War of the Words: Literary Rebellion in France and Ireland

Edited by:

Eamon Maher and Eugene O’Brien

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Contents

Introduction

Eamon Maher and Eugene O'Brien

Revolution and rebellion have always been at the heart of literature. From the earliest stories of Prometheus and Pandora's Box and Adam's taking of the apple in the Garden of Eden, down through literary and cultural history, the rebellion of the individual against some form of unjust system has been an abiding literary trope. Some of the greatest characters in literature across all cultures have been rebels, and some of the most resonant lines from literature have been those wherein characters voiced their desire to break free of a system which they found oppressive or constricting. One only has to think of John Milton's Satan and his resonant lines in *Paradise Lost*:

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
> What matter where, if I be still the same,
> And what I should be, all but less than he
> Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
> We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
> Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
> Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
> To reign is worth ambition, though in hell:
> Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.[1]

Here the image of rebellion as beginning in the mind and then progressing into the world of social and cultural interaction. To personify Satan in this way was quite radical and of course this portrayal has the famous imprimatur of another great Romantic rebel, William Blake:

> Note. the reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of
> Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because

[1] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, edited by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), I, ii, 254-263.

> he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it.[2]

As a medium for the expression of an alternative viewpoint, literature has long been the home of rebellion. Its resonant ambiguity and foregrounding of the aesthetic dimension of language can allow it to voice political perspectives that, in a different genre, could well have negative consequences for the author. Also, Milton is able to voice the negative connotations of rebellion while at the same time making a subtle point about the fear of change that is to be found in his own revolutionary culture while ostensibly writing about the depths of a mythological and imaginary hell:

> He above the rest
> In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
> Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen
> Looks through the horizontal misty air
> Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
> In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
> On half the nations, and with fear of change
> Perplexes the monarchs.[3]

The same can be said of Shakespeare, who has given voice to some of the most emblematic images of rebellion and revolution in literature, but like Milton he too points to the darker consequences of rebellion:

> [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
> Let not light see my black and deep desires:
> The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
> Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.[4]

[2] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*: *The Major Authors, Volume B*, Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (eds) 8th ed. (New York: Norton, 2006), pp.1430-1441, p.1433.
[3] *Paradise Lost*, I, ll, 499-509.
[4] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Sylvan Barnet (ed.) (Signet Classics Series,

By the end of the play, the image of the doomed rebel, risking all on one final act is expressed in the ringing lines:

> Arm, arm, and out!
> If this which he avouches does appear,
> There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
> I gin to be aweary of the sun,
> And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
> Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
> At least we'll die with harness on our back.[5]

In an Irish context, perhaps the most famous rebellion in Modernist literature as Stephen Dedalus uses a translation of the very language of the Catholic Church, Latin, to voice his personal rebellion against the strictures of that Church, and the allied constraints of identitarian politics. In keeping with the rebellion of *Paradise Lost*, Stephen is taught about the rebellion of Lucifer but from a very Catholic and religious perspective, and the rebellion here is seen from a theological perspective: 'Theologians consider that it was the sin of pride, the sinful thought conceived in an instant: *non serviam*: I will not serve. That instant was his ruin'.[6] Stephen learns this lesson but not in the way his teacher might have expected. Later in the book, as he ponders the role of the artist in society, he gives voice to the words of Lucifer but in a very altered context: 'I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church'.[7]

Of course, in all three of these examples, the cultural is always already imbricated in the political, as we can see in Milton's subtext about the consequences of political change, and Shakespeare's nod towards James the Second in *Macbeth*, and of course in Stephen's mention of the term 'fatherland', with all of the attendant associations of political patriarchy that this term invokes. And the same is true of the issues discussed in the present book.

In the French context, literary creation has always been linked to rebellion in one way or another. When one considers how Flaubert set

New York: New American Library), I (iv) l48-53.
[5] *Macbeth*, V (v) 38-51.
[6] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by R.B. Kershner (Boston: Bedford Books of St Martin's Press, 1993, first published 1916), p.131.
[7] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p.283.

about writing a novel that would be held together by style alone and where the novelist would remain like God in nature, always present but nowhere visible, it is not an exaggeration to say that he was breaking with the approach of his illustrious predecessors, Balzac and Zola. Flaubert is only one in a long list of French writers who saw in the art of creation a rebellious act. Baudelaire expressed his desire in *Les Fleurs du Mal* in the following manner:

> Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe ?
> Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du *nouveau* ![8]

Clearly, innovation and art are synonymous for many artists. Baudelaire's quest to discover what was new and original is typical of the manner in which French writers sought to push the boundaries of language to their limits. Joyce and Beckett felt comfortable in a Parisian environment where experimentation was the order of the day and where writers were not afraid to declare themselves dissatisfied with the power of traditional language to convey reality. Hence, it is no surprise to have Nathalie Sarraute writing about 'l'ère du soupçon' in the 1950s. By the 20th century, writers and critics were becoming increasingly suspicious of all the carefully constructed mythology associated with literary traditions. A writer like Jean Sulivan (1913-1980) gives voice to the profound dissatisfaction with traditional approaches in a novel like *Joie errante* (1974), where the narrator makes no attempt to hide his presence in the text and provokes the reader with remarks like the following:

> Votre trouble m'émeut. Tous ces va-et-vient dans l'espace et le temps… Vous aimeriez un ouvrage plein qui vous happe ! Je ne veux pas mentir à ce point. Pourquoi me laisserai-je conduire par la mécanique d'une intrigue ? [..] Pourquoi vous tendre ce piège, tandis que je me tiendrais derrière la paroi lisse de l'écriture, glace sans tain, à vous regarder vous regardant, comblés par mes impostures ?[9]

Sulivan and his generation of French writers display a marked distrust of accepted literary canons. Devices such as plot, organic development of

[8] Charles Baudelaire, "Le Voyage", in *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Claude Pichois (ed.), *Charles Baudelaire* : *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 2001), p.134.
[9] Jean Sulivan, *Joie errante* (Paris : Gallimard, 1974), p.147.

characters, objective narration, are all abandoned by Sulivan for a type of conversational style where the point of view alternates between the narrator and the characters. Similarly, one often encounters in his work the breakdown of syntax and punctuation as the novelist searches desperately to find the style that will best capture the intense experiences he is trying to describe. 'Pour trouver du nouveau', to repeat Baudelaire's phrase, it is necessary to break with the past, to rebel against what others have done, to start again from zero. Writing about the Nouveau Roman at the end of the 1950s, Olivier de Magny stated:

> Si nos romanciers actuels, entrés dans l'ère du soupçon, dans l'ère où tout est soupçonné faux, ont un trait en commun, le voici : ils écrivent tous quand une connaissance véritable des hommes et du monde n'est plus possible, quand la vérité n'est plus possible.[10]

It is at such moments of uncertainty and doubt that great literature can emerge, as was most certainly the case in France in the latter half of the 20th century, a time of rebelliousness and innovation. French writers have always played a pivotal role in the political and intellectual life of their country in a way that their Irish counterparts have not tended to do to the same extent. In the 20th century alone, the names of Bernanos, Mauriac, Proust, Gide, Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, Genet, Céline, Drieu and Malraux are synonymous with agitation of one kind or another, whether it be to do with the cultural, social or political domains. In his study of Occupied France, Frederic Spotts makes the following observation:

> Failure to understand the importance of culture in a nation's life was not a mistake Hitler made. Culture was not peripheral but central to his Occupation policy. In the arts he saw a narcotic to be used to pacify the French and make them amenable to collaboration while he was busy with his war in the Soviet Union. … But he had a further aim. Hitler's racial theories compelled him to assert German cultural supremacy over the French and in that way to challenge their self-confidence and to weaken their sense of national identity.[11]

[10] Olivier de Magny, « Panorama d'une nouvelle littérature romanesque », in *Esprit*, Juillet-Août 1958, p.12.
[11] Frederic Spotts, *The Shameful Peace*: *How French Artists and Intellectuals Survived the Nazi Occupation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,

It is doubtful if Hitler succeeded in the latter objective. While some writers and artists were happy to appear to accept the Nazi presence in their country, many others used the tools of their trade, most often words, to fight German attempts at acculturation. Defending their cultural patrimony became a rallying cry among many French intellectuals who jealously guarded their intellectual independence. In this, there are more than a few similarities with their Irish equivalents who, while apparently assimilating the culture of the colonial power, nevertheless retained many traits that were quintessentially Irish. Thus Joyce's special form of Hiberno-English came to be acknowledged as being distinctively 'Irish' rather than 'English'. Joyce thus corresponds to the model contained in that well-coined phrase, 'The Empire wrote back!'

Long before the 20th century, however, Ireland had looked to France for its inspiration. Connections between Ireland and France have been long-established at all levels of societal, linguistic and cultural interaction. In terms of historical specificity, the French Revolution has long been seen as a template for the actions and ideological position of the United Irishmen whose 1798 rebellion in Ireland owed a lot, in both form and substance, the revolution that begun in Paris on July 14th, 1789.

These connections were both political and cultural. Theobald Wolfe Tone said that political position was influenced largely by the French Revolution, which, as he wrote later 'changed in an instant the politics of Ireland', dividing political thinkers from that moment into 'aristocrats and democrats'.[12] Perhaps the central socio-political influence of the French Revolution was the libertarian and emancipatory thrust of its informing secular Enlightenment ethic. The writings of Enlightenment thinkers were disseminated thoroughly throughout different parts of Ireland, especially in the North of Ireland, where they found a receptive reading public among Presbyterians. The work of Tom Paine was especially influential, with four Irish newspapers reprinting *The Rights of Man*, a work labelled by Tone as the Koran of Belfast.[13] Enlightenment theories of society and government, embodied in practice by the French Revolution, offered an example of how a seemingly stratified and hierar-

2008), p.3.

[12] William Theobald Wolfe Tone (ed.), *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, 2 volumes, (Washington, 1826), I, p.43.

[13] Edith Mary Johnston, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*. *The Gill History of Ireland volume 8* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p.168.

chical society could be completely changed according to the will of the people. They also offered an ethical demand that alterity, in the shape of the people, be protected by the force of law.

It was through the shaping of this will of the people that the United Irishmen sought to achieve their aims. Drawing again on the example of revolutionary France, the press would be a forum wherein conflicting ideas and ideologies would be debated and mediated. They were intent on creating a climate of informed opinion, analogous to Habermas's culturally produced social sphere, and again, theirs was a centrifugal impulse drawing comparative inspiration from the revolutions, and revolutionary philosophies of America and France. Indeed, this form of educational improvement was central to the Enlightenment project, specifically Kant's 'What is Enlightenment', where what came to be known as the *credo* of the Enlightenment, *Sapere Aude*, 'have courage to use your own reason', was first enunciated.[14]

That most of the sources of this Enlightenment knowledge came from locations outside Ireland further underpins the cosmopolitan impetus of the United Irishmen, and the French connection To this end, pamphlets, which distilled the writings of Enlightenment thinkers, were distributed among the peasants of the north of Ireland, between 1795 and 1797, which contained the writings of Godwin, Locke (especially his notion of the implied contract between ruler and ruled), and Paine as well as those of Voltaire and De Volney.[15] The selection of writers distributed and read by the United Irishmen makes for an impressive list of liberal thinkers on social and political issues, and further reinforces the claim that their views on identity were necessarily pluralist – their aim was to broaden the notion of Irishness so that it might be inclusive of the different socio-religious traditions of Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter. The Francophone origin of so many of these writers further underscores the point: Montesquieu, Schiller, Raynal, Condorcet, Rousseau, Diderot, Sieyès and de Montesquieu.

Print and reading were crucial to the disseminating of such ideas and the logistics of this enterprise were impressive, with a whole print-

[14] Isaac Kramnick (ed.), *The Portable Enlightenment Reader*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 1.
[15] Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*: *Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760-1830, Critical Conditions Series,* (Cork: Cork University Press in association with Field Day, 1996), p.63.

based culture set up to broadcast the United Irishmen's agenda. Whelan cites at least fifty printers in Dublin, thirty four Irish provincial presses and some forty newspapers in print,[16] all of whom were sympathetic to the United Irish cause. The United Irishmen's own paper, the *Northern Star*, a vehicle for the spread of Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals, at its peak sold some 4,200 copies per issue. It is reckoned that, due to collective reading of each copy by at least ten people, the effective readership was some 42,000.[17] And of course there was also the prospect of a more practical form of French aid. Guy Beiner, in his book describing the effect of the landing of a French army under General Humbert in Killala Bay, county Mayo, on August 22, 1798, makes the point that 'Songs hailing the imminent arrival of French troops on vessels prepared the ground for reception of radical ideologies influenced by the French Revolution and anticipated poetic descriptions in Irish of the French invasion attempts in 1796 and 1798.[18]

The revolution is paradigm-shift in terms of influence on Ireland, but it would be a mistake to locate this influence purely and simply in the historical past. As Slavoj Žižek notes, the 'real' effect of the French Revolution is more lasting:

> The real Event, the dimension of the Real, was not in the immediate reality of the violent events in Paris, but in how this reality appeared to observers and in the hopes thus awakened in them. The reality of what went on in Paris belongs to the temporal dimension of empirical history; the sublime image that generated enthusiasm belongs to Eternity.[19]

And Walter Benjamin makes the point that the true task of Marxist historiography, apropos the French Revolution, is 'to unearth the hidden potentialities (the utopian emancipatory potentials) which were betrayed in the actuality of revolution and in its final outcome (the rise of utilitarian market capitalism)'.[20]

[16] *The Tree of Liberty*, p.63.
[17] *The Tree of Liberty*, p.66.
[18] Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*: *Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), p.87.
[19] Slavoj Žižek, *Defense of Lost Causes* (London, Verso, 2008), p.15.
[20] Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 2006), p.78.

This collection is an embodiment of Žižek's position that the French Revolution has been a significant influence on world culture. The chapters here, dealing with politics, literature and culture, will trace the connections and influences that exist in a Franco-Irish public and cultural sphere. It is our hope, as editors, that the collection will proceed, in a small way, the Žižekean idea of a fairer and more utopian present and future.

This current volume is the 5th in the annual series inaugurated by the Association for Franco-Irish Studies (AFIS). Like its predecessors, it is the fruit of a conference, this time the highly successful gathering at University College Cork in May 2009. Our sincere thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of this conference, most particularly Professor Grace Neville and Mary O'Rourke, whose organisational acumen has become legendary at this stage! The theme of 'rebellion' seemed most apposite at a venue located in the heart of 'The Rebel County', but there was no conflict in the unanimous appreciation among the conference delegates of the huge effort and good humour expended by Grace and Mary to ensure a most enjoyable stay in Cork.

Thanks also must go to all at the highly efficient TIR publications in Rennes2 for producing such an attractive tome so quickly. It would be remiss of us not to mention the superb international editorial board consisting of Yann Bévant, Scott Brewster, Anne Fogarty, Anne Goarzin, Peter Guy, Sylvie Mikowski, Paula Murphy, Grace Neville, Mary Pierse and James Rogers, all of whom worked tirelessly on vetting and proofing texts. Enfin, nous voulons exprimer notre sincère gratitude aux Services Culturels de l'Ambassade de France en Irlande pour leur généreuse aide financière des activités de l'AFIS.

EAMON MAHER and EUGENE O'BRIEN

Part I

Political Agitation in Literature

Chapter 1 Alison O'Malley-Younger

Remembering the Year of the French: Wolfe Tone, Republican, Rebel or Melodramatic Hero?

In 1843, John Kells Ingram commemorated the uprisings in 1798 with the words:

> Who dares to speak of 'Ninety-eight?
> Who blushes at the name?
> When cowards mock the patriots' fate,
> Who hangs his head for shame?

Central to Kells Ingram's ballad is a rallying cry to remember the pantheon of patriots enshrined in national memory as sacrificial victims to the cause of Ireland in *Bliain na bhFranach* – the year of the French. The French Revolution was vital to Ireland. . Just as France threw off its cloak of servitude and donned the armour of Liberty, the Presbyterians and Catholics of Ireland began to strive for greater freedom, culminating in the rebellions of 1798. Out of this tumult a number of patriot heroes emerged: Theobald Wolfe Tone, Thomas Palister Russell, Henry Joy McCracken, Lord Edward Fitzgerald; each dressed in the mantle of the martyr, marching in 'apostolic succession'[1] towards the final victory of the nation. Besides the obvious Christian iconography and symbolism associated with these heroes, they also embodied the classical republican concepts of 'virtue', committed to notions of the public good, or *res-publica*. I will introduce a caveat here: any definition of heroism is protean and must be tied to a particular time and place. The hero, in other words, is a cultural barometer of a given zeitgeist. It follows that representations of the hero will be coloured by ideological and cultural freight. At a simple level, representation mirrors society in both content and form

[1] See Alan Ford, "Martrydom, History and Memory in Early Modern Ireland", in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian MacBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.43-66, p.43.

and thus the image of the hero is chameleon-like, changing according to the demands of the moment.

For the purpose of this paper, I will concentrate on Theobald Wolfe Tone; my contention being that Tone was a hero of his time, a time in which the French Revolution had inaugurated, according to Edmund Burke: 'a revolution of sentiments, manners and moral opinions'[2] which deracinated the concept of feudal chivalry at the core of French aristocratic society. Lamenting its loss, Burke defines chivalry as 'the nurse of manly sentiments and heroic enterprise',[3] linking chivalric behaviour with manliness and heroism. In response, Thomas Paine attacked Burke's brand of chivalric revivalism as 'the effeminising mental Bastille of aristocrats'.[4] At the core of this polemic is the notion of what constitutes the masculine and the heroic. With the passing of the age of chivalry, a new age of heroism was inaugurated, the age of the democratic and republican citizen hero, an age in which gentlemanliness and heroism were separated from hereditary privilege and dynastic ambition, an age when the hero was measured by personal merit, citizenship and republican independence rather than primogeniture or accidents of birth.

This chapter is not principally concerned with the 'historical' figure of Wolfe Tone in himself, but rather with the attempt made by subsequent writers to shape perceptions of this principal architect of the Irish rebellion of 1798. I will focus on melodramatic representations of Tone in J. W. Whitbread's 1898 patriotic melodrama, *Theobald Wolfe Tone.* The play's protagonist conforms to the patriot civic hero obliged to defend the liberty of the people against tyranny and injustice and committed to a noble code closely allied to the democratic principles of French republicanism. As such, the recast figure of Tone can be viewed as an idealised version of a republican model able to operate as a patriotic avatar, proposing a new paradigm of Irish identity based on liberty, independence and revolutionary reform, ideals still hauntingly unfulfilled in the Ireland of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when the

[2] See Edmund Burke, "Reflections on The Revolution in France", in *Edmund Burke*: *Reflections on The Revolution in France* edited by J.C.D Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, p.80.
[3] See Edmund Burke, "Reflections on The Revolution in France", p.236
[4] Thomas Paine, in *Thomas Paine*: *Political Writings*, edited by Bruce Kuklick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.89.

fervently-sought reality of a whole, independent, and in every way united nation often seemed just over the horizon.

Wolfe Tone: Martyr

To claim that Tone was republican and heroic is neither un-contentious nor original; patriots, polemicists, politicians, poets and playwrights have long discussed and debated his putative heroism and Republican provenance. History can do little to assist us in finding that which is knowable or even retrievable. In the years since Tone's death, the myth has eclipsed the man, and the history has been replaced with what Marianne Elliott calls 'the Cult of Tone'.[5] In short, representations of Tone have become the argued-over narratives of skilful ideologues and propagandists. This is true at the levels of both content and form. The content, or facts, can and are foregrounded or subordinated depending on the ideological stances of the tellers; the form can and does lend itself to a given 'zeitgeist'. Consider, for example Padraig Pearse's oration over Wolfe Tone's grave in 1913:

> We have come to one of the holiest places in Ireland; holier even than the place where Patrick sleeps in Down. Patrick brought us life, but this man died for us. He was the greatest of Irish Nationalists…we have come to renew our adhesion to the faith of Tone: to express once more our full acceptance of the gospel of Irish Nationalism which he was first to formulate in worldly terms. This man's soul was a burning flame, so ardent, so generous, so pure, that to come into communion with it is to come unto a new baptism, into a new regeneration and cleansing.[6]

Framing his elegiac exhortation in Christian terminology Pearse presents an image of Tone which fits seamlessly into a paradigm of sacrificial heroism which translates a reverence for the dead into a new baptism into Nationalism. Here the content is shaped by the poetic logic of the form which in turn resonates with the ideology of the speaker. As Susan Cannon Harris points out: 'Pearse was a Catholic speaking to a heavily

[5] See Marianne Elliott, *Wolfe Tone*: *Prophet of Irish Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp.411-19, p.414.
[6] Padraig Pearse, *Collected Works of Padraig H. Pearse*: *Political Writings and Speeches*, 5 volumes, (Dublin: Phoenix, 1917-22), vol. 2, p.58.

Catholic movement'.[7] Thus, his literary resurrection of Tone relies heavily on a context-bound poetic logic. There is propaganda in poetry, and poetry in propaganda. Pearse's oration comprises both. Filled with hype, hyperbole and passionate lyricism, the speech surrounds Tone with largely Catholic iconography despite the fact that Tone was a Protestant by birth and an atheist by choice. We are connected not, as Eugene O'Brien argues, with 'the historical Wolfe Tone, but with a narrative image of Tone'.[8]

Notably, Pearce's militant republicanism is couched in terms of love and sanctity as a corrective to contemporary British depictions of the Irish people as barbaric, brutish, degenerate and simian. His highly cadenced speeches offer a passage for the heroic dead to pass inexorably into the hearts and minds of the living. Here, Pearce's depictions of Tone, according to Cannon Harris, offers a corrective to 'the British attempt to criminalize and pathologize nationalist resistance', by describing them in terms of an 'ideal manhood' in which 'virile aggression and a feminized capacity for love and suffering peacefully co-exist'.[9] This was particularly pressing in a post-1860s cultural and political milieu in which 'Irishness' was repeatedly viewed through the lens of Fenian terror, neo-Darwinism and Parnellite agitation. As Vincent Cheng argues, racial hatred of the Irish was 'fuelled by the spectres Fenianism conjured up for the English, such as mob-rule, "Rome rule", republicanism, anarchism, and revolution against the Empire'.[10] Such spectres had haunted the imaginations of the English since the French Revolution, feeding a 'virulent Francophobia'[11] which paralleled the virulent Hibernophobia of post-1860s England. The correlative was the revolutionary tendencies of both the French and the Irish: the common denominators being Celticism and Catholicism.

[7] Susan Cannon Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p.164.
[8] Eugene O'Brien, "Kicking Bishop Brennan up the Arse", in *Reinventing Ireland Through a French Prism*, edited by Eamon Maher, Eugene O'Brien and Grace Neville (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), p.276.
[9] In Susan Cannon Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, p.139.
[10] Vincent Cheng, *Joyce, Race and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.32.
[11] Seamus Deane, "Civilians and Barbarians", in *Ireland's Field Day*, edited by Tom Paulin (London: Hutchinson & Co. 1985) p.36.

Wolfe Tone: French Republican

English antipathy towards the French both prefaced and postscripted the French Revolution of 1789. During the early eighteenth century, the French were vilified in magazines such as *The Spectator* as a race of effeminate, profligate sodomites and Mollys, devoid of sincere passion and obsessed with fashion. The consensus among English gentlemen was that French aristocratic culture represented a threat of contagion to the supposed vigour, virtue and restraint of the gentlemanly classes in England. So pernicious was this threat that it occasioned Joseph Addison to comment in 1711:

> What an inundation of Ribbons and Brocades will break upon us? What peals of laughter and impertinence shall we be exposed to? For the prevention of these great Evils, I could heartily wish there was an act of Parliament for prohibiting the importation of French fopperies.[12]

The French were thus seen as distinctly unmanly, and as such, according to commentators of the time, undeserving of full citizenship and enfranchisement.

In the post-revolutionary period, the stereotype changed from fop to fanatic, booby to barbarian, as is evident in a correspondence penned by Horace Walpole in 1793, in which he becomes so inflamed it renders him speechless and, as Seamus Deane points out, he decides that 'the French deserved nothing more than their own name':[13]

> But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such inferno-human beings – but must compose a term that aims at conveying my idea of them – for the future it will be sufficient to call them the French.[14]

It may well have been sufficient in some quarters to call the Irish 'French' in the period surrounding the rebellions of 1798, so closely interwoven were their desires for 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. Rebellion and revolution were seen by some in both Ireland and England as a

[12] Thomas Addison, "The Spectator", Saturday, April 21st, 1711, in *The Mind of the Spectator under the editorship Addison and Steele*, edited by G.S Streatfield, (London: T.F Unwin. Ltd, 1923) p.67.
[13] Seamus Deane, "Civilians and Barbarians", p.36.
[14] Seamus Deane, "Civilians and Barbarians", p.36.

contagion, a pox – that which Bishop Thomas Hussey described as 'the French disease',[15] threatening to infect the less biddable elements of Irish society. As 1798 approached, Edmund Burke's anxieties that the 'swinish multitudes' of Ireland would mimic the 'malignant French distemper'[16] of 'perfidious France' were becoming a reality. The 'quarantine' he advised to halt the progress of 'the French disease' had little effect amongst radicals such as Tone, Thomas Russell and Edward Fitzgerald who found an antidote to Burke's polemic in the philosophies of Thomas Paine, Rousseau and Locke. Paine's 1790 *Rights of Man*, popularly known as the 'Koran of Belfast' was circulated widely, distributed cheaply and serialised in publications such as *The Northern Star*. Paine was granted honorary membership of the Dublin Society in 1792; Tone read his works avidly alongside those of Locke and Rousseau. His support for Paine in particular is evident in his memoirs in which he discusses 'Burke's invective' and 'Paine's reply' in terms which leave us in no doubt as to his view of the importance of Paine's works and of the Revolution in France to Ireland:

> This controversy and the giant event which gave rise to it, changed in an instant the politics of Ireland. Two years before the nation was in lethargy […] but the rapid succession of events, and above all the explosion which had taken place in France, and blown into the elements despotism rooted in fourteen centuries, had thoroughly aroused all Europe, and the eyes of every man in every quarter were turned anxiously on the French National Assembly.[17]

Clearly, Tone felt that the fall of the *Ancien Régime* in France had sent shock waves throughout Europe, but more importantly it had roused the Irish people from their torpor and inspired them to revolt against governmental tyranny. For Tone, the French Revolution transformed the Irish people to the point that in 'this oppressed, insulted and plundered nation […] the French Revolution became the test of every man's politi-

[15] T. Hussey to R. Burke, 28 August 1790. Burke, *Correspondences* IV *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, Volume I, April 1744 – June 1768, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958), p.134.
[16] Edmund Burke, "Reflections on The Revolution in France", p.211.
[17] Theobald Wolfe Tone, *Memoirs*, edited by William Theobald Wolfe Tone (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), p.35.

cal creed'.[18] It is a telling observation. Following the French example, the demand for a communal voice had decisively arrived in Ireland, resulting in a transformation of society in which, according to Samuel McSkimmin, 'every country bumpkin considered himself to be a consummate politician'.[19] In short a cultural democracy which had seeded in France was beginning to bud in Ireland in the 1790s cultivated by patriots such as Tone and later Emmet. The hope of contemporary balladeers was that this bud would take root and grow into a 'Liberty Tree': a living symbol consecrated to the declared beliefs of the French Revolution: *Liberté, Equalité and Fraternité*.

With this in mind many of the leaders of the United Irishmen, Tone included, sought to enlist French support for insurrections which would overthrow the tyranny of British rule. When it came in 1798 it was too little, too late. British retribution was swift and brutal and, at the end of what Roy Foster describes as 'the most concentrated outbreak of violence in recorded Irish history',[20] around 30,000 people had died. Amongst the dead were the leaders of the rebellions. Wolfe Tone did not die on the field of battle. He was captured, tried and found guilty of treason but he escaped a public execution. Whether by his own hand or by murder, Tone was found with his throat cut on the evening of the 12th of November, 1798. He died a week later. With his passing, according to C. Desmond Greaves:

> …there perished the brightest mind of eighteenth century Ireland. The United Irishmen were not utterly extirpated as the rising of Robert Emmet five years later shows. But the world scene had shifted. No longer was the French revolution shedding the light of hope on all who dreamed of a better life…It was now only necessary for Pitt to appear like Mephistopheles and claim his bond. That bond was the Union.[21]

[18] In Sean O'Faolain, *The Autobiography of Wolfe Tone*, (London, T. Nelson, 1937), p.34.
[19] In Daire Keogh, "'The Most Dangerous Villain in Society': Fr John Martin's Mission to the United Irishmen of Wicklow in 1798", in *Eighteenth Century Ireland/Iris an dá Chultúr*, 1996 Vol 7, pp.115-135, p.115.
[20] Roy Foster, *The Irish Story*: *Telling Tales and Making it up in Ireland* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 2001), p.214.
[21] C. Desmond Greaves, *Theobald Wolfe Tone and the Irish Nation*: *1763 – 1963* (London: Connolly Publications, 1963), p.31.

In Greave's opinion, the Union was a Faustian pact which catapulted Ireland into another dark age of tyranny. It was seen, according to Joep Leerssen, as 'a muzzle imposed by a reactionary British government',[22] a means to suppress a budding Irish nationhood; a 'wrong turn in Irish history'.[23] Tone's dream of a united Ireland was left hauntingly unfulfilled, but, as Greaves points out, 'not utterly extirpated'. As Leerssen astutely observes: 'from 1800 onwards we see a sudden increase in the tendency to see Irish history as unfinished business, as a set of outstanding grievances waiting to be addressed.'[24]

Wolfe Tone: Romantic Revolutionary

In 1803, an attempt was made to address these grievances when the 25 year- old Robert Emmet endeavoured to spearhead another French-aided uprising against English tyranny. The rebellion itself was a well documented failure, but the subsequent brutal execution of Emmet, along with his ill-fated love affair with Sarah Curran, his speech from the dock and the mystery surrounding his earthly remains, propelled him from relative obscurity to legendary status. As an image of doomed youth laid waste Emmet became the ultimate icon designed to unite the interests of a nation coming to be – a romantic quester imbued with the glamour of heroic failure and lost cause, destined to join what Richard Kearney describes as 'a sacrificial heritage'[25] in which Padraig Pearse later claimed 'life springs from death'. This transformation occurred, according to Marianne Elliott in a zeitgeist characterised by embryonic nationalism, 'shaped and repackaged by the Romantic Movement'.[26] The primary mover in this re-packaging, she argues, was Thomas Moore, who 'set the tone for the legend',[27] in his eulogies, elegies, liebstods, laments and lyrics. Yet Moore, who wielded pathos as deftly as the rebel militia could swing a pike, was not alone. Fired with admiration for the ideals Emmet

[22] Joep Leersen, *Remembrance and Imagination*: *Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p.9.
[23] Joep Leersen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p.9.
[24] Leersen, p.9
[25] Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland* : *Politics, Culture, Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.110.
[26] Marianne Elliott, *Robert Emmett*: *The Making of a Legend* (London: Profile Publishing, 2003), p.113.
[27] Marianne Elliott, p.113.

represented, Robert Southey wrote a rousing tribute to his heroic death; Byron expressed a wish that should he die during the struggles in Naples, his friend Moore would 'at least celebrate him by another "Oh breathe not his name"'.[28]

The response of the Romantic poets to '98 and 1803 can be attributed to a number of factors, not least, according to Elliott, to 'a malaise born of the disillusionment at how the hopes of the French Revolution had been disappointed'.[29] Combined with this was the aura of romantic nationalism surrounding Tone and Emmet, both of whom were suitably dashing, rebellious, heroic and fundamentally democratic to fit the republican image of what a hero should be. Each had impeccable revolutionary credentials to represent heroic masculinity divorced from feudal and hereditary bonds – both having been born into bourgeois but not aristocratic families. Both were free thinkers attentive to their social duty and to serving the people regardless of rank; each eschewed the tyrannical tendencies of feudal chivalry. In short, they embodied a model of republican heroism which validated them not only as national but as Romantic heroes. Moreover, they were *romantic* heroes who had died for a cause – a subject close to the hearts of the Romantic poets, and to subsequent nationalists such as Pearse.

The histories of 1798 and 1803 are characteristically melodramatic – filled with gentlemanly heroes and caddish villains, damsels in distress, hair-trap escapes, sympathetic and rebellious priests, spies and informants, loyal retainers, comic mishaps, sensational scenes, pathos, bathos and a good portion of declamatory rhetoric. They were filled also with blood-letting and starvation, 'pitch-capping, lynchings, arson and rape.'[30] Combined with the obvious carnage and oppression, the 1801 Act of Union – a 'withering insult' according to Thomas Moore which: 'Made Ireland first, in wild adulterous trance,/Turn false to England's bed, and whore with France'[31] -had debased and undermined the people of Ireland:

[28] Thomas Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondences*, edited by John Russell (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853) p.207.
[29] Marianne Elliott, p.113.
[30] Selina Guinness, "The Year of the Undead: 1898", in *New Voices in Irish Criticism*., edited by. P.J Mathews (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp.19-27. p.21.
[31] In Francis James Child, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* (Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1856) p.227.

> The loss of independence very early debased our character…It is true that this island has given birth to heroes…but success was wanting to consecrate resistance, their cause was branded with the disheartening name of treason, and their oppressed country was such a blank among nations that…the fame of their actions was lost in the obscurity of the place where they achieved them.[32]

Labelled as traitors, bedevilled by successive failures, the heroic endeavours of the few had, according to Moore, become insignificant in the grand narrative of colonial history. From 1798, and in particular following the Act of Union, the Irish people developed a sense of inferiority induced by colonial occupation. The anterior of this was the developing nativist veneration of all things Irish. There was no place for heroism in a national narrative without a history of independence but paradoxically every need for heroic figures to bolster a sense of cultural self-respect and distinctiveness in the Irish people.

Such concerns extended throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, manifesting themselves in literary forms tailored to the cultural and political tastes of their times. By the late nineteenth century the popular patriotic melodramas of playwrights such as Dion Boucicault, J. W Whitbread, Hubert O'Grady and later P.J Bourke repackaged the patriot hero by staging plays which were, admittedly anathema to belletrists in their 'gimcrack sensations … reach-me-down plots, empty bombast and florid declamation',[33] but had immense drawing power, perpetually full houses and long runs. As Christopher Fitzsimon wittily observes when Yeats mused about the possibility that his *Cathleen ni Houlihan* had sent out 'Certain men the English shot',[34] '[he] clearly had no idea that the patriotic dramas staged contemporaneously … probably "sent out" far more young men, if only because the audiences were much more numerous'.[35] Populist, sensationalist, and arguably devoid of literary quality these patriotic melodramas may have been,

[32] Thomas Moore quoted in Robert Welch, *Changing States*: *Transformations in Modern Irish Writing* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.20.
[33] M Kilgarriff., *The Golden Age of Melodrama* (Hatfield: Stellar Press 1974) , p.11.
[34] W.B Yeats, "The Man and the Echo", in *Collected Poems* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1933), p.393.
[35] Christopher Fitz-simon, *The Abbey Theatre* (London, Thames & Hudson, 2003), p.11.

but they served two important functions: the first was to break the mould of the risible or dangerous stage-Irishman; the second to render the past vivid, accessible and rife with contemporary significance to a mass audience fascinated with the melodramatic and the spectacular.

Melodrama, in which 'the suffering heroes or heroines, villains or well-meaning comics play a moral, humanitarian, and sentimental plot in a world divided into good and evil, where virtue is protected and vice punished',[36] was the hallmark of the Irish stage in the nineteenth century. As Stephen Watt argues persuasively in *Joyce, O'Casey and The Irish Popular Theater* (1991), melodrama was also the form in which history was presented in the period; the latter part of which was characterised, as he suggests by '"increasingly strained"…Anglo-Irish relations'[37] resulting from 'The Fenian insurrection in the 1860s, the Land League and Home Rule movements, and the Boer War'.[38] Popular Irish newspapers and pamphlets ran 'emotionally-charged and ideologically rich'[39] notices decrying English oppression by recalling Irish moments, movements and makers of iconic significance in a language of 'martyrdom and sacrifice'[40] in order to forge national unity under the banner of the heroic past. Melodrama, the literary descendant of Pixérécourt's French *mélodrame* was able to both entertain and inform a mass theatre audience. Thus it was a highly effective tool in promulgating ideas of national reform under the guise of popular entertainment. In a period in which the past is presented in melodramatic terms, it is no surprise that playwrights such as Boucicault and Whitbread should 'interpret history for their audiences in precisely the same way'.[41]

Wolfe Tone: Melodramatic Hero

The year is 1898; the date is 26th December, in the midst of what Gary Owens describes as 'the most concentrated outpouring of commemora-

[36] J.R. Lehning *The Melodramatic Thread*: *Spectacle and Popular Culture in Modern France* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), p.5.
[37] Stephen Watt, *Joyce, O'Casey and The Irish Popular Theater* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p.55.
[38] Stephen Watt, *Joyce, O'Casey and The Irish Popular Theater*, p.55.
[39] Watt, p.61.
[40] Watt, p.59.
[41] Watt, p.59.

tive statuary that Ireland has ever seen';[42] part of, as he suggests: 'a year long indulgence in patriotism and anglophobia'.[43] In this centenary year, 100,000 people processed along Grafton Street for the dedication of a foundation stone to a monument of Tone. It was also the year which 'establishes Wolfe Tone as an unrivalled icon of resistance to British rule'[44] and when the Queen's Royal Theatre, Dublin, opens its doors for the premiere matinee of J.W Whitbread's eponymous melodrama, *Wolfe Tone*. There is standing room only in the house as the audience clap, jeer and hiss their way through what the *Evening Herald* described as this 'realistic presentment of a series of episodes the most interesting in the romantic history of our land'.[45] The curtains open to reveal a flat set of the outline of Trinity College behind a group of 'students' wandering from stage left to right and back again. Into their midst comes a singing porter who has his cap knocked over his face by one of the students and is hit in the stomach by another. 'Dancing about' and 'shaking his fist'(p.174), he begins to berate them in the exaggerated brogue characteristic of the 'Stage Irishman'. Enter, 'Russell' stage left, whom he mistakes for 'one of thim blayguard students … an omadhaun[46] and a raporee.[47] Laughingly offering him coins to 'heal your wounds', Russell very courteously asks if he knows of the whereabouts of a 'Mr Wolfe Tone', to which our college porter, (whom we now know is Shane McMahon, friend to Tone), responds:

> Is it Mr Theobald Wolfe Tone? No one bether. Whether at larnin', dhrinkin' or larkin' wid the petticoats, he's always to the fore. (175)

[42] In Eugene McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival* (Cork: Cork. University Press, 2008), p.41.
[43] In Ian MacBride, "Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland", in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.31.
[44] In Ian MacBride, p.4.
[45] Cheryl Herr, *For the Land they Loved*: *Irish Political Melodramas 1890 – 1925* (New York: Syracuse, 1991), p.8. All subsequent quotes from Whitbread are taken from Herr's edition and will have the page number in brackets in the text.
[46] Fool.
[47] Outlaw, vagabond. See Herr, p.175.

At the mention of the name of 'Mr Theobald Wolfe Tone', 'Russell bows'. He then requests that the porter relay a note for him to Mr Tone. Enter 'Peggy', a 'purty colleen' who 'stands well in her brogues'. She begins to remonstrate with Shane for behaving in what she considers to be an inappropriate manner towards his 'shupariors' in his acceptance of money from 'the young gentleman' (Russell). She in turn demands that a 'letther' be taken to Mr Tone 'at once'. *Sotto voce*, she informs the unfalteringly gallant Russell that she is maid to Miss Susannah[48] Witherington, 'swateheart' to Mr Tone and sister of the villainous Mr Witherington, who enters coincidentally just as she is informing Russell that 'the times are too dangerous almost to spake at all' (177). Enter Turner and Rafferty – the dastardly villain and his unctuous sidekick intent on purloining the letters meant for Mr Tone. Intent on defending the until now unseen Tone, first Peggy, then Russell and finally Shane challenge the puerile Rafferty who is capable of nothing more than catcalls and jibes to defend himself. He is verbally abused by Peggy; threatened with a battering from Shane, and virtually challenged to a duel by the extremely proper and heroic Russell. Fade to Tableau.

The opening scene, though hackneyed and formulaic, has tremendous pace and energy, and acts as an exposition to character, theme and plot. In an echo of Shakespeare's *Othello* (and there is good reason to suppose this is the case), we learn of the eponymous hero via the opinions of others. Unlike Othello, however, our first impressions are provided by admirers and friends: Shane McMahon, the artful rogue with a brogue, Peggy Ryan, audacious, ebullient and filled with sauce and brio, and Thomas Russell, the bold and dignified gentleman friend of the hero. At first this appears an innocuous piece of characterisation, but as the play progresses, we realise that the characteristics displayed by these 'good' characters serve to define the villains by that which they lack: loyalty, generosity of spirit, inventiveness, bravery and civic dignity. Indeed, faced with the mordant humour of Peggy, the artful, verbal pyrotechnics of Shane, and the natural grace of Russell, the informer-villains are shown to be vapid, venal, shallow, weak and cowardly – scoundrels with no sense of honour. The stage is set for the entrance of the hero – the ultimate emissary of virtue against villainy –, the impoverished but inherently moral and heroic Theobald Wolfe Tone.

[48] Martha Witherington – Whitbread changes the name to Susanna as Tone changed it to Matilda.

From the outset, Whitbread does not attempt to present Tone as a *chevalier sans reproche*. Shane's description of him as pre-eminent in 'larnin' dhrinkin and larkin' wid the petticoats' indicates that Tone may not be a paragon of unequivocal rectitude, but he is charismatic and resolute. He is, in fact, all-too-human and, in part because of this, beloved amongst his 'band of brothers'. Tone does not, in Witherington's mind, have the wherewithal to support a wife. However, what becomes immediately apparent is that he has been able to curb his riotous tendencies and discipline his passions to take on the role of a devoted husband and the mantle of a leader of men. Moreover, he shows contempt for money and a dignity unsullied by greed, unlike his villainous counterparts Turner, the spy, and Rafferty, his sidekick who see 'goold' as 'an excellent antidote to patriotic sentiment'.[49]

Lest we forget that Turner is the villain of the piece, Whitbread accords him ample opportunity to relay his venal, caddish and scurrilous intentions to the audience. For example, after attempting to discredit Tone as a fortune hunter to Witherington, insinuating that Mrs Tone and Russell are engaged in an improper liaison, and suggesting to Napoleon that Tone is in the pay of Pitt, Turner then attempts the act of supreme caddishness in contriving to have Mrs Tone sold into white slavery by the dastardly and remarkably stupid Dutch sea captain Hans, who relishes the prospect and engages in this 'beesiness'(229) because, as he points out: 'I would sell my own mudher for monies; vot are vomans for?'(229) Interestingly, 'vot vomans are for' in this play is to outwit fiends such as Hans. In a moment which veers dangerously close to farce, he attempts to gain access to a weeping Mrs Tone just after Peggy announces the arrival of 'Madam Josephine Bounaparty'(233) who has come to tell Mrs Tone that she has interceded on her behalf to have Napoleon grant an audience to 'your 'usband'(234). At this point, Hans barges in past an outraged Peggy, demanding: 'I vant myself mid von vomans by ze name of Smeet of Wolfe Tone' because, 'I have mit me, von leetle message from mysther your husband' who is 'on board of mine sheep' and ready to sail

[49] Herr, p.187. It is worth noting that Samuel Turner, like Tone was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Again, like Tone he was involved in United Irish activities at an executive level. Unlike Tone, however Turner was a double-agent who operated a hive of spies from Hamburg. Under the pseudonym of 'Richardson' or 'Mr R' he supplied the British government with information about the activities of the United Irishmen for 8 years.

to Brest at the orders of Bounaparte' (235). The ever-dutiful Susannah is about to follow him to his 'sheep' 'at once' when she is halted by Josephine who confronts Hans, leading to a textbook melodramatic unmasking of the villain's accomplice.

As Mrs Tone is about to leave for 'a fate vorse than many deaths' (236), Josephine halts her with the words, 'stay chérie', at which point the characters on stage freeze into a tableau vivant. As the action recommences, Hans is thoroughly outwitted in a scene which bears quotation not only for its melodramatic irony but also for the preposterously hilarious, but all too common use of racial stage types. The scene is set with Hans and Josephine facing each other eye-to-eye. She begins:

> JOSEPHINE: What general did you mention sar, zat gave zat order to ze Lady's 'usband?
> HANS (*in doubt*) Vot General?
> JOSEPHINE (*stamping her foot*) Zat, sar is what I did say to you.
> HANS: De leetle Corporal – General Bounaparte.
> JOSEPHINE: Sar, you do lie in von barefaced manner; ze General Bounaparte gave no such instructions. Se's lady's 'usband is at zis momen wiz General Kilmaine, Kivand, and Colonel Lemoines. Zis is a plot, sar, to ensnare zize lady avay from her home.
> HANS, (*confounded*) Mein gott, Dis no plot is, on mein honour it is de truth; who mights you be?
> JOSPEHINE: Who might I be sar?
> HANS: (blustering) Yah. Dat zo! Who mights you be?
> JOSEPHINE: I am ze vife of ze General Bounaparte.
> HANS: (*a bit frightened*) The thousand debbils I have put mine heads in mine mouth.
> JOSEPHINE: Go sar, before I have you laid by ze toes of your boots and put in prison.
> PEGGY: Ye've got yer ordher, yer dirty Dutch haddock, (flourishes broom). Go! Or I'll spiflicate yez. (236)

Outwitted, cowed and battered with Peggy's broom, Hans makes his exit while the courteous Mrs Tone shares a moment of entente cordiale in which Josephine informs her new friend of her reasons for saving her: 'Because I love all you Irish ladies. I love your eyes, your complexion, your figure. Zey are grand – perfection' (237).

The ladies' relief is premature, however. In the darkness of the wings Hans has rallied himself and, with Turner and Rafferty, is clambering over the railings at the back of the stage on a rope ladder. Rafferty's thoughts, as one would expect of a villain such as he, turn to

thievery, and with the words, 'I'll pocket this', he takes a paper from Wolfe Tone's desk. Unknown to him, however, Peggy is in the room and she immediately springs at him, threatening to 'choke the dirthy life out ov ye'. Sadly she is seized by Hans and, after a valiant struggle she is overpowered. Just as it seems all is lost, and Peggy will end up with her 'claws cut' on board Hans' 'sheep', Turner arrives and tells his Dutch confrere that this is a case of mistaken identity. Mrs Tone, hearing Peggy's cries, arrives at almost the same time, allowing Turner to lock the door theatrically and employ the classic line used on the powerless heroine by the melodramatic villain: 'At last you are in my power'(239). Then, as she recoils from his 'evil' he is able to tell her what has motivated him to behave in such a monstrous fashion: 'It's hate! Do you hear, hate? Hate for you and your cur of a husband. I will strike at him through you. His agony will be my joy – your ruin part and parcel of my revenge'(239). He has not, however counted for Shane, who has hidden under a table masquerading as a French soldier. Shane, having cunningly disguised himself by donning and eye-patch and repeating 'oui' a lot, has already tricked Turner and Rafferty into believing he is, as Rafferty describes him, a 'frog golloper'(229). Here, in the nick of time, he leaps out from under the table, brandishes a pistol at the astonished duo who gasp 'You!' 'Aye, mesilf', he responds, 'let go that lady or I'll blow yez to Timbuctoo'(229). As Turner instructs his lackeys to seize the doughty Shane, an insistent knocking is heard at the door and a manly voice of Tone is heard to say 'Let me in'.

As the plot approaches its sensational climax, Turner tricks the remarkably anodyne Bonaparte into believing that Tone is the true villain of the piece. They do not, however, reckonon Bounaparte's chivalric attitudes towards 'womans'. His gorge is raised by their lies and ungentlemanly behaviour and he has 'zeze gentlemen' confined to their hotel 'so zey cannot escape'. As they are removed from the stage, a brief interlude occurs in which Mrs Tone is able to offer a rousing patriotic speech about her husband's love of Ireland and 'the enfranchisement of her people', and the scene is set for the central meeting of the play – between Theobald Wolfe Tone and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Throughout the previous scenes, Tone is shown as unremittingly heroic – a dashing gentleman who respects the ladies and who has a daredevil spirit, combined with a sympathy for the oppressed. He is an astute tactician, an honourable foe, brave in the field, magnanimous to a fault, with an unquestionable devotion to and from his friends irrespective of their social position. In short, he knows the true meaning of civic virtue

and the gentlemanly code. Indeed, so superior is he to Napoleon that he not only chides him for his behaviour towards his lady wife with the words 'General, you forget yourself' (246), but also advises him on a military strategy that 'will make you an Emperor of France for centuries to come'(248). Yet, despite this, Bonaparte remains unconvinced of Tone's innocence of the charge of spying until, in a melodramatic twist, Josephine intervenes, Hans is brought in gibbering and cowering and Turner and Rafferty are found to have papers about their persons that offer proof positive that both are traitors. They are dragged away with instructions that they be shot at sunrise.

It seems the plot has creaked its way to its inevitable denouement. Good has prevailed over evil, and, yet, there remains one final twist which allows Tone to be seen as the ultimate patriot hero and republican gentleman. Despite describing Turner as the 'devil incarnate' and witnessing extreme examples of grovelling cowardice from the pusillanimous Rafferty, he cannot execute their punishment because 'they are still my countrymen'(254). In the remaining page of the script, as Tone shields the delicate eyes of Susannah from the sight of Turner and Rafferty, dying 'ze death', Turner turns on Rafferty, Rafferty turns on Turner; Rafferty shoots Turner, Turner survives, Rafferty begs Tone for mercy but receives none because, as Tone manfully argues: 'The blood – the innocent blood of all of those you have sent to death cries aloud for vengeance'(257). As the firing squad raise their guns and shoot the miscreant, a tableau forms around a resolute Tone as he utters his final words: 'So perish all traitors'. Fin.

There is no question that this play presents Tone as the ultimate example of heroic masculinity –beset by problems, undermined by villains but ultimately triumphant. There is equally no question this is a spectacular endorsement of nationalism. The question is why would Whitbread, an English entrepreneur, choose to stage such a play in 1898? The simple answer is profit, but as Oscar Wilde quipped, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 'the truth is rarely pure and never simple'.[50] The play itself, neither truthful not simple, has more in common with the fall and rise of Sir Edward Fitzgerald than with the life and times of Tone, but the form, that of Irish patriotic melodrama, can be taken as a sign of the times, times in which the Irish were enraged at the red, white and blue extravaganza of

[50] Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London, Magpie Books, 1993), p.325.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Dublin, times in which the Pro-Boer War Transvaal committee were inveighing against the imperialism of England, and Irishmen who enlisted in the British army were seen as Judases intent on betraying those united against the 'yoke of tyranny' represented by the 'merciless British'.[51] These were melodramatic times in which the clarion call to Irish art as well as politics from cultural nationalists such as Arthur Griffiths was to 'revive throughout the land the spirit of brotherhood which animated the United Irishmen'.[52]

Such a spirit is apparent in the heroics of Whitbread's *Wolfe Tone*; in his selfless striving for liberty, equality and fraternity; in his republican spirit and love of Ireland. Whitbread may well have struck a nerve by capitalising on these emotions and presenting them daily to packed houses at the Queens Royal Theatre. In 1898 he had in his hands a heady mix of historical plot, topical reference, potential for spectacle, and well-loved stage types. Whether created for profit or patriotism, it became part of the merchandising of the centenary and commemoration of the events which would 'reverberate down the echo-chambers of history', immortalising the names of 'Tone, Russell, Fitzgerald. McCracken and Emmet.'[53] The play was one of a series of echoes, distorted admittedly by the times in which they were written, of the first heroic few who dare not only to declare but to die for the Republican beliefs which fired the rebellions of '98.

[51] Calma, "Napoleon and Ireland", in *United Irishmen*, 17 November, 1900, p.6,col. 4.
[52] Arthur Griffith , *United Irishmen*, 15 March, 1900.
[53] Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty*: *Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760 – 1830* (Cork: Cork University Press 1996), p ix.

Chapter 2 Faith Binckes and Kathryn Laing

From 'Wild Irish Girl' to 'Parisianised Foreigner': Hannah Lynch and France

Hannah Lynch was born in Dublin in 1859 and died in Paris, 1904. Her now almost forgotten *oeuvre*[1] includes novels, short stories, travel writing and an extensive range of journalism for numerous publications, mainly British and American journals. This writing takes as its subject and setting, the map of Europe from the west of Ireland to Dublin, from Spain to Italy, France and Greece. Notable in all these diverse settings is Lynch's consideration of the problems of gender and national identity: the conditions of being a woman, and more explicitly, the double disadvantage of being Irish, and a woman. Her examination of these themes is particularly prevalent in her writing with French connections. As a writer who, in a fictionalised autobiographical work describes herself as "a born traveller"[2] and "a hopeless wanderer" (*Autobiography*, 194), France, and in particular, Paris, became her literal and perhaps spiritual home up until her premature death. Her travel and writing, and even her eventual resi-

[1] See Faith Binckes's entry for Hannah Lynch in the *New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Critics who have recently drawn attention to Lynch's work include J.W. Foster's *Irish Novels*: *New Bearings in Culture and Fiction 1890-1940* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), Margaret Kelleher and Philip O' Leary (eds), *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature* Vol. II: 1890-2000 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Elizabeth Grubgeld, *Anglo-Irish Autobiography*: *Class, Gender and the Forms of Narrative* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004). Sonia Crimmins's well-researched short MA dissertation "Hannah Lynch 1862-1904" (MA in Women's Studies, UCC, 2006) provides the fullest examination of her life and work to date. See also our forthcoming essay, "Hannah Lynch: A Vagabond's Scrutiny", in Elke D'hoker, Raphael Ingelbien and Hedwig Schwall (eds), *Irish Women Writers*: *New Critical Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

[2] Hannah Lynch, *Autobiography of a Child* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1899), p.134. Subsequent quotations from this text will be indicated by *Autobiography* followed by the page number. A similar format will be used for all primary texts cited.

dence in France, were not luxuries but necessities. Poor and often unwell, Lynch literally wrote for her life; her literary output was constrained and, to some extent, formed by the conflict between her ideals of being literary, and the necessity to earn her living. Extensive travel around France and residence in Paris resulted in a proliferation of writing such as "In Provence" (1899) (perhaps footnote these 6 words: which was published in *Blackwood's Magazine*,) and *French Life in Town and Country*,[3] part of a popular travel series (footnote this too?("Our European Neighbours") published in England and the United States. From 1896 to 1903, Lynch's observations on French society, culture and literature featured in the "Paris Letter" which she wrote for *The Academy* and they provided a window on France for its readers. She also published a range of short and longer fiction with France as subject and setting.

While information about Hannah Lynch's life remains sparse, it seems that her rebel identity was formed young, and that France had a particular part to play in its formation. Her step-father, James Cantwell, was one of the 'Men of 48'and he, like many others, spent some time in Paris while on the run. Lynch, with her sisters and step-sisters, were educated in English and French convents, and some of them, including Hannah, became governesses, working in Ireland and Europe. Rebellion, already characteristic of this extensive family of daughters, manifested itself in their involvement in Fanny Parnell's Ladies' Land League. As the story goes, either Hannah or her sister Nannie, or perhaps both, were involved in rescuing the type from the suppressed *United Ireland*, taking it from Dublin to Paris via London, and having it printed and distributed there.[4] It is more than likely that the Lynch-Cantwell sisters shared Anna Parnell's disenchantment with the treatment meted out to the members of the Ladies' Land League by her brother and other nationalists. In addition, as J. W. Foster has noted 'the Europeanized Lynch's field of view was far wider than Irish nationalism's' (Foster, 278). Her satire and critique levelled both at Ireland's colonized position and also at nationalist extremes, made her enemies in both literary and political circles.[5]

[3] Lynch, *French Life in Town and Country* (London: George Newnes; New York and London: G. P.Putnam's Son's, 1901).
[4] Narratives vary about these events and require further research. Jane McL Côté's *Fanny and Anna Parnell, Ireland's Patriot Sisters* (Gill and MacMillan: Dublin, 1991) provides important details about the Ladies Land League.
[5] Frances H. Low, a contemporary of Lynch's, provides the fullest portrait

This 'Europeanized view' was a complex one, informed by Lynch's conflicted and rebellious sense of gender and national identity that developed from her childhood experiences. The making of this Irish rebel is obliquely traced in her 'novel'[6] *Autobiography of a Child*, which describes the childhood of 'the Dublin Angela' who is sent to school 'on Saxon shores' where the 'English Angela' and the 'Irish rebel' are forged out of resistance to the cruelty and harshness of the school regime (*Autobiography*, 211, 141). In this work, the conflation of Irishness and femaleness, gender and nation, is quintessential to the formation of 'Angela of Lysterby' (*Autobiography*, 143), and arguably, to the formation of Hannah Lynch, governess and wanderer, turned travel writer and novelist. This double, or even multiply split identity is fractured and complicated further by her French education, travels and residence. There are fewer allusions to her schooling in France and these are scattered through her fiction and non-fiction, but Lynch's preoccupations are consistent: education of girls and the conditions of being female in Ireland and elsewhere at the end of the nineteenth century.

A key element of Lynch's engagement with France and with French culture was the opportunity it presented for subversive, even rebellious, explorations of national and gendered selves – both at the level of content, and in terms of genre, perspective and narration. This article aims to give a flavour of this engagement. It will begin with a consideration of the importance of France in the formation and voicing of Hannah Lynch's feminist rebellion; examining the shaping of female identity, and in particular Irish female identity. In so doing, it will return briefly to Lynch's controversial *Autobiography of a Child* before considering a short story called "A Page of Philosophy"[7] (1896) from a collection of her stories, and an article "A French Girl Interviewed" (1902).[8] This will

available of Hannah Lynch, and she also observes that: 'Her outspoken criticism on Irish matters and especially upon Irish politicians, coupled with her scathing wit, had made her enemies almost from her girlhood'. 'A Woman's Causerie', in *The Speaker*, 15 December 1906, p.319.

[6] *Autobiography of a Child* is the only work of Lynch's to have retained critical attention and the question of its genre has dominated discussion.

[7] Lynch, "A Page of Philosophy", in *Dr Vermont's Fantasy* (London: Dent, 1896), pp.185-223.

[8] A British monthly literary magazine launched in 1877 by James Knowles as the *Nineteenth Century*, updating its name in 1901.

be followed by a consideration of Lynch's explorations of national identity, as refracted through her discussion of France, Ireland, and England in her "Paris Letter" column in the London *Academy*, in "On the Acropolis" (another *Academy* piece) and in "A Backward Glance at the City of the Pale", one of her earliest travel pieces about Ireland published in Boston by *Donohoe's Magazine*.

Set in Ireland and England, but most likely written in France, *Autobiography of a Child* was serialised first in *Blackwood's Magazine* alongside Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (published later as *Heart of Darkness*). It was published in book form in England and America in 1899, and later in translation in France in 1902 as *La très véridique histoire d'une petite fille*.[9] In *Autobiography*, Lynch launches her most scathing attack on the stifling conditions into which Irish girls are born as she describes Angela's return to Dublin for the school holidays, where she finds a new baby sister at home:

> Another lamentable little girl born into this improvident dolorous vale of Irish misery. Elsewhere boys are born in plenty. In Ireland, – the very wretchedest land on earth for woman, the one spot of the globe where no provision is made for her, and where parents consider themselves as exempt of all duty, of tenderness, of justice in her regard, where her lot as daughter, wife, and old maid bears no resemblance to the ideal of civilisation, – a dozen girls are born for one boy [....] The army of inefficient Irish governesses and starving illiterate Irish teachers cast upon the Continent, forces one to lament a virtue whose results are so heartless and so deplorable. (*Autobiography*, 218)

Lynch's outspoken and stinging critique of her class, religion and nation in relation to the treatment of, and attitudes towards, the female sex has its sources in her own life. It is placed in a fictional framework here as a way of distancing and perhaps protecting herself, but this is also a way of making a broader political point about gender issues. Her self-exile in France and her re-invented identity as 'a hopeless wanderer' and 'vagabond' (*Autobiography*, 194, 134), and particularly as a 'Parisianised foreigner' (*French Life*, 47), facilitated the creation of her distinctive voice

[9] This French translation was serialised in another notable literary periodical, the *Revue de Paris*, between February and March 1902. Once again, the work made the transition into book form, and was published by Hachette in the same year.

as an ostensibly impartial 'social anthropologist' or 'cultural observer' (Foster, 278) as she embedded her feminist critique in ostensibly quaint tales of French life. For example, in "A Page of Philosophy", which predates *Autobiography* and its striking regret over the birth of a baby girl, Lynch begins the narrative with a discussion between several Parisian intellectuals, which is suddenly halted over the allusion to a death:

> There was dead silence. A perceptible start of emotion found expression in an interjectionary arch of brow, a sigh blown on the puff of attitudes. A baby girl! What a slight thing in the hurry of life, what a simple thing in its crowding perplexities! The tragic end of men and women whom the years have worn and fretted; the sudden death of happy youth in the midst of its bright promises; the peaceful sadness that accompanies the departure of the old, who have honourably lived their lives and accomplished all natural laws: – but the closed eyes of a little baby girl! What is it more than tumble of a new-born bird from its nest, leaving no empty space? Upon a boy paternal pride might have feasted, and the sting might remain that new avenues to fame and fortune were closed by his sharp withdrawal.
> Yet despite the insignificance of the loss, none of the faces round Rameau wore a look of indifference or surprise. ("Page", 191)

The narrator of this tale (which Lynch dedicated to Gaston Paris),[10] is one of the many male French characters in her fiction. The narrator remains just a voice (rather like the frame narrator who sets the scene of the tale in *Heart of Darkness*), interjecting in the wry masculine banter around the subject of women and marriage, but also relating a tale told to the circle of listeners by 'Professeur Rameau', about Kratowtosky, 'that queer Russian who used to hold forth here some years ago' and about an extraordinarily talented Spanish poet, with whom he fell in love ("Page", 188). This multi-layered tale, with its international characters and Parisian salon setting, conceals and enables Lynch's ironic feminist commen-

[10] Gaston Paris (1839-1903) was as famous for his intellectual salon as for his scholarship on medieval literature. He was Professor of French medieval literature at the Collège de France and Lynch translated into English his book, *Medieval French Literature* in 1903. In the correspondence between Lynch and Paris, held in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Lynch acknowledges him as the source of 'un petit conte "A Page of Philosophy" dont j'ai reçu l'inspiration directement de vous', Sept 27 1895, (BNF: NAF 24447), f. 228.

tary by placing the critique of misogynist assumptions of her society and, more specifically, of her church, in the mouth of the melancholy Russian:

> My dear Rameau, have you ever reflected upon the amazing one-sidedness of religion on these occasions? Wives are eloquently exhorted to practise all the virtues, and not a word is flung at the husbands. It is something of course for us to learn, by the aid of the Church, that all the duty is on the other side, and that we have nothing to do but command, be worshipped, and fall foul of infidelity. The beautiful logic of man, and the profound pessimism of woman! She never rebels, but accepts all without hope of remedy. ("Page", 215)

Lynch's implicit critique of Catholicism, and especially of Irish Catholicism, is refracted here through a specifically French setting, which at once distances the author from the critical commentary and liberates her to make it while she clearly aims at the imprisoning ideologies of ideal womanhood purveyed through Irish education and through the institution of Irish marriage as she portrays it in *Autobiography*.

In "The Young French Girl Interviewed",[11] Lynch did not require the protective layers of multiple narratives to voice an attack on Catholic education for girls, but her commentary is filtered once more through the lens of French life and experience. In what is an extraordinary essay for its wit, insight and declaration of a modern and feminist outlook, Lynch alludes to her own experience of a French convent as she reviews a work called *Les Jeunes Filles peintes par elles-mêmes*, 'to which several thousands of Parisian and provincial young girls have contributed, either in the form of interview or written interrogation' ("Young", 277).[12] In her review, Lynch regrets, 'with a feeling of alarm, that these 600 pages treating of youth between eighteen and twenty-one should show no trace of wildness, of animal spirits, no murmur of hoydenism, no originality, freshness or breezy candour. The sweet reasonableness of so many young persons disconcerts and dismays. Is it quite natural?' ("Young", 278). She attributes the general acceptance by most of these young woman of 'the indestructible purity of girlhood, a radiant recognition of all the old-

[11] Lynch, "The Young French Girl Interviewed", in *The Nineteenth Century*, February (1902), pp.276-283.
[12] Written by Olivier de Tréville (1901) in response to Marcel Prévost's *Demi-Vierges* (1894).

fashioned virtues of womanhood' to the excesses of convent education: 'There is too much cant, too much conventional piety to be sure, but most of them are convent girls, trained in the cultivation of cant' ("Young", 277). Their convent training is also blamed for 'intransigence' on the grounds of purity. 'This, of course, is the result of their Catholic training, by which one would think the Christian soul of woman knew no other obligation than that of chastity. As if lying, slandering, bad temper, selfishness, dishonesty, brutality were not sins as great!' ("Young", 283). Critiquing French Catholicism implies her critique of Irish Catholicism, but more broadly, Lynch makes a point formulated by many other New Woman writers in periodicals and fiction in England, Ireland and elsewhere.[13]

While in the main Lynch admires the contributions of these young women, despite the clear imprints of a narrow-minded and restricted education, she notes that:

> A great deal of sense amongst all these young persons, but no echo of the generosity, the magnanimity, the bewildering passion and indignation that drove George Sand into revolt. Decidedly the modern young girl is not romantic, or ardent, or disinterested. One would prefer a little touch of anarchy now and then, the utterance of a burning word in behalf of abstract justice. It is surely not altogether admirable that fresh youth should be so seemly, so unrash, so incapable of an unwise and unprofitable bargain. ("Young", 280)

Her plea for a little more of what is implicitly suggested – the model of 'the wild Irish girl', or a modern, irreverent, adventurous and experimental New Woman – is made wittily through her satire on the reading matter of these virtuous young maidens who consider the appreciation of foreign genius as unpatriotic, and modern fiction and theatre as corrupting: 'For they are dismally penetrated with the sense of their virtue, and would not, as they value their immortal souls, cast a glance of curiosity in the neighbourhood of a newspaper or a new novel' ("Young", 281). While Lynch claims that there is 'Nothing [of the] feminist about these young French girls' ("Young", 279), her article clearly shows that its au-

[13] There are clear parallels to be made between Lynch and Thomas Hardy, but George Meredith was her favourite of the earlier writers of 'New Woman' fiction. Lynch published one of the first monographs on his work: *George Meredith*: *A Study* (London: Methuen, 1891).

thor is indubitably feminist. The insights she offers into French life, in particular into the life of French women, are calculated to engage with and contribute to the much wider debate at the time, on 'the Woman Question'.

In *Autobiography*, Lynch rages at the treatment of girls and women in Ireland as contrary to 'the ideal of civilization'. But her insider knowledge and experience of France and the French do not provide her with such an ideal of civilization. In that country, she finds much to admire but also much to criticize, not only in relation to the system of education but, in addition, concerning the consequences of the educational ideologies. In *French Life in Town and Country*, she recounts an incident in the French countryside where her impulsive departure from a group to pick blackberries prompts comments about improper behaviour; in response, she suggests to the group that she would write 'with their aid, the things a man and a woman (especially a woman) cannot do in France, but on consideration found it would make too large a volume' (*French Life*, 22-23).[14] In this way, France provides another lens through which the plight of women can be viewed more broadly.

Rebellious and sometimes provocative exploration of gender identity is one focus of Lynch's French-inflected writing; national identity is another. For example, in her "Paris Letter" of 11 February 1899, Lynch mulls over which nation might produce the best writing on the subject of Ireland. She comes to the following conclusion:

> The best book on Ireland is yet to be written. I doubt if it could be written by an Irishman, and am certain no Englishman could write it. The ideal author will be either a sympathetic Scotchman, with something of Stevenson's temperament, or a Catholic Frenchman, with some of the intellectual loftiness and liberality of a Montalembert. The former would write a charming, the latter a great, book on so varied, so curious, so elusive a theme. ("Paris Letter", 195)

On several counts, this is a striking, and political, selection. Its literary politics are apparent enough as Lynch dismisses, at a stroke, a swathe of

[14] Lynch argued that France was actively hostile to the professional advancement of women: 'It would be difficult to find a people to whom modern feminism is more repugnant than the French, and hard to name one that owes more to the intelligence, goodwill, and incessant labour of women.' *French Life*, p.13.

current Irish talent, including both Yeats and George Moore. She goes on to note that the most successful evocation of Ireland to date was Paul Bourget's short story "Neptunevale," a work she had already reviewed, rather less positively, in 1897.[15] Like Charles de Montalembert, Bourget was both Catholic and French. However, Lynch made it clear that she had selected Montalembert in part because of his "liberality", a quality that chimed very strongly with her own political and religious position at the time. Indeed, her hostility to conservative elements – within church and state, and in both Ireland and France – could be ferocious. Her later treatment of Bourget is a good example as, by June 1902, her earlier praise had been replaced by harsh criticism. She depicted the author as seduced by success and the patronage of the upper classes, and accused him of filling his novels with a hypocritical blend of piety and snobbery.[16] Just as being French did not automatically guarantee an author's superiority to his or her Irish subjects,[17] so shared religious practices could be of less significance than the social and cultural differences they were supposed to elide.[18]

[15] This account concealed Lynch's own nationality, while gently satirising Bourget's depiction: 'M. Bourget has not escaped the indescribable fascination of that melancholy and humorous race, which seems chiefly to exist for the pleasure of being misunderstood and wondered at. He, too, wonders, and admires in that sentimental, amazed temper most intellectual sympathisers fall into on this debatable ground.' See "Paris Letter", 28 August 1897, *Academy*, p.167.

[16] Lynch was reviewing Bourget's novel *Etape*. She viewed it as a sentimental tribute to the *ancien régime*, who, had they still been in power, would have held Bourget to be 'little better than their valets'. She was equally unimpressed by Bourget's representations of religion: 'the devout Catholics are not even interesting, they are placed so insolently in the right'. "Paris Letter", *Academy*, 28 June 1902, pp.20-21.

[17] In the same review, Lynch also mentions Edmond Mandat-Grancy's 1887 *Chez Paddy*, a book packed with 'hasty and absurd generalisations', and which was on the whole 'an exasperation'. In fact, a text countering many of Mandat-Grancy's depictions had already been written: Emile Piché's *Réponse à "Chez Paddy": pour l'Irlande* (Paris: J. Mersch; Montreal: Cadieux et Derome, [1887]).

[18] In the "Paris Letter" for 13 July 1901, Lynch makes it clear that she viewed wealth and class as more socially defining than nation or religion. She aligned the 'wealthy, purse-proud, birth-proud Anglo-Saxon, and the wealthy, purse-proud, birth-proud French Catholic', attacking both for their hypocrisies.

Lynch's open discussion of the affinities and differences at play in French representations of Ireland was highly sensitive to any projection of such representations as a confluence of forces. This was in contrast to the notion of a more two-dimensional relationship of sympathy between the two nations. But her own situation – that of an Irish woman writing for a predominantly English audience – had a further, specific impact upon the way in which parallels between her adopted, and her native, countries could be utilised. In her writings for *The Freeman's Journal*, she often openly attacked English attitudes towards the Irish. In the *Academy*, she was far more likely to turn her attention to English representations of the French.[19] However, at times it is possible to see an overlap between the two, often combined with a more general sense of the blinkering effects of nationalistic, or indeed imperialistic, sentiment. A good example is "The Frenchman in English Fiction", an article she published in the literary supplement to the *Academy* of 24 July 1897. In response to a reviewer who had mocked French depictions of the English, Lynch draws attention to the equally hilarious results of English "popular" novelists' attempts to write convincing French characters. Referring to a much-reprinted work of the early 1890s, *The History of David Grieve*, she comments that: "Mrs Humphrey Ward's Bohemian Paris of *David Grieve* is still a matter of astonishment and laughter to her French readers. Her Montmartre and artists of either sex are as likely to be found in the moon as here' ("Frenchman", 71). Writing of a critically acclaimed recent novel, and of its dissolute French hero, she notes:

> He plaintively conjures Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to assist him in the seduction of Kitty, his friend's guest... As a child he was taught at his mother's knee to say "Mary, Mother of God, pray for me." Mr. Keary conceives him in manhood meditating a base crime, shouting, with streaming eyes, to the moon: – Mary, Mother of God – assist me to be a blackguard." ("Frenchman", 71)

While noting that this sort of depiction readily converted the intended moral tragedy into farce, Lynch also draws attention to the hollowness of its implied cultural superiority: 'it is not at all necessary to despatch a

Academy, p.38.

[19] Her novel *Denys D'Auvrillac* (1896) was written as a corrective to such portrayals of the French as a nation of fops and seducers.

young man to Paris to learn bad manners... and the art of profane speech. It is not long since the Englishman has ceased to be called abroad the *Goddam* Englishman...' ("Frenchman", 71).[20] The reiterated exclamation – Mary, Mother of God – not only sounded ridiculous, but could just as easily have been used by a French author to demonstrate the English habit of profanity. Thus, Lynch hints that this sort of 'international caricature' had serious implications on a number of levels ("Frenchman", 71). Not only did such misrepresentation serve to emphasise and reinforce well-worn cultural prejudices like those of the 'hasty and absurd generalisations' that also characterised depiction of Ireland and of the Irish – indeed, Lynch's translation 'Mary, Mother of God' contained a clear Irish inflection – perhaps more significantly still, it prevented the realisation that nations shared flaws as much, or more, than they did perfections.

It is more than apparent that in responding to another's culture and identity, one is inevitably saying something equally telling about one's own. Lynch's later *Academy* piece, "On the Acropolis", was even more overt on this point. The article, published on 14 June 1902, was framed by Lynch's meditations on a variety of artistic engagements with that monument, and with the cultural values it was seen to represent. Her two points of focus were both French: a recently commissioned painting of Ernest Renan 'saying his famous prayer on the Acropolis', and the sculptor Alexander Falguière's memorial to Byron, which depicted him as fallen hero of the Greek struggle for independence ("Acropolis", 610-611). Noting the crowd of English tourists gathered around the latter, she reflects on the way in which assumed national differences could conceal important similarities, drawing a direct parallel between Byron and a French officer who had died while fighting on the Afrikaner side in the recent Boer War:

> ...watching a group of British tourists arrested in front of this commemorative statue in honour of an Englishman's disinterested death in an alien cause, I marvelled as we ever must at every turn of life, at the glaring inconsistencies of nations and individuals, remembering

[20] Moreover, it would have been offensive not only to French readers, but also to Catholic readers at home: 'He habitually, being of course a villain and a cad, implores the assistance of the symbol of purity, the patroness of maidenhood, in the ruin of a maiden' ("Frenchman", 71).

> the tone of some Imperialist papers of London upon the action and death of Villebois Mareuil who, like Byron, adopted a quarrel not his own and died for a people who were not his. But after all it is possible the Turks found for Byron a contemptuous term the equivalent of "foreign mercenary" with which the sacrifice of the French officer was gracelessly tossed off in England. ("Acropolis", 611)

Lynch's target here is ostensibly the posturings of the 'Imperialist papers'. However, the more general prevalence of 'glaring inconsistencies', generated by national self-interest, is clearly stated. Once again, the proximity between Irish and French positions remains unenunciated, yet yet tangible, as Irish support for the Afrikaners was well-known.[21]

All these texts demonstrate the connections and parallels between Ireland and France which emerge in Lynch's work. However, she does not always feature similarity and proximity. Her early novel, *The Prince of the Glades* (1891) tells the story of a landowning family in which the favoured children are sent to live and to be educated in Paris, while the neglected youngest son is left alone on the untended estate in Ulster. The two sons of 'the O'Moore' are united by their shared heritage, and, ultimately, by their love for the same woman. Yet these fraternal bonds fail to bring about a union – the French brother is killed by the Irish one who then escapes into exile. The final word is given to their surviving sister, who is married to a Frenchman and who briefly visits the scene of death and of failed uprising many years later: 'C'est Irlande, mon ami, un rêve bien triste, mais non pas la vie'. As has been noted already, the short stories collected in *Dr.Vermont's Fantasy* deploy their French and Irish settings to explore moments of supposed understanding that reveal assumption, and often presumption, on the part of French characters towards their Irish interlocutors. "Brases", another story in this collection, is narrated by a French writer, who recalls the way in which he fell in love with an Irish noblewoman, Lady Brases Fitzowen, who has separated from her husband on the grounds of his cruelty. When trying to extract information about this lady from an elderly man he has met on the estate, the narrator is openly captivated by the notion of a shared Celtic heritage: 'were we not brother Celts – albeit, I a Parisianised Breton, and he an il-

[21] Donal McCracken's account, *Forgotten Protest*: *Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War*, provides excellent information on this engagement (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003).

literate native of the wild Kerry uplands?' ("Brases", 140). However, this desire to connect, while sincere, is, deeply 'sentimental'. Not only does it prevent him from seeing that Brases does not love him, it also prevents him from paying much attention to the elderly man's explanations of the impossibility of divorce. For all his supposed affinity with this 'illiterate native', he quite simply cannot stomach some of the harsher realities that the Irishman can face. This is humorously illustrated in a moment when, having shared a meal together, the old man offers him a drink: 'The potheen was simply barbarous, a suitable drink for Caliban or the Indian brave, but no amount of water could soothe it to my French palate' ("Brases", 143). Although this story allowed Lynch to comment on the inflexibility of divorce laws in Ireland, it also enabled her to query certain elements at work within French interest in Celticism.

In the title story, "Dr. Vermont's Fantasy", the narrative is orientated in the opposite direction. The narrator, an Irish woman writer and traveller, describes pleasant afternoons spent in conversation with a young French woman she has befriended. She teases this friend by constantly changing her opinion during their debates, a game which prompts the following exchange on the subject of Irish national character:

> 'I suppose it must be a matter of temperament, or perhaps it is an Irish peculiarity,' she would say, and inspect me very seriously.
>
> I assured her that the Irishman was not born who could not change his opinion at a moment's notice for the fun of the thing, and in the midst of comedy fall foul upon tragedy for pure diversion's sake. She shook her head despondently, and decided at once that there could be found no earnest scholars, no born leaders of men, in a band of amiable buffoons. ("Vermont", 43)

The narrator (whose identity is kept carefully distinct from that of 'The Author' who narrates the second section of the story) plays around with a national stereotype which, it appears, her friend genuinely believes to be true. Indeed, the more the narrator ironises 'Irish peculiarity', the more her behaviour seems, in the eyes of the Frenchwoman – and perhaps in the eyes of the reader – to confirm it. The despondency Mlle. Lenorment expresses upon hearing her opinions apparently confirmed, echoes the despondent ending of *The Prince of the Glades* in which Irish character and Irish history run on with tragic inevitability and constitute 'un rêve bien triste' to which the French are compelled to bear witness. However, "Dr Vermont's Fantasy", like "Brases", suggests otherwise: by drawing

attention to the way in which all nations construct others narratively, it exposes the creation of a representative cycle of expectation from which it is hard to escape.

It would seem, then, that the nature of Lynch's profound engagement with France and with French culture is most accurately captured in this movement both towards and away from certainty – it is perhaps analogous to the narrator's game of positions in "Dr. Vermont". There is no doubt regarding Lynch's sense of affiliation, nor concerning the importance of French writers to her own practice and sense of authorial identity. Yet, while she readily invoked authors such as George Sand and Pierre Loti, Bourget, and Maurice Barrès, Lynch vigorously resisted the idea that France offered a template for, or had the measure of, Ireland. In considering, then, how best to frame a correspondence and a relationship that are so central, and yet so shifting, it would be apt to close with a reading of one of Lynch's earliest travel pieces that was published for an Irish-American audience in Boston in 1884. Entitled "A Backward Glance at the City of the Pale" [22], it appeared in *Donahoe's Magazine* framed by two quotations from Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* – the first of which was this famous section from Chapter 2, "Paris a vol d'oiseau":

> *Mais une ville comme Paris est une crue perpétuelle. Il n'y a que ces villes-là qui deviennent capitales. Ce sont des entonnoirs où viennent aboutir tous les versantes géographiques, politiques, moraux, intellectuels d'un pays, toutes les pentes naturelles d'un peuple, des puits de civilisation pour ainsi dire et aussi des égouts, ou commerce, industrie, intelligence, population, tout ce qui est sève, tout ce qui est vie, tout ce qui est âme d'une nation filtre et s'amasse sans cesse goutte à goutte, siècle a siècle.* ("*Glance*", 385)

Hugo's description constructs the city as a conduit for, and an expression of, history, and, in particular, the history of a people. Lynch's second quotation is more succinct on the latter aspect: "Le temps est l'architecte, le peuple est le maçon" ("Glance", 385). Lynch's account of Dublin, from the era of the Danes until the present day, aims for a similar effect by describing (in some detail) the evolution of the city until 1782. This

[22] Lynch, "A Backward Glance at the City of the Pale", *Donahoe's Magazine*, XII: 5 (November 1884), pp.385-396.

tracks across the city, street by street, finally lingering on the old Parliament House on College Green:

> At what hour, in what light, is it not beautiful? Victor Hugo calls *Notre Dame* a vast symphony in stone: might we not call this house a vast and sublime ode to liberty in imperishable writing, round which all the best hopes, the eternal passion and aspiration of a suppressed nation are centered irrevocably... ("Glance", 394)

Here, architectural and cultural history merge, just as they do within Hugo's Paris. Within Lynch's account of Dublin, however, such a merging is as painful as it is inevitable. Not only did Lynch replace a religious edifice with a political one, but she observes that the Parliament house offered a sense of continuation alongside a parallel feeling of loss. Vanished buildings evoked present memories, as she imagined a visitor standing on the ground formerly occupied by the Corn Market: 'but the spectator of to-day would have no room for other memories than the loved memory of Robert Emmet and his tragic death' ("Glance", 395). The disjunction continues throughout the latter part of the article as it dwells on the developments that had taken place in Dublin over the previous century – the majority of which happened, of course, after the Act of Union. Here the 'imperishable writing' of the older cityscape is juxtaposed with reminders of colonial intervention – such as the 'meaningless ugliness of Nelson's Pillar' – and of ongoing resistance – the 'gilt vulgarity of King William remains in sublime unconsciousness of its double unattractiveness, happily relived of its fatal prominence by the really admirable statue of Grattan near it' ("Glance", 396). She continues:

> But some of us, perhaps, picture to ourselves regretfully the grim towers, the irregular streets, the labyrinthine lanes, and vaguer plans of old Dublin, with its strongly marked individuality, its thousand quaintness and incongruities, over which the sunshine and shadow fell so unequally long, long before it became the City of the Pale. ("Glance", 396)

Lynch's reading of Hugo, and of Paris – which, of course, had undergone its own erasures since the publication of *Notre Dame de Paris* – provided her with a lens through which to anatomise her own native city. What emerges through this parallel exploration is a far more prominent emphasis on rebellion. Rebellion is encoded at every level of Dublin's emergence as a colonised city, and its echoes linger, even if only in the collec-

tive memory of a doubly displaced readership. But this was not only rebellion against the English presence, it was a more subtle rebellion against the template of the epigram. Despite their shared aims, Lynch rejects the swooping overview of Hugo's text, preferring the wandering, street-level, vagabond perspective, she is in accord with 'irregular streets, the labyrinthine lanes, and vaguer plans of old Dublin, with its strongly marked individuality, its thousand quaintness and incongruities'. In other words, "A Backward Glance" demonstrates Lynch's emphasis on reading *through*, rather than simply superimposing upon, and her conviction of the necessity of tracing 'individuality' and 'incongruity' even when considering sympathetic relationships between individuals and nations. This interpretative position was encouraged by all her various engagements with France, it was a stance that insisted upon the revelation of difference within congruence or similarity, and opened up a rebellious discourse even within the language of assent.

Chapter 3 Lauren Clark

French and Irish Perspectives on Childhood Rebellion in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Advertising

"Have you ever heard of a woman named George?" asks Holly Erskine Hirko in the preface to her translation of George Sand's *Contes d'une grand-mère, A Grandmother's Tales*.[1] More pointedly: "Have you ever heard of an Irish woman named Sydney?" George Sand (1804-1876) and Sydney Starr were the pen names of controversial French author Aurore Dupin Dudevant and the lesser known but equally marginalized Irish author, Fannie Gallaher (1880-8).[2] Together with May Laffan, these controversial écrivaines depicted Irish and French children implicitly rebelling against established orders, overturning class relations and probing artistic representations of the child in fascinating and refreshing ways which have shirked from the critical spotlight.

As someone with a penchant for authorial guises and anonymity, May Laffan (1849-1916), later May Laffan Hartley, also seemed to endorse her own critical neglect. She was nevertheless appreciated by those who mattered in the late nineteenth century critical field (as can be seen in Stephen Brown's guide to *Ireland in Fiction* and Yeats' 1895 *hit-parade* of best fiction), and her infamous short story of three Dublin street urchins, *Flitters, Tatters and the Counsellor*, was considered to be

[1] George Sand, *The Castle of Pictures and Other Stories, A Grandmother's Tales, Volume 1*. Translated by Holly Erskine Hirko (New York: The Feminist Press, The City University of New York, 1994).

[2] Gallaher's career was in *floruit* from 1880-1888, the period in which most of her works were produced. These include *Katty the Flash* (1880), *A Son of Man* (1880) and *Thy Name is Truth* (1884). Little else is known of Gallaher's birth or death dates. This is confirmed in Angela Bourke, Siobhán Kilfeather, Maria Luddy, Margaret Mac Curtain, Gerardine Meaney, Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, Mary O'Dowd and Clair Wills (eds), "Women and writing 1700-1960," in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*; *Volume V Irish Women's Writing and Traditions* (Cork: Cork University Press in association with Field Day, 2002) , p.973.

'quite the most perfect thing that has been written about Dublin life.'[3] Some of Laffan's works are beginning to be reprinted and all were deservedly resuscitated four years ago in Helena Kelleher Kahn's concise and laudable study *Late 19th-Century Ireland's Political & Religious Controversies in the Fiction of May Laffan Hartley*.[4] It is in this study that Laffan's relationship with her contemporary Fannie Gallaher (daughter of a long-serving editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, Mr J.B Gallaher), fellow student at Alexandra College and, in one instance, as an unsolicited editor, is mentioned.[5] There is scant critical material and biographical sources to be had which shed light on Fannie Gallaher outside of her literary activities and her Lady Land League subscription. She even appears as 'Fanny Gallagher' in the 'Anonymities Unveiled' section of *Irish Monthly* in 1902, making her identity doubly impenetrable in archives.

Some examples of Sand, Laffan and Gallaher's short fiction can be likened in their seeming preoccupations with child education standards and alternative childhood upbringings between Dublin slums, enchanted forests, rural idylls and the Parisian banlieue respectively. Perhaps then the presentation of Irish and French childhood experience in literature as being at odds with established orders, terror-laden and rebellious in nature, calls for further examination. So-called 'slum fiction,'[6] authored by the imaginative middle classes and the creation of the mock-bucolic in Irish and French literature and advertising can be seen as symptomatic of underlying social currents in both countries in the shift towards educational reform and child protection.

Rather than sell Irish childhoods, the literature of certain marginalized female authors seems to *mêle* distinctly French or Irish nationalistic artistic representations abroad. In this sense, Irish and French reconfiguring of the position of the child through advertising

[3] Stephen J, Brown, *Ireland in Fiction; A Guide to Irish Novels, Tales, Romances and Folklore* (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company Ltd, 1919), p.132.
[4] Kahn, Helena Kelleher, *Late 19th-Century Ireland's Political & Religious Controversies in the Fiction of May Laffan Hartley* (Greensboro: ELT Press, 2005), pp.57-58.
[5] As above, this account is also described in Siobhán Kilfeather, (ed.), "Women and writing 1700-1960," p.973.
[6] Siobhán Kilfeather (ed.) "Women and writing 1700-1960," p.974.

makes for rebellious counter-currents. Does the shaping of children as consumers through advertising and literature in the late nineteenth century indicate childhood identity crisis, teenage angst or fin de siècle neurosis, voire l'ennui?

May Laffan Hartley's quiet riot

What May Laffan as both author and pioneer in child protection seems to refute most patently, however, are the neat, pre-established hierarchies of discourse which featured in concurrent late nineteenth century Victorian works. These would have children, adolescents and minor-minor characters either scripted into silence, acting as mute figurines, or as pawns beckoning to empire or upholding nationalist and revivalist agendas. And yet the objections that Laffan, Sand and Gallaher may have felt towards the manipulation of childhood in Irish and French nineteenth century fiction have not been fully accounted for in the same way as they have been in nineteenth century gothic fiction. Today, Postcolonial and Subaltern studies would chime quite conveniently with the Irish child-colony analogies that texts such as A *Singer's Story*[7] and *Katty the Flash*[8] offer, but the extent to which these authors were fuelling a revolt against childhood and rebelling against the types of child characters which appeared in late 19th century Irish Revival literature remains to be seen. Despite the differences in the settings of these stories, of the social circumstances of, and indeed the level of English and French spoken by characters, each of these stories strikingly illuminates the plight of rebellious children

On discussing how a young lady might distract herself from the timeless concerns leering Parisian fops pose, Hester Dalrymple, the adolescent soprano of May Laffan's *A Singer's Story* opts to ignore them completely whilst her 'Bostonian,' accomplice offers a prosaic alternative:

> "[…] just exactly at this spot I chirped a bit, scarcely over my breath, and what do you think?- a horrid man, that I never dreamed was within cry of me, sidled out from below those bushes:
> "C'est toi! Enfin! Charmante oiseau que je cherche si longtemps."

[7] May Laffan, *A Singer's Story* (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1885).
[8] Sydney Starr (Fannie Gallaher), *Katty the Flash, A Mould of Dublin Mud* (Dublin: M.H Gill and Son, 1880).

> She mimicked the voice and the accent of the marauder, hunching up her shoulders, and grimacing her piquant freckled countenance. Hester laughed outright.
> "What did you do?"
> "Sat like a dumb thing, and began to talk on my fingers with my eyes and mouth wide open, and after five minutes or less he cleared out stupefied. It's the best way I find." She added reflectively.[…]
> "How sharp you are, must have been brought up on pickles. How do you do when you are annoyed by the gommeux? You are of course," she added, with a critical look at Hester's face and figure.
> "Take no notice whatsoever."
> "Ah! You can do the statuesque – I can't. Any rôle but a passive rôle for me. I've got to do or say something. I could no longer pose as the frozen Diana than a kitten could help playing with a Cork […] "[9]

As suspicious as May Laffan seemed to be about reading fictional works relating childhood and colonialism to an allegory for the infantilisation of Ireland, the political resonance of Hester Dalrymple's friends' words are rebellious. Hester's disregard for the 'gommeux' is interpreted by her American counterpart Delicia Everett Leroy as a willingness to engage in statuesque pretence. Such youthful inaction and impassivity represents the very statuesque pretence which would have prepubescent Irish fictive voices scripted into silence, as was arguably already the case in Victorian theatre. And yet the Bostonian teenager's cryptic response refutes the apparently 'brutally simple,'[10] nature of some theoretical or metaphorical descriptions of English/Irish colonial analogies which fall into two somewhat garish categories 'colonization as rape, union as shotgun marriage.'[11]

In light of the gratuitous violence of colonial rapes and shotgun marriages, the young American can neither side with the 'frozen' power Victorian empire poses nor the philandering of playful 'kitten' Kitty O'Shea. The role Delicia vows to therefore adopt is one of active pretence, perhaps denying her previously Romantic child-self[12] which is nevertheless necessarily violently rebellious as entry into *langue* creates

[9] Laffan, *A Singer's Story*, p.124.
[10] Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch, Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p.81.
[11] Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.81.
[12] Allison James and Alan Prout (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* (Bristol: The Falmer Press, 1990), pp.37-38.

scars; 'I've got to do or say something.' Declan Kiberd has written of the teenage dissidence in revival texts as being emblematic of identity-formation within a colony:

> Beginning as a nonentity, he or she grew into an Irish person. Like Americans of the same period, the Irish were not so much born as made, gathered around a few simple symbols, a flag, an anthem, a handful of evocative phrases. In the process, childhood-like Ireland itself – had to be reinvented as a zone of innocence, unsullied and intense, from which would emerge the free Irish protagonist.[13]

Although a reinvented 'unsullied and intense' childhood, resulting in liberty is an interesting fictional analogy, Laffan's *A Singer's Story* barely follows this path, oft trod by revivalists, and her lack of critical attention can feasibly be attributed to this very fact. Nonetheless, if revivalist authors such as Yeats, Synge and Gregory sought to liberate independent young protagonists through an obligatory reinvention and sanitation of the childhood zone, then Laffan's orphans, bastards and street children inhabit a zone which is so lacking in innocence that freedom is only sought by becoming the colonised but rebellious underdog, happily playing the role of the poor, mature of mind, streetwise and anti-Victorian.

There has been considerable debate over the relationship Irish history has with rebellion. Similarly, much ink has been spilled over the problems of diachronic, synchronic and inchoate historical analyses and the uncensored use of deconstructed 'expressions of attitudes,'[14] as they taint and re-colour historical accounts. It is consequently with no undue hesitation that the term 'childhood rebellion' will be employed in the context of nineteenth century Irish and French literature and advertising in this chapter. Childhood rebellion, as with historical rebellion, predicates re-examination and revolt. In this case, an acceptance of the plurality of childhoods which existed in late nineteenth century Ireland and France is required. The intention is not reminiscence with nostalgic

[13] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London : Vintage, 1996), pp.101-102.
[14] ' … as mentality becomes an accepted part of historical analysis expressions of attitudes (subconscious as well as conscious) are seen not only as legitimate but as essential subjects for deconstruction.' (Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.171).

backward looks in literature, nor is it to advocate poignant accounts of childhoods revisited or to commend individual authors for their respective tales of childhood as meritorious spleen-venting or moral crusading.

One is moved to question why commentaries relating the evolving positioning of children within colonial paradigms and the Irish child as emblematic of colonial coercion remains an occluded aporia. The extent to which Irish and French late nineteenth century fiction and advertising was complicit in a rebellion against the form of childhood is perhaps a key to this understanding. The dichotomy drawn between outspoken American Delicia and the politically astute, itinerant, Hester Dalrymple[15] is thus an interesting point of departure for it sheds light upon adolescents engaging and taking ownership of discourses from which they may have been previously excluded. It may even be suggested that Hester, unable to say where she lives, is allowing herself to be victimised and represented as happily passive, in as much as Ireland, in its adolescence, was responsible for its own collapse and for somewhat perversely endorsing its own infantilisation in a colony.

George Sand, Slums and Consumer Dystopias

The earliest usage of the word 'slum,' according to Jacinta Prunty's study *Dublin Slums 1800-1925*,[16] occurs in *Vaux's Vocabulary of the Flash Language* (1812) where 'slum' is entered as a synonym for 'a racket', any particular branch of depredation practised by thieves. In French the term 'banlieue' allegedly emerged from feudalism with 'ban' representing the feudal jurisdiction 'canton,' and 'lieue,' the physical area which the feudal jurisdiction covers. Yet there are similarly negative connotations attached. It has been argued the syntagymic stem of 'banlieue' is located in verb '*bannir*' to banish and thus can be associated with '*au ban de*,' meaning to ostracise someone. Both slum and banlieue are loaded terms, not only designating peripheral spaces but implying a

[15] After the death of her Uncle and due to financial hardship, Hester is employed as a governess for a family in Mayfair. It is curious that Hester's family lineage is never mentioned. Her whereabouts are omitted and only by attention to sparse details in the narrative do we learn that she is of neither Scottish nor English descent.

[16] Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925*; *A Study in Urban Geography* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 1998), p.2.

cultural decentralisation and even decrepitude at the hands of the new burgeoning consumer capitals (Dublin and Paris) which in the nineteenth century had curiously already established themselves around the older demarcations of urban layouts.

The 1853 Irish Industrial Exhibition stimulated professional middle classes to support a proliferation of monster houses in Dublin[17] – Cleary's opened in time for the Exhibition's close – and the onslaught of the centrally located Paris Exhibition of 1900 seemed to stimulate consumption as a modern social practice all the while providing a stage for urban middle classes to negotiate a political stance. In the 1840s, however, George Sand and other collaborators produced a satirical annual entitled *Le diable à Paris*[18] which contained parodic sketches by Albert D`Arnoux – under the pseudonym of Bertall – of 'Les enfants à Paris.' Bertall's sketches of children and families from different sides of the Parisian class equation are indicative of the formative concurrent consumerist developments taking place in the capital as well as debates over the maintenance of Parisian fortifications.

For example, differences in the classes of Parisian children are delineated in the very games they play, with two images in particular indicating two street urchins jostling to play with a cork whilst their father is 'au cabaret' alongside a well-heeled bourgeois family enjoying a game of badminton apparently *en pleine nature*. The clothing of the bourgeois boy is reminiscent of early Parisian department store advertising of boys in fashionable sailor suits which is in marked contrast to the ragged trousers the urchins have been breached in, presumably only to commemorate the start of their working lives. Furthermore, the brick backdrop where the urchins play only serves to enhance their status as individuals barely contained within the city`s fortifications and certainly 'au ban de' and banished from consumer fashions this is all

[17] Dr Stephanie Rains discussed this phenomenon in her 'Consumer Culture, Advertising and Literature' public lecture entitled"The Development of Modern Consumer Culture in Dublin Department Stores and the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853," on the 25th of April 2009 at the University of Sunderland. See www.ccalireland .com for further details of this lecture.

[18] George Sand et Théophile Lavallée, *Le Diable à Paris et Les Parisiens*: *moeurs et coutumes, caractères et portraits des habitants de Paris, vols I & II* (Paris : Hetzel, 1845 & 1846).

tragically tied in with an acceptance that the poorer individuals have of their plight.

George Sand, in an article entitled *Coup d'Oeil général sur Paris* launches a hearty harangue on the excesses and revolting inequalities which exist within Paris:

> Pourquoi n'aimes-tu pas Paris, le berceau de ton être intellectuel et moral, le milieu où ton existence gravite mêlée à celle de tes semblables? Je t'ai répondu : Je hais Paris, parce que c'est la ville du luxe et de la misère, en première ligne. Je ne m'y amuse point, parce que je n'y vois rien que de triste et de révoltant … je vois ici le spectacle et la consécration insolente et cynique de l'inégalité poussée à l'extrême.[19]

Sand avows that the city is one of paradoxes, of revulsion and sadness bound by the axiom of inequality. Given her stance on Paris, it is understandable why Sand located her *Contes d'une grandmère* in the rural areas of Southern France such as Gévaudan, Mende and a number of fictitious supernatural forests. Nonetheless, in *The Talking Oak*[20] it is this same sentiment of derision which arises in her description of the 'sad hamlet' Oursines-les-Bois, where Emmi a child-runaway is taken under the wing of a beggar woman named Catiche. Emmi is invited to stay with Catiche after she finds him hiding in an oak tree provided that he can pickpocket money to provide for her. As he fails, she attempts to sell him to a travelling circus and eventually Emmi realises that poverty is a disease which he must immunise himself against. Emmi then returns to live in the oak tree until Catiche dies and provides him with inheritance enough that he can live more comfortably and marry the woodcutter's daughter. Beyond the parable-like structure of the plot however is an ever persistent contempt for the lacklustre hamlet and a preference for the lush forest. Upon Emmi's arrival, Oursines-les-Bois is described in no uncertain terms:

> Disgusting filth in the muddy lanes, which served as streets, a vile stench rising from all the huts, torn laundry drying on the bushes, rot-

[19] George Sand et Théophile Lavallée, *Le Diable à Paris*, Vol. I. p.38.
[20] George Sand, "The Talking Oak," in *The Castle of Pictures and Other Stories, A Grandmother's Tales, Volume 1*. Translated by Holly Erskine Hirko, pp.35-62.

> ten thatched roofs with nettles growing in them, a look of cynical neglect, of pretended or voluntary poverty – it was enough to turn Emmi's stomach with disgust.[21]

'Stomach turning'? Certainly. Rebelliousness is less clear. That is unless one considers the context in which Sand wrote this story. *The Talking Oak* was composed at the end of Sand's life and the stories in the *Contes d'une grand-mère* collection were written specifically to incite her grandchildren's curiosity. Given that Sand is adopting another face for children's literature in this collection it is notable that her irritation at the inequality of the poor in France persists. The poor who in their 'pretended or voluntary poverty,' and in their 'cynical neglect,' nevertheless provoke inner-conflict and continual introspection in the young Emile.

Some forty years later however, the Scottish and Irish slum settings of May Laffan's *Flitters, Tatters and the Counsellor*[22] short story collection and Fannie Gallaher's *Katty the Flash* continued to cause concern. The penury and suffering of children in these slum tales comes to constitute couched parables voicing against the lackadaisical sequence of HM reports into working class housing which prevailed in Ireland throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Such reports, according to Prunty measured and classified issues such as the sharing of privies and ash toilets as injurious to 'Victorian respectability' and bemoaned the 'filthy and drunken women sitting obstructively on footways and pavements in Pill Lane and Patrick Street,'[23] without actively engaging with the 'slum,' environment to improve matters.

Prunty states there was allied debate with the Mendicity Association as to how to distinguish the 'deserving,' from the 'non-deserving poor,' 'whose rooted habits of idleness, vagrancy and vice,' could only be reformed by hard labour.[24] Gallaher's *Katty the Flash*, a tale of bartering,

[21] Sand, "The Talking Oak," p.40.
[22] May Laffan, *Flitters, Tatters and the Counsellor and other Sketches* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1881).
[23] Jacinta Prunty, *Managing the Slum 1850-1922* (Dublin City Libraries: Dublin, 5th Annual Lecture in Gilbert Lecture Series, Wed 23rd January 2002).
[24] *Report of the Association for the Suppression of Mendicity in Dublin for the Year 1818* (Dublin, 1818,) as cited in Jacinta Prunty, "Dublin Slum Matters 1800-1925: An Overview" in *Dublin Slums 1800-1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), p.5.

mother and daughter, Dublin fisherwomen who are arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour, features a narrator who delights in employing a similarly scathing, speculative, anthropologic tone when referring to Katty Flash junior as '[…] never having learned what was better; she could never know how poor she was.'[25] This narrative speculation is continued, painting a baby-brandishing Katty into a mute tableau of suffering:

> It was very evident that she was as delighted in the possession of this weak, pining, new-born, ill-gotten piece of humanity as the most virtuous little mamma with her exquisitely-trimmed darling in her arms [...].[26]

As sneeringly satisfying as this statement may appear for acolytes of the street urchin equals moral deficiency equation, there is an overbearing sense that Katty is being reconfigured as an active child consumer in a form of aspirational lifestyle writing. It is the 'possession' of the child which allows her to appear as a 'little mamma' and it as if the 'exquisitely-trimmed darling' constitutes a passport, enabling her to enter a middle-class consumerist utopia. The 'exquisitely-trimmed darling' calls to mind the 'little darling' pretty child photo competitions located within late nineteenth century journals, aimed at a middle-class female readership such as *The Lady of the House* and the English *Lady's Newspaper*.

George Sand's *The Devil's Pool*[27] sees young Marie on the receiving end of some equally unwanted attention from an aggressive Breton farmer. Marie finds herself lost after embarking upon a journey to Ormeaux with Germaine and his child, Petit-Pierre. Germaine discovers Marie has been hired by a farmer as a shepherdess. She escapes after the farmer makes sexual advances towards her and attempts to bribe her to keep quiet about it:

> "There is my gist to you monsieur!" replied the little Marie aloud, throwing his Louis-d'or in his face with no gentle hand.

[25] Gallaher, Fannie, *Katty the Flash*, p.34.
[26] *Katty the Flash*, p.31.
[27] George Sand, *The Devil's Pool*. Translated by George B. Ives (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006).

> "I thank you very much, and I beg you to let me know beforehand when you are coming our way; all the young men in my neighbourhood will turn out to receive you, because our people are very fond of bourgeois who try to make love to poor girls! You'll see, they'll be on the lookout for you!"[28]

Marie's angry retort is indicative of a deliberate attempt by Sand to criticise childhood literature and child-friendly stories which, if authored by a controlling adult, would be reified by class. A bourgeois author, in this respect, would delight in little Marie's defilement and there would be no mention of the child's moral victory. Some critics have noted that Sand's intelligent girl characters inhabit an educated liberality from which Sand was excluded, having undergone, like Laffan, insubstantial convent schooling. In light of this, Marie's money throwing embodies the difficulty with which some children coped with their education as she literally throws money back in the face of the salacious adults who sought to commodify child-subjects or children's literature in this way.

Even teaching children how to read was advertised in ways which Sand would find distasteful. Le Bibliothèque Nationale de France has a fascinating online exhibition which has accessible images for early childhood reading materials. An early phonetics worksheet from Théodore Lefèvre`s Bébe saura bientôt lire for example depicts a pronunciation caption 'Je t'apprendrai à jeter des pierres,' underneath an image of a child being punished for throwing stones by his uniformed father as a guide to pronouncing 'ai' sounds.[29] The shock value of the punished child, the violence of the father and quashed rebellion may well have led to some harboured resentment amongst children learning to enunciate by force.

Furthermore, a book cover from the same collection by Théodore Lefèvre[30] bears an initially generic-looking chromolithographic image of a young French girl in a red smocked dress reading from an alphabet copy book . She rests her right arm upon a pile of books with her index

[28] Sand, *The Devil's Pool*, p.68.
[29] Théodore Lefèvre, *Bébe saura bientôt lire* (Paris: Librarie de Théodore Lefèvre, 1874). Image accessed from "Livres d'enfants d'hier et d'aujourd'hui," Bibliothèque Nationale de France, April 2009; http://expositions.bnf.fr/livre-enfants/.
[30] Théodore Lefèvre, *Bébé saura bientôt Lire*. http://expositions.bnf.fr/livre-enfants/.

finger outstretched and pointing to a letter 'L,' in bold script. What is interesting is the child's face lacks overall expression. The eyes are undoubtedly a prominent feature yet there is an apparent unenlightened emptiness in the child's gaze. However, upon closer examination it seems that these docile eyes and pointed finger are not those of an autodidact – as Sand was- rather they are those of an obedient tabula rasa, a child mesmerised, learning by instruction. *Bébé saura bientôt lire*, but will it sooner rebel against its learning-by-role call and this passive, rebellion-incensing image?

If the very jackets of late nineteenth century children's books are comparatively controversial when pitted against their pedagogical intent, there is certainly a call for the further analysis of the extra-literary, rebellion incitement that French or Irish children[31] would have had to bear witness to. In *Class, Gender and a History of Metonymy*, Wai Chee Dimock laments the limits of generalisations disseminating from what is said to be our practice to speak of the 'body of the text […] as a miniature container of the historical whole,' and she suggests:

> Rather than trying to derive historical generalizations from literary texts- rather than trying to read literature as the ground of intelligibility for history – we might want to invert the entire process, and […] question the very notion of "generalizability" itself.

Examining the figure of the woman worker in nineteenth century America and the Literature she inhabits leads one to assume that both "class" and "individual" constitute a generalisable body. It would be more 'humanly precise'[32] to view these as part of what Dimock states is a 'composite image,' unwilling and unable to give an accurate account of the whole, which she argues is 'shown to be somewhat of a fiction.' This metonymical argument has many implications for materialism but ultimately, as far as the manipulation of childhood is concerned, the

[31] This is also highlighted by recent developing interests in areas of Irish Childhood Studies as evident in the Spring/ Summer 2009 edition of *Éire-Ireland* edited by James Smith and Maria Luddy, as well as the activities of the Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature.

[32] Wai Chee Dimock and Michael T. Gilmore, *Rethinking Class*: *Literary Studies and Social Formations* (Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press: 1994), p.188.

extent to which extra-literary material (advertisements, official records, magazines and other ephemera) puffed, pilloried and preened late nineteenth century Irish and French childhoods forbids its apologetic horse-shoeing into the literary sphere. Neither is it forced to inhabit the periphery of the body of the text. It is therefore in the interest of the 'composite image' that satirical sketches, ephemera and advertisements will, somewhat rebelliously, be examined alongside May Laffan and Fannie Gallaher and the French author George Sand.

Irish childhoods: sell or mêle?

Unlike the English infinitive 'to infantilise,' the French 'infantiliser,' carries two meanings. The first, as with English, signifies rendering someone or something child-like by reverting to an earlier stage in its development. Childhood revisited it is not, because the child-like state represents a contortion of ideals imposed upon the subject by a hierarchical or familial power. Examples of this in nineteenth century art can be had by comparing the horror of the "Bridget O'Donnell and Her Children," charcoal sketch as it featured in *The Illustrated London News* in 1849, or Ford Maddox Brown's "The Irish Girl" (1860) with later Victorian faerie drawings of seemingly Gaelic-inspired children.[33] One is torn between the perverse beauty and realism of Bridget O`Donnell and all the while compelled to rail against the oversimplification, manipulation and ownership of Gaelic stereotypes in the the rosy-cheeked, black-haired example. This contradiction between Ireland as either the stricken child or the Gaelic faerie can also be seen in concurrent advertising and satirical journalism of the late nineteenth century.

The use of Ireland as the stricken child in satirical journalism appeared frequently in *Zozimus* beginning with an early issue from the 13th of July 1870.[34] Alongside an animated discussion of Gladstone's Land Acts appears an emaciated child named 'Bill' in the arms of a nurse being handed back to his mother 'Mrs Gladstone' in a sketch entitled 'Baby Farming at Westminster.' In the background there is a door panel

[33] Both images can be consulted in Fintan Cullen & R.F. Foster, *Conquering England*; *Ireland in Victorian London* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2005), pp.26-53.

[34] "Baby Farming at Westminster," in *Zozimus*, 13th of July 1870, p 103. National Library of Ireland, periodical collection.

deceptively emblazoned with the word 'Lord,' and the nurse figure stands before a cupboard housing child-sized coffins stating in the caption underneath, "Yiss my Lady; an 'lot of nice paragoric we've given him to improve him!" Using the child, as a potent signifier in advertising and satire, the national sorrow at the great hunger of 1848 and the agricultural crisis is attached to little, starving Bill in a defiant use of the image of the child which is almost too close to the bone. This ravished spectre and the coffins which surround it, intends to call to mind much more than Gladstone's First Irish Land Act which took place earlier that year, it reflects Denis Denisoff's concern over the 'dehumanization,'of children in academic studies relating the nineteenth century and consumer culture.[35]

Similarly, the front cover to the 1890 Christmas Edition of the *Young Ireland* journal bore a nationalistic image which entwined youth with consumer buying power.[36] The cover features a group of adolescent boys and girls surrounding a flag featuring the Celtic harp and the name of the journal – thus combining national emblems with commodity. The children's eyes are riveted adoringly on the flag and it is interesting to note the fruits and leaves which these children bear, almost as offerings to the flag recalling not only images of Gaelic faerie children but also ironically the use of children in food advertisements.

Further still, Irish advertisements for foodstuffs from the late nineteenth century appear to continually involve children in cultural exchanges. A notable advertisement for *Kennedy's Bread*[37] features ironically Rubenseque children aping a generic pastoral ritual which has further trans-national qualities. The advertisement features five children in what appears to be Victorian country clothing surrounding a huge loaf of Kennedy's bread with one child standing on top of the loaf and several others eagerly attempting to clamber on over him. Although not explicitly so, this image is nevertheless rebellious, for it transforms what might have been a misinterpretation of Irish country children into a sort of Victorian pastiche with children as the giggling participants in a

[35] Denisoff, Denis, *The Nineteenth Century Child and Consumer Culture* (Aldershott: Ashgate, 2008), p.3.
[36] *Young Ireland*, Christmas 1890, National Library of Ireland, periodical collection.
[37] *Kennedy's Bread Dublin*, Advertisement, National Library of Ireland Ephemera Collection, Undated.

mockery of a mock-pastoral. This over-exaggeration of the countryside is also evident in May Laffan's *The Game Hen* which tells of the decrepitude of a Dublin slum and the gossiping inhabitants of Commons Lane who ostracize a young mother forcing her to abandon her children. The abandoned child, Petie, is sent to Artane Industrial School and it is only at this point that peaceful, artistic imagery is used to describe the child's rescue from penury:

> The old priest turned homewards, leading Petie by the hand; when he reached the hedge which divided the cabbage-field from the offices he turned, and shading his eyes from the sun with one hand, looked back. Dandelion and scutch, chickweed and groundsel, were flying in clouds before the hoe, and the gardener's curly head was bent immovably on his task.[38]

Rather than describing Petie's struggles with silence and his release from Commons Lane, a sententious tone is adopted painting the already mute Petie into further stasis. The gardener, 'bent immovably on his task,' pushes realism and the use of bucolic to a negative extreme and the reader is left to wonder how Petie will be represented in this arrangement, having been led there by the hand. Further still, an advertisement for *Bolands Metropolitan Bakery* from *The Lady of The House*, magazine depicts distinctly well-attired middle class children beckoning to Irish Christmas cakes. A baker is pictured in the centre of the advertisement holding up an enormous baking sheet laden with breads and christmas cakes and beneath disproportionately small children reach after the cakes while a mother is pictured in the background with flailing arms.[39] What makes this the most pertinent example of rebellion is the fact that one cake is embossed with 'Fáilte' indicating its unique, national, source, all the while the children beneath are depicted as yearning for the novelty of seasonal Irish produce in somewhat of a hysterical state. The adult guardian remains in the background looking somewhat perplexed and defeated as she oversees her children scrambling for cake in a manner

[38] May Laffan, "The Game Hen", in *Flitters, Tatters and the Counsellor and Other Sketches*, p.173.
[39] "Boland's Xmas Cakes," Metropolitan Bakery Dublin as featured in *The Lady of the House Magazine*, 15th December, 1896. (Inside cover).

which is much more akin to the go-getting of consumerism than it is to hunger or imitating the pastoral as in the *Kennedy's Bread* example.

Finally, an example from the 1921 edition of *The Gael* utilises underlined text and different fonts rather than the image of the child with the bold, addressing the prospective young consumer directly, encouraging him to act as a go-between the Toyland company in Cork and Mammy.[40] The advertisment is headed with the imperative "Children! Look at this" in bold, underlined font, followed by a sales pitch which states: "When Mammy is buying your TOYS bring her to look at our Dolls, Perambulators, Motors, Aeroplanes, Horses, Houses, Steam Engines etc." with the word 'toys' capitalised, enlarged and centered. While the advertisement patently encourages crafty behaviour amongst those children lucky enough to be spoiled with toys, the lack of illustrations, varying font sizes and deliberate underlining of the imperative, 'Look at this,' means that this invitation would only be open to literate children. Considering the high literacy rates in Ireland before and after the 1870 Education Act, Toyland's invitation would attract literate children from a variety of classes and social groups.

Equally compelling is the fact that the toys advertised are not explicitly Irish in form. They appear to have more formative functions than simply instilling nationality in Ireland's younger generations in the manner that *Young Ireland's* front page boldly asserts. Rather, Toyland plays on the exotic attraction of 'Motors, Aeroplanes' and coal-run 'Steam Engines,' constituent machines in an industrial revolution which was flourishing elsewhere in the British Empire. This is not to say that the toys resemble objects of empire but there is a sense of otherness and marketability in *le monde ailleurs*.

What is apparent is that child engagement with consumer culture in nineteenth century Irish and French fiction appears to be somewhat of a taboo, juxtaposed with the trite and often generic use of children in French and Irish advertising. Childhood rebellion therefore results from a dissatisfaction of situation, presentation of children in advertising and literary child discourses which are often reified according to class. Sand's concern for the Parisian street urchins is mirrored, albeit satirically, in Fannie Gallaher's novella *Katty the Flash*. Katty's troubles begin when she enters into small-scale slum bartering for herrings,

[40] 'Toyland,' in *The Gael*, 26th of December 1921, p.21.

oranges and onions which the narrator dissects as an '[…] accompanying ease and grace of Kathleen's manner, the timid expression on her shy, girlish face as she proffered her articles of commerce and the general picturesque effect of the whole.'[41] The effect is far from 'picturesque': rather, it is an example of tragic irony, for Katty junior dies of starvation, unable to consume the very wares she was pressed to promote and her mother, at the moment of passing, strips Katty of her clothing so that it can be sold. Similarly the 'after-dinner philosophy,' of the Counsellor in May Laffan's *Flitters, Tatters and the Counsellor* sees him reject begging by his statement: "People does always be talking of money-money! And in the end what is the good of it?"[42] In *The Game Hen*, it is the exchange of malicious gossip about new Commons Lane arrival, Honor Walsh, by salesman Dinny the Duck, who 'was in the habit of conducting even his conversation on the strictest business principles,'[43] and categorically sells Honor Walsh's story, which leads to her being rejected beyond the confines of the slum by Mrs Carmody.

Thus, the encroaching consumerism, commodity culture and advertising in Ireland alongside children's visual print cultures in France and Ireland might seem unlikely sources of inspiration for childhood rebellion when considered in isolation. One can perfectly well associate new means of advertising foodstuffs and toys with temper tantrums, terrible twos and such trivialities. What sees them throw the proverbial toys out of the 'perambulator' is not the availability of child-orientated advertising and literatures, however. Rather, it is the fact that children were being continually and unashamedly reconfigured in Irish and French advertising in literature as consumers and as an unwitting guinea pig generation preordained by their ability to afford to engage in the new consumerist utopia.

[41] Fannie Gallaher, *Katty the Flash*, p.12.
[42] May Laffan, *Flitters, Tatters and The Counsellor*, p.26.
[43] Laffan, *Flitters, Tatters and The Counsellor*, p.117.

Chapter 4 Sylvie Mikowski

Liam O'Flaherty's *Insurrection*: an Irish *Chouannerie*?

The last works of fiction that Liam O'Flaherty wrote consist of a historical trilogy that includes *Famine* (1937),[1] *Land* (1946)[2] and *Insurrection* (1950).[3] Of the three novels, *Famine* is probably the most remarkable and has generally been praised for the accuracy of its depictions and its raw emotional power. *Land* also fits the definition of the historical novel in that it places fictional characters against the background of real historical events, namely the early days of the Land League, its connection with Fenianism, and the first implementation of a new form of rebellion called boycotting. *Insurrection* differs from the first two volumes insofar as its action unfolds in a single place, spans over three days only, and involves a very limited number of characters, techniques more associated with drama than with the novel. Indeed, to a certain extent the book lacks the scope and the documentary richness that makes *Famine* such an illuminating survey of the causes and consequences of the potato blight, as well as of the structure of Irish rural society in the 1840s. *Land* also sheds light on the forces at work in the Land War, acquainting the reader with the nuances of social classes and political opinions, between the liberal Anglo-Irish intellectual élite and the rough, brutal rent-rackers supported by the army and the police.

Insurrection departs from these didactic intentions and presents itself, as one critic puts it, as an "idea book",[4] perhaps because what interested O'Flaherty in the first place was to explore the political and above all spiritual significance of the Easter Rising, rather than to provide the reader with historical details which he probably supposed would be

[1] Liam O'Flaherty, *Famine* (1937) (Dublin : Wolfhound Press, 2002).
[2] Liam O'Flaherty, *Land* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946).
[3] Liam O'Flaherty, *Insurrection* (1950) (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1993). All quotations refer to this edition with the page numbers in brackets.
[4] See John N. Zneimer, *The Literary Vision of Liam O'Flaherty* (Syracuse N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1970), p.143.

known by most at the time when he wrote the book, a mere 34 years after the events. Easter 1916 is undoubtedly a turning point in the history of Ireland, explicitly defined as being at the origin of the idea of a Republic. Official discourses maintain that it marks a split between an old order and a new one, between slavery and freedom, tradition and modernity, subjugation and emancipation, and, of course, between English domination and Irish independence. Yet, the Easter rebellion is also in the eyes of most historians a symbolic nexus of all that went wrong with the project of Irish Independence. For what happened after this alleged revolution failed to bring about the expected changes, and in the aftermath of independence it became more and more difficult for Irish people to perceive the effects of the freedom in their daily lives implied in these binary oppositions: freedom, progress, emancipation, Irish supremacy. As a result, 1916 became a topos of Irish literature, illustrated as early as 1923 by Sean O'Casey in *The Plough and the Stars*, which O'Flaherty admired greatly, and as recently as Roddy Doyle's 1998 novel *A Star Called Henry*, or Sebastian Barry's *A Long, Long Way* (2005). The Easter 1916 Rebellion and the War of Independence have also been a source of inspiration for such movie directors as Neil Jordan (*Michael Collins*, 1996) and Ken Loach (*The Wind Shakes the Barley*, 2006).

It should be emphasized, however, that *Insurrection* differs from these representations of the Rising insofar as it seeks to make no political statement regarding the aims and achievements of the rebellion, and does not indict the Nationalists for failing to take into account the possible social implications of their actions. Neither does O'Flaherty criticize them for the bad preparation, bad timing and the futility of the rising from a military perspective. In other words, *Insurrection* is no revisionist testimony to the beginnings of the Republic, and tends, rather, to offer a stylised, even allegorical, picture of the historical facts. Even though some of the actual historical actors of the event are mentioned – among them Pearse, Connolly and Plunkett – O'Flaherty deliberately leaves aside historical accuracy, for instance by beginning the narrative with the phrase: 'It was noon on Easter Monday 1916 in the city of Dublin. O'Connell Street was crowded with people on holiday', even though everybody knows that the original name of Sackville Street was not changed to O'Connell Street until 1924. Another sign of intended simplification, or allegorization, is the use of the phrase 'Imperial soldiers', which fails to provide an explanation as to which Empire he is referring exactly.

This move away from factual realism towards abstraction matches O'Flaherty's evident purpose, which is to analyze his characters' motivation for getting involved in the action of the time. In fact, part of O'Flaherty's objective is to show that these motivations are far from political in nature. His characters are not really moved by what O'Casey in *Juno and the Paycock* derisively made his characters call 'their principles". Stapleton, for example, who thinks of himself as a new Shelley, has joined the Volunteers to experience what he calls 'the beauty of war'. His revolt remains very indefinite as is obvious from this declaration of faith: "I'm in revolt against the whole concept of good and evil current in our age" (184). His friend Kinsella, who is the more reasonable and down-to-earth of the two, has for his part joined the Volunteers in order to fulfill what he sees as his duty, even though what exactly that duty consists of is not made explicit: "The only thing in life that counts is to do one's duty. Everything else is vanity and foolishness", he says (179). As for Madden, the third major protagonist of the novel, he is quite unable to delineate his own ambition in so many words, but the omniscient narrator translates his thoughts by repeating that "for the first time in his life, his mind had conceived an abstract idea that lit the fire of passion in his soul" (28). However, once again O'Flaherty is unwilling to explain exactly what the idea consists of. In line with Madden's 'abstract ideas', the novelist repeatedly has recourse to vague abstractions to describe his characters' mood, among which the 'dark rapture' which is supposed to fill Madden's heart everytime he shoots at an Imperial soldier, the "ugly passion" which takes hold of him, his 'wild delight', or the 'ecstasy' which grips either of the fighters, and which remains as elusive to the reader's mind as 'the horror' in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Because of their undefined motivations and in the absence of an elaborate background for each of them, the characters of Madden, Stapleton and Kinsella can therefore be considered as little more than 'types', even though they are still much more fully developed than their antagonists, treated as two anonymous masses, one composed of the 'imperial soldiers', previously mentioned, the other of the people of Dublin, generally called 'the crowd', the 'mob', the 'multitude', the 'mass', or even the 'horde', and often described as being 'vast', 'enormous', 'dense', or 'rowdy'. The sense of a threatening danger deriving from this systematic allusion to the people of Dublin as a huge homogeneous body is corroborated by the numerous, and to tell the truth, quite obnoxious, comparisons with animals which prop up all through the narrative. From the list of

these similes one can observe that the animals referred to either evoke stupidity or mindlessness, such as the rabbit and the birds, or the lack of any decisiveness, captured by sheep, cattle or ants. For smallness and worthlessness, ants are again used, and for wild, instinctual aggressiveness, the bull, the dog or the colt. To this evocation of the people of Dublin as a mass of stupid, gregarious and merely instinctual loiterers should be added the depiction of slum-dewellers looting shops and carrying away whatever they can lay their hands upon, but revelling mostly in the consumption of beer and champagne. Needless to say, the looting of the shops along Sackville Street in the aftermath of the occupation of the GPO by the insurgents is a historical fact, and O'Casey made it one of the central scenes in his play, *The Plough and the Stars*, whose first performance in 1926 spurred such fierce controversy that the playwright decided to leave Ireland for good. Yet in his play O'Casey redeems the slum-dwellers by developing them into fully-blown characters, endowed with a psychological depth likely to allow them self-discovery and the ability to change, so that instead of being represented as a confused, undetermined mass, O'Casey's Dublin poor come to be revealed in all the different shades of their humanity. O'Flaherty's own emphasis on the dehumanization of the crowd could be explained by a desire to picture the slum-dewellers as victims of their dire living-conditions, as is hinted at by descriptions like 'their wild eyes stared hungrily from their gaunt faces' or 'gaunt and ragged people stared from their crumbling houses at their young men being searched by alien soldiers, a scene that symbolised the endless cruel tale of invasion and conquest' (164). But such rare expressions of compassion are outnumbered by far more derogatory allusions to the repelling aspect of the destitutes, as conveyed by the comparisons with a 'giant reptile' (79), or to their 'slimy bodies' (60) which 'infected all with whom they came in contact' (34). The depiction of the poor as a dangerous, infectious, lurking mass, eager to steal, pilfer and sully whatever it might come into contact with, reminds us of the famous 'classes laborieuses, classes dangereuses' stigmatized by the French government during the Paris Commune of 1871, an event to which an allusion is made in *Land*.

Madden, whom O'Flaherty chooses as a sample of those who attend the insurrection without being its actual agents, finds himself involved in the momentous events of the day by pure chance. Indeed it is quite clear that Madden has no clue as to what is going on around him, even though he embodies the essence of what the rebels were supposed to be fighting

for. He is the typical Irish peasant, a native of the original West so dear to the Revivalists, who has just returned from Liverpool where he has toiled hard in order to be in a position to marry a small farmer's daughter. But having drunk himself to sleep, all his money was robbed from him. Even though Madden is thus distinguished among the anonymous mob of Dublin slum-dwellers, he is similar to them as far as his stupidity and animality are concerned. As already stated, his thoughts are inarticulate and need to be transcribed through the voice of an omniscient narrator who for example describes his 'abject fear' of the soldiers changing into a 'frenzy of joy' (37). For Madden experiences a kind of revelation on hearing Pádraig Pearse read the proclamation of the Republic. He is portrayed as being spellbound by words which, 'like music', 'carried him away into enchantment' (29), which implies that he is unable to comprehend such abstract notions as 'freedom', 'citizenship' or 'nationhood' and can only be made to react through sensual, emotional, non-verbal means of communication.

As O'Flaherty probably deemed it implausible that his protagonist should meet the real Pádraig Pearse, he has him enroll in the Volunteers on the spur of the moment, under the leadership of Michael Kinsella, a fictional counterpart of Pearse, a teacher like him described as 'having the ascetic face and the mysterious eyes of a monk' (73). Madden immediately becomes enthralled by Kinsella and starts following him like a dog, or a slave: 'he wanted to imitate in every possible way the man that was now a master' (77). Such phrasing reminds us of Daniel Defoe's depiction of the encounter between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, whereby the native 'savage' is drawn as if by nature to imitate the English castaway who has turned the island into his own kingdom. Like Friday too, whom Crusoe rescues from cannibalism, Madden is described as possessing a primitive, innate taste for blood and violence. To highlight Madden's natural enjoyment of violence, O'Flaherty piles up sexual connotations when evoking the man's love of his rifle: 'His rifle was tucked in close to his right side. He held his cap with both hands in front of his chest and he kept touching the little holes with slow-moving fingers. His whole body was rigid' (89); 'from the moment that he had begun to fire at the soldiers, he had been carried away by an outburst of passion; like a man that holds within his grasp a long-sought mistress and strives with all his living strength to thrust the pent-up fever from his blood' (113). Even though Madden's primitivism and ingrained violence are transcended at the end of the novel by his heroism while trying to protect his

masters Kinsella and Stapleton, it remains the case that the depiction of the lower-class in *Insurrection* as an underclass of *Untermenschen* (to parody a Nietzschean phrase) is more likely to inspire the reader with fear and loathing than compassion and sympathy. O'Flaherty's novel conveys an underlying anxiety about the Otherness of the Irish lower classes, who stood on the fringes of a revolution devised and engineered by the middle-class and the bourgeoisie, which is reminiscent of the feelings inspired in France by the Breton Chouans in the wake of the French Revolution.

The Chouans were the actors of a royalist counterevolution, which started in the Vendée and in Brittany, and which was finally crushed by the *Bleus*, the army of the Republic. The unfolding of the Vendean Wars and the horror and fascination they exerted on the French Republicans were recorded by such authors as Victor Hugo, Chateaubriand, Barbey d'Aurevilly, and most memorably by Balzac, in *Les Chouans*. First entitled *Le dernier Chouan, ou la Bretagne en 1800*, it was published in 1829 and subsequently revised. It would eventually come to be considered the first French historical novel. Written in the manner of Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper, Balzac highlights the gap which separates 'Les Bleus', the soldiers of the Republic, embodying the forces of progress and modernity, from the Breton peasants, who were represented as being mired in a primitive state. In those days, Brittany represented for the rest of France, and for Paris in particular, exactly what Ireland stood for in the eyes of the English, or what the West of Ireland embodied for the Dublin artists and intellectuals of the Revival, the main inspiration for the Easter rebellion. Indeed, as Claudie Bernard puts it in her introduction to a modern edition of *Les Chouans*[5]: '*La Bretagne balzacienne est excentrée et excentrique*'. As Bernard further explains, the Chouan is the uncivilized, original Other haunting the frontiers of revolutionary France, the embodiment of the myth of the primitive savage against which the new French nation can define itself by contrast : '*Le Chouan est l'autre ; du Parisien, de l'homme moderne, du civilisé, du lettré*'. O'Flaherty's character Madden, a Connemara man, also comes from the fringes of the future Irish nation. Similarly, the slum-dwellers embody an urban version

[5] Honoré de Balzac, *Les Chouans*, introduction et notes de Claudie Bernard (Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 1972). All references will be to this edition with the page numbers in brackets.

of the backward peasants that O'Flaherty also pictures in *Land*. In her book-length study of the literary representations of the Chouans,[6] Bernard underlines how they lived in proximity to their natural environment, listing for example Balzac's heavy borrowing from the realm of the vegetal, the mineral but also the animal, a similar device to the one used in O'Flaherty's novel.

The Bretons' animality is thus first evoked by the name Chouans, deriving from the word *chouette*, the owl, as the Breton rebels would call each other by imitating that animal's hooting. The main protagonist in *Les Chouans* is called Marche à terre, the name suggesting the feral relationship between man and the land, and Balzac describes his head as being '*presque aussi grosse que celle d'un boeuf, avec laquelle elle avait plus d'une ressemblance*'.[7] Furthermore, the Breton peasants are said to be dressed in goat skins '*qu'on pouvait facilement prendre pour la leur*'.[8] The Chouans are also defined by their slyness and brutality: as pointed out once more by Bernard: '*Le chouan vient à évoquer le rustre au mieux borné, au pire brutal et sournois*'.[9] Thus for Balzac's Breton peasants as for O'Flaherty's Connemara man or Dublin slum-dwellers, greed is a more powerful incentive to fight than the call of freedom, and the rebellion is just an opportunity to steal and to pilfer.

Another feature shared by the Breton 18th-century Chouans and their Irish modern counterparts is the strength of their Catholic faith, which to the eyes of Parisian intellectuals verges on fanaticism and superstition. In this regard, Claudie Bernard interestingly reminds us that the French word *paysan* derives from the Latin *paganus*, from which also derives the English word *pagan*. Balzac's Chouans are enslaved to their priest, in the same way as the Catholic clergy plays a key role in the Irish land wars evoked by O'Flaherty's *Land*. In *Insurrection*, the characters' identities are also deeply shaped by religion, as is made obvious through their speech, characterised by constant references to God, the Virgin Mary or the Holy Spirit, from Pearse's authentic proclamation made 'in the name of God', to one of the rebels' mother's prayer to the 'Mother of God' that she might protect her son (37). But here again the leaders of

[6] Claudie Bernard, *Le Chouan romanesque* : *Balzac, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Hugo* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1989).
[7] *Les Chouans*, p.78.
[8] *Les Chouans*, p.66.
[9] *Les Chouans*, Introduction.

the rebellion differ from the mass of the primitive believers, as is the case with Stapleton who says that 'Above all, I'm in revolt against the idea that man is the centre of the universe and that he is made in God's image' (184). This Nietzschean view of religion, also shared by Raoul St George in *Land*, is only one of the differences O'Flaherty takes pains to establish between the plebian Madden and his noble, refined and heroic leaders, who are portrayed as a new enlightened and enlightening aristocracy.

In *Les Chouans* Balzac establishes a similar distinction between the Breton peasants and their leader, the aristocratic Montauran, who according to Claudie Bernard, is a compound of Lancelot, Valmont from *Dangerous Liaisons* and Bonaparte – in other words, he possesses some of the qualities of the epic hero, the libertine and the political leader. O'Flaherty's own Raoul St George in *Land* comes close to this definition in his own way as he is descended from an ancient aristocratic family, has become a free thinker under the influence of French philosophy during his stay in Paris, and turns into an active, imaginative and charismatic leader of the people after he returns home. Although St George doesn't take after Bonaparte, he certainly is modelled on Ireland's own 'uncrowned king', Charles Stewart Parnell.

In *Insurrection*, we find the same combination of epic heroism, freethinking and natural authority in Stapleton and Kinsella's quest for the Irish Holy Grail, in the awe they inspire in the simple-minded Madden, and finally in their intellectual detachment from common beliefs. Balzac's *Les Chouans* is of course a much more complex novel than O'Flaherty's *Insurrection*, especially insofar as the variety of the characters involved is concerned. The Breton royalists include not just the primitive peasants and the sophisticated, heroic Marquis de Montauran, but also the corrupt, decaying petty nobility. The Republicans range from the blunt, straightforward Commandant Hulot and his men, to the machiavelian Corentin, the government spy who indulges in double-dealing and foreshadows the self-serving materialism of modern times. Not to mention the role of Marie de Verneuil, the illegitimate daughter of an aristocrat, who acts as a spy for the Republic and is used by Corentin as a decoy to trap Montauran. She eventually falls in love with him, and prefers to die by his side rather than to betray him. This intricate, romantic plot highlights the ambiguity of Balzac's feelings towards the insurgents and towards the Republic. Indeed, he started out writing the novel as an indictment of the reactionary forces embodied by the Breton rebels; but as his opinions moved in time from republicanism to legitimism, he re-

vised the novel in such a way as to convey a more explicit admiration for the panache of their aristocratic leaders while continuing to criticize the backwardness of Breton peasants. Indeed, even though, as Claudie Bernard puts it, '*tout est mal qui finit mal*'[10] in the novel, as could only be expected from the evocation of a doomed counter-revolution, the death of the noble Montauran in the arms of his newly wed Marie supplies it with the cathartic grandeur common to all great tragedies.

For his part, O'Flaherty excludes all romance or marriage, contrary to what happens in *Land*, and he simply opposes the primitivism of the lower classes to the outstanding intellectual and moral qualities of their Republican leaders. The insurgents' enemies are described as nothing more than a fuzzy, indeterminate yellow mass of soldiers who fall dead like puppets under the Republicans' attacks. Yet the novel is underpinned by the same sort of ambiguity with regard to the meaning and achievements of rebellion as Balzac's masterpiece. Although O'Flaherty seems to eulogize the Insurrection, he implies that only one category of human beings is actually worthy of freedom and dignity, those belonging to the new élite, the middle class, such as Kinsella the school-teacher and Stapleton the genteel Anglo-Irish Protestant. The "people" in whose name the rebellion is fought are viewed as an underclass who can only be redeemed by being used as cannon-fodder, as is made clear by Madden's death at the end of the novel.

Thus, O'Flaherty's last novel expresses deeply anti-democratic assumptions about the natural inferiority of the peasant and the working class. In *Land*, O'Flaherty, a lapsed socialist whose nationalism brought close to admiration for fascism, also showed the necessity for the masses of Irish peasants to be led like a herd by a natural leader, in the person of Raoul St George, an Anglo-Irish aristocrat whose sister is a Catholic convert and whose daughter marries a Fenian hero who gets killed in action very shortly after the wedding. This marriage is not unlike that of Montauran and Marie de Verneuil at the end of *Les Chouans*, as it embodies the ideal, yet doomed, union of the antagonistic élites in a manner also reminiscent of what Lady Morgan portrayed in *The Wild Irish Girl*. In either case, ordinary people are left out of the picture. Indeed, both *Land* and *Insurrection* can be said to construct an image of the Irish poor as the barbaric, irreducible 'Other' who needs to be rejected to the mar-

[10] *Les Chouans*, Introduction.

gins of the nation, so that the newly-born imagined community might more conveniently invent an identity for itself, based on a clear-cut division between what used to be and what now is. Bernard mentions that for the Chouans, '*la révolution délimite un avant et un après, une coupure entre ce que nous fûmes et ce que nous sommes, un* '*nous*' *civilisé et un* '*autre*' *barbare, entre un Parisien et un Chouan*'.[11] Likewise, *Insurrection* clearly exemplifies O'Flaherty's idea of the Irish revolution as the advent of a world from which the primitivism, the wildness and exoticism of the original Irish peasant will be excluded, only to be evoked as a distant, fantasized myth arousing both fear and attraction. As a result, the novel, published in 1950, when de Valera's party had transformed Ireland into what John McGahern described as 'a theocracy in all but name',[12] reads like a conscious or unconscious justification of Fianna Fáil's relinquishing of the ideals of 1916, and of its utter indifference to the advancement of the lower classes of Irish society.

[11] Claudie Bernard, *Le Chouan romanesque* : *Balzac*, *Barbey d'Aurevilly*, *Hugo* (Paris : PUF, 1989), p.97.
[12] 'By 1950, against the whole spirit of the 1916 Proclamation, the State had become a theocracy in all but name'. John McGahern, *Memoir* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p.210.

Part II

Struggling with Rebellious Forms

Chapter 5 Sarah Balen

Baudelaire's Revolt against *Ennui*: A Poetics of Paralysis

As a painter of modern life, Baudelaire was determined to urge the citizens of Paris into consciousness. Awakening them from slumber involved lambasting them with accounts of their skewed morality, as well as his own, and exposing the dangers of *ennui*. The entry into adult life and responsibility, for Baudelaire, meant facing into a life of routine, boredom and despair. He confessed in a letter to his mother of crying out of boredom. He approached and faced the invisible wall which usually prevented those around him from screaming out, vocalising, or even acknowledging the devastating slum of feelings to which they were prisoner. Few of his poetic characters sustain the naive happiness of those who, ignoring societal norms and conventions, achieve some immunity to its emotional stops. When Baudelaire speaks of *ennui* he links it with laziness and punishments, treating it as the ultimate evil and a yawning abyss. This chapter will examine Baudelaire's portrayal of consciousness and *ennui* in his poems and letters to his mother, analysing the consequences which arise from these extreme states, as lived in the city, incorporating some of the ideas of Neitzsche and Heidegger.

Malcolm Bradbury commented that 'the quest for self and art alike can only be carried out in the glare and existential exposure of the city.'[1] Baudelaire talks of '*le chaos des vivantes cités*', of Paris' swarming scene, '*fourmillant tableau*', which does nothing to rouse him or anyone else from the engulfing melancholy.[2] Everyone is caught up in the 'délire officiel d'une grande ville', something which affects especially '*le cerveau du solitaire*', and it is on his own experience, and so on that of

[1] Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane (eds), *Modernism* (London: Penguin, 1976), p.101.

[2] Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes 1*. Edited and with an Introduction by Claude Pichois (Paris : Gallimard, 1975). 'Les Petites Vieilles', p.89. All quotations from Baudelaire's poems will be from this edition, with the poem title followed by page number.

the city individual, which Baudelaire focuses.[3] Watching '*un fantôme débile*', '*cet être fragile*',[4] he concludes that all these city souls have come from the same hell, heading towards the same '*but inconnu*'.[5] Located and living '*dans les labyrinthes pierreux d'une capitale*',[6] night brings the inhabitants one step closer to the realisation that '*tout est néant, excepté la mort*.'[7] While exposing the hellish reality of the city he disgusts and terrifies even himself with the portrayals of pained, hopeless and almost invisible citizens who are lost in the '*brouillard sale et jaune*'.[8] He both sees and senses frail ghosts crossing Paris who are the '*Débris d'humanité*' and are ready for the next world, '*ombres ratatinées, […] le dos bas*',[9] '*condamnés à espérer toujours*'.[10] It seems that on earth no escape is possible, that only death can provide respite from the harsh physical and spiritual decay that these city dwellers have, possibly unknowingly, in part created themselves.

Baudelaire exclaims, '*J'ai vu l'horreur de mon taudis*' and knows, as he becomes conscious of his own miserable situation, that he must pull his readers out of their sluggishness, their boredom, out of the '*triste monde engourdi*' and into consciousness.[11] According to Hugh Underhill: '[F]or both Eliot and Baudelaire, the practice and profession of poetry are a discipline, imposing order on a life otherwise felt as meaninglessly chaotic, lived always on the edge of the abyss, the horror […] vitiated by the monster *Ennui*.'[12] But how can we trace definitions of boredom or *ennui* – as laziness, idleness, apathy, languor, lethargy, lack of enthusiasm, 'uneasiness of the mind, restlessness of the body'?[13] Are banality, monotony, tedium, and redundancy the result of boredom or factors contributing to it? Drowsiness has been considered one of the

[3] 'Un Plaisant', p.279.
[4] 'Les Petites Vieilles', p.89.
[5] 'Les Septs Vieillards', p.87.
[6] 'Le Crépuscule du Soir', p.94.
[7] 'Le Tir et le cimetière', p.351.
[8] 'Les Septs Vieillards'.
[9] 'Les Petites Vieilles'.
[10] 'Chacun sa Chimera', p.283.
[11] Baudelaire, 'Rêve Parisien', *Tableaux Parisiens*, p.103.
[12] Hugh Underhill, *The Problem of Consciousness in Modern Poetry* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.176.
[13] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Toronto: Bastian Books, 2008), p.465.

'by-products or daughters of acedia',[14] a word with Greek origins which lays the responsibility for what is considered a psychic condition at the feet of the individual. Acedia (accidie) was accepted, from late medieval times, as one of the seven deadly sins and linked with sloth and defined by Aquinas as a state of disinterest in spiritual things, 'goods' – 'spiritual good is a good in very truth, sorrow about spiritual good is evil in itself.'[15] Baudelaire's *ennui* is indeed laced with evil, '*Dans nos cerveaux ribote un people de Démons*.'[16] The '*hypocrite lecteur*', in denial as to the extent of his/her sinning, is subsumed into Baudelaire's definition of their common and earthly experience, '*C'est le Diable qui tient les fils qui nous remount*.'[17]

Aquinas explains that 'every vice makes a man sorrowful about the opposite spiritual good: for the lustful man is sorrowful about the good of continence, and the glutton about the good of abstinence.'[18] Since '[E]very vice shuns the spiritual good of its opposite virtue', being bored, or victim to boredom, necessarily involves a route without crossroads, where feelings of impatience at being unoccupied or uninterested in current activity cannot achieve the reverse position.[19] 'Sloth by weighing on the mind, hinders us from doing things that cause sorrow: nevertheless, it induces the mind to do certain things, either because they are in harmony with sorrow; such as weeping, or because they are a means of avoiding sorrow.'[20] Aquinas described acedia or apathy as 'an oppressive sorrow', a 'sluggishness' of the mind, resulting in one who 'wants to do nothing.'[21] It can be concluded that boredom is 'both an impediment and stimulus to action.'[22] For this reason, *ennui* is perhaps the most suitable of topics for Baudelaire, an unstable condition of longing, straddling oppositions, the subject inert yet ready to be called to new/renewed action.

[14] Michael Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.2.
[15] Aquinas, p.460.
[16] 'Au Lecteur', p.5.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Aquinas, p.461.
[19] Aquinas, p.462.
[20] Aquinas, p.466.
[21] Aquinas, pp.459-460.
[22] Raposa, p.25.

In 1863 Baudelaire wrote of the '*effroyable maladie*' afflicting him.[23] He further clarifies: '*je veux dire la rêverie, le marasme, le découragement, et l'indécision*.'[24] This melange of sometimes contradictory states goes towards a definition of Baudelaire's *ennui*. Indeed, this state, whether induced by city life, or the drug hazes and depressions invited by it, is a struggle to shrug off, '*Décidément, je considère l'homme qui parvient à se guérir d'un vice comme infiniment plus brave que le soldat ou l'homme qui se battre en duel*.'[25] After all, such a man battles against himself. Baudelaire addresses the chasm of despair, which rarely offers its opposite realm as an easily accessed alternative, '*Comment avec la désespérance faire de l'espoir, avec la lâcheté faire de la volonté*.'[26] Quite immersed within this impossibility to act, he questions whether this malady is even real, or only real after having been first imagined. Baudelaire so desperately seeks consciousness in evil, or in boredom, or in the sickness borne of both, that he questions his very sensibilities, his capabilities to distinguish, and the truth of his sufferings. The solitude and incurable melancholy he cites as possible causes of the malady in this letter run directly to parallel to his constructions, or deconstructions, of himself as poet, as city poet and as Parisian in poems such as 'L'Albatros' and 'Les Foules'.

Ennui presents the possibility of the greatest evils, providing the uplighting and set of the necessary hell to the heaven of consciousness. Dante went as far as to portray acedia as 'a phenomenon of defective love'[27] – defective love something which Baudelaire perhaps knew too much about, both boredom and consciousness being intensified by defective, disruptive unsatisfactory love – and this heartache, in turn, itself something painful to be numbed or pushed out and away, onwards to tomorrow and simultaneously to the past. Baudelaire confesses: '*Franchement, le laudanum et le vin sont de mauvaises ressources contre le chagrin*. *Ils font passer le temps, mais ne refont pas la vie*.'[28] Renaissance literature on the subject viewed melancholy as a disease which could be

[23] Baudelaire, Charles, *Lettres à sa Mère* (Paris: L'école de loisirs, 1998), le 31 décembre 1863, p.174.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Raposa, . p.26.
[28] *Lettres à sa Mère*, Samedi 4 décembre 1847, p.25.

cured, something which could be overcome. Baudelaire treats it as a state to be exploited by the poet – recognised, indulged, garnered, then overcome and rejected.

The very first poem of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 'Au Lecteur', alerts the reader to the roles that *ennui* and death have taken in the lives of the living. Introverted and incommunicative, the swarming bodies bustle past each other, their souls closed to outside sounds or glances. Baudelaire details the position which *ennui* holds:

> *Dans la ménagerie infâme de nos vices,*
> *II en est un plus laid, plus méchant, plus immonde*!
> *Quoiqu'il ne pousse ni grands gestes ni grands cris,*
> *Il ferait volontiers de la terre un débris*
> *Et dans un bâillement avalerait le monde*;
> *C'est l'Ennui*! *L'oeil chargé d'un pleur involontaire,*
> *II rêve d'échafauds en fumant son houka.*
> *Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat,*
> *– Hypocrite lecteur, – mon semblable, – mon frère*! (My emphasis).[29]

It is the subtle approach and build up that gives ennui its unique power, its enduring grasp. The lethargy and inaction that characterise this vice increase its paralysing control and Baudelaire concludes the poem with the accusation that we are all familiar with this creeping/plotting force which disables all – the reader and his brother, the poet. Indeed, as his letter of 31 juillet 1864, written three years before his death reveals, as his body gave up, his mind and spirit were again victim to an inability to act: '*jamais je n'ai senti tant d'ennui et tant de faiblesse*.'[30]

Baudelaire presents boredom as the worst possible vice, an enemy in modern city living, admitting: '*Oui*! *Ce taudis, ce séjour de l'éternel ennui, est bien le mien*.'[31] *Ennui* is all-permitting, a vacuum, a nothingness in which any evil may be committed, allowing the invasion of all kinds of sin, breeding banality and despair, reproducing the drained demi-existence of Baudelaire's Parisians. It is, therefore, a vice which makes crimes justifiable – calling for critical decisions from critically pressured states of mind. The *Spleen et Idéal* section of *Les Fleurs du*

[29] 'Au Lecteur', p.5.
[30] *Lettres à sa Mère*, p.179.
[31] 'La Chambre Double', p.280.

Mal contains four poems entitled 'Spleen', each centred around boredom. These poems explicitly link the city and boredom.'*Les faubourgs brumeux*' contain a population plagued by physical and mental deterioration and disintegration.[32] Baudelaire draws an image of the expansion of boredom: '*L'ennui, fruit de la morne incuriosité, / Prend les proportions de l'immortalité.*'[33] Like '*Un vieux sphinx ignoré du monde insoucieux*', those affected are left unmarked upon the map with an eternity of waiting ahead of them, accompanied by a millennium of memories, each, like Baudelaire '*un cimetière abhorré de la lune*',[34] a cemetery without moonlight seeming somehow more eerie than a cemetery streaming with such light. This abandonment to memory, confinement to self and to the past, and to the contemplation of same, is another one of the effects of boredom which can negatively affect Baudelaire and his fellow Parisians. Only if there is a consciousness can this confrontation of self lead to something positive. Towards the end of his life, at forty-five years of age, his forays with boredom and its associated invitations to evil had led him through the pitfalls and beyond multiple observations, not just of his own and others' episodic and escapist drug taking, but of many individuals' reactions to ennui, daily and nightly. He links his vices, which he recognizes, '*je connais mes vices, je connais mes erreurs*', to his treatment at the hands of Paris: '*Paris n'a jamais été juste envers moi*.'[35]

Kierkegaard observed in *Either/Or* that 'Boredom is the/a root of all evil.'[36] Hegoes on to explore this evil: 'the gods were bored, and so they created man. Adam was bored alone, and so Eve was created. Thus boredom entered the world, and increased in proportion and increased in population. [...] then Adam And Eve were bored together; then Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel were bored together [...] to divert themselves they conceived the idea of constructing a tower high enough to reach the heavens.'[37] This tower of Babel pushes crowds together and paradoxically up and out in endless division, idealistically toward one understanding and vision, yet in reality into multiplicity, incomprehension and mis-

[32] 'Spleen', LXXV, p.72.
[33] 'Spleen', LXXVI, p.73.
[34] Ibid.
[35] *Lettres à sa Mère*. Samedi 23 décembre 1865, p.192.
[36] Kierkegaard, Soren, *Either/Or*. Translated by. David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.237.
[37] Kierkegaard, pp.281-282.

comprehension (resonant in many ways of the Burj Khalifa Tower, newly erected in Dubai – itself soaring out of contradictory ideologies). Baudelaire has scaled the institutional highs and heights of Parisian society, commented critically on the manifestations of the most gifted Parisian artistic minds at the salons, praising more than any other feature, the melancholic tone achieved by certain painters. He has focused on the quotidian melancholy, night time disappointments that go with city living, where Adam seeks Eve, one tongue brief communion with another.

Beckett's Vladimir proclaims he is 'bored to death.'[38] and in his essay on Proust, Beckett uses a quote from the latterwhich nicely parallels and underscores some of the concerns of *Waiting for Godot* and *Les Fleurs du Mal*: 'if there were no such thing as Habit, life would of necessity appear delicious to all those whom death would threaten at every moment, that is to say, all Mankind.'[39] This habit seems to act as a preventative to clear perception, blocking awareness of the possible meanings/pleasures of human experience, as well as to its inevitable and unpredictable end. Experiencing boredom thus signals either the 'absence of some meaningful object of perception or my failure to attend to it', an inability to escape the various perceived trappings of that moment, an unawareness of the possibilities outside the moment.[40]

Before Baudelaire, Pascal wrote of man's condition as 'Inconstancy, boredom, anxiety.'[41] 'After all, what is man in nature? A nothing compared to the infinite, a whole compared to the nothing, a middle point between all and nothing, infinitely remote from an understanding of the extremes', extremes which Baudelaire, in contrast, so readily pursues.[42] 'Being unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, men have decided, in order to be happy, not to think about such things.'[43] This is the naive and ignorant happiness I mentioned earlier, in which Baudelaire refuses to partake, the ignorance which he is directly challenging. Pascal

[38] Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p.52.
[39] Samuel Beckett, *Proust* (New York: Grove Press, 1931), p.7.
[40] Raposa, p.15.
[41] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writing*. Translated by Honor Levi (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p.14.
[42] Pascal, *Pensées*. Translated by A.J. Krailsheimer (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1995), p.61.
[43] *Pensées*, p.37.

comments: 'nothing could be more wretched than to be intolerably depressed as soon as one is reduced to introspection with no means of diversion.'[44] Baudelaire is concerned with this diversion and diversionary tactics, and determined to expose them as such to the readers – who, in their efforts to avoid boredom get lost in the midst of distracting themselves from their actual lives – a situation, which, it could be argued, is just as lamentable as being engulfed by boredom itself. Baudelaire, on the other hand, as poet, has various escapes open to him, the inhabitation, at will, of whom so ever he might choose from the crowd. He recognizes his diversions and his dependence on the possibility to vent and escape. Of a much despised Belgium he wrote, '*La flânerie est impossible à Bruxelles*.'[45]

Baudelaire's poem 'Obsession' begins with a fear of open, wide spaces: '*Grands bois, vous m'effrayez comme des cathédrales*; *Vous hurlez comme l'orgue*.' He continues: '*dans nos coeurs maudits [...] Répondent les échos de vos* De profundis.'[46] The perceived vastness of space and the travelling of the echo lead to an amplification of the emptiness, as the fullness of woods is cooled by the stone impasse of the outside of cathedrals, the cold and chilled height. And yet it seems that it is exactly this type of emptiness, vast and awe- inspiring that B is instinctively reaching for: '*je cherche le vide, et le noir, et le nu / Mais les ténèbres sont elles-mêmes des toiles*.'[47] That the darkness is itself a canvas, a blank waiting to be filled in is emphasised by the '*Mais*' – a blank which he wants to fill – but already on these canvases are projections of the dead and departed, invisible shadows to boredom. This nothingness is, at the same time, non-existent, indefinable and infinitely desirable and inspirational to the poet. Can he convince the reader of the same? In attempting to confront the nothingness that exists through and beyond boredom he cannot leave the blank dark or the dark blank and so thoughts race and multiply. An obsession with vastness and extension, be it of the sea, '*Je te hais, Océan* ! *tes bonds et tes tumultes*'[48], or of boredom, means that he is never dealing only with self, but with self in relation to other and outside, crowd and space.

[44] Pascal, p.8.
[45] *Lettres à sa Mère*, Samedi 10 février 1866, p.203.
[46] Obsession', p.75.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

Someone suffering with or from ennui was often an 'object of pity.'[49] We do find evidence of pity in Baudelaire's poetry, self-pity entwined with a shuddering quasi-resignation as he gathers strength.

> *Je suis de mon coeur le vampire,*
> *– Un de ces grands abandonnés*
> *Au rire éternel condamnés*
> *Et qui ne peuvent plus sourire* ![50]

Also evident is an almost sadistic pitying of others – whose tortuous situation he, as poet, can decipher. In 'La Muse vénale' he asks what will become of the addressee '*Durant les noirs ennuis des neigeuses soirées*' and claims to observe the '*rire trempé de pleurs qu'on ne voit pas.*'[51] As in the poem 'Le Masque', Baudelaire unmasks the realities ignored by others, faces the concealed tortures which are most often conveniently overlooked. Baudelaire wanders through the crowd in order to find himself in others, to identify himself by cancelling out or recognising elements of others. Since boredom forces us to reckon with ourselves, drives us into the arms of any distraction that will house us and deafen us to the truths of ourselves (either the depths to which we've sunk, or the depths to which we are prepared to go in order to avoid ourselves) and invites an evaluation of self as individuated or as same. Baudelaire pursues this duality in poems such as 'Le Cygne' or 'L'Albatros' which isolate the poet as exile and other.

Nietzsche, in his 1873 essay 'On Truth and Lies in the Nonmoral Sense', 6 years after Baudelaire's death in 1867, addresses the di- or bisephalous nature of human behaviour, examined also in Baudelaire's 'Le Masque':

> Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendour, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and oneself – in short, a continuous fluttering around the *solitary* flame of vanity – is so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing

[49] Raposa, p.35.
[50] 'L'Héautontimorouménos', p.78.
[51] 'La Muse vénale', p.15.

> which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them.[52]

Baudelaire, in 'Au lecteur', addresses the selfishness and self-obsession of his self-inclusive subject:

> *Nos péchés sont têtus, nos repentirs sont lâches*;
> *Nous nous faisons payer grassement nos aveux*,
> *Et nous rentrons gaiement dans le chemin bourbeux*,
> *Croyant par de vils pleurs laver toutes nos taches*. (My emphasis)

The faint repentance smacks of a failure to engage and a lack of awareness [with either the being or the nothingness] – as Nietzsche describes it: 'They are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see 'forms'. Their senses nowhere lead nowhere to the truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and, as it were, engage in a groping game on the backs of things.'[53] This image echoes the awkward, misguided clambering of foot on back and foot onto next back, bodies nettling past one another to reach the tower's top only to come full circle, ending up back underfoot, literally surrounded by the mechanical footfalls of those other invisible souls. As Baudelaire highlights in his opening poem of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, boredom and socialisation are interlinked. Nietzsche summarises: 'From boredom and necessity, man wishes to exist socially and with the herd.'[54] He highlights our inability to exist independently, to amuse ourselves, stimulate ourselves without interaction with the pack – whether or not we will ever actually fit in with the pack or not seemingly irrelevant.

Nietzsche claims that 'The liar is the person who uses the valid designations, the words, in order to make something which is unreal appear to be real.'[55] Like Baudelaire, Nietzsche interrogates the characteristics and formulation of what is real or false, truth or lies, consciousness or unconsciousness.

[52] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader – On Truth and Lies in the Nonmoral Sense* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p.115.
[53] Nietzsche, p.115.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

> Truth? A moveable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed [...] Truth are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force.[56]

Baudelaire's truth is a consciousness which questions illusions, assesses sin and responds to the repercussions of the emptiness, self-torture, self-loathing, guilt and moral expectations of society. By supplanting the tired, devalued metaphors with new ones, Baudelaire succeeds, as the banning of some of his poems perhaps proved, in shocking and provoking his readers into a new examination of what they do to avoid boredom, and what they do while in the grips of it. Baudelaire's particular and personal revolt was in the realisation that consciousness was the key, stopping and standing in that moment – letting the face of ennui gape ('*Soulagement et gloire unique, – La conscience dans le Mal*!').[57]

Nietzsche continues: 'Does nature not conceal most things from him – even concerning his own body – in order to confine him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibres.'[58] Baudelaire's rebellion is to open up and splice the innards of this body so adept at cloaking, to empty out, search through the spleen, the entangled gall – force a connection between body and mind, between body and consciousness. What is being played out in *Les Fleurs du Mal* is 'the drama of a generalized modern consciousness.'[59] Baudelaire is curving the poetic trajectory and driving his readers: 'The poem's emphatic denial that any of the experiences or memories are themselves of interest leaves the impression that any value must lie in the operations of consciousness themselves, such as memory, revulsion, or self-criticism.'[60] The extent to which such operations of consciousness valorise sin, debauchery, destitution or destruction varies, as does the de-

[56] Ibid., p.117.
[57] 'L'Irrémédiable', p.79.
[58] Nietzsche, p.115.
[59] *The Flowers of Evil*, Edited by James McGowan and Jonathan Culler (Oxford: OUP, 1993) p.xxxi.
[60] Ibid.

sired effect of each on the senses, and the power of each to motivate and stir from boredom. The relief that Baudelaire imagined from *ennui* was not simply an awakening into consciousnesses, but also a release into and beyond another world. In 'Elévation' Baudelaire talks of a place above and beyond the city and nature, and most importantly, one untouched by the curse of boredom: '*Derrière les ennuis et les vastes chagrins.*'[61] The new and unknown were to be encountered on voyages, in the mere idea of embarkation – barks (echoing Shakespeare's sonnet 116) themselves raring in the heads of hair which spread like oceans, deranged and unmanageable before him. The possibilities presented by the voyage were multifold, the heavenly presented alongside images of ships of death: '*O Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps*! *Levons l'ancre*!'[62] 'Le Voyage' asserts that '*les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent / Pour partir*.' Similar, perhaps, are those who chose consciousness as an alterable and alternate destination, and chose it for its own sake, regardless of the thundering horrors and sobering tableaux in wait.

A trademark Baudelairean move in Underhill's view was 'to carry perverse postures to extremes.'[63] Baudelaire pushed *ennui* and all that it entailed to a position opposite from consciousness, a position of unwitting loss of choice and free will, a position which led inevitably to a chain of uncontrollable consequences. Baudelaire relates details of an ennui which has hijacked time, creating a timelessness that grates and drags, the opposite of an awareness of time ('L'Ennemi'). The drug use, to which ennui was the necessary precursor, companion and conspirator, had similar powers to paralyse ('La Destruction'). Once consciousness in evil is achieved, time takes on different implications and, once gained, is something to be tested, heightened and experimented with. Intoxication then, ironically, offers itself as the only escape from both time and boredom itself, while perpetuating its cyclical drive (prose-poem 'Enivrez-vous').

Heidegger remarks: 'Boredom is still distant when it is only this book or that play, that business or this idleness, that drags on. It irrupts when 'one is bored.' Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abyss of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and human

[61] 'Elévation', p.11.
[62] 'Le Voyage', p.129.
[63] Underhill, p.176.

beings and oneself along with them into a remarkable indifference.'[64] This fog meets Baudelaire's '*brouillard*', where this indifference has led to invisibility, death. 'This boredom reveals beings as a whole'[65] – but beings on the verge/edge and seeking an exit. Heidegger describes anxiety and the peculiar calm which pervades it.

> 'We say, 'one feels ill at ease [*es ist einem unbheimlich*]'. What is 'it' that makes 'one' feel ill at ease [...] The receding of beings as a whole that closes in on us in anxiety oppresses us. We can get no hold on things. In the slipping away of beings only this 'no hold on things' comes over us and remains. Anxiety reveals the nothing. We hover in anxiety. [...] without the original revelation of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom.'[66]

Baudelaire creates a similar climate of anxiety – a feeling of being 'ill at ease' as Heidegger puts it – pushing the reader out into the nothing, into realisation, selfhood and ultimately freedom. Only by recognising and being made aware of their boredom can the reader come to terms with their state, come to know the opposite of boredom, the alternative. '[T]he original anxiety in existence is usually repressed. Anxiety is there. It is only sleeping'[67] – and it is the same with consciousness. Baudelaire is pulling it from its drugged slumber. He also reawakens anxiety and therefore re-attunes his readers to the nothing, forcing a consciousness of being. '[H]uman existence can relate to beings only if it holds itself out into the nothing.'[68] Baudelaire holds the reader out into the devastation of nothing, boredom, forcing them to confront the question which Heidegger formulated: 'Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?'[69]

Baudelaire's rebellion is in his confrontation of *ennui*, in his assault of the soporific masses as he serves up a rather unappetising platter of reality, home truths, unsettling questions and accusations. Again towards the end of his life, Baudelaire revisits the question of his own vices, and that which has consistently been his personal downfall. While he may

[64] Heidegger, Martin, *What is Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, 1978), p.99.
[65] Ibid., p.99 (My emphasis).
[66] Ibid. My emphasis.
[67] Heidegger, p.106.
[68] Heidegger, p.109.
[69] Heidegger, p.110.

have acknowledged, and therefore reduced to some degree the silent drain of ennui on his own person, he was painfully aware of the time which, despite his considered consciousness, he watched slip, '*le vice encore plus dangereux, c'est la lâcheté, le découragement, et l'habitude de laisser fuir les années, en renvoyant toujours les choses au lendemain.*'[70] He was not, however, immune to boredom, but his cognisance of it allowed him to open up questions of being beyond a lifetime on earth, questions pertaining to the possible purgatorial boredoms stretching beyond any human or knowable consciousness, beyond any earthly achievement over conquerable ennui. Baudelaire's examination of *ennui*, his exposition of its city burgeoning, its seductive side-streets of divertimenti, its final, yawning, consumptive possession of the urban individual, chart the trajectory of the human prey. Tossed and caught like the casual city sinner, Baudelaire shares his encounters – so that others might recognise the mire, or, when stumbling, reach to steady themselves and clutch at a consciousness of the mindless and misremembered sin they approach – before it's too late. Despite all this, Baudelaire, like Nietzsche, is not offering any bespoke comforts or Christian certainties. 'Consciousness in evil'[71] is the ideal state, not the easy one:

> *Voulez-vous* (*d'un destin trop dur*
> *Epouvantable et clair emblème*!)
> *Montrer que dans la fosse même*
> *Le sommeil promis n'est pas sûr*;
> *Qu'envers nous le Néant est traître*:
> *Que tout, même la Mort, nous ment.*[72]

[70] *Lettres à sa Mère*, 11 février 1865, p.188.
[71] 'L'Irrémédiable', p.79.
[72] 'Le Squelette Laboureur', p.94.

Chapter 6 Luke Gibbons

Form, Fiction and Irish Modernity: Some French Connections

> Gap in their voices too. . .
> James Joyce, *Ulysses*.[1]

Arthur Conan Doyle's short story, 'A Shadow Before', opens with a terse summary of the tale that is to follow:

> The 15th of July, 1870, found John Worlington Dodds a ruined gamester of the Stock Exchange. Upon the 17th he was a very opulent man.[2]

The opening paragraph goes on to outline the abstract, mysterious forces of global finance at the onset of the modern world system, suggesting that by their very inscrutability, they lend themselves to the storyteller, or lover of romance:

> There is a romance of finance yet to be written, a story of huge forces that are forever waxing and waning, of bold operations, of breathless suspense, of agonized failure, of deep combinations which are baffled by others still more subtle. The mighty debts of each great European Power stand like so many columns of mercury, forever rising and falling to indicate the pressure upon each. He who can see far enough into the future to tell how that ever-varying column will stand tomorrow is the man who has fortune within his grasp. (154)

John Worlington Dodds, the hero of the story, is one such fortune teller – or fortune hunter –but his success on the world stage is not without a cer-

[1] James Joyce, *Ulysses* [1922] (New York: Vintage, 1993), 11.974. p.232.
[2] A. Conan Doyle, "A Shadow Before", in *The Green Flag* (Hodder and Staughton: London, n.d.), p.154. The story was first published in the *Windsor Magazine*, December 1898, vol. 9, pp.48-57. Subsequent references in parentheses in text.

tain bathos, for it took place not in the metropolis but in the town of Ballinasloe, Co Galway:

> And yet he has effected [the change in his fortunes] without leaving the penurious little town of Dunsloe, which could have been bought outright for a quarter of the sum which he has earned during the single day that he was within its walls. (154)

Worlington Dodds' lucky break arises from his visiting the town of Ballinasloe during its famous horse-fair. At breakfast in the 'George Hotel', he notices the delivery of telegrams, written in cipher, to two strangers, Mr. Strellenhaus of Liverpool and Mr. Mancune of Glasgow, who subsequently enter into a frenetic bidding war for a considerable stock of the finest horses at the fair. Mr. Strellenhaus wins but when he arrives at the telegraph office, Worlington Dodds is there before him, urgently wiring his financial partner, Mr. Warner, in London to dispose immediately of all French and German securities on the Stock Exchange. Though Warner is somewhat mystified as to what his partner could learn about securities in such a backward outpost as Ballinasloe, he acts accordingly. The following morning, he sees an excited crowd gathering around a poster fastened by a newsboy to a lamp-post: 'FRANCE DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY!"

Conan Doyle's remarkable story of the French connection with Ballinasloe underlines a key feature of globalization, often overlooked in standard accounts of centre versus periphery, advanced versus backward regions, of the world economy. This is that all sectors, however remote, are brought into contact with each other, though obviously at different levels and in continually altering circumstances. The west of Ireland was one such region, often depicted as a haven of primitivism and the premodern, but in many ways structurally integrated into world trade and population flows, not least through migration, fishing and agricultural markets. Visiting the island of Inisbofin in the mid 1930s, Thomas Mason noted that:

> Whilst waiting for the boat at Cleggan, our point of departure, I was astonished to hear two men, obviously foreigners, conversing in French. One of these men lives at Cleggan, which is a central depot for the lobsters that are trapped along the coast and around the islands . . . . The principal market is Paris and the French, who have organized the industry, have agents on the different islands where the lobsters are kept in large floating hollow rafts, each holding eight

> hundred lobsters, from which they are transferred to a boat with a large tank.[3]

A similar story applies to the Blasket islands, but not without its Brian Friel-type difficulties:

> During the lobster season a boat comes from France every fortnight. . . . When the boat first began to call, there was a difficulty in carrying out the business transactions. As the captain of the vessel spoke French and the islanders Irish neither party understood the other, and neither of them was able to talk fluently in English, which was the sole connecting link. These difficulties were eventually solved and the island men appreciated the value of the market at their very doors, as before the French boat called they had to sail about fifteen miles to Dingle in order to sell their lobsters for transportation to London. I was told the French sailors were 'decent men,' an Irish expression that denotes the height of respectability.[4]

In Mason's account of the revival of the Blasket fisherman's fortunes, it is possible to see a condensed narrative of the cultural crossings of Irish Literary Revival, as it bypassed London in favour of Paris, the alternative capital of modernity at the turn of the twentieth century. This recapitulates the central thesis of Pascale Casanova's magisterial account of the 'World Republic of Letters', the process whereby certain national literatures initiate a conversation not only with their own culture but with the world at large, projecting the intensities of a specific place or time onto the world stage. For Casanova, the Irish Revival was the most telling example of such a process, establishing, in effect, a triangulation of achievement in which Parisian modernism acted as an alternative to the provincial constraints of Dublin and the debilitating imperial metropolis of London. As an epigraph to her chapter on 'the Irish paradigm', she cites Cyril Connolly's incendiary account of the leading writers of the Revival: 'For them England was the Philistine and since they could not use Gaelic, their aim was to discover what blend of Anglo-Irish and

[3] Thomas H. Mason, *The Islands of Ireland* [1936] (Cork: Mercier Press, 1967), p.58.
[4] Ibid., pp.111-12.

French would give them an explosive that would knock the pundits of London of their padded seats'.[5]

Mapping the co-ordinates of Irish literature onto global space, Casanova outlines a three-stage process: the first stage consisting in Yeats' leadership of a revival in Dublin, the second in Shaw's moving to London for greater critical and commercial success, and the final radical breakthrough effected by Joyce's move to Paris – and, of course, Trieste and Zurich - repudiating both national and imperial poles to establish a new international literary meridian. The first stage in this process in which a culture comes to consciousness, like Christy Mahon stuttering into speech in *The Playboy of the Western World*, undeniably represents a considerable achievement, all the more so given the jeremiads of cultural extinction that faced the so-called 'Celt' since the mid-eighteenth century. The theory of 'doomed races', of ethnocide if not actual genocide, predated Darwinism by over a century and was, in fact, first formulated in relation to the Celt in the aftermath of the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Hence the trope of the 'Last of the Bards' and the 'Last of the Clan' that received its earliest expression in the elegiac laments of the mythical Ossian in the Scottish Highlands, and which re-surfaced with ominous intent in the United States in the theme of the 'Last of the Mohicans', or the 'Last of the Race', that were to accompany the exit of Native American from history.[6] As the writing was on the wall for Gaelic culture as well, it was not surprising that it led to the inveterate melancholia of the Celt: 'He went forth to war/But he always fell', in the famous lines of Ossian memorialized by Matthew Arnold. For Pascal Casanova, the first generation of a national revival tended to look precisely to the endangered old sagas and legendary cycles to stake out the claim to an ancient civilization, a process underlined by the turn towards folklore and ethnographic realism in the peasant play and the 'myth of the west' in Ireland fostered by the Revival.

Partly in reaction to this inward turn, writers like Shaw, and, to a lesser extent, Wilde, looked to London to spread their literary wings, 'integration with the center' seeming 'to assure the certainty of aesthetic

[5] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. De Bevoise (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.303. Subsequent references in parentheses in text.
[6] Georg Fridén, *James Fenimore Cooper and Ossian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).

freedom and critical tolerance that small national capital such as Dublin, torn between the centrifugal pull of British literary space and internal self-affirmation, could not guarantee' (314). It is at this point that the third generation breaks free, repudiating both nation and empire – a radical shift effected by the revolutionary energies of Joyce and Beckett:

> Exploiting national literary resources that for the first time are regarded as such, they break away from the national and nationalist model of literature and, in inventing the conditions of their autonomy, achieve freedom. In other words, whereas the first national intellectuals refer to the political idea of literature in order to create a particular national identity, the newcomers refer to international literary laws to bring into existence, still on a national level, another type of literature and literary capital. (324-5)

'Wrote Ever With One Eye of London'[7]

This image of a culture first talking to itself in a national colloquy (if not monologue), and then freeing itself from egocentric speech to speak to others in the imperial centre and the world at large, accords with certain perceptions of the transition from the national to the international, but in fact requires considerable revision in the case of Ireland. Casanova mentions in passing that the 'centrifugal pull' of London in Shaw's case *predates* the Revival, but by locating her analysis within the timescale of 1890-1930, the period of 'inventing' Ireland, her depiction of an initial stage of national narcissism fails to do justice to the complex manner in which Irish letters *were already implicated* in empire and a wider Anglophone world. Viewed from the longer duration of late eighteenth century and the Romantic era, the trajectory of Irish literature can be seen not as a shift from the local to the global, but the other way around: the attempt to *retrieve* a national voice, to conduct an internal dialogue, from a previously imposed internationalism, routed through London and empire. As Daniel Corkery famously argued in *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (1931), expatriation has a deeper hold on Irish literature in English than the native 'moulds' of tradition:

[7] W. B. Yeats' dismissal of the verses of Samuel Lover and Charles Lever in "Popular Ballad Poetry of Ireland" [1889], in W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Works: Early Articles and Reviews*, ed. John P. Frayne and Madeleine Marchaterre (New York: Scribner, 2004), vol. IX, p.108.

> Expatriation is not of to-day, nor of yesterday. It has been a chronic disease from Goldsmith's time, Steele's time, Sheridan's time, Burke's time, [Thomas] Moore's time, Prout's time, Wilde's time, to our own time of Shaw, Joyce and [George] Moore. Expatriation is, therefore, an older feature in this literature than the very moulds of it.[8]

The 'original' state of Irish letters was thus one in which a culture *spoke to others*, or sang for its supper, in the master's court.[9] The inescapable orientation towards London, not just in terms of publishing houses but economies of scale relating to readership, meant that an indigenous revival, a literature primarily for and by Irish people, was not on the cards. As the novelist William Carleton lamented in 1843, sounding the note of literary absenteeism that was to resonate throughout the century:

> In truth, until within the last ten or twelve year an Irish author never thought of publishing on his own country, and the consequence was that our literary men followed the example of our great landlords; they become absentees, and drained the country of its intellectual wealth precisely as others exhausted it of its rents. Thus did Ireland stand in the singular anomaly of adding some of the most distinguished names to the literature of Great Britain, whilst she herself

[8] Daniel Corkery, *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* [1931] (Cork: Mercier Press, 1966), pp.6-7.

[9] As Margaret Kelleher notes: 'The years 1830 to 1890 also mark a period in which differentiations of 'English' and 'Irish' writing, whether in prose or drama, are not easily made. Many Irish born writers moved to London or were entirely published in London; some entered the mainstream of English literature, without complication, in terms of subject matter and form; others returned to Irish themes frequently, still others intermittently in their careers. Of the authors who remained in Ireland, few could sustain themselves solely on the domestic market and sought a wider readership'. Kelleher proceeds to examine how Irish fiction sought definition within these market constraints. Margaret Kelleher, "Prose and Drama in English, 1830-1890", in Margaret Kelleher and Philip O'Leary (eds), *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), vol. 1, p.450.

> remained incapable of presenting anything to the world beyond a school book or pamphlet.[10]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as native publishing houses such as James Duffy, James M'Glashan, , Sealy, Bryers and Walker, M. H. Gill and Sons and others began to cater for an expanding Irish reading public, calls were still being made for 'A national Irish Literature [which] must be the work of men who write for the Irish, but not for the English public': 'Literature to be national, must be racy of the people among whom and for whom it is produced'.[11] Yet notwithstanding the burgeoning of national sentiment, the imbalance between the publishing of Irish titles in Ireland and England increased dramatically towards the end of the nineteenth century: whereas the proportion was almost 1 to 1 in the 1830s, it was I to 8 by the 1890s.[12] It is for this reason that D. J. O Donoghue still found it necessary to warn that literary absenteeism was a blight on the cultural landscape:

> The writers follow the books & once an Irishman [sic] publishes in England, the chances are a thousand to one, unless prevented by some professional or other appointment, that he will settle there in due course. This literary absenteeism . . . is almost worse for Ireland than that of the other kind practiced by landowners.

O'Donoghue proceeded to argue that an 'Irish writer publishing in London does not cater solely for his countrymen at home, who are necessarily more exacting in the manner of the right sort of national sentiment.'[13]

[10] William Carleton, "General Introduction", *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (Dublin and London: Curry and Orr, 1843-4), vol. 1, p.v, cited in Kelleher, p.451.
[11] Joseph F. O'Carroll, "A National Irish Literature", Inaugural Address, Literary and Historical Society of the Catholic University of Ireland (Dublin, 1877), cited in Rolf Loeber, Magda Stouthamer-Loeber and Joep Leerssen, "Early Calls for an Irish National Literature, 1820-1877", unpublished paper, 2001, pp.14, 13. I am grateful to the authors for a copy of this valuable survey.
[12] Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, "The Early and later Development of Fiction Relating to Ireland, 1680-1900", 18th-19th Century newsletter, No. 8, August 1998, p.3. I am grateful to the authors for a copy of this research.
[13] D.J. O'Donoghue, "Literature in Ireland; By an Irish Onlooker" [1894], cited in Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, 'Literary Absentees: Irish

As Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber point out, the ambiguity of the phrase 'his countrymen at home' alerts us to the predicament of the Irish writer: it leaves open the possibility of countrymen *abroad*, and an ineluctable international dimension, whether fraught (as in Corkery's critique of the émigré) or enabling. That the most ardent calls for a national literature envisaged it taking place in the English language meant, moreover, that British readers and the global networks empire were privy to the conversation. So far from impairing speech, it may have been precisely the dual address, relaying diverse messages to different readerships, that laid the groundwork for the Irish Revival's accession to world literature, its capacity to speak to others while conversing with oneself. As Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber note in relation to woman authors: 'It is also possible that Irish women authors living in England could appeal to multiple audiences at any one time, and could cannily exploit both markets to maximize their success'.[14] In this respect, Irish authors thus came to resemble the condition of Swift's Laputans, 'one of their Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith',[15] whether in London or elsewhere.

In its constant orientation towards other voices and influences, Irish writing assumed the 'susceptibility' that the philosopher and educationalist Sophie Bryant took to be the condition of Irish identity itself, whether at a personal or cultural level. Awareness of the other or 'sympathetic consciousness', she writes, 'is not the product of civilization in him' – though, as we have seen, a pervasive colonial presence and the political economy of publishing were hardly negligible features in producing it. Bryant continues:

> When he [the Irish person] opens his eyes on the consciousness of self, the consciousness of these others with whom he lives and grows is present to him. And this other consciousness towards human beings generally, and even towards animals, grows with his growth and develops, so far as not checked by circumstances, in all normal life relations.

Women Authors in Nineteenth-Century England', in Jacqueline Belanger (ed.), *The Irish Novel in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp.170, 183.

[14] Ibid., p.184.

[15] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, in Philip Pinkus (ed.), *Jonathan Swift; A Selection of His Works* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), p.151.

This openness to others in the act of speaking for and to oneself becomes 'the *key to the Irishman's social nature*': 'he is *other-conscious as a matter of course*'.[16] Racial typologies aside, Bryant's observations pick up on the significant strand in Irish writing as it evolved from the Romantic period to the Revival: an 'other-consciousness' of self-expression, an awareness of speaking to more than one audience. Though Bryant considers this primarily in positive terms, the 'Celtic' capacity for sympathy and hospitality, it is more likely that it arose as successive accretions within Irish culture reacted to a series of invasive, *dominant* 'Others'. When writers from a Gaelic or Catholic background found expression in print, it is not surprising that they showed an acute awareness of multiple voices, the formal pressures induced by diverse readerships not necessarily on the same page. As Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) described the opening sections of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827), whose narrative incoherence risked losing English readers in a maze of legal disputes and labyrinthine family genealogies that were only of interest to the dispossessed:

> This volume is a faithful transcript of the manners, style, & habits of the Provincial Irish (particularly in Connaught) 60 years ago – Terrence O'Brien & the Miss Mac Taafs are portraits of originals long passed away - and tho for the English reader the *busy facility* of the first 100 pages, will render them tedious – In Ireland, they made the fortune of the book.[17]

This 'forked tongue', or dual address, is one of the constituents of 'the national tale', the forerunner of Irish national literature, as evident in the ethnographic asides, antiquarian footnotes, idiomatic glossaries which testify to different degrees of comprehension in disparate reading audiences. In the case of Mary Leadbetter's *Cottage Dialogues* (1811, 1813), only the London editions carried the glossaries (prepared by Maria Edgeworth); Irish readers were presumed to be 'in the know'.

[16] Sophie Bryant, *The Genius of the Gael: A Study in Celtic Psychology and its Manifestations* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913). p.88.
[17] Lady Morgan, handwritten dedication to Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, February 10, 1830, in presentation copy of *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (private collection).

The Autoethnographic Turn

This adoption of an anthropological stance towards one's own culture (the 'critical interruption' of the voice) amounts to what recent critics have termed the 'autoethnographic' turn in nineteenth-century fiction, one of the devices whereby a national literature attained a global, proto-modernist mode of address. In *Disorienting Fictions*, James Buzard traces the origins of a distinctive modernist form of consciousness associated with ethnography and anthropology that is free, as it were, to roam to the world, opening up other cultures to its scrutiny while yet retaining attachments (however unspoken) to its own metropolitan – not to say, imperial – provenance. The native cultures subject to this ethnographic gaze are not, of course, accorded the same imaginative range: they are rooted on the spot, lacking a capacity to look askance at other cultures, let alone themselves. They are subject to the vernacular, the idiomatic, the language of the folk, duly recorded in dialogue and field notes: the observer, however, floats free in a kind of cultural bi-location, roaming the world while yet remaining British at core. Buzard thus challenges Perry Anderson's argument that in their haste to look abroad, the British lost the ability to take a good hard look at themselves. It was precisely the 'thinning' of Britishness through overseas settlements that provoked the desire to intensify identity back home, conferring it under an Arnoldian turn with a new cultural depth, if not quite ethnicity (which remained the preserve of natives). In nineteenth-century British fiction, Buzard traces a tendency to turn, as it were, the anthropological gaze on Britain itself, a reflexive development manifesting itself in a distinctive 'autoethnographic' stance in the work of novelists such as Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. Pressed, to account for the emergence of this dissociative modernist sensibility in fiction, he cites the authoritative narrative mobility of Scott's *Waverly* and - almost as an afterthought – the prior imaginative fictional excursions of Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson in Ireland:

> The story of the English Victorian novel has to begin outside of England and before the Victorian era, in the early nineteenth-century narratives of cultural autonomy and United Kingdom consolidation [sic] produced by *Irish, Anglo-Irish and Scottish authors oriented primarily to the secondary capitals of the United Kingdom, Dublin and Edinburgh*. It is the hands of such writers that the novel first takes up the task of safeguarding, salvaging, or recovering cultural identities and territories, and it does so – a century before Malinowski's field-

> working science - through an increasingly *self-conscious practice of critical interruption*.[18]

Buzard cites Edgeworth's use of the native informant, Thady Quirk, the unreliable narrator of *Castle Rackrent*, as a case in point – so unreliable, in fact, that his voice has to be repeatedly interrupted by the intervention of a more authoritative source of truth in the form of the textual apparatuses mentioned above: scholarly references, textual glossaries, and so on. The impartial authority of this narrative scaffolding, however, is destabilized in Owenson's fiction by the *re-admission of the native voice*, albeit in the form of her own personal interventions, often in an idiomatic register: 'I saw this myself in Connacht', etc.[19] Edgeworth was ventriloquizing the native voice, whereas Owenson, from a Gaelic background, was double-coding it, re-routing it through the 'academic' self-conscious gloss or footnote. This duality was bound up with Owenson's own biography, her father, the actor and stage manager Robert Owenson, anglicising his name from MacEoin and changing his religion to pass as a gentleman in late eighteenth-century Ireland, as well as being the first performer to speak in Irish on the Dublin stage. Owenson's fiction then might be seen as introducing a *subaltern* autoethnographic turn, the reflexive capacity in the native voice to address an external vantage-point in the act of self-expression: in later modernist terms, James Joyce reading the book of himself.

In the multiple registers of Owenson's voice – buried quotations, layered idioms and shifting interlocutors – it is possible to trace the outlines of a stylistic device that became one of the formal signatures of modernism, particularly in the work of James Joyce: free indirect discourse. Free indirect discourse is a mode of narration in which a character's consciousness is described from the outside, in the third person, but in a manner that catches the tonality of their voice: their personality, values, world view. As Karen Lawrence summarizes it:

[18] James Buzard, *Disorienting Fictions: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p.40.

[19] I have discussed the incongruity of these personal interpolations in "Narratives of the Nation: Fact, Fiction and Irish Cinema", in Luke Dodd (ed.), *Nationalism: Visions and Revisions* (Dublin: Film Institute of Ireland, 1999), reprinted in Claire Connolly (ed.), *Theorizing Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2004).

> This technique renders a character's speech or thoughts in the character's own idiom, while maintaining 'the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration' but not the introductory phrases (such as 'he said that') of indirect discourse.[20]

For Lawrence, this device is more representative of Joyce's distinctive contribution to modernism than its more famous related narrative mode, the 'interior monologue' or 'stream of consciousness' in which a characters inner world is seemingly given directly to the reader. The oscillation between alternative voices and narrative positions in free indirect discourse allow for a full range of polyphony and parodic qualities that stretch narrative authority to its limits. The French connection to Irish modernism is again apparent here for it is common to account for Joyce's adoption of this technique in purely formal or intertextual terms to literary predecessors such as Flaubert,[21] or to the forces that give rise to the emergence of cubism and multiple perspectives in art.[22] What is of concern here is what might be termed the *inner history* of form, the possibility that such innovations come into their own at critical points in the history of the culture that produces them. Thus Joyce's experiments with form emerged from a Irish culture already struggling with the difficulties of articulation in multiple voices: a culture that had not only lost its own language in everyday life, but was subject to speaking the new language in its dominant received forms of standard English. The capacity of French techniques and innovations, whether from Balzac, Flaubert, Impressionism or 'interior monologue', to provide narrative spaces for Irish writers outside the constraints of the Victorian novel, is already apparent in the stylistic departures of George Moore, who was already experimenting both interior monologue and free indirect discourse in the 1880s.[23] That Joyce considered this search for form to be bound up with

[20] Karen Lawrence, *The Odyssey of Style in* Ulysses (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.19. The quoted segment within is from Dorrit Cohn's classic discussion of the technique, *Transparent Minds: Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p.100.
[21] See Michael Patrick Gillespie, *Reading the Book of Himself: Narrative Strategies in the Work of James Joyce* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1989), Chs. 4, 7.
[22] Jo Anna Isaak, *The Ruin of Representation in Modernist Art and Texts* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), pp.36-40, 49-50.
[23] David B. Eakin and Helmut E. Gerber, "Introduction", *In Minor Keys: The*

the dual-voice of Irish culture us clear from the famous exchange between Stephen Dedalus and the English Dean of Studies in Portrait, in which Stephen reflects:

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.[24]

This emphasis on semiotic shifts, of different worlds attaching to the same words, lies behind what may be called the *genealogies* of form in Irish modernism, the extent to which submerged histories and cultural voices find stylistic expression in aesthetic form. Considered in these terms, form can be seen – as suggested by critics such as Theodor Adorno and Fredric Jameson - as both the distillation and displacement of history, the concentration of the unrequited cultural energies of one epoch into the framing perspectives of the next: often a period that ostensibly breaks from its predecessors.[25] Free indirect discourse, the tendency of hitherto stifled cultural forces to place pressure on the language of the master, bears witness to precisely the emergence of the Irish Revival, and its capacity to inspire similar struggles for articulation in marginal or peripheral cultures the world over. The question of Joyce's Irishness relates not just to anecdotal details or local colour, the small change of content or textual allusions, but underlies his most profound innovations in *form*, the means whereby an Irish national literature becomes modern in its most radical, universal sense.

Clearly, form itself is historically situated and free indirect discourse overtly so, in that it prevents any closed, purely textual interpretation, always depending for its nuances and fine-tuning on the 'extra-

Uncollected Stories of George Moore (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p.30.

[24] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* [1916], ed. Seamus Deane (London: Penguin, 1992), p.205.

[25] On this aspect of Adorno, see Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Centuries Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Ch. 1.

textual' cultural location of the reader.[26] Thus, in one of it variants, the retention of omniscient narration in free indirect discourse can lend itself to a version of the narrator as anthropologist, the 'author' ventriloquizing inner voices only to control and orchestrate them, concealing its own master narrative under a patina of authenticity and local idioms. The use of subdued dramatic irony in such cases implies that the narrator knows more than the characters, the inner life of the native being ventilated to expose its deficiencies, its lack of grasp of what is happening to them.[27] Hence Karen Lawrence's description of a process in which, through free indirect discourse, the narrator 'borrows' from characters 'their self-images, their fictions, their cliches':

> He masquerades as a participant in the world of his characters and appears 'unreliable' because he seems to accept his character's limitations. Free indirect discourse allows him to seem to accept the self-image a character has created for himself, while pointing to the insufficiency of that image.[28]

This is certainly one possible outcome of the dialogical interplay between narration and a character's predicament, although it is open to alternate readings even in seemingly clear-cut cases: for example, the registering of Maria's voice in 'Clay' in *Dubliners* undoubtedly exposes shortfalls in her grasp of her surroundings, but it may also evoke sympathy rather than condescension, conveying the vulnerability arising from the gap between inner and outer worlds.

The assertion of authority in indirect free discourse, ironizing 'subordinate' voices, depends ultimately on a *stable*, objective narrator, and it is precisely this privileged vantage-point that is questioned historically in some of the most significant achievements of Irish fiction, from Sydney Owenson through to Thomas Moore's *Captain Rock* (1824), from Bram Stoker's assembly of a collage of narrators in *Dracula* (1897) to Joyce's stylistic innovations. In this sense, Irish anticipations of free indirect dis-

[26] See Michael Patrick Gillespie, *Reading the Book of Himself: Narrative Strategies in the Work of James Joyce* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989), p.12.
[27] For this mode of ironic condescension in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, see Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp.482-5.
[28] Lawrence, *Odyssey of Style*, p.23.

course approximate to Lily's obstreperous 'back answers' in 'The Dead', the native voice insisting on a claim to authorial participation, and a say in its own narrative destiny. This contestation of (often disavowed) master narratives is closer to the strategy of hybridity outlined by Homi Bhabha 'that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rule of recognition'[29] Such a reversal can be seen in the manner in which Lily's idiomatic register 'pollutes' the narrative authority of the opening sentences of "The Dead": 'Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet'; she 'scampered' along the hallway; 'It was well for her she had not to attend to the ladies also'.[30] Her actual voice does not make it into the text when Gabriel arrives for we do not hear her 'three-syllabic pronunciation of his name', only his patronizing response to it. When her colloquial passion finally breaks into dialogue, it is as if the ground has been prepared for the infiltration of other muted voices that will unsettle Gabriel's composure, not least the voice that sang 'The Lass of Aughrim' in the 'old Irish tonality'.[31]

It is striking that Gabriel's discomfiture, and further loss of authority, is augmented by his determination to *supplant* his native 'tonality', whether of Dublin or the west of Ireland, by London and 'the continent'. The opening onto the universe at the end of the story is routed through Gabriel's visionary journey to the west - what Joyce himself called the 'unsettling modernity' of Galway[32] – indicating that his hubris lies not in his cosmopolitanism, but his assumption that sophistication and access to the modern can only be attained through abasement of one's own culture. The colonial cringe that consists in the muting of one's voice is shown in starker light in "A Little Cloud", as Little Chandler's abjection is induced

[29] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.162.
[30] For a pioneering discussion of Lily's voice in relation to free indirect discourse, see Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), pp.15-16. Kenner goes on famously to refer to the technique as 'The Uncle Charles Principle' in Joyce, linking it to Joyce's ventriloquism of the character Uncles Charles in *A Portrait.*
[31] James Joyce, "The Dead", in *Dubliners* [1914] (London: Penguin, 1992), pp.177, 211.
[32] James Joyce, "The City of the Tribes: Italian Memories in an Irish Port"[1912], in *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.197.

not by actual circumstances but an undue envy of elsewhere, the small mind's rage at its own provincialism. The visit of Little Chandler's world-wise friend, Ignatius Gallaher, from exile abroad further accentuates his *ressentiment*, all the more when Gallaher arranges to meet him in the up-market Corless's restaurant: 'He had never been in Corless's but he knew the value of the name. He knew that people went there after the theatre to eat oysters and drink liqueurs; and he had heard that the waiters there spoke French and German'.[33] The prospect of meeting Gallaher boosts the vanity of Little Chandler's sagging ego: 'For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin' (68). In his momentary elevation, he muses of the life that might have been, or could still be:

> Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic life .... He tried to weigh his soul to see if it was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy....He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notice which his book would get. *Mr. Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse.... A wistful sadness pervades these poems....The Celtic note*. (68-9)

Little Chandler's paltry ambitions are, however, cruelly exposed when Gallaher, dining out on his continental soirees, asks him has he ever been abroad:

> - Have you never been anywhere even for a trip?
> - I've been to the Isle of Man,' said Little Chandler.
> Ignatius Gallaher laughed.
> - The Isle of Man!' he said. 'Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good. (71)
> The ensuing sense of deflation is matched only by the timidity of Little Chandler's libidinal reveries: 'Everything in Paris is gay,' continues Gallaher:
> They believe in enjoying life -- and don't you think they're right? If you want to enjoy yourself properly you must go to Paris. And,

[33] James Joyce, "A Little Cloud", in *Dubliners*, p.66. Subsequent references in parentheses in text.

> mind you, they've a great feeling for the Irish there. When they heard I was from Ireland they were ready to eat me, man.
>
> Little Chandler took four or five sips from his glass.
>
> 'Tell me,' he said, 'is it true that Paris is so ... immoral as they say? (72)

That the source of Little Chandler's discontent is not just Dublin but his obsequious attitude towards all things foreign is clear early in the story from his sounding of the Arnoldian 'Celtic Note' as the expression of his inner voice. Though Casanova rightly points to the literary movement led by Yeats, Gregory and Synge as the foundations of the Revival, she does not attend sufficiently to the fact that much of this 'national conversation' was attuned in its early phases to 'the Celtic Note', an expression of imperial nostalgia for a vanishing culture. This corresponds to that version of free indirect discourse, noted by Lawrence above, in which the native speaks in its master's voice, the parting rays of the Celtic Twilight marking its exit from history and flight to the spirit world. It was this fey spiritualism that Joyce set out to dispel, not 'the national', as Casanova would have it: in fact, Joyce's own intellectual formation at University College, Dublin, took place in a nationalist milieu whose scathing rejection of Celticism was prompted by cultural energies that pointed a way forward in this world rather then the next.[34] Joyce's determination to debunk exoticism, enlisting the most debased aspects of the city in his project of renewal, linked the resurgence of the nation to a vernacular modernism, a contestation of language that allowed a culture for the first time to speak to the world at large in its displaced voice. Irish entry into the 'World Republic of Letters', therefore, did not follow a gradual transition from the local to the global but the reverse journey: a connection with the universal that allowed a concentration on the particular like never before. In his advice to the aspiring Irish artist Arthur Power, Joyce cautioned him to beware of simply imitating international influences, whether French or Russian: 'You will never do it . . . You are an Irishman and must write in your own tradition. Borrowed styles are no good'.

[34] Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1995). For a selection of writings by Joyce's contemporaries at college, see my section 'Constructing the Canon: Version of National Identity', in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. Seamus Deane, vol. 2 (Derry/London: Field Day/Faber and Faber, 1991).

It is not the borrowing but the recasting of other styles, the cultural expression of free indirect discourse, that generates a national literature, such as that of the great Russian writers: 'They were national first . . . and it was the intensity of their nationalism which made them international in the end, as in the case of Turgenev'.[35] Casanova rightly credits Joyce with a establishing a new literary meridian, an alternative, as it were, to Greenwich literary time, and in the 'Oxen of the Sun' chapter of *Ulysses*, Joyce gives free rein to his own mimicry of the English literary canon. Set in Holles Street hospital, it is perhaps appropriate that 'the Helios' or Sun God, the Head of the Lying-in Hospital, is Sir Andrew Horne, a native of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

[35] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.505.

Chapter 7 Alan Graham

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Apprentice: Beckett in the Paris Joyce Circle

Samuel Beckett first met James Joyce in November 1928. Beckett had just taken up residence as the Trinity College exchange *lecteur* in English at L'Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and through his predecessor, Thomas MacGreevy, met with his famous compatriot within the first few days of his arrival. Sixty years later Beckett's recollection of his first meeting with Joyce suggested an impressionable youth exhilarated by an encounter with a modern icon: "I remember coming back very exhausted to the Ecole Normale", he told James Knowlson, "and, as usual, the door was closed; so I climbed over the railings. I remember that. Coming back from my first meeting with Joyce."[1] In the interviews that he gave for Knowlson's biography in the last years and months of his life, Beckett returned again and again to his friendship with Joyce in the Paris of the late 1920s and 1930s and his memory of the details of this relationship testified not only to a rigorous mind but to the impact that Joyce had on his younger fellow Dubliner – he could still even remember Joyce's telephone number. Beckett's first experience of Paris was inextricably linked to this association with its most famous Irish resident and his representations of this friendship are inevitably wrapped up with the city, such as the touching portrait of 'the master' supplied in the late play *Ohio Impromptu* in which their Sunday constitutionals along the Seine are recalled:

> Day after day he could be seen slowly pacing the islet. Hour after hour. In his long black coat no matter what the weather and old world Latin Quarter hat. At the tip he would always pause to dwell on the

[1] James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*: *The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), p.98. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by K, followed by the page number.

> receding stream. How in joyous eddies its two arms conflowed and flowed united on. Then turn and his slow steps retrace.[2]

Yet what is often overlooked in scholarly accounts of the Joyce / Beckett nexus is the city in which it occurred. An investigation of the Paris that hosted one of the most intriguing relationships of the literary tradition sheds important light on the nature of this friendship and can help to elucidate the key divergences between Ireland's two most important literary exiles. In considering here the young Beckett's role within the Paris Joyce community I hope to provide a portrait of his interface with Joyce in terms of an equally significant negotiation of the artistic life of the city. While the years from 1928 to 1939, which bookend Beckett's membership of the Paris Joyce group, were marked more by frustration with his literary efforts compared to the rich vein of creativity that emerged in the aftermath of the war, this was the period in which Beckett made the most influential associations of his career, encounters which had a strong bearing on the Beckett *oeuvre*. Paris of the late 1920s and 1930s was for the young Beckett both the site in which his crucial engagement with Joyce took shape and the environment in which a path away from Joyce could be charted.

Twenty four years separated Beckett from Joyce when MacGreevy made the fateful introductions. Despite this the two quickly found much in common: both had studied French and Italian and both had a deep love of Dante, affinities that led Joyce to request Beckett to write the honorific essay "Dante … Bruno. Vico .. Joyce". They also shared a love of music, particularly Schubert, although Beckett never acquired Joyce's love of opera. Both men were decidedly agnostic and apolitical and capable of a wicked sense of humour – an important bond between Irish people. Their Irishness of course was an important connection and was largely responsible for bringing them together through MacGreevy, yet it was equally the differences in their backgrounds that formed part of the attraction: Joyce was pleased with Beckett's South County Dublin, Protestant upbringing and Trinity education, Beckett envious of Joyce's lapsed Catholicism which provided him with a rich creative reservoir and which Beckett would have recognised as an important ingredient in the Surrealist art of the time. Being Irish provided both men with a shared outlook

[2] Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p.446.

on life, perhaps best illustrated in Nino Frank's account of Joyce's visits to Beckett in hospital after he had been stabbed following an altercation in the street in January 1938:

> I have never felt so close to Ireland, to its sentimental isolation, to the very air of *Ulysses* as I did that day, sitting between these two brothers … Joyce confirmed my feeling, when having had enough of silences, we left. 'He is truly Irish', he told me. 'He doesn't hold it against the tramp at all, but do you know what he is mad about? The knife made a hole in his overcoat. He wants the judge to make it up to him and buy him another one.'[3]

Of course, the similarities and shared sympathies between the two writers have encouraged the critical tradition of presenting Beckett as Joyce's disciple, a portrait that would dog Beckett for much of his career. Even with his emergence in the 1950s as a ground-breaking dramatist writing in French the temptation for critics to contextualise Beckett's achievements in terms of Joyce's legacy proved irresistible; thus Lionel Abdel's 1959 essay on *Waiting for Godot* and *Krapp's Last Tape*, entitled "Joyce the Father, Beckett the Son." Seamus Deane has observed the ridiculous lengths that some critics will go to in order to assert affinity between the two and provides the example of when Beckett, having undergone an eye operation, was asked by an enthusiast to comment on the tradition that existed of Irish novelists who suffered from glaucoma.[4]

The details of Beckett's activities as a member of the Joyce circle are well-documented.[5] These consisted of clerical type tasks necessitated by the author's crippling eyesight and included taking dictation and reading aloud to Joyce from material that was of possible value to *Work in Progress*. Increasingly, however, Beckett was entrusted with duties that bordered on the authorial remit: correcting the proofs of parts one and three of *Work in Progress*, for example, or providing a French translation

[3] Cited in Anthony Cronin, *Samuel Beckett*: *The Last Modernist* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p.285. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by C followed by the page number.
[4] Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals*: *Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p.123.
[5] See biographies by Deirdre Bair, James Knowlson and Anthony Cronin and the most complete study of the Joyce/Beckett association, Barbara Reich Gluck's *Beckett and Joyce*: *Friendship and Fiction*.

of "Anna Livia Plurabelle". Beckett did sometimes receive payment from Joyce for this assistance, including on one occasion an old overcoat and five used ties which the impoverished Beckett did not refuse, commenting to MacGreevy in recognisably Beckettian terms, "It is so much simpler to be hurt than to hurt."[6] Beckett was therefore intimately associated with the writing of *Work in Progress*, the fruit of Joyce's Parisian exile and, indeed, scholars have been eager to establish Beckett's presence in the finished text of *Finnegans Wake*. This has fostered a number of myths which were left un-investigated until relatively recently. The most commonly known of these is the 'come in' anecdote first reported in Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce; Beckett was taking dictation when there was a knock on Joyce's study door, Joyce responded 'come in' and Beckett duly transcribed the remark. When he read the passage back, Joyce realised the error and insisted that 'come in' remain in the text. It has proved difficult, however, to find this reference in the finished text – Hugh Staples pointed to "The Mime of Mick Nick and the Maggies" sequence in book two as its probable location[7] but most critics now see the story as somewhat of a red herring. The most compelling evidence for Beckett featuring in the text is the section from book three which contains:

> Sam knows miles bettern me how to work the miracle … I bonded him off more as a friend and as a brother … Illstarred punster … 'Twas the quadra sent him and Trinity too … He'll priskly soon hand tune your Erin's ear for you.'[8]

This seems to contain very pointed references to Joyce's assistant, including the title of Beckett's first creative work, yet, as Knowlson points out, this passage was published in *transition* in the summer of 1928 before Joyce first met Beckett in the November of that year (K, 99). The

[6] Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (eds), *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*: *Volume 1, 1929-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.574. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by *Letters*, followed by the page number.

[7] Hugh Staples, "Beckett in the Wake", in *James Joyce Quarterly*, 8:4 (1971), pp.421-424 (p.421).

[8] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin Books , 1992), p.467. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by *FW*, followed by the page number.

most reliable of these anecdotes is the remark Beckett made when Joyce told him a story about an Irish soldier, Buckley, fighting in the Crimea who waited until a Russian General had finished defecating in the grass before he shot him – "Another insult to Ireland!" Beckett exclaimed; Joyce agreed and it features in the text as "At that instullt to Igorladns" (*FW*, 353).

In relation to Beckett's own writing, one of the more important aspects of his assistance to Joyce was the notes he took on books that the author asked him to read. Much of this material would find its way into Beckett's work. Knowlson proposes, for example, that Heinrich Zimmer's study of Indian myth, which Beckett read for Joyce, accounts for traces of Eastern thought in the Beckett *oeuvre* (K, 760, fn141). More significantly, Joyce asked Beckett to take notes on Fritz Mauthner's *Contributions Towards a Critique of Language*, a key influence for the young Beckett which provided him with a model for "using language to indict itself",[9] the central manoeuvre of his mature work. What is intriguing is Beckett encountering Mauthner through the prism of Joyce: the Joycean "apotheosis of the word"[10] would be the chief target of Beckett's "literature of the unword" (*D*, 173) expressed in the celebrated Kaun letter of 1937 and a distinction between language mastery and its enervation would form the basis of Beckett's 'renunciations' of Joyce following the master's death.[11] Interestingly, Beckett also took notes on a variety of Irish texts for Joyce covering a variety of aspects concerning the history, politics and myth of their native country and, bizarrely, were it not a source for *Finnegans Wake*, a study of Ireland's dairy herd. This perhaps

[9] Linda Ben-Zvi, "Samuel Beckett, Fritz Mauthner, and the Limits of Language", in *PMLA*, 95:2 (1980), pp.183-200 (p.183).

[10] Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta*: *Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (London: John Calder, 2001), p.172. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by *D* followed by the page number.

[11] The most cited of these is contained in the infamous Israel Shenker interview of 1956: "(Joyce) was making words do the absolute maximum of work. There isn't a syllable that's superfluous. The kind of work I do is one in which I'm not master of my own material. The more Joyce knew the more he could. He's tending towards omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence, ignorance." (Interview with Israel Shenker for the *New York Times* reprinted in *Samuel Beckett*: *The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p.148. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by *CH* followed by the page number.

also allows us to speculate about the influence the Joyce association had on Beckett's attitude to his homeland and how he perceived his exile from it. The most important service Beckett rendered for Joyce and what is the most significant interface between the two writers is the 1929 essay "Dante … Bruno . Vico . . Joyce", commissioned by Joyce for inclusion in the extravagantly titled *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, a collection of twelve essays defending what would become *Finnegans Wake*. A mark of the extent by which Joyce was impressed with his young fellow Dubliner was the fact that he requested this of Beckett just over a month after they first met. In fact, Deirdre Bair suggests that Beckett's late inclusion as one of the contributors to *Our Exagmination* came at the expense of another previously recruited disciple.[12] Beckett's essay also appeared as the first in a volume which featured contributions from Eugene Jolas, Robert McAlmon and William Carlos Williams – quite an achievement for an unpublished twenty-two year old.

In later years Beckett was quick to assert that he was not Joyce's secretary: "I never wrote any of his letters" (*CH*, 147) he insisted in 1956 in an attempt, perhaps, to temper the servile connotations of his assistance to the 'Penman', as he and MacGreevy referred to Joyce. While there may well be an element of revision in this and other similar remarks in the post-war years, Beckett did occupy an important and, compared to most other members, privileged position among Joyce's Paris supporters. The Joyce coterie that Beckett entered towards the end of 1928 had undergone a reconstitution of sorts; key figures had grown impatient with the sycophancy of the circle and were beginning to fall away, among them William and Jennie Bradley and most notably McAlmon, who earned a slap from Edouard Dujardin at a reading of the French translation of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" for mocking the reverential air of the proceedings. There was space therefore and perhaps a need for new blood in the Joyce circle when MacGreevy first brought Beckett to dine at Rue de Grenelle. The politics of discipleship, however, did not interest Beckett; he did not forge lasting relationships with the more ardent of Joyce's followers like Eugene Jolas, Paul Leon, or Nino Frank – his

[12] Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett*: *A Biography* (London: Vintage, 1990), p.79. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted by B in brackets followed by the page number.

intimates in the circle tended to be those who were less central and less devotional, in particular MacGreevy, who was as much a confidant of Nora Joyce's as he was of her husband's, and Alfred Peron whom Beckett had known previously at Trinity College and with whom he worked on the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" translation. He often felt uncomfortable in the organised gatherings that typified the social life of the Joyce community and looked on at the fanaticism around Joyce with disdain: "Aren't people shits?" he wrote to MacGreevy in 1930, "Signed photographs, signed books, signed menus. I suppose the Gilberts & Carduccis would feel honoured if Joyce signed a piece of his used toilet paper?" (*Letters*, 21).

Deirdre Bair, in her controversial biography, claims that Beckett "offered Joyce a relationship he had not had since he left his brother Stanislaus in Trieste" (B, 73). This is quite a fanciful portrait of the Joyce / Beckett association but Joyce certainly did confide in his young assistant. This is borne out in Ellmann's biography in which Beckett is often cited as the sole source for many of the insights into Joyce and his work, including the interestingly Beckettian remark: "I may have oversystematised *Ulysses*."[13] Perhaps Cronin is more accurate when he describes Joyce's attitude towards Beckett thus: "He had found in Beckett an obliging, highly intelligent young Irishman who shared many of his own interests and something of his own outlook on life … and who was prepared to provide admiration and sympathy even at some cost to his own identity" (C, 91). Over time Beckett filled the place in the Joyce circle that Frank Budgen had occupied in the Zurich Joyce community and that McAlmon had perhaps fulfilled in the early Paris circle – a devotee who could stimulate and who could be trusted to understand vulnerabilities.

Bair offered this description of Joyce's influence on Beckett's relationship to literary Paris:

> […] by watching (Joyce) carefully Beckett learned much about the vagaries of life in Paris. Joyce had developed several poses which helped him to cope with sophisticated Parisian society … (and) lead his literary life at home avoiding *salons* and large parties unless the group had been formed expressly for the purpose of making him its

[13] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.702.

> centre … Beckett too had found … that compartmentalising his friendships gave him a certain amount of control over the terror of a meeting … In time he honed this practice to a fine point of protective privacy that far outdistanced Joyce. (B, 76)

While there is an element of truth in her description of Beckett's capacity for solitude Bair underestimates the extent and significance of his association with the cultural life of Paris outside the Joyce community. Indeed her portrait of an ascetic hermit in apprenticeship to Joyce would seem to be fashioned after Adrienne Monnier's famous caricature of the young Beckett as "a new Stephen Dedalus, striding all by himself along the strand."[14] Like Joyce, Beckett did tend to eschew the more self-conscious elements of the social world of Paris' artists and intellectuals; however the young Beckett, not consumed by an intricate home-life as in the case of his elder compatriot, did not shy away from making contact with other artistic coteries outside the Joyce circle. In fact, the young Beckett immersed himself in the zeitgeist of 20s and 30s Paris and developed an ability to dialogue with a diverse set of interests for which Joyce was quite unprepared. The very dynamic engagement Beckett had with Parisian cultural life suffers from the over-privileging of the Joyce connection in accounts of his sojourns in Paris during the period. Over time these associations would become much more significant than his membership of the Joyce circle in Beckett's acculturation to the city that would become his home.

Knowlson describes Paris of the 1920s and early 1930s as "a revelation to Beckett … During these early years (he) laid the foundations of an enduring personal relationship with (the city) and became fascinated with avant-garde literature, painting and theatre" (K, 106-107). The Paris to which Beckett arrived in late 1928 had largely experienced its experimentalist heyday**:** Proust had died in 1922, the Dada movement had peaked in a fervour of innovation, Surrealism had already been announced by Andre Breton in 1924, Jolas' important "Revolution of the Word" manifesto had appeared in 1926. Yet there was still much about which to enthuse: the Surrealist exodus to London had not yet occurred and Breton would reissue the *Manifeste du Surréalisme* in 1929. Jolas' next important missive, "Poetry is Vertical", to which Beckett would lend his name, would appear in 1932 and Paris, when the 22-year old

[14] Giselle Freund, *James Joyce in Paris* (London: Cassel, 1966), p.56.

Beckett arrived, still enjoying its reputation as the great meeting house of the Anglophone and Continental traditions. This artistic milieu, and the Surrealists in particular, was one in which the young Beckett was well read, perhaps unusually for an Irishman of the time. Beckett's mentor at Trinity College Rudmose–Brown had instilled in him his great love for the French canon, Racine and Gide in particular, and had introduced him to contemporary French writing, including Eluard, Breton and Crevel. In fact Rudmose-Brown sent Beckett to Paris with an enthusiastic letter of introduction to the poet Valery Larbaud which Beckett did not act upon but whom he came to know through Larbaud's role as editor of *Our Exagmination*. Another important early discovery for Beckett at TCD was the poetry of Unanimisme associated with Pierre-Jean Jouve and Jules Romains. It had been commonly perceived that the principal reason for Beckett's first sojourn in Paris, facilitated by Rudmose-Browne, was to complete a postgraduate project on Jouve.[15] However, this was not the case and he had completed this work, unsatisfactorily, while still at Trinity. Therefore Beckett's first introduction to Paris in 1928 was prefigured by an immersion in the French literary tradition and in the latest developments in French literature.

It was Paris as the capital of this literary tradition rather than the city of the latest incarnation of Joycean exile, that was foremost in the young Beckett's attractions to the city when he moved there in late autumn 1928. Indeed Beckett's knowledge of Joyce up to this point was sketchy and certainly doesn't suggest itself as one of the motivations for his stay in Paris. The first record of his reading of Joyce was not until 1927, only a year before he first met Joyce: he had enthused about *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and was also familiar with Joyce's poetry. There is no record of Beckett's attitude towards Joyce's work before he met him and, interestingly, it has still not been shown by scholars that Beckett had read *Ulysses* upon becoming a member of the Joyce circle. It may have been during his 'gap' year teaching at Campbell College, Belfast before the move to Paris that Beckett first read *Ulysses*, yet a record of his reading of the great book does not exist from this period. In fact the "Dante" essay suggests that Beckett was still not familiar with Joyce's masterpiece when preparing the text: there are no references at all to *Ulysses* compared to four clear references to *Portrait*. Thus Joyce

[15] For example see Bair p.120 and Cronin p.119.

was for Beckett, when he first met him, a relatively new addition to his interests and one which was preceded by a much more intimate familiarity with contemporary French literature.

When Beckett reached Paris he was quick to enlarge his interests in the French literary scene, in particular Unanimisme, a school of poetics with Orphic overtones which stressed "the collective life shared by the individual" (K, 76), an ideal which, on the face of it, seems quite remote from the mature Beckettian outlook. Beckett met Jules Romains, the leading figurehead of the Unanimisme movement, during his first stay in Paris, finding him disappointing, yet by 1934 he still felt it necessary to identify Romains as "a poet of importance" (*D*, 77) and Romains' work continued to hold a significance for Beckett in the first phases of his career. The principles of Unanimisme found their way both into Beckett's essay on Joyce in his valorisation of Vichian gesture and perhaps more noticeably in his study of Proust in which he celebrates involuntary memory as "the total past sensation … annihilating every spatial and temporal restriction … engulf(ing) the subject in all the beauty of its infallible proportion."[16] That Beckett was willing to engage with the myriad of artistic movements that Paris had to offer can be judged from his flirtation with the *Anonyme* group. This was spearheaded by the American poet Walter Lowenfels with Michael Fraenkel and among the broad concepts around which this brief movement revolved was the necessity for the anonymity of the artist and the consideration of suicide as a response to the modern age. Perhaps more interesting than what this association tells us about Beckett's attitude to either of these ideas, it demonstrates the extent to which the young Beckett was prone to the modish thinking of the time.

A much more significant community with which Beckett associated during his first Paris visit was the Surrealists. Whilst it would be wholly inaccurate to propose Beckett as a foot-soldier of the Surrealist revolution, any investigation of Beckett's relationship with Paris would be incomplete without an acknowledgment of this dimension to his intellectual life in the city. Joyce and the Surrealists were, in some respects, competing focuses for the young Beckett's artistic impulses and interests and both became for the mature artist important influences to shake off.

[16] Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues* (London: John Calder, 1999), p.72.

As Daniel Albright has observed, Beckett's relationship with Surrealism was as both insider and outsider.[17] He was involved in translating and publicising Surrealist writings, yet he maintained a cautious distance owing to both his discomfort with organised movements, particularly groups as exclusive as the Surrealists, and the antipathy this group held towards Joyce. Yet his involvement with Surrealism was a strong feature of his first Paris visit. Within the first few months of his arrival Beckett had translated "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria" by Louis Aragaon and Andre Breton and in 1930 he translated parts of Breton and Eluard's *The Immaculate Conception* for Nancy Cunard's *Negro Anthology*. The *Thorns of Thunder* collection of 1936, edited by Beckett's literary agent George Reavey, also contained Beckett's translations of Eluard. The influence of Surrealism, and its Dada origins, on Beckett during this period manifested itself in his interest in the liberation of art from authorial control. This is evident in the poems written in Paris during this period which, if not quite an illustration of Tristan Tzara's famous formula for writing poetry, "Take a newspaper. Take some scissors",[18] there is an attraction to randomness as the basis for expression. Certainly Beckett's earliest writings, from his first creative publication "Assumption", evidence an assault on narrative that echoes both Joycean and Surrealist philosophies. The intricate note-taking system that Beckett used at this time to store verbal oddities and 'found art' also owes as much to Surrealist-influenced automatic writing as it does to Joyce's encyclopaedism. The influence is still discernable in the mature Beckett: the fascination with technology evident in *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Film* has a strong Surrealist flavour and, indeed, Beckett's central preoccupation with language itself as a failed 'technology' owes much to his time in the Surrealist Paris of the 20s and 30s. Dada and Surrealist painting similarly permeate Beckett's late work. As Albright has pointed out, the cones and ruins of the later fiction such as *The Lost Ones*, *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *Lessness* recall, for example, the menacing rotunda in de Chirico's *The Red Tower* (A, 18).

[17] Daniel Albright, *Beckett and Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.9. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be denoted in brackets by A, followed by the page number.
[18] Tristan Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*. Translated by Barbara Wright (London, Paris, New York: Calder Publications and Riverrun Press, 1992), p.39.

It was Beckett's engagement with the Paris Surrealists as much as his proximity to the writing of *Finnegans Wake* that provided him with the parameters against which he could individuate his own practice. Exposure to both these artistic forces was an important experience for the young Beckett in first learning the need to question literary convention but also in recognising the essential reiteration of authorial design brought by, and sought by, such experimentalism. Unlike Joyce or the Surrealists, Beckett's assaults on language do not contain 'liberationist' motives, the emancipation of the artist from the determinism of literary culture. Rather Beckett's art would assert the essential inability of language to re-imagine experience – even Beckett's early imitations of Joyce, for example *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, contrive to frustrate language rather than liberate it. Becket's early negotiation of the Surrealist aesthetic in Paris as well as his formative struggle with the Joyce influence would result in his valorisation of failure as an aesthetic position and as a strategy of practice. Indeed, the seeds of this can be seen in the "Dante" essay. Even at this early juncture in his association with Joyce the mature Beckett who would yearn for the destruction of language is discernable.

> Here words are not the polite contortions of 20th century printer's ink. They are alive. They elbow their way onto the page, and glow and blaze and fade and disappear. (*D*, 28)

Beckett made important connections with the Paris art world during his first visit to the city, commencing an association that would be the most lasting of all his affiliations with the Parisian cultural establishment. Painting was an important preoccupation for Beckett throughout his career: the canvases of Caspar David Friedrich, for example, inspired *Waiting for Godot* whilst the origin of *Not I* lies in Caravaggio's depiction of the beheading of St. John the Baptist to name but two instances of Beckett's engagement with specific artworks.[19] His first substantial engagement with the Paris painting community came in 1929 when he stood in for MacGreevy (who would become director of the National Gallery in Dublin in 1950) as Secretary of the English language edition of *Formes*: *An International Review of the Plastic Arts*. By the late 1930s

[19] See Lois Oppenheim's *The Painted Word*: *Samuel Beckett's Dialogue with Art* for a fascinating study of Beckett's relationship to painting.

he had forged important and lasting friendships with a large number of French and émigré painters in Paris. Among the most significant were the Dutch brothers Bram and Geer van Velde. It was this association, along with his friendship with the art critic and editor of the new post-war *Transition*, Georges Duthuit (also Henri Matisse's son-in law), that occasioned what is commonly regarded as the most complete expression of the Beckett aesthetic in the *Three Dialogues* publication of 1949:

> The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express. (*D*, 139)

Beckett also befriended Alberto Giacometti during his first visits to Paris, an important relationship which influenced the work of both artists. Giacometti would later provide a model of the tree for the 1961 Odéon Théâtre de France revival of *Waiting for Godot*.

In addition, despite depending on Eugene Jolas' *transition*, inherently linked with the Joyce circle, for his first publications ("Dante … Bruno . Vico .. Joyce" and the short story "Assumption"), Beckett made important connections in the Paris Anglophone publishing world quite independently of Joyce. These introduced him to a Parisian readership and facilitated his introduction to the English publishers. His first publishing contact outside the Joyce group was the *This Quarter* journal and its associate editor Samuel Putnam for whom Beckett did some translation work and later contributed to Putnam's own *New Review* magazine and *European Caravan* anthology of poetry in 1931. Nancy Cunard was also another important contact for Beckett during this period. Her Hours Press published the long poem *Whoroscope* in 1930 and later provided much needed work when Beckett translated Breton and Crevel for Cunard's *Negro Anthology*. This association led to Beckett's most significant publication during this period as it was Cunard's partner in the Hours Press, the novelist Richard Aldington, who recommended Beckett to Chatto & Windus in London, the firm that produced Beckett's first commercially published work, *Proust*, in 1931. Charles Prentice, an early champion of Beckett, at Chatto & Windus would oversee the publication of *More Pricks Than Kicks* in 1934. It was also during his first period in Paris that Beckett met George Reavey, a significant figure in his early career who acted as his agent and whose Europa Press published *Echoes Bones* in 1935; Beckett also translated the work of Paul Eluard for Rea-

vey's *Thorns of Thunder* collection of 1936. Undoubtedly these experiences of dealing with Paris-based publishers and translating from French texts in the Paris sojourns from the late 1920s and into the 1930s influenced Beckett's decision to settle in the city in 1937 and provided a testing ground for the viability of adopting French, as he did in the immediate post-war period, as the co-language of his *oeuvre*. All of these publishing contacts were quite independent of Joyce and his circle. Indeed, for all the creative work that Beckett produced while Joyce was alive, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, *Echoes Bones* and *Murphy*, Joyce did not involve himself in attempting to place any of these with publishers.

By the late 1930s, Beckett had distanced himself from the organisation around Joyce. This was illustrated by his refusal in December 1937, upon Joyce's request, to contribute to a pamphlet similar to the *Our Exagmination* project of 1929 in preparation for the publication of *Work in Progress* which was finally due the following summer. Beckett, recalling a previous rift precipitated by an awkward entanglement with Lucia Joyce, wrote coolly of the stand-off to MacGreevy: "if that means a break, then let there be a break. At least this time it won't be about their daughter" (*Letters*, 575). By this stage Beckett had moved permanently to Paris and his willingness to sever ties with Joyce reflected the confidence that he had gained in his identity and abilities as a writer through his vibrant involvement in the cultural life of the city. Beckett forged fruitful connections with Paris' bohemian and intellectual worlds which enabled him to resist the gravitational pull of the Joyce circle, providing him with an important independence in the early phases of his career with which to cultivate his own practice. Indeed Beckett's relationship with the cultural life of the city was one which, in many respects, Joyce never achieved. Joyce's carefully nurtured status as an émigré in Paris contributed to the construction of an often obsequious and insular circle suspicious of other coteries, evidenced, for example, in the shared antipathy between the Joyce group and the Surrealists. Beckett's traversing of the city's diverse artistic communities in the periods he spent there from the late 1920s until he made it his home is reflected in the Beckett circle that emerged after the Second World War. Rather than a band of disciples organised around the assistance with and promotion of Beckett's work, the Paris Beckett community was a loose collection of artists and intellectuals with whose work Beckett felt an affinity and which, in contrast to Joyce, he actively promoted – much of the substantial prize

money Beckett won over his long career, most notably his Nobel award, was given to his friends. Although he tended to shy away from the more self-conscious post-war coteries such as L'École du Regard of Barthes and Robbe-Grillet, with which he was nonetheless associated (and he kept a polite distance from Sartre), Beckett's associations with Parisian literary, painting, music, dance, and film circles reflected a much more substantial commitment to the cultural life of Paris than his old master. Whereas for Joyce Paris was always a city of exile, for his young apprentice Paris had become home.

Chapter 8 Anne Goarzin

"Stealthy Work": Irish Poetry and Rebellion

Introduction: Rebellion and the Unexpected

As is so often the case when approaching Irish cultural developments in the modern period, I find David Lloyd's critical writings, and specifically his approach in *Ireland After History*, to be a valuable starting point for the understanding of how popular rebellious movements (or 'popular proto-nationalism', as Hobsbawm calls them)[1] fit in the elaboration of the nationalist discourse. Lloyd writes that they tend to be 'absorbed into the historically progressive trajectory of nationalism, so that what is significant in them is the set of traits which lend themselves to national ends'. Whatever traits stray from that trajectory, 'such as modes of organization and communication, and certain kinds of spiritualism, are relegated to the residual space of historical contingency. Here they constitute the nonsense, the irrepresentable of historiography.'[2] Yet Lloyd notes that while the absorbing dominant discourse evacuates "incompatible" elements:

> this relegation writes such popular movements out of history and into the mythopoeic space of arrested development, and fixity *vis-à-vis* the forward movement of nationalism itself. It is, then, to the resources of this mythopoeic space that national culture is held to recur in its atavistic movements […] The state is both the proper end of historical process and the eternal antagonist of contingency and myth.[3]

With this in mind, I would like to examine the way two poets, Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson, whose work may be said to stand at two very

[1] Quoted in David Lloyd, "Nationalisms Against the State", in *Ireland After History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), p.24.
[2] Lloyd, *Ireland After History*, p.24.
[3] Lloyd, *Ireland After History*, p.24.

distinct ends of the Irish poetic spectrum,[4] offer an alternative reading to Lloyd's twofold postulate (Historical process vs. Contingency and myth). Both Heaney and Carson reassess the 'irrepresentable' forms which the national discourse tends to leave aside yet, more strikingly so in the case of Heaney's poem, the examples chosen show that neither poet opts for the fixity of mythopoeic space. Their approach associates the chronicle of history; of events, as Lloyd puts it, that are 'proven possible merely by happening'[5] with a more poetic reading – that is, one that is excluded from historical temporality yet emphasises the 'probable'.

I will argue that poetry widens the scope of the historical discourse by not implementing its doxa. Indeed, Heaney's 'Requiem for the Croppies' could be read as a metatextual statement on what poetry does and fundamentally is. For poetry deviates from the proper course of things in that it elicits a 'breakaway of innate capacity, a course where something unhindered, yet directed, can sweep ahead into its full potential',[6] as Heaney states in *The Redress of Poetry*. In its form, poetry alters our perception of the world and introduces the unexpected, thereby challenging the set discourse of modernity. Not unlike a good rebellion, good poetry is by essence *recalcitrant* to a set discourse and *persistent* in asserting that deviation from the norm. More importantly, as Heaney puts it, poetry

[4] As a rule, Heaney apprehends the lore of the place as a way to come to terms with the nightmare of history, thus heavily relying on the elaboration of a 'mythopoeic space of the poem' to make sense of the Troubles: in the 'bog poems', metaphors become myths of recurring violence, while Ciaran Carson's poetry more radically departs from ideological discourses based on recurring tropes that unify the community as critic Alex Houen states: '[With his] interpretations of the *dinnseanchas*, the relation between a place and its onomastic lore is […] broken apart', in *Terrorism and Modern Literature – From Joseph Conrad to Ciaran Carson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2002, p.258.

[5] David Lloyd, *Ireland After History*, p.24.

[6] Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995), p.15. This is of course reminiscent of Yeats's 'Easter 1916', a poem that dwells on the highly unexpected change that came with the Rising. While the course of a dull history seemed to be set as early as 'September 1913', change occurs and disturbs the course of events. Poetry, because of its dense form, epitomizes best the notion that "Cultural identity should not be seen in terms of artificial essentialisms, but of 'contrapuntal ensembles', involving an 'array of opposites, negatives, oppositions'."; in Tom Dunne (quoting from David Lloyd's *Anomalous States*), "Subaltern Voices? Poetry in Irish, Popular Insurgency and the 1798 Rebellion", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 22:3 (1998), p.32, pp.31-44.

counterweights, or 'disobeys the force of gravity'[7] by offering a 'redressing' effect '[that] comes from its being a glimpsed alternative, a revelation of potential that is denied or constantly threatened by circumstances'[8] and thus elaborates a different pace and a different temporality.

Disobeying the Forces of Gravity

In Heaney's 'Requiem for the Croppies', the homogenising drive of the historical narrative is replaced with signs that class politics symbolises a resistance not only to the imperial nation, but also to a homogenising national discourse that is attracted to the elaboration of myths (as the references to Vinegar Hill or the to the rebels' deaths show). Heaney's poem points at the stealthy movement of an insurgent group which defines itself by class (peasantry) and denies the right for any totalising historical narrative to eradicate them: 'Requiem for the Croppies' suggests that people are 'a potentially disruptive *excess* over the nation and its state',[9] in David Lloyd's words.

And although one may be tempted to see Ciaran Carson's latest collection entitled *For All We Know*[10] as only remotely connected with such an approach, his focus on small-scale events that make up the individual past and present histories of the French Nina and of her Northern Irish lover Gabriel, inevitably leads to considerations on the way these elements intersect with wider-ranging events. Indeed, the couple's common '(hi)story' which filters through Carson's collection perpetually plays with the limits of the subject within the nation or without it, as the reader wanders between their differing versions of the events and several geographical locations. The violent events mentioned obliquely (from random bomb attacks to the politics of surveillance) do not form the central interest of Carson's poems and, as is often the case even in Carson's poetry on Northern Ireland, the collection deviates from one's expectations and a proper 'centre of gravity' as a final explanation constantly eludes the reader.

Both Heaney and Carson's poems suggest that any attempt at fixing a discourse on history is ultimately a vain one, as Clément Rosset writes:

[7] Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, p.4.
[8] *The Redress of Poetry*, p.3-4.
[9] David Lloyd, *Ireland After History*, p.33.
[10] Ciaran Carson, *For All We Know* (Loughcrew: Gallery Books, 2008).

> *[…] il n'y a pas de secret de l'Histoire, pas de mystère du devenir. Le devenir est sans mystère car il advient… somehow anyhow* : *de toute façon et d'une certaine façon, c'est à dire n'importe comment – et il est étrange que tant d'énergie intellectuelle se dépense à vouloir percer à jour le sens du devenir et la raison de l'Histoire, c'est-à-dire le sens de ce qui n'a pas de sens.*[11]

Rather, one might say that both Heaney and Carson point to the vitality of a poetry that produces a cycle of meaning – as Clément Rosset puts it, "*un cycle du sens, un flux, un courant ; le sens n'est ni ici ni là, le sens est ce qui 'passe', et c'est se condamner à le manquer que de prétendre s'arrêter pour s'en saisir.*"[12] What lies at the heart of the alternatives offered by both poets is therefore 'the surprise of poetry', its 'unforeseeable thereness, the way it enters our field of vision' as a 'natural, heady diversion',[13] which is devoid of ethical obligation. Heaney does this by seemingly paying a tribute to the rebels of 1798 and obliquely stating the function of poetry. Carson provides us with less obviously historical references, yet as he draws us into the wider net of the hypertext, he sets out to provide valuable insights into the contemporary potentialities of history reading and writing.

Cycles of violence: Rebellion in 'Requiem for the Croppies'

At this stage, a close study of the term 'revolution' appears to offer relevant meanings: linguist and etymologist Alain Rey states that the idea of 'rupture' (albeit not necessarily a violent one) and that of 'resumed or perpetual movement'[14] were among those predominantly associated with

[11] C. Rosset, *Le Réel, traité de l'idiotie* (Paris: Minuit, coll. Critique, 1977), p.39.
[12] Rosset, p.57.
[13] Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, p.15.
[14] Alain Rey, *Revolution*: *Histoire d'un mot* (Paris: Gallimard, coll. Bibliothèque des Histoires, 1989), p.64. "*Car le mot révolution garde des traces de ses origines* : *il désigne non seulement une rupture, mais un retour, non seulement un événement observé, mais une cause liée à la nature même de la durée. Une grande ambigüité en résulte dans les emplois, qui, comme aujourd'hui, peuvent être ponctuels* (*une révolution*) *mais aussi duratifs* : *la révolution* '*se fait*' *dans tel ou tel domaine, elle* '*peut être moins forte et moins sensible*' *là qu'ailleurs. C'est encore Diderot qui s'exprime ici* (*article de l'Encyclopédie*) ; *il ne faut pas oublier qu'il emploie encore révolution pour désigner le cours des temps et de l'histoire.* "

the term 'revolution' in the 18th century – that is, before it came to be associated with the political upheaval of 1789. It is also worth noting that at the same period the substantive was mainly associated in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* with the description of the movement of the cogs and wheels in watch-making.[15]

While the vocabulary of revolutionary France[16] undoubtedly made it possible for the Whiteboys or local Defenders to articulate traditional agrarian and sectarian grievances, Heaney's poem is a far cry from the formal acknowledgement of radical violence in the form notoriously exemplified by the Terror which followed the French Revolution in 1792. The images in Heaney's poem[17] seek to illustrate the ongoing and mechanical movement referred to in the *Encyclopédie*, but it should be noted that the text does not altogether bypass the violence and bloody outcome of the Wexford rising,[18] and subtly dodges the expected competing narratives of radical repression and mythified sacrifice.

> The pockets of our greatcoats, full of barley –
> No kitchens on the run, no striking camp –
> We moved quick and sudden in our own country.
> The priest lay behind ditches with the tramp.
> A people, hardly marching – on the hike –
> We found new tactics happening each day:
> We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike

[15] "*Venant de l'astronomie, révolution acquiert alors très normalement une valeur analogique en géométrie* (*1727 chez Fontenelle*), *et, exemplairement, en technique*. *L'Encyclopédie de Diderot et d'Alembert reflète bien la hiérarchie des centres d'intérêt que le terme mobilise* : *le texte de loin le plus long, au mot révolution, a pour objet […] l'horlogerie, et les mouvements des roues transmis par les engrenage*", explique A. Rey, p.55.

[16] "[…] rather than [...] the propaganda techniques of the bourgeois United Irishmen", Dunne contends, in "Subaltern Voices?", p.38.

[17] Seamus Heaney, 'Requiem for the Croppies', from *Door Into the Dark* (1969) in *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p.12.

[18] Dunne also argues that the commemoration of 1998, "[...] seeks to present a modern, politically correct version of the insurrection, stressing the living principles of democracy and pluralism which the United Irishmen formulated, rather than the bitter sectarian, agrarian and legal legacies of the still recent colonial revolution that made the Wexford outbreak one the bloodiest events in Irish history, up to 30,000 people dying in three hot summer weeks", in "Subaltern Voices?", p.33.

> And stampede cattle into infantry,
> Then retreat through hedges where cavalry must be thrown.
> Until, on Vinegar Hill, the fatal conclave.
> Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at cannon.
> The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
> They buried us without shroud or coffin
> And in August the barley grew up out of the grave.

The form of Heaney's poem denotes a relentless, stubborn movement which is rendered palatable through the use of a syncopated punctuation denoting the collusion of words and action as well as the determination of a political impetus that may neither be halted by British repression nor kept in check by the sonnet structure, or by dashes, commas or full stops. The text emphasises the intensity of a movement which, having denied itself a break in its angry pace, gathers speed, wave-like, until its reaches a stage of chaotic confrontation ('we'd […] stampede cattle into infantry') followed by the inevitable climactic moment of the 'fatal conclave' on Vinegar Hill near Enniscorthy in 1798.

Diversions From the Set Path

Interestingly, the poem also suggests that the insurgents have opted for a different pace, one that strays from the expected movement of troops and thus defines a new rhythm: 'A people, hardly marching – on the hike – / we found new tactics happening each day: / We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike'. In the same way as their tactics are unconventional and their fight instinctive, the Croppies' spontaneous discourse on the nation is not linear. It is a primitive claim to survival which is prompted by hunger and a deep sense of injustice, as the first two lines indicate.

The Wexford rebels' unusual behaviour only confirms the abnormality of the political situation of Ireland in 1798. 'We moved quick and sudden in our own country', reads the poem, pointing to a people who feel like strangers in their own land, hunted down like animals. In the last tercet of the sonnet, the amalgamation of the rebels with the landscape (and with their territory) which was announced earlier on (with the mention of 'ditches', 'hedges', 'reins and rider') is enacted. Also confirming the numerous verbs of action that challenge the 'peace' contained in the 'Requiem' of the title, is the fact that death itself does not allow for the rebels or their political claims to rest. The order of the clauses suggests the ongoing struggle of fighters who are still syntactically 'shaking' even after they've been 'terraced' ('Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes

at cannon'). Unexpectedly so, blood images in the poem outline a new life mechanism, a different kind of 'rest' in the sense of 'remainder': the landscape absorbs both the rebels and the blood spilled in the fighting while the metaphor of 'the hillside [blushing], soaked in our broken wave' again provides an organic shortcut. Blood has replaced the water that made the barley grow.

The 'barley' image is at the heart of a dynamics that runs through the poem and anticipates a tragedy that does not end with the death of the heroes. That is, the transformation that takes place between the first and the last line of the poem – from 'The pockets of our greatcoats, full of barley' to 'They buried us without shroud or coffin / And in August the barley grew up out of the grave' – emphasises a metabolic process in which the rebel's barley seeds that were transformed into physical energy have been 'metabolised' into poetic energy, as is best exemplified through a metaphor that turns the dead rebels into the seed of further insurgencies. Just as in tragedy the *metabole* is the moment or the event that serves as a dramaturgical signal, a device to prepare the audience for a subsequent turn of events and call attention to the operation of tragedy especially the sudden reversal, which Aristotle called *peripetia* (which here, is 'the fatal conclave'), in Heaney's poem the metabole calls the reader's attention, in retrospect, to the predictable tragic ending of the rebellion in its 1798 form as well as to the necessity for a new time-frame. Jean-Philippe Pastor adds that the metabole tends to be uncovered '*après-coup*', after the tragedy has occurred, but he also argues that this 'aftermath', far from bringing events to an end, initiates a transformation, a maturing of events and a movement which rhythm is altered and differs from any movement occurring prior to it.[19]

[19] ''*Et la Métabole désigne de manière très littérale l'après-coup* (*meta*) *d'un certain envoi* (*ballein*); *un envoi qui a lieu au cours de la représentation et qui donne l'élan*. *Au cours de cet envoi arrive un certain moment qui voit la situation dramatique se retourner*; *ce retournement où le drame se joue et où les tenants et les aboutissants de la représentation viennent à se transformer de manière totalement inanticipable […] L'après-coup n'est pas un arrêt*. *Il est encore un mouvement de transformation, de maturation*; *mais un mouvement qui certes ne vit pas au même rythme que le précédent*.'', see (http://metabole.typepad.com/jean_philippe_pastor/2008/07/laprs-coup-dans.html, accessed Jan 9, 2010.

There is a rupture that contradicts the established order of historical temporality and defines an impact that goes beyond the operation of tragedy. For the contemporary situation of the rebels in 1798 is indeed shown as dysfunctional in Heaney's poem, in which 'pikes' are defeated by 'cannon'. Perpetual movement is indeed 'revolutionary' in the 18th century, watch-making sense, of the term. It is through movement that the poem is able to forge the rebels' identity: first shapeless, nameless individuals in 'greatcoats', the rebels emerge as 'We […] a people' in the making. This obviously echoes both the 1776 American Declaration of Independence which, it should be noted, includes a 'Right to revolution' that states: '[W]hen a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government'.[20] Similarly, in the 1916 Declaration of Independence by 'The Provisional Government of The Irish Republic to the People of Ireland, Irishmen And Irishwomen', the definite article 'the' asserts the identity of a people which was only beginning to emerge in the late 18th century.[21] It is perpetual movement that is their political statement, one that goes beyond the failure of the United Irishmen to deal with the past:[22]

[20] ''The Declaration of Independence'', July 4, 1776. (Full text: http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/)

[21] See the *1916 Declaration of Independence*, which takes up the idea of the revolution considered as natural law: "We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the last three hundred years they have asserted it to arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations." (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proclamation_of_the_Irish_Republic#The_text_of_the_Easter_Proclamation, retrieved Jan 9, 2010).

[22] Tom Dunne argues that "It was the United Irishmen's misfortune that no amount of forward looking rhetoric could overcome the burden of the past. In the late 18th century Ireland may have undergone 'modernisation', but the passions, aspirations, and outlook of many of its inhabitants were still doggedly stuck in the seventeenth." (in "Subaltern Voices ?", p.35).

political disruption is enacted through unexpected, unconventional tactics and where this movement ceases (that is, in the formality of the 'conclave'), death is the tragic outcome but also the site from which to initiate a renewed narrative.

The Infinite Text, the Hypertext: Ciaran Carson's *For All We Know*

Similarly, the fascination for the potentialities of the 'metabole' and the structural instability[23] which unites the parts and the whole of the protagonists' story is what prompts Carson to deal with the chaos of subjectivity. How then does his collection propose to account for the perpetually unfinished dimension of events which nature (whether violent or intimate) may not be not accounted for by a linear narrative?

Insofar as Carson is as much a musician as he is a poet, it comes as no surprise that he should use the musical form of the *metabole*,[24] as found in the 'fugue' for example, as an epigraph for the collection: 'Fugue must perform its frequently stealthy work with continuously shifting melodic fragments that remain, in the 'tune' sense, perpetually

[23] "*La Métabole continue à dire les mêmes choses avec d'autres mots. Elle est une figure par laquelle on modifie l'ordre habituel du discours, la disposition des termes. C'est là la vérité de la transformation qu'elle opère et la fait progressivement sortir du cercle du sens et de la signification d'origine. Elle consiste à accumuler plusieurs expressions synonymes pour peindre une même idée qu'elle s'emploie peu à peu à transformer sans pour autant la détruire. L'antimétabole dit tout autre chose mais avec les mêmes mots. Elle tient à rester circulaire*."
(http://metabole.typepad.com/jean_philippe_pastor/2009/04/antim%C3%A9tabole.html, accessed Jan 09, 2010)

[24] Jean-Philippe Pastor defines the musical *metabole* as follows: "*Une métabole se caractérise par le croisement et l'empilement de différents sons perçus simultanément. L'écoute vague est à un certain moment métabolique, rien n'en émerge particulièrement. L'assemblage des différentes sources provoque une transformation de l'ensemble et entraîne chez l'auditeur une confusion de la perception. Cette instabilité transitoire de la structure met en contradiction le fond sonore (global) et les composants singuliers. L'importance de la métabole permet d'évaluer les degrés de distributivité des figures émergeantes. Il est toutefois extrêmement difficile en son de maîtriser les valeurs qui définissent le fond et la forme. C'est le champ d'instabilité et son caractère muable qui restent encore les notions les plus importantes de la métabole*."
(http://metabole.typepad.com/jean_philippe_pastor/2009/03/m%C3%A9tabole-musicale.html, retrieved May 15, 2009)

unfinished.'[25] Faithful to the rhetorical definition of the term, which involves playing with the position of shifting syntactic elements, the musical metabole also points to a change that affects elements which constitute the auditory environment and entails the superimposition and the addition of multiple sources, which can be heard simultaneously. Indeed, *For All We Know* offers the reader seemingly unconnected, insignificant events combined in fragments or evoked in poems which, by echoing one another, build new responses – like in the musical pattern of the fugue. Meaning, albeit perturbed, emerges through resonances and contamination, and is infinite.

Carson chooses significantly to counterweight or 'redress' the first part of his collection by offering his reader the 'alternative' of a 'part two' which is disrupting (hence faithful to the rhetorical function of the metabole) in that it contains the same two sets of thirty-five poems with exactly matching titles. Among recurring title poems duplicated in Part Two of the collection, let us quote : 'Second Time Around', 'Redoubt'; 'Revolution', 'Pas de deux', 'Second Hand', 'The Shadow', 'Second take', 'Corrigendum', 'On the Contrary'; 'Never Never', 'Collaboration'; 'Before'; or slightly different versions of the same titles, for example 'The Story of the Chevalier' and 'The Story of Mme Chevalier'. While such a composition may appear reassuringly redundant, its main force resides in its ability to engage the reader in parallel readings or cross-readings that foster the appearance of unexpected signifiers and afford some of the features of hypertextuality.[26]

The compulsory comings and goings between the poems' identical titles and their dissimilar contents forces the reader elaborate his own 'hypertext', that is, his personal and selective interpretation of the poems

[25] Glenn Gould, "So You Want to Write a Fugue", epigraph to *For All We Know*.

[26] This quality of unexpectedness is also one that characterizes the revolution, Jean-Philippe Pastor notes in a discussion of Cornelius Castoriadis' work: "*Nous vivons une ère de conformisme profond et généralisé. Cependant, la révolution est une séance courte, le temps de la révolution est celui de l'événement fortuit, du sacrifice inattendu, de la violence inanticipable, de la pulsion brusque, un moment décisif où le sujet, identifié au peuple, bascule dans l'acte qui le détermine. Souvent, un homme arrive de nulle part pour être le héros d'un moment où le peuple reconquiert ses symboles, d'un instant où le souffle du désir imprègne les gestes de la foule. Un héros qui surgit de nulle part.*" (http://www.metabole.net/, accessed May 15, 2009).

by developing an *ars memorativa*. One is led to reorganise one's memories of the text by 'revisiting' mentally the various 'rooms' that the collection offers – from the second-hand clothes store in Belfast where the couple meet, to Paris and back, or to a mysterious sea resort, or possibly all these places in reversed order. One is thus bound to circulate through the text, creating one's own 'vision' of it, and a new 'version' of this couple's story which confirms one's newfound position as the potential 'author' of a story that isn't initially one's own but becomes it. In other words, what I am doing right here is merely adding a hypertextual link onto Carson's rendering of this particular story, which can only be done through the reappropriation of the text, or maybe only fragments of it (as I've chosen to do). The revolution here is literary, yet silent, in that it turns the reading process into a creative process. The poems induce a hypertextual reading because the structure of the collection and its contents validate precisely what Carson is writing about: coincidence, chance, chaos, polysemy. Carson's poems rebel against a set narrative by constantly deviating from the path we expect him to stay on.

Links and Hypertext

Carson's motif of the fugue offers common features with the hypertext: not unlike the musical fugue, the hypertext has no beginning or end. It is not a fixed form and can evolve with the addition of links: the hypertext involves a renewed approach to reading, one that emphasises the difficulty to tell the difference between the reader and the potential writer. The title of Carson's collection itself is an unfinished segment, which seems to open on to additional probabilities. As Helen Emmit points out in her review of the collection for the *Irish Literary Supplement*, even the title is doubled:

> There are two popular songs called 'For all we Know', one from 1934 by J. Fred Coots and Sam M. Lewis and the other from 1970 from the movie *Lovers and other Strangers* by Fred Karlin, Robb Wilson, and Arthur Jones.[…] That doubleness fits in well with the two speakers (both of whom possibly lead double lives), the two countries they come from (France and Northern Ireland), the mirrors,

> doppelgangers, double meanings, shadows, echoes, repeating quilt patterns, as well as the two-sequence form.[27]

As such, Carson's rhizomatic writing signifies much more than it seems and allows coincidence, chaos, chance and the unexpected to rise from his text.

'Revolution' (I and II)

While the main 'storyline' in the collection is articulated by the reminiscences or narratives of two protagonists, doubled speaking 'I's; Gabriel and Miranda / Nina,[28] the reader is confronted with the difficulty to make sense of all this. A comparative approach of the two poems entitled 'Revolution' (p.23 and p.73 in the collection) illustrates how Carson denies the reader the comfort of a set narrative and only provides him with multiple entries and combinations, or links and connections. How does Carson's poetry inscribe the *metabole*, the unexpected and its aftermath in poetry? I will argue here that his use of the fugue form provides an aesthetic dynamics that is a common denominator to all good poems,[29] in that it causes a disruption: it encourages us out of our casual reading. Carson's use of navigation tools is also worth examining: it is possible to browse through his poems or to operate a more refined 'search', as the study of a poem such as 'Revolution' (p.23 and p.73) demonstrates. Such a technique grants access to several levels of meaning similar to those found in hypertextual maps (and interestingly, one of the software items used to create those happens to be called 'FreeMind').

The persona in the first version of 'Revolution' locates himself in the days before he met his lover:

> I would try to separate the grain from the chaff of
> the helicopter noise as it hovered above on my house.

[27] Helen Emmitt, "Ciaran Carson's Art of the Fugue", in *The Irish Literary Supplement*, Fall 2008, p.21.
[28] See "Fall", p.85: "I'm Miranda, you said, though some people call me Nina."
[29] In that sense, good poetry "is when the spirit is called extravagantly beyond the course that the usual life plots for it, when outcry or rhapsody is wrung from it as it flies in upon some unexpected image of its own solitude of distinctness, it is then that Herbert's work exemplifies the redress of poetry at its most exquisite." (Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, p.16).

> This was back in the late Sixties, I didn't know you then.

Carson goes on adding another dimension to this simple flashback, by having the persona project himself on to what was at the time an unpredictable event (the couple's encounter in a second-hand clothes store) and picturing in retrospect what his beloved might have been doing back then: 'Later I'd picture you in an apartment in Paris / You'd be watching riot police and students on TV […]'. As the poem proceeds, the sound of the helicopters in the distance becomes clearer ('the helicopters came later / within earshot grinding the sound-bites into vocables') but newfound meaning does not last for long and image supersedes sound:

> I felt I had a malfunctioning cochlear implant,
> that someone I didn't know was watching me from on high.
> The picture would break into unreadable pixels.

In the second instance of 'Revolution' (p.73), the title, or even the key words of the first poem – which could have served as Boolean operators in a search for the second one (such as 'helicopter', 'watching', 'picture', 'ear', 'listening', or 'shell') – unveil the unexpected dimension of a violence which was only latent in the first poem, where two rebellions intersected (the growing political unrest in Northern Ireland and the events of May 1968 in France). The link between the two texts is hypertextual in its non-linearity. As one jumps from one segment to the next in an erratic way that echoes the chaos of the attack, the deafening sound of the helicopters and the 'riot police and students on TV' give way to a grimmer reading in 'Revolution' (part II). Once clicked on, the initial words open up onto 'The spinning mills going up in a avalanche of flame', while the blurred temporal scale of past and present is taken up and expanded with the shift from 'watching' to the omnipresent 'watch[30]' or to its semantic extensions in the form of 'public clocks', and 'hands' – the sound of which, in turn, calls for the 'tick and tack of the Remote Bomb Disposal Unit' or the 'clicking security cameras, watching, watching'.

The romantic 'conch' that echoes the malfunctioning 'cochlear implant' in the first poem confirms the occurrence of the unexpected as it gives way to 'the public telephone box where I'm trying to get through'

[30] For insights into the use of watches in Carson's collection, also see Helen Emmitt, "Ciaran Carson's Art of the Fugue", p.21.

in the second one. The harmless missing 'hands' of the 'untrustworthy public clocks, stopped at various times' have now morphed into 'the hands sometimes missing of the face pockmarked by shrapnel' or even the 'handbag that is being searched', while the body is being searched. The comforting rhythmic sounds of 'shells becoming shingles, and shingle sand' which the persona relies on in the first poem is taken up only to be contaminated by the chaotic atmosphere of the second poem, which points at 'The way your voice comes over in waves of long-distance call.' There also *literally* has been a revolution here, in the sense that by the end of the second 'Revolution', we have returned to the end of the first one, yet in a non-linear fashion. For the poem does not end here as the last line indicates: 'The things you tell me of what might become of us for now'. What will happen next is left untold, and it is necessary to hit the right buttons again to find out what might happen, a process that requires returning to the first 'Revolution'.

There are more hints in the collection that Carson is deliberately providing us with a hypertextual reading, in the poem entitled 'Proposal' (p.29 and p.78). Here, the hypertextual tool is directly referred to as Gabriel mentions Nina's computer:

> You were the first to go for an Apple, when they
> first came out, you said, it must have been the year whenever,
>
> 1984? Stuck, you'd click on the Option button
> whereupon popped up a menu of possible answers …

As the poem ends, the 'serendipity / of the Apple' is praised as a tool that gives life to ordered words. And indeed, the so-called 'serendipity' of the same Apple computer confirms its ability to come upon unforeseen events in the second 'version' of the poem, where the proposal has moved from being one on the menu button to an unexpectedly sensual and sexual one, involving an 'apple' that seems to have come straight from the Garden of Eden:

> It happened over an apple. We were in a market,
> sunshine and August flowers flickering through the glazed roof
>
> Over a barrel of apples green with a blush of red,
> the dew still seeming to glisten on them. You picked one up.
>
> Try and see, Miss, said the vendor. You nodded, and bit

into the crisp flesh. You felt its juice explode in your mouth

As I did when you passed it to be for a second bite.
They're called Discovery; said the vendor, a very good

eating apple. […]

[...] We took bite for bite
from it

until we finished it as one. We threw away the core.
Then we asked things of each other we'd never asked before.

Conclusion

Carson's poem entitled 'A Present' (p.51-52 and p.101) allows me to articulate some concluding remarks. Here, the revolution of the watch's hands is also a metaphor for the revolutionary nature of poetry. While the speaker in the poem focuses on Nina's pre-war Omega watch's reliable mechanism ('Lovely work: levers, bearings, ratchets, gears, wheels, screws / and springs / performing their task of intricate synchronicity'), she makes also the watch into the symbol of events that are both part of her own life story and outlast the greater pattern of historical events:

[…] Everything I know, you said,

I got with the watch. It was a present from my uncle.
He collected watches. He'd make stories about them

when I came to visit. At least I think he made them up.
One I remember in particular, a pocket watch

with a dent in its case he said had saved a soldier's life.
The hands had seized at the hour and minute the bullet struck.

And even as she tells the story of the watch ('it belonged to my aunt who had died for the Résistance'), Nina suggests more hypertextual links to that story in the form of further anecdotes which again, go against the monolithic discourse of a fixed national history, whether it be Irish or French:

But other people whispered of her collaboration.

> If watches could speak, he would say, what tales could they not tell?
>
> You looked at your watch. Look after this watch for life, he said,
> and the watch will be working long after you are gone. (p.52)

Clément Rosset sums up the thrill that derives from this kind of realisation:

> *Aussi la disparition de témoignages, si beaux ou éminents soient-ils, est-elle finalement indifférente puisqu'elle n'affecte pas le réel lui-même, fondement de toute valeur et de toute beauté. Les sculptures de Phidias, par exemple, témoignent d'une rare et incomparable extase devant le réel; elles tomberont un jour en poussière, mais non le réel qu'elles célébraient – et c'est ce réel-là qui compte, au dire même de l'œuvre qui en témoigne, infiniment plus que les hommages qui lui sont rendus. […] il est établi du même coup que sa disparition est sans conséquence sérieuse, dès lors que lui survit l'essentiel de ce qu'elle avait, mieux que toute autre, réussi à dire.*[31]

For there is indeed what Clément Rosset calls *allégresse* both in the last line of Carson's 'The Present' and at the end of Heaney's 'Requiem for the Croppies', a 'lightness' that celebrates the real and acknowledges its transitory nature, as it meditates on the value of what it celebrates rather than on its form[32] and opens up onto an infinite set of approaches by going against the grain of what we expect both from life and from poetry.

[31] C. Rosset, *Le Réel, Traité de l'idiotie*, pp.79-80.
[32] Heaney writes: "The movement is from delight to wisdom and not vice-versa […] Poetry cannot afford to lose its fundamentally self delighting inventiveness, its joy in being a process of language as well as a representation of things in the world. To put it in W. B. Yeats's terms, the will must not usurp the work of the imagination." In *The Redress of Poetry*, p.5.

Chapter 9 Stephanie Schwerter

Traductions « rebelles » : Verlaine, Rimbaud et Chénier revisités

Tom Paulin est un des plus influents poètes nord-irlandais, qui choisit la traduction comme mode d'expression pour ouvrir de nouvelles perspectives sur les « Troubles ». En traduisant et récréant la poésie d'auteurs de nationalités diverses, il donne corps à son propre discours politique de manière subtile. Dans *The Road to Inver* il traduit des œuvres de 34 poètes européens. Les poèmes de ce recueil, dont la plupart ont paru dans des ouvrages antérieurs, furent écrits entre 1975 et 2003. Se référant à des cultures, histoires et luttes politiques étrangères, Paulin tente de déconstruire les interprétations traditionnelles du conflit nord-irlandais. Il joue sur le contraste et la comparaison, et met ainsi en relief les tensions entre les deux communautés ethno-religieuses en Irlande du Nord. La manière dont Paulin approche les différents originaux dans ses traductions est très variable. Dans certains cas, il explore les textes-sources de façon approfondie, tout en restant d'abord proche de l'original, pour s'éloigner du poème étranger par la suite. A d'autres moments, cependant, il diverge visiblement de la source dès la première ligne. De cette façon, il rend les liens entre l'original et sa traduction difficiles à percevoir dans le cas de certains poèmes. En donnant à *The Road to Inver* le sous-titre *Translations, Versions, Imitations*, Paulin attire l'attention sur le fait que les limites entre la traduction et la création de poésie sont brouillées dans les œuvres figurant dans son recueil.

Il est particulièrement frappant que l'une des plus importantes traditions littéraires qui informent l'œuvre de Paulin soit la tradition française. En traduisant des poèmes de Paul Verlaine, Charles Baudelaire, André Chénier, Arthur Rimbaud, Albert Camus, Gérard de Nerval, Tristan Corbière et Stéphane Mallarmé, il essaie de créer des parallèles historiques, politiques et culturelles entre l'Irlande du Nord et la France et pose ainsi un nouveau regard sur le conflit. Pendant que Paulin fonde ses traductions de poèmes allemands et russes sur des traductions préexistantes, il

traduit lui-même les poèmes français.[1] L'importance que le poète accorde à la tradition française se trouve d'ailleurs soulignée par la conclusion de *The Road to Inver*, à savoir un épilogue bilingue, écrit alternativement en anglais et en français.

Cette étude se propose d'examiner la traduction par Paulin des trois poèmes français suivants: « Bournemouth » de Paul Verlaine, « Les Corbeaux » d'Arthur Rimbaud et « Iambe VIII » d'André Chénier. Ces poèmes ont été choisis en raison des différentes approches de traduction que suit Paulin. En outre, les traductions des trois textes sont caractéristiques des divers modes qu'il emploie pour évoquer les conséquences du conflit nord-irlandais. Cette étude cherche enfin à s'interroger sur les raisons qui poussent Paulin à dépasser le cadre traditionnel de l'Unionisme britannique et du Nationalisme irlandais par le biais de cette démarche de traduction centrée autour des notions d'altérité et d'« ailleurs ».

Dans les traductions de « Bournemouth », de « Les Corbeaux » et de « Iambe VIII », les limites entre la traduction et la réinvention des poèmes originaux sont difficiles à établir. La fidélité aux textes source varie selon les différents poèmes. Il est pratiquement impossible de définir précisément l'instant où une traduction devient une « version » ou une « imitation ». J'ai donc choisi d'appliquer des théories différentes tout en gardant comme notion générale le terme « traduction », qui englobe les trois concepts.

Parmi les trois œuvres, « Bournemouth » est celle qui reste la plus proche de la source. Pour cette raison, la théorie de la « domestication » et de la « foreignization » de Lawrence Venuti,[2] guidera notre étude du poème. Dans ce contexte-là, « domestication » veut dire intégrer des valeurs et des concepts typiques de la culture cible dans la traduction. A l'inverse, l'objectif de la « foreignization » consiste à incorporer le maximum de concepts propres à l'environnement culturel du texte original. « Les Corbeaux » et « Iambe VIII », au contraire, s'éloignent de manière significative de leurs originaux. De ce fait-là, il me paraît approprié de faire référence aux écrits théoriques d'André Lefevere et de Clive Scott en considérant les traductions de Paulin comme « rewritings »[3] ou

[1] Communication personnelle par email avec Tom Paulin (04.02.2009).
[2] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*. *A History of Translation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).
[3] Cf. Clive Scott, *Translating Rimbaud's "Illuminations"* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006); André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the*

bien comme des « acts of experimental writing ».[4] Malgré les approches diverses que suit Paulin, chaque traduction contient, à des degrés différents, des allusions à la situation en Irlande du Nord. De cette manière, les trois poèmes deviennent liés l'un à l'autre par une thématique commune. Dans l'analyse qui va suivre, nous nous référons aux termes employés dans le domaine de la traductologie pour désigner les poèmes originaux, à savoir les « textes sources », tandis que les poèmes traduits deviendront « textes-cibles ».

La traduction de « Bournemouth » fut publiée pour la première fois dans la collection *The Wind Dog* en 1999. Le poème éponyme de Paulin peut être regardé comme « domesticating translation » parce que l'original français se voit exploré de manière approfondie, et revêt en même temps des connotations qui renvoient au conflit nord-irlandais. En traduisant « Bournemouth », Paulin utilise un poème apolitique pour véhiculer son propre rejet de l'Unionisme britannique. Afin de saisir l'esprit de l'original français et de pouvoir juger les modifications de Paulin, il importe de considérer le poème de Verlaine dans son contexte historique. « Bournemouth » fut publié en 1885 dans un recueil de poésie sous le titre *Amour*. Entre 1875 et 1877, Verlaine exerçait en tant que professeur dans la ville de Bournemouth. Il se rendit en Angleterre après avoir purgé une peine de prison de deux ans pour avoir tiré une balle dans l'épaule de Rimbaud.[5] Sorti de prison, Verlaine se sentit tourmenté par sa mauvaise conscience : il se culpabilisait d'avoir maltraité son amant, et d'avoir abandonné sa femme et son fils. Cherchant un nouveau sens à sa vie, Verlaine se convertit au catholicisme. Son recueil *Amour*, qu'il décrit lui-même comme « livre catholique »,[6] contient de nombreuses références à la religion. Après l'incarcération du poète, sa vie émotionnelle fut marquée d'intenses sensations, passant de l'ardent espoir de voir sa famille réunie, au désespoir profond en raison de sa vie personnelle et artistique, qui lui semblait dénuée de sens.[7] La vénération de l'Eglise catholique et les états d'âme de Verlaine trouvent leur expression dans « Bournemouth » :

Manipulation of Literary Fame (London: Routledge, 1992).
[4] *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations*, p.6.
[5] Yves-Alain Favre (éd.), *Paul Verlaine*. *Oeuvres poétiques complètes* (Paris : Editions Robert Laffont, 1992), p.XLIV.
[6] *Paul Verlaine*, p.LXX.
[7] Cf. Henri Troyat, *Verlaine* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), p.225.

A gauche la tour lourde (elle attend une flèche) Se dresse d'une église invisible d'ici; L'estacade très loin; haute, la tour, et sèche: C'est bien l'anglicanisme impérieux et rêche A qui l'essor du cœur vers le ciel manque aussi. (Verlaine)[8]	On the left of a heavy tower (it is waiting for a spire) is a church, which is invisible from here; The jetty very far away; high and dry the tower: it is doubtless the imperious and rough Anglicanism which is lacking the elevation of the heart towards the sky. (Traduction personnelle)[9]	To the left a heavy tower – it has no spire – squats above the church that's hidden by the trees. That hard basic tower, the wooden jetty in the distance, are Anglicanism – brisk, bossy, heartless and utterly without hope. (Paulin)[10]

Le paysage décrit par Verlaine dans son poème traduit une ambiance de désespoir et de dépression. L'illustration de la tour comme édifice menaçant crée une atmosphère particulièrement oppressante. Cette image reflète l'accablement du poète, et fait allusion à son rejet de l'Eglise protestante. Alors que l'église elle-même est invisible, sa tour domine le paysage de manière terrifiante. De cette façon, Verlaine laisse sous-entendre que la foi, symbolisée par l'église invisible, et le Protestantisme, rendu par la tour effrayante, représentent deux concepts dissociés l'un de l'autre. L'attitude négative envers l'Eglise protestante se voit clairement exprimée par les adjectifs « impérieux » et « rêche », qualifiant le nom « anglicanisme ». L'image du cœur, qui n'est pas élevé vers le ciel par la foi protestante, renforce la dimension critique du poème. Comme le cœur, la tour n'atteint pas le ciel non plus : sa flèche manque, et de ce fait, le lien entre la terre et le ciel est dissous. Par le choix de ses images, Verlaine provoque une sensation d'oppression et de désolation.

[8] *Verlaine*, p.217.
[9] Les traductions des poèmes français que je propose dans les lignes suivantes ont pour but de refléter le plus précisément le contenu de l'original. Pour cette raison, elles ne respectent pas la métrique et les rimes du texte source.
[10] Tom Paulin, *The Road to Inver* (London: Faber, 2004), p.37.

Dans sa traduction du poème de Verlaine, Paulin inscrit le « texte-cible » au cœur des son propre environnement culturel avec ses nouveaux concepts et ses standards socio-politiques. Selon les termes de Venuti, l'approche suivie par Paulin vise à une « réduction ethnocentrique»[11] de l'original. Dans le cas de « Bournemouth », cela veut dire que le poète cherche à adapter les valeurs véhiculées dans le poème français aux valeurs caractéristiques de la culture nord-irlandaise. Ce procédé pourrait être interprété chez Paulin, comme une tentative pour « personnaliser » le poème afin de communiquer son propre point de vue politique. Faisant écho à Verlaine, il articule ainsi son rejet du Protestantisme. Elevé au sein de la communauté protestante, Paulin était initialement persuadé qu'une égalité sociale et politique pouvait être obtenue en Irlande du Nord dans le cadre du Royaume-Uni.[12] Par la suite, il devait pourtant se retourner contre les valeurs unionistes en prenant conscience de l'inégalité sociale crée par le gouvernement britannique.[13] Il se fit alors le défenseur des idées nationalistes soutenues par la communauté catholique continuant à promouvoir l'idée d'une Irlande réunie sous la forme d'une république laïque au sein de laquelle toutes les traditions culturelles pourraient s'exprimer et évoluer librement.[14] De ce fait, il rejette également l'église protestante et l'église catholique comme institutions de pouvoir et de contrôle.

En attribuant de nouvelles connotations à l'original à travers sa traduction, Paulin transfère le poème de Verlaine dans un contexte nord-irlandais. Quand on considère en détail la strophe susmentionnée, on remarque qu'il modifie subtilement le contenu du poème original en changeant la structure syntaxique de la phrase. Dans le poème français, « l'église » est le sujet alors que « la tour » fonctionne comme objet. En revanche, dans la traduction de Paulin, « l'église » est l'objet, alors que « la tour » devient le sujet. De cette manière, le poète pose l'accent sur « la tour » et souligne ainsi son importance : la tour qui « squats above the church » est située au dessus l'église et la domine par conséquent. Ainsi dans la traduction de Paulin, « la tour » prend une nouvelle dimen-

[11] *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.68.
[12] Tom Paulin, *Ireland and the English Crisis* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1984), p.16.
[13] Cf. John Haffenden, *Viewpoints. Poets in Conversation* (London: Faber, 1981), p.159.
[14] *Ireland*, p.16.

sion. L'édifice peut ne pas être interprété comme un simple symbole de l'Eglise protestante, mais il peut également incarner, par extension, l'Etat britannique. Vue dans un contexte nord-irlandais, la « heavy tower » rappelle les tours de contrôle érigées par l'armée britannique pour surveiller la population locale. Le verbe « squat », quant à lui, renvoie à « squaddy », terme argotique utilisé en Irlande du Nord pour désigner un soldat britannique. De cette façon, Paulin introduit subversivement des termes et des concepts contemporains dans la description du paysage de Verlaine. L'image de la tour lui permet de reprendre l'allusion au Protestantisme faite par Verlaine.

Dans la deuxième ligne de la strophe, Paulin inverse l'ordre des mots afin de changer l'accent de la phrase. Contrairement à l`original, où la jetée est mentionnée avant la tour, elle figure en second lieu dans la traduction anglaise. Par cette voie, Paulin souligne la prédominance de la tour sur l'église, et sous-entend que l'Eglise protestante est sous la surveillance de l'Etat britannique, qui l'a transformée en instrument de pouvoir et de contrôle. Au lieu de traduire les adjectifs « haute » et « sèche », Paulin choisit les termes « hard » et « basic » pour définir l'édifice. Ainsi, il attribue à la tour des traits de caractère comportant des connotations péjoratives. Si nous considérons les mots utilisés par Paulin pour décrire le Protestantisme, nous pouvons constater une gradation. L'énumération des termes « brisk, bossy, heartless and utterly without hope », à l'intensité croissante, renvoie à l'attitude intolérante du gouvernement britannique à l'égard de l'Irlande du Nord. L'adjectif « brisk » peut se lire comme une allusion à la cruauté avec laquelle les décisions politiques répondant aux tensions en Irlande du Nord ont été prises. Les mots « bossy » et « heartless », au contraire, rappellent le règne autoritaire du gouvernement britannique tout en suggérant un comportement inhumain et dominateur. « Utterly without hope », en revanche, fait référence à la situation en Irlande du Nord, qui semble sans espoir. En intégrant de nouveaux concepts et de nouvelles images, ainsi qu'en attribuant des connotations inédites à certains termes, Paulin s'écarte de l'original de manière subtile. Quand bien même l'approche de la traduction s'éloigne du modèle verlainien, elle fonctionne comme « domestication », le but principal de Paulin étant de suivre les grandes lignes de l'original et de rester relativement proche du texte-source.

Contrairement à la traduction de « Bournemouth », la traduction du poème de Rimbaud « Les Corbeaux » s'écarte considérablement de l'original. Dans sa traduction, Paulin choisit de changer le sens de pas-

sages entiers du texte-source, remplaçant certains vers du poème français par ses propres phrases. De plus, le langage employé se colore d'allusions clairement politisées. Voilà qui justifiera donc que dans l'analyse suivante, nous employons le concept de la traduction en tant que « rewriting »[15] à l'instar des écrits théoriques d'un Scott ou d'un Lefevere. Scott considère en effet le texte-source comme « instrument by which the translator explores his own voice »,[16] ce qui veut dire que l'original sert au traducteur comme point de départ pour sa propre écriture. D'autre part, Scott avance l'argument selon lequel un texte-source est seulement une mise en exergue de tous les textes possibles qui le précédent.[17] D'après Scott, le traducteur multiplie les réalisations potentielles de l'original en le transposant dans un nouveau contexte créatif. De ce fait, le texte-cible donne lieu à de nouvelles façons de réfléchir sur le sujet de l'original. Percevant une traduction comme « response to textual opportunities », Scott explique : « every text desires to be other »,[18] ce qui veut dire que chaque texte « désire » être réinterprété et réinventé de plusieurs manières différentes. Il soutient la théorie de Walter Benjamin selon laquelle le but d'une traduction est d'assurer le progrès de l'original dans sa « vie d'après », ce qu'il appelle l'« after-life ».[19] Dans le cas de la traduction des « Corbeaux », le texte source « progresse » à travers les nouvelles connotations et les nouveaux concepts attribués à l'original par le traducteur. Empruntant un terme utilisé par Tony Harrison, nous pourrons dire que la traduction de Paulin « reenergizes »[20] et renouvelle le texte-source en se fondant sur des références à l'Irlande du Nord.

Paulin utilise le poème de Rimbaud pour étudier à travers sa traduction les conséquences de la violence politique. Il traduit « Les Corbeaux », non par « The Ravens », équivalent du mot anglais, mais par « The Rooks » (« Les Corneilles »), et de cette façon choisit une autre espèce d'oiseau pour son titre. D'emblée, il illustre ainsi son parti-pris de

[15] Cf. *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations*, p.13, *Translating, Rewriting*, p.VII.
[16] *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations*, p.10.
[17] Ibid., p.8.
[18] Ibid., *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations*, p.23.
[19] Walter Benjamin, « The Task of the Translator » traduit par Harry Zohn, dans *The Translation Studies Reader*, édité par Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2008), pp.75-82, (p.77).
[20] Tony Harrison, *Phaedra Britannica* (London: Rex Collings, 1976), p.IV.

ne pas rester proche de l'original. En raison de leur habitude de se nourrir de cadavres, les corbeaux et les corneilles sont généralement associés à la mort dans la littérature. Attirés par les champs de bataille, ces charognards font fréquemment figure d'oiseaux de mauvaise fortune.[21]

Nommant son poème d'après une espèce d'oiseau incarnant la mort et la désintégration, Rimbaud crée une atmosphère apocalyptique dès le titre. « Les Corbeaux », écrit en 1871, appartient à l'œuvre précoce de Rimbaud, qui est marquée à cette époque par une forte dimension politique. Pointant du doigt la défaite de la France lorsque la guerre franco-prussienne, le poème constitue une critique dirigée contre la bataille menée par Napoléon III. Rimbaud poursuivait des idéaux anarchistes, rejetant la religion ainsi que l'autorité de l'Etat. Le poète avait fixé comme objectif à son art de décrire sans ménagement la vie moderne pour illustrer avec précision les aspects négatifs de la société contemporaine. Le but ultime, la destruction de l'ordre social existant, serait ainsi réalisé grâce à la pris de conscience que provoque la poésie.[22] Dans son poème, Rimbaud se fait très critique envers Napoléon III, étudiant les conséquences de cette guerre qui avait mené le Second Empire à sa fin. Il ouvre son poème sur une série d'images évocatrices de la froideur, de la destruction et du désespoir, instaurant ainsi un climat angoissant :

Seigneur, quand froide est la prairie, Quand, dans les ha- meaux abattus, Les longs angélus se sont tus… Sur la nature défleurie Faites s'abattre des grands cieux Les chers corbeaux dé- licieux. (Rimbaud)[23]	Lord, when the prai- rie is cold, when in the worn-out hamlets the long Angelus fell silent … Let from the high skies delicious dear ravens sweeep down on the faded nature. (traduction person-	When the ground's as hard as rock and the Angelus has gone dead in each crushed village Lord let the rooks - those great clacky birds sweep down from the clouds onto fields and ridges (Paulin)[24]

[21] Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.167-168.
[22] Rimbaud cité dans: Graham Robb, *Rimbaud* (London: Picador, 2001), p.55-81.
[23] Arthur Rimbaud, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), p.36.

nelle)

En commerçant son poème par le mot « Seigneur » et par cette évocation de l'Angélus, Rimbaud fait allusion à l'Eglise catholique. Il se sert de la traditionnelle série de prières pour formuler une critique subversive de la foi catholique. Dans son poème, il présente le « Seigneur » comme dépourvu de pourvoir : les longues prières terminées, il est exposé sans protection à la ruine et à la dévastation. Pour Rimbaud, c'est une manière de suggérer que ni le « Seigneur » ni l'« Angélus » n'ont une influence sur la situation politique. La prairie froide rappelle un champ de bataille, et les corbeaux qui descendent du ciel renvoient à la mort imminente. Cette allusion à l'immobilité et à la fossilisation, n'a pas seulement trait à la dévastation causée par la guerre franco-prussienne, elle égratigne également les structures rigides du Second Empire. En rejetant toute autorité imposée, le poète se révolte contre l'ordre social établi de la France du 19^{e} siècle. Dans le vers « chers corbeaux délicieux » il convient de considérer deux niveaux narratifs. D'une part, ils créent cette atmosphère mélancolique qu'affectionnent les poètes parnassiens pour rendre les « états d'âme ». D'autre part, ils peuvent se lire comme une attaque ironique dirigée contre l'Eglise catholique, car les prêtres catholiques sont souvent appelés « corbeaux » par les anti-cléricaux. Articulant ainsi son rejet de la religion, Rimbaud exprime son opposition à l'institutionnalisation de celle-ci.

A l'instar de l'atmosphère lugubre présentée dans le poème de Verlaine, l'ambiance poétique de Paulin passe par l'image de corneilles annonciatrices de désastre. Les champs de bataille, leurs « crushed villages », renvoient à l'Irlande du Nord pendant les Troubles. Dans le vers « the Angelus has gone dead », Paulin fait allusion au catholicisme et à l'incapacité de l'Eglise catholique de mettre un terme à la violence dans ce conflit, souvent considéré comme un combat religieux. Vu dans un contexte plus large, l'« Angélus mort» implique l'absence générale de la religion. Par ce moyen, Paulin présente le conflit nord-irlandais comme une lutte pour le plaisir et sans idéaux élevés. La terre dépeinte comme « as hard as a rock » peut être reliée aux positions résistantes sur lesquelles campent les deux communautés ethno-religieuses d'Irlande du Nord. Ainsi, Paulin montre une société nord-irlandaise pétrifiée et oppo-

[24] *The Road to Inver*, p.31.

sée au progrès. Les prairies et les crêtes mentionnées évoquent les verts pâturages et les montagnes dénudées d'Irlande tout en suggérant le vide et la stagnation. Les « great clacky birds » symbolisent les messagers de malheur, et font allusion aux victimes du conflit. A travers le symbolisme du poème, Paulin développe son rejet de la violence politique en soulignant les horreurs de la guerre. En transformant la critique de la guerre franco-prussienne développé par Rimbaud en une condamnation du sectarisme nord-irlandais, Paulin substitue, d'après Scott, une conception du monde à une autre.[25] Il transpose l'original non seulement dans un lieu étranger, mais aussi dans une époque ultérieure et, par ce moyen, élargit le « potentiel expressif »[26] du texte source. Selon la théorie de Benjamin, il aide ainsi l'original à progresser et évoluer dans son « after-life ».[27]

Dans sa traduction de « Iambe VIII » de Chénier, Paulin s'éloigne encore plus visiblement du texte-source, ne serait-ce que par le choix du titre, car il refuse de traduire le titre français en renommant son poème « From the Death Cell ». La traduction de Paulin peut être considérée comme « creative act »[28] ou comme « experimental writing »[29] car elle tient encore plus de la récréation que dans « Les Corbeaux ». La relation entre Paulin et Chénier peut donc être décrite comme « co-authorship »,[30] étant donné que le texte français sert uniquement de point de départ à l'écriture créative de Paulin.

Pour Paulin, choisir Chénier, c'est faire appel à un symbole de la résistance et de l'héroïsme. Aujourd'hui, Chénier passe pour l'un des auteurs les plus influents du 18e siècle. Dans ses écrits poétiques et journalistiques, il attaquait à la fois la monarchie et la violence dont la Révolution avait fait preuve.[31] Accusé d'avoir commis des crimes contre l'Etat, il fut emprisonné en 1794 et guillotiné sans procès après 141 jours de détention. Son exécution eut lieu trois jours seulement avant la chute de

[25] Cf. Clive Scott, *Translating Baudelaire* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), p.5.
[26] Cf. *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations,* p.23.
[27] « The Task of the Translator », p.77.
[28] Cf. *Translating Rimbaud's Illuminations,* p.13.
[29] Cf. Ibid., p.6.
[30] *Translating Baudelaire,* p.9.
[31] Cf. L. Becq de Fouquières, « André Chénier. Sa vie et ses œuvres » dans *André Chénier. Poésis. Edition Critique,* édité par L. Becq de Fouquières (Paris : Gallimard, 1994), pp.VII-LXXIV, (p.XXXVI).

Robespierre, événement qui lui aurait très probablement sauvé la vie. « Iambe VIII » est un des derniers fragments de poésie composés par Chénier dans la Prison de St. Lazare en attendant son jugement.[32]

Ce poème se fait l'écho de la vie quotidienne en prison, et illustre l'angoisse, partagée par tous les prisonniers, d'être mené à l'échafaud à tout moment. A un niveau narratif plus abstrait, « Iambe VIII » peut être lu comme poème contre la captivité et comme rejet du système politique responsable de l'incarcération du narrateur :

On vit ; on vit infâme. Eh bien ? Il fallut l´être ; L'infâme après tout mange et dort. Ici même, en ces parcs, où la mort nous fait paître, Où la hache nous tire au sort, Beaux poulets sont écrits, maris, amants sont dupes, Caquetage, intrigues de sots. (Chénier)[33]	We live, we life dishonoured. What of it? It had to be. After all, the dishonoured eats and sleeps. Even here in the pens, where death makes us graze, where the axe decides on our fate, beautiful love-letters are written, husbands, lovers are betrayed, gossip, foolish intrigues. (traduction personnelle)	We live – dishonoured, in the shit. So what? It had to be. This is the pits and yet we feed and sleep. Even here – penned in, watered and waiting for the chop (just place your bets) – affairs take off, there's gossip, bitching and pecking-order. (Paulin)[34]

Il est très probable que le poème "From the Death Cell" veuille évoquer le souvenir du "Dirty Protest", qui en 1981 avait précédé la grève de la faim des prisonniers républicains dans la prison de « Maze ». Pris dans ce contexte-là, le mot argotique « shit » ne fait pas seulement allusion à la situation misérable des prisonniers, mais rappelle également les excréments étalés sur les murs des cellules lors de la manifestation.

[32] Cf. John C. Bailey, *The Claims Of French Poetry* : *Nine Studies In The Greater French Poets* (New York : Libraries Press, 1967), p.153.
[33] André Chénier, *Œeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), pp.192-3.
[34] *The Road to Inver*, p.19.

Paulin joue avec le double sens du terme familier « pit », qui se traduit par « une place pour dormir» et par « l'enfer », allusion claire aux conditions inhumaines dans lesquelles vivaient les prisonniers. Le vers « waiting for the chop », reprend l'allusion de Chénier à la guillotine. Cependant, dans un contexte nord-irlandais, l'image de la décapitation correspond au jugement des prisonniers républicains par la juridiction britannique. Par extension, les références à la violence sont à relier aux tortures physiques et psychologiques infligées aux détenus par les forces de sécurité britanniques. Dans sa traduction, Paulin s'éloigne du langage suranné et lyrique de Chénier en le remplaçant par un discours contemporain marqué par des mots familiers et argotiques. Les passages où Chénier énumère les activités des prisonniers, « Beaux poulets sont écrit/ maris, amants sont dupés, / Caquetage, intrigues de sot », se voient résumés en des termes modernes, tels « gossip », « bitching » et « pecking-order ». De cette manière, Paulin transpose le scénario composé par Chénier dans un contexte contemporain.

La seconde strophe comporte une attaque virulente contre les hommes politiques révolutionnaires :

L'un pousse et fait bondir sur les toits, sur les vitres, Un ballon tout gonflé de vent, Comme sont les discours des sept cents plats bélîtres, Dont Barère est le plus savant. […] et braillent, boivent, rient politiqueurs et raisonneurs	One sends off and lets bounce on the roofs, on the panes, a ball full of wind, like the speeches of the seven hundred dumb idiots, among whom the wisest is Barère. […] and "politicians" and thinkers bray, drink and laugh.	Someone bops a tight ballon against the window-panes. It's like the speech of those seven hundred eejits (Barrère's the shifties of the lot) [36] – a comic fart we whoop and cheer and then forget. […] that greasy pack of gut and gullet politician raps and hoots
(Chénier)[35]	(traduction person-	

[35] *Œuvres complètes*, p.193.
[36] Ortographe originale du nom « Barère » est modifiée par Paulin. Il s'agit très

nelle) (Paulin)[37]

Les « sept cents plats bélîtres » font penser aux sept cents membres de l'Assemblé Nationale pendant la Révolution. De cette manière, Chénier stigmatise leur manque de crédibilité et leur incompétence. Jouant avec l'image du ballon, qui est aussi remplit d'air que le sont les discours des politiciens, Chénier ridiculise les proclamations des révolutionnaires. Une telle description grotesque des hommes politiques dépeints comme autant d'êtres « braillant », « buvant » et « riant », remet en question leur sérieux. Cette image des politiciens douteux se voit renforcée par la référence à Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac, présenté avec causticité comme « le plus savant ». A l'époque, Barère était en effet considéré comme l'un des révolutionnaires les plus redoutables, pour avoir contribué à l'instauration du régime de la Terreur. Il propageait un patriotisme violent et soutenait farouchement la peine de mort. Appelant Barère le révolutionaire le plus savant, Chénier décrit le régime de la Terreur avec ironie, tout en considérant également sa propre incarcération de façon sarcastique.

La traduction de Paulin reprend le discours ironique que Chénier dirige contre les politiciens de son époque, mais le transpose dans un contexte nord-irlandais. A travers le terme « eejit », version irlandaise du mot « idiot », il insiste sur la localisation de son poème en Irlande. La référence de Paulin aux « seven hundred eejits » est peut-être à mettre symboliquement en parallèle avec les membres du Parlement britannique, qui prenaient des décisions discutables au sujet du conflit nord-irlandais. Les décrivant par un langage argotique comme « greasy pack of gut and gullet politicians », il met en cause leur autorité. Le recours à l'adjectif « greasy », qui évoque la saleté, et au nom « pack », expression argotique pour un group de criminels, permet à Paulin d'accuser les politiciens de manque de sincérité. Le mot « gut » fait penser à l'expression « gut decision », à savoir une décision reposant sur des émotions irrationnelles et non fondée sur des considérations réfléchies. Par ce moyen, Paulin sous-entend que les politiciens emportés par leurs propres senti-

probablement d'une faute de frappe puisqu'il n'existe pas de « Barrère » correspondant au personnage dont il est question dans le poème.

[37] *The Road to Inver*, p.19.

ments et préjugés, ne sauraient être guidés par la raison : la politique traitant d'Irlande du Nord serait donc dépourvue de toute rationalité. L'allusion à Barère vise peut-être Ian Paisley, cet homme politique d'Irlande du Nord qui fit à maintes reprises de proclamations sectaires à l'encontre de la communauté catholique. Dans un contexte de rejet par Paulin des idéaux unionistes, le passage « a comic fart we whoop and cheer and then forget » est à interpréter comme une offensive contre l'intolérance loyaliste que ce dernier a incarné durant de nombreuses années.

Chénier illustre la fin de son poème par l'évocation angoissée de l'exécution qui peut survenir à tout moment :

Quelle sera la proie Que la hache appelle aujourd`hui ? Chacun frisonne, écoute ; et chacun avec joie Voit que ce n'est pas encore lui. (Chénier)[38]	Who will be the pray which the axe calls for today? Everybody shudders, listens and with joy sees that it is not yet him… (traduction personnelle)	Who's getting it today? We freeze and listen. Then all but one of us knows it isn't him… (Paulin)[39]

A travers le terme « la hache » le poète français évoque la décapitation des prisonniers par la guillotine. Paulin choisit de remplacer l'image de Chénier par la question « Who's getting it today ? ». Posée en langage familier par le narrateur, la question ne suggère pas l'exécution des détenus, mais renvoie à leur torture physique. De cette manière, Paulin se réfère aux méthodes punitives pratiquées par le Gouvernement britannique, ayant fait l'objet d'une condamnation internationale. Par sa traduction, il transforme un poème qui traite du destin spécifique de Chénier et dénonce un système de terreur institutionnalisé, en poésie critiquant l'attitude partiale de Westminster dans le conflit nord-irlandais.

« Bournemouth », « Les Corbeaux » et « Iambe VIII » constituent autant de textes-sources que Paulin transpose dans un nouveau contexte

[38] *Œuvres complètes*, p.193.
[39] *The Road to Inver*, p.19.

culturel afin d'explorer d'un point de vue détaché les conséquences de la violence politique. Il essaie donc d'établir une certaine distance géopolitique et mentale pour étudier le conflit nord-irlandais à travers l'histoire et la poésie française. Dans sa traduction de « Bournemouth », Paulin transforme un poème reflétant l'esprit troublé de Verlaine en critique ouverte de l'attitude de l'Eglise et de l'Etat britannique au cours des Troubles. Quant il traduit « Les Corbeaux » de Rimbaud, il fait la jonction entre les atrocités commises pendant la guerre de 1870 et les conséquences de la violence politique en Irlande du Nord. Simultanément, il utilise le texte-source pour chanter son désir d'une Irlande réunifiée sous la forme d'un état laïque. Chez Paulin, le poème de Chénier sert de socle pour illustrer la situation dans la prison de Maze dans les années quatre-vingt au cours du « Dirty Protest ». Ces traductions consistent autant de façons différentes d'élargir les connotations des textes-sources, destinés à acquérir une dimension nord-irlandaise. En prenant l'histoire française comme point de comparaison et de contraste, Paulin juxtapose différentes visions du monde pour explorer les Troubles. Dans ses traductions, il se livre à des expérimentations grâce à des expressions familières, argotiques et dialectiques, et de cette manière crée un langage hétérogène, qui s'éloigne de la langue officielle de façon subversive. En refusant l'utilisation des termes et des concepts sectaires, en créant son propre langage, Paulin suggère que de nouvelles formes d'expression s'imposent pour générer de nouvelles façons de penser. Il considère la langue anglaise comme langue de colonisation. Il argue de cela pour proposer qu'elle soit déconstruite puis redéfinie[40] afin de pouvoir exprimer l'idée d'une Irlande non-sectaire. Par la création d'un mode d'expression novateur pour débattre du conflit nord-irlandais, Paulin laisse entendre que la langue anglaise, telle qu'elle est actuellement utilisée par les politiciens et les média pour appréhender les Troubles, n'est pas en mesure de traduire la situation en Irlande du Nord de manière impartial. A travers ses traductions des poèmes français, Paulin tente d'insérer sa propre voix poétique dans le discours afférant au conflit, tout en rejetant l'opposition traditionnelle entre unionisme britannique et nationalisme irlandais.

[40] Cf. Paulin Tom, *Ireland and the English Crisis* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1984), p.15.

Bien que les poèmes de Verlaine, Rimbaud et Chénier permettent à Paulin de communiquer une vision alternative du conflit, la validité des parallèles qu'il crée entre la France et l'Irlande du Nord pourrait néanmoins être remise en question. D'aucuns pourraient juger exagérés les liens que Paulin tente d'établir entre la guerre de 1870 et les Troubles. La façon dont il rapproche les prisonniers du Régime de la Terreur et les détenus républicains en Irlande du Nord peut également sembler outrancière. On pourrait ainsi lui rétorquer que l'ampleur des conséquences du conflit franco-prussienne et de la Révolution française au niveau européen n'est pas comparable avec les effets des Troubles. Si l'on considère cependant la fonction de la poésie en général, il est fort probable que Paulin n'avait pas l'intention de comparer les différents degrés de violence et d'oppression politique en termes absolus. Dans ses traductions, il s'attache plutôt à composer de la poésie provocatrice, qui pousse le lecteur à la réflexion. Les exagérations dont il fait preuve en établissant des parallèles entre l'histoire française et les Troubles nord-irlandais peuvent être vues comme la tentative de communiquer cette situation politique à une audience internationale par le biais de l'amplification. En même temps, les rapports établis entre la France et l'Irlande du Nord peuvent se lire comme un plaidoyer pour une approche plus large du conflit, en ce qu'ils réunissent des perspectives divergentes. On constate avec intérêt que Paulin n'est pas le seul poète nord-irlandais à choisir la traduction comme mode d'étudier les Troubles. Les traductions de Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel et Ciaran Carson confirment une nouvelle tendance dans l'écriture en Irlande du Nord, qui propose de mettre en oeuvre une vision du conflit plus détachée et plus neutre par le prisme de cultures différentes. En transposant les Troubles dans un environnement plus global, les auteurs se prononcent contre un discours monolithique en rejetant tout autant les propos provincialistes et sectaires.

Part III

The Novel as a Site for Rebellion

Chapter 10 Peter Guy

Revolution, Space and the Death Drive in John McGahern's *Amongst Women*

Among the important interventions Lacan gives in the *Ethics* seminar, perhaps the most radical is his reading of Freud's theory of the death drive.[1] What Lacan tells the attendees of his seminar is that the death drive actually is an ethical stance, and one that must be accepted in order to disrupt the superego bond that keeps the individual at bay in the community. To underline his point, Lacan turns to Sophocles' *Antigone*: confronted with the fact that her uncle, Creon, refuses to give her brother, Polynices, a proper burial on the charges that he is a traitor, Antigone goes against the Theban community and sprinkles dust over the dead body of Polynices, thus giving him a makeshift burial. This act of Antigone's is not, for Lacan, any kind of hysterical transgression of the law; rather, it is the ethical act par excellence inasmuch as it causes the dismantling of the Theban community as well as Creon's law – the very basis of her existence.

In effect, Antigone herself has been declaring from the beginning: 'I am dead and I desire death'… An illustration of the death instinct [read:drive] is what we find here'.[2] But Lacan also points out a crucial difference because of which it cannot be said that all of us, insofar as the death drive is also operative within us, are in the same ethical dilemma as Antigone: '[F]rom Antigone's point of view life can only be approached, can only be lived or thought about, from the place of that limit where her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side from where she can see it and live it in the form of something already lost.'[3] This act of Antigone's, Lacan tells us, is the embodiment of the death drive at its purest. To be a true revolutionary, Lacan's challenge goes, one must

[1] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-60*. Translated by Denis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.279-285.
[2] Lacan, *Ethics*, p.281.
[3] Lacan, *Ethics*, p.280.

commit the Act in the footsteps of Antigone – an Act that would cause the dismantling of the very conditions of subjective being. And, if not, then 'hysteric' is the name they must bear. What then is the connection between Antigone's Act and the death drive? Suffice to say, embracing the Act not only means to give up the enjoyment of a meaningful existence in the established order, but it also marks the point from which a new order is thought possible. Acceptance of the law of the father, and hence subjection to the law of society, is a crucial step in the formation of personality. The formation of a social being seems to be understood by Lacan as an organic necessity, a fact which does not prevent him from criticizing the discontents of civilization resulting from this territoriality. Although there are far-reaching differences between the two, Lacan aligns himself with Hegel's ultimate theory of the proper function of aggressivity in human ontology, that is, the dialectic of master and servant. It is from this dialectic, Lacan claims, that Hegel 'deduced the entire subjective and objective progress of our history.'[4] What is decisive in Hegel's analysis is the role played by desire: 'The satisfaction of human desire is possible only when mediated by the desire and labour of the other.'[5] However, the Lacanian dialectic is to be understood not as a dialectic of consciousness, but of space. It follows that where Hegel sees the insertion of the individual into the social order as the work of desiring consciousness, Lacan perceives it in the constitution of the space of the subject as the space of the Other's desire, an infusion which takes place through the mediation of vision.

The spatial dimension of being a social being is genetically derived from a space marked by relatively indeterminate positions of subjectivity and objectivity in a dialectic relation. This allowed Lacan to speak of the 'relation existing between the dimensions of space and subjective tension, which in the discontents or malaise of civilization intersects with that anxiety.'[6] The space of the subject as a social space determines subjectivity as absent in the spatial as well as the temporal sense. In mapping subjective space onto the space of the other – the social space – the subject invests its desire for being an image which, as representation, marks

[4] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits – A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), p.20.
[5] Lacan, *Écrits*, p.26.
[6] Lacan, *Écrits*, p.22

it as not here and not yet here. Social space is the domain of Freud's death-drive.

Now, Lacan's attitude towards social space is determined by the realization that it must necessarily remain a space of tension. Hence he shows the same ambivalent attitude to war, for example, which he has towards the Symbolic order as a whole. War, for Hegel, is: 'a rational form of aggressivity because it subordinates individual and particularistic interests to the interest of the state', interpreted by Hegel as universal.[7] For Lacan, it is the natural form of spatial experience in the field of social interaction, while at the same time a showplace of the contradictions between the technical requirements of the war-machine, and the limitations of the subject in fulfilling these requirements.

An aspect of McGahern's realistic fiction which often draws comment is his representation of space, his description of both landscapes and interiors. In the absence of what he calls a system of manners, a coherent and generally accepted view of reality, McGahern must create a context for his fictions. Part of this involves the re-representing of landscapes and spaces through language; and for McGahern this process is analogous to military or political conquest. McGahern could be described as anti-republican in his political outlook. He regards Nationalism as an outmoded ideology which, in Ireland, never received more than lip-service from a people whose world-view was mainly localist. Nevertheless, we have seen that he laments the absence of a unifying system of manners, which we might describe as a national ideology, and suggests that the pessimism of his work may stem from this absence of a structured society. He does appear to realise, or to consider important, the unavoidable link between manners and culture, and between both of these and political power.

Because of this lack of a structured society and unifying ideology, the citizens of the Ireland in which he grew up 'never felt that the country was theirs' despite having gained political independence.[8] I suggest that

[7] Wilfried Ver Eecke, "Hegel as Lacan's Source for Necessity in Psychoanalytic Theory", in Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (eds), *Interpreting Lacan in Psychiatry and Humanities* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983), p.135.

[8] James Whyte, "An Interview with John McGahern." Appendix to *History, Myth and Ritual in the Fiction of John McGahern*: *Strategies of Transcendence* (Lewistown, Queenstown, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), p.233.

his fiction, telling a version of the story of Ireland since independence, is an effort to reclaim the country, to assert an imaginative ownership which parallels the political and military control which his father's generation won. This is evident in the Prologue to a reading in Rockefeller University, "The Image", where he speaks of the need to establish 'a world of imagination' over which he can 'reign' as a 'king', albeit in an absurd fashion.[9] Art offers a power analogous to political or military power. While McGahern presents it as an escape from political reality, a shield against 'the immovable solidity' of the 'real' landscape which is not his own, he fails to recognize that his art is enmeshed in a web of ideological presuppositions. This is nowhere more evident than in his representation of the relations between the sexes.

McGahern's fathers represent the authority of the patriarchal social order. Yet they are also typically disillusioned with the social order which emerged after Independence, especially with the new middle class, represented by the priests and doctor: 'It was the priest and doctor and not the guerrilla fighter who had emerged as the bigwigs in the country Moran had fought for.'[10] Their response is to retreat into the family where they can exercise complete control. There they establish, in their patriarchal mini-states, a microcosm of the country at large. This sense is given further weight by McGahern's claim that the country is filled with 'thousands of independent republics called families.'[11] These father figures tend to relate to others most intimately along the barrel of a rifle.

The Imaginary in adult life valorises the Other in its links to the mirror-stage quest for sameness and the Oedipal injunction to difference. Even the illusion that a person can find complete understanding derives from the narcissistic drive to eradicate differences between self and other to regain the mythical paradise of *jouissance*, and in so doing to deny castration. This drive implies a greater Desire to be right than to know the truth about oneself in the exchange of opinion and theory. Imaginary logic stands behind the human tendency of moralizing and ethical

[9] "The Image: Prologue to a Reading at the Rockefeller University", in *The Honest Ulsterman*, vol. 8, December 1968, p.10. With revisions in *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 17, July 1991, p.12.
[10] John McGahern, *Amongst Women* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p.88 Hereafter all references to *Amongst Women* will be in the text (AM) followed by the page number.
[11] Whyte, *History, Myth and Ritual*, p.143.

judgements, therefore, as well as behind all binary and oppositional thinking. In its absolutist, moralistic nature the Imaginary is the topological, diachronic function that allows individuals to connect themselves to the world through convictions and beliefs. Thus, the laws of narcissism and aggressiveness being inherent in its structure, the *moi* of Imaginary absolutism stands behind war, ideology and religion. Less broadly speaking, Imaginary tendencies are revealed in the passions of hate and ignorance. Even before they acquired language in any coherent sense, infants made the archaic stabilization of space in terms of which "good" was associated with me and "bad" with the affairs of the mirror rival. This structural underpinning explains why in the realm of human interdependence there is a fundamental instability and discord. The "you or me" of war which Lacan invoked, parallels the dialectical disunity within one's own being.[12]

The language of space, as it is used to describe family relations, is important in this regard. With its patterns of advance, retreat, invasions and taking cover, it echoes the descriptions of actual battles in McGahern's fiction. This is particularly obvious in the portrayal of the courtship of Moran and Rose as a battle between two military strategists. The language in which the courtship is related echoes that used in the description of the ambush a little earlier in the novel. At the start, it is Rose who does the running, exposing herself to taunts and 'cheers that echo out like firing' (*AM*, 25) as she makes her way to the post-office to meet Moran. We can compare this to McQuaid's memory of the ambush: 'By the time I rolled to the bottom of the slope I could see the steady fire coming from the windows. I waited to get my breath before cutting across the road.' (*AM*, 17) Once Moran 'neither went towards her nor withdrew,' (*AM*, 26) Rose withdraws herself, forcing Moran to break cover and visit her house. At last she is in control: 'No longer, exposed and vulnerable,

[12] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*: *Book II – The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*. Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.) (New York: Norton, 1991), p.169. This paranoid logic, the "unbinding tie" of violence and identification, is realized to the letter in a range of recent films on serial murder: for example, Lars von Trier's *Zentropa* or the German film *Apartment Zero*. In the British film on female compulsive identification, *Butterfly Kiss*, the two female characters – Eunice and Miriam – drawn into relation, and engulfed by identification, go by the nicknames "Eu" and "Mi" ("it's you or me").

would she have to chase and harry after happiness. From a given and confident position she would now be able to move forwards.'(*AM*, 30) Her situation here resembles the advantageous position which the ambush gains for the IRA column: 'We had them on the run by then. They were afraid to venture out except in convoys… Then it began to get easier. We hadn't to hide any longer.'(*AM*, 18)

McGahern's father figures are concerned with controlling space in another way also. McGahern says of the generation which preceded his own: 'A lot of them were revolutionaries, and of course, in a way the revolution never happened. You know, a revolution did happen, they walked free from England, but nothing changed and these people were very disillusioned.'[13] Both Reegan in *The Barracks* and Moran in *Amongst Women* are good examples of these embittered revolutionaries. They are socially and geographically displaced in the new Ireland which they have helped create and are obsessed with the urge to re-establish a connection with the farming life of their forebears, which they have abandoned to fight for their country's independence.

In *Amongst Women*, Moran's bullying of his teenage daughters is implicitly contrasted with his inability to maintain his ascendancy over his former lieutenant, McQuaid – ergo, the outside world. McQuaid acts as another, different big Other to Moran: he deconstructs his ego and invades his imaginary identity. McQuaid once bolstered his ego as a freedom fighter, a killer independent of the community. That McQuaid is no longer willing to accept this role leads Moran to feel a 'wild surge of resentment' towards him. (*AM*, 11) The military and its discipline, though he never romanticised it, is key to Moran's imperturbability, reinforcing the image of him as head of a small, independent battalion rather than a family. His '[S]eparateness and pride' (*AM*, 23) is what first attracted Rose whilst he addresses his children as the 'troops'. (*AM*, 3, 31, 59) McQuaid also makes reference to the 'missing soldiers.' (*AM*, 12) He tells his daughters, 'The closest I ever got to any man was when I had him in the sights of my rifle and I never missed.' (*AM*, 7) During his second, major argument with Rose, he speaks to her 'as quietly as if he were taking rifle aim.'(*AM*, 69) Mark, Maggie's husband, complains to her

[13] Jacqueline Hurtley *et al*, *Ireland in Writing*: *Interviews with Writers and Academics* (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), p.43.

that his stay in Moran household was '[L]ike moving around in a war area' (*AM*, 135)

While commentators such as Denis Sampson have suggested that the home acts as Moran's 'fortress' or 'the boundaries of his kingdom' I would argue otherwise – it is in the home where Moran suffers his greatest setbacks.[14] The loss of his friend McQuaid, Rose's assertion of her equal status in the marriage and his physical altercation with Michael which ends in defeat – all these incidents take place in the kitchen. It is only in the fields and in war that Moran regains his primacy: "For people like McQuaid and myself the war was the best part of our lives. Things were never so simple and clear again." (*AM*, 6) Thus, it would not serve our purpose to view Moran merely as a domestic tyrant, waited on hand and foot by subservient womenfolk. When McQuaid quits the house for the final time he states: 'Some people just cannot bear coming in second.' (*AM*, 22) That McQuaid is now determined to break up this imaginary world, leaves Moran badly exposed. That his bride succeeds in besting him in the courtship, further underlines Moran's antipathy towards the outside world.

One scene which is of importance is set during the Monaghan Day section, where the daughters are frantically cleaning the house:

> No sooner had the door closed than Mona, released from the tension of his presence, let slip a plate from her hands…quickly they swept up the pieces and hid them away, wondering how they would replace the plate without being found out…anything broken had to be hidden until it could be replaced or forgotten. (*AM*, 10)

The plates act as a metaphor, in one way, for the fractured but outwardly coalesced Moran family, and on a deeper level, for Moran himself, broken but defiant, hidden behind the barriers of the family. Lacan also posited the idea of the *corps morcelé* – the fractured body – which referred not only to the image of the physical body but to any sense of fragmentation and disunity: 'He [the subject] is originally an inchoate collection of desires – there you have the true sense of the fragmented body.'[15] When

[14] Denis Sampson, *Outstaring Nature's Eye*: *The Fiction of John McGahern* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), p.230.
[15] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar*. *Book III*. *The Psychoses*, *1955*-56. Translated by Russell Grigg (London: Routledge, 1993), p.39.

the infant views himself in the mirror, he see his reflection as whole, a synthesis – this causes him to perceive his own body as divided and fractured in contrast. This anxiety is viewed positively – a step towards the disintegration of the rigid unity of the ego. The human subject oscillates between these two poles – the image, which is alienating, and the real body, which is, like the plates, in pieces. Lacan used the idea of the fractured self to explain certain symptoms of hysteria, reflecting in part the way the body is divided up by an imaginary anatomy. The structure of desire, as desire of the Other, is shown more clearly in hysteria than in any other structure – the hysteric is someone who appropriates another's desire by identifying with them.

As Bruce Fink states:

> The hysteric also identifies with her male partner, and desires as if she were him. In other words, she desires as if she were a man. When Lacan says that "man's desire is the Other's desire," one of the things he means is that we adopt the Other's desire as our own: we desire as if we were someone else.[16]

Certainly, Moran's daughters' desire as if they were the Other – Moran in this case. Each have inherited his sense of separateness and in turn, dominate the men in their lives in the same sense of role reversal that Fink made reference to – Moran desires are his daughters' desires – his distrust of femininity, weakness, the outside world, friendship tempered somewhat by his espousal of the family and patriarchy – such is the way his daughters lead their life almost as if they *were* Moran. It is, perhaps, as good an explanation for the inherent weakness of patriarchy as has yet been given. The monologic discourse of the past century was collapsing in the face of modernizing trends which were beginning to undermine the whole symbolic/patriarchal order. As society began to fragment, the Irish male proved incapable of dealing with his loss of centrality. Conversely, Irish women, better equipped as they were for compromise rather than conquest, eventually supplanted the male as the head of the household in this new society where interdependence (individual responsibility to the mutual benefit of all) took precedence over an autocratic (and often self-serving) male dominated one.

[16] Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*: *Theory and Technique* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp.124/25.

The ethical Act today does not differ in structure from that of Antigone's. Thus, for us, the ethical Act must be to fall into a second death by renouncing the superego edict to 'Enjoy!' – this refusal to pursue enjoyment at the cost of reducing all objects to abject refusal is the Act par excellence. Indeed, such an Act would appear absurd to affluent late capitalist society. In *Amongst Women*, we witness a protracted refusal on Moran's part to enter into this society. This act in itself is a reaffirmation of his revolutionary stance. Moran is repeatedly described as withdrawing into himself 'and that larger self of family' in order to channel his aggressions into a shrunken realm he attempts to control. (*AM*, 12) His adjustment from guerrilla fighter to father is never complete, and the question of how to maintain authority over his children while allowing them room to grow is central to the novel.

Moran turns his family into a closed community and the absence of any intrusion from without further augments his own paternal supremacy. The primacy of the family is an idea also sanctioned by the Catholic Church where links between Catholicism and patriarchy are reinforced by its most repetitive narrative ritual – the Rosary – which acts in part as an illustration of what is termed the repetition complex. In psychoanalytic terms, ideology and dogma constitutes a sort of repetition-complex that dooms us to perform the same destructive acts over and over without end.

Lacan linked the repetition of the unconscious repressed to the insistence of the signifying chain, where 'repetition is fundamentally the insistence of speech.'[17] Lacan used the word 'insistence' to express the notion of repetition or compulsion where in analytical terms, the chain of unconscious purposive ideas insist on being heard, beyond an attachment to the pleasure principle or the ego's attempts to stifle meaning. As Lacan states:

> For its symbolizing function speech is moving towards nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link that it establishes with the one who emits it – in other words, by introducing the effect of the signifier.[18]

[17] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book III. The Psychoses, 1955-56*, Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.). Translated by Russell Grigg. London: Routledge, p.242.
[18] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, p.83.

In Lacan's view, the signifier dominates over the subject. In his seminar on Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, Lacan emphasized how the path of the letter as pure signifier determines the destiny of the subjects – as such, the subject is transformed by the effects of the signifier. The Rosary in *Amongst Women* is such an example – it represents Moran's hold over the family:

> 'They say the family that prays together stays together… I think that families can stay together even though they're scattered, if there is a will to do so. The will is the important thing.'(*AM*, 137)

Even when he uses the Rosary to enforce his dominance over the family, the reality is that it is used merely as a device to impose his will rather than one which automatically confirms it. As Antoinette Quinn writes:

> The Rosary is peculiarly identified with Moran, an economical, realist device for connecting Catholicism, patrocentrism, and the mesmeric rhythms of shared family experience… the stability conferred by ritual and repeated phraseology implicitly underscores the disruptions and changes that the passage of time brings to Great Meadow.[19]

This can be seen in Maggie's return from London, where she becomes the centre of attention: 'She was the centre of the table', thus displacing Moran from his self-assumed role. (*AM*, 79) He attempts to supplant her primacy by starting the Rosary earlier than usual, but the formulaic manner in which it is recited breaks down and rather than confirming his role as head of the family, it positively discourages it:

> This night Moran enunciated each repetitious word with slow clarity and force as if the very dwelling on suffering, death and human supplication would scatter all flimsy vanities of a great world; and the muted responses giving back their acceptance of human servitude did not improve his humour. (*AM*, 79)

Once he loses the physical strength which has helped him regulate the patriarchal power structure in the family, the words of the Rosary no longer contribute to, or endorse, his claims. To refer to a common mani-

[19] Antoinette Quinn, "A Prayer for my Daughter: Patriarchy in *Amongst Women*", in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 17.1, July 1991, p.86.

festation of the death drive, namely, repetition compulsion, it is rather impossible for Moran to be compelled to repeat from a place in which life has been lived and seen as lost. Nonetheless, his daughters and younger son will return time and again to their home Great Meadow, exposing themselves to Moran's approbation in an attempt to reaffirm their own sense of identity. For example, the word 'came' or 'come' holds special significance in the opening pages of the novel – it is repeated no less than nine times on the first page: 'came at Christmas', 'came every weekend', 'her family to come with her', 'come regularly', 'come from London', 'not come', 'came every year'. It can also be seen as an allusion to Moran as the 'big Other'. (*AM*, 1)

Moran's final utterance in the novel further indicates that the Rosary holds no special significance to him save as a means to reinforce the militant structure in the household. According to David Malcolm: 'He seems to have no religious belief himself, yet insists on the ritual, for he decides when the beads are to be told, and he controls the whole event. His patriarchal power is never more evident.'[20] It draws the family together but firmly places him as the centre of attention. However, as his life slips away, his daughters take up the Rosary on his command. It is notable that by the end of the novel, the Rosary is only thing Moran has left to initiate – his daughters and wife have supplanted him in everything else. This may be the reason why his final words are '*Shut up*!' If he can command them to pray, a final command to 'shut up' indicates that he is not willing to fully surrender, even on his death-bed.

In comparison, we must at once take into account that Antigone's 'Great Refusal' of Creon's edict is not simply a transgression, because a transgression can only be accomplished against the background of a law that can be transgressed in the first place. In this way, Antigone's Refusal is of a more radical type precisely because it seeks to dislodge the law itself and to make the law disappear. But at the same time, we must keep in mind that Antigone's Refusal is no act of willpower which assumes a type of endurance against the odds that the law creates. Rather, it is more proper to conceive of Antigone's Refusal as 'beyond good and evil,' in so far as it cannot be registered against the measure of the law; it is precisely outside the law.

[20] David Malcolm, *Understanding John McGahern* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), p.113.

McGahern suggests that many of his father's generation who fought in the War of Independence had difficulty adapting to civilian life afterwards.[21] The language of rebellion and conflict has particular relevance in the father-son relationship. In asserting an identity separate from his father's, the son must desert the army of the family. In both *Amongst Women* and in the short story "Korea", the idea of execution and the father-son relationships are closely inter-linked. In *Amongst Women*, Moran threatens his son with a shotgun:

> It was then, coldly and deliberately, that he fixed his eyes on the shotgun where it stood beside the back door in the far corner of the room. Whether he was seriously thinking about using the gun or that he wanted Michael to think he would use it would never be known. If he just wanted Michael to think he might use it he succeeded absolutely. (*AM*, 120)

In "Korea", the son who narrates the story naively believes that his father is telling him about his experiences in the War of Independence out of a generous impulse 'to give of himself' on their last summer together.[22] However, as the story unfolds, it seems that his father's story of the death by execution of two comrades comes out of a plot that he is hatching where he hopes his son joins the army when he emigrates to America and if so, 'each month he'd get so many dollars while I served, and he'd get ten thousand if I was killed.'[23] The Darwinian struggle of conflicting forces is the hallmark of the father-son relationship in McGahern's fiction, as father and son plot the murder of the other in their battle to survive.

To conclude, we can see that the entry of the child into the world of the father, into language and the social, is complicated by the fact that the father is not an adequate representation of culture and civilization. Moran's rebellion against the British occupying forces is never resolved – the other is transmogrified into shadowy forces who, in his mind at least, forever threaten his independence. Rose represents civilized space, a world of comfort and culture and she, along with her step-daughters,

[21] Rosa Gonzales Casademont, "An Interview with John McGahern", in *European English Messenger*, 4 (Spring), p.19.
[22] John McGahern, *The Collected Stories* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), p.67.
[23] *The Collected Stories*, p.68.

duly become conspirators – fifth columnists in their war of attrition against Moran and all he represents – an impoverished closed space. Moran has already dismissed the rebellion which demarcated his life so vividly but McGahern astutely inverts the more usual patrocentric view by suggesting that woman exerted a subversive and ultimately more essential power in the battle at the heart of Irish family life.

Chapter 11 Eamon Maher

War and Rebellion in the Work of Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Sebastian Barry

When it comes to literary notoriety and the depiction of the Great War, the French writer Louis-Ferdinand Céline and his Irish counterpart Sebastian Barry would seem not to have a huge amount in common. Céline's masterful *Voyage au bout de la nuit* was inspired by his personal experiences as a decorated war hero who subsequently chose to excoriate the propaganda war machine in France that placed on a pedestal something he knew to be nothing other than the mindless butchery of soldiers whose lives were sacrificed to further their political leaders' ambitions. *Voyage*, in the words of Tom Quinn, caused a storm of protest at the time of its publication in 1932 mainly because of the irreverence it displayed:

> The memory of the Great War, like the later memory of the Holocaust, was kept, as it still is, with extreme solemnity. To laugh at the war and the memory of the war was to infringe a taboo. Céline's laughter thus disturbs the sanctity of the collective war memory. He uses humour to strip it of its redemptive layers.[1]

Not only was *Voyage* apparently poking fun at the memory of the Great War, but it was also doing so in a colloquial, slang-filled language that was completely revolutionary for the time. We will see that Céline felt he had to develop a new oral style that would be in keeping with the approach he wished to adopt, which was in essence one that sought to debunk the mythology surrounding a conflict that as a war veteran he felt had nothing to recommend it. Céline did not doubt the heroism of the soldiers in the trenches, their bravery under fire, their harrowing deaths.

[1] Tom Quinn, *The Traumatic Memory of the Great War, 1914-1918, in Louis-Ferdinand Céline's* Voyage au bout de la nuit (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), p.284. Quinn's magisterial study, based on his doctoral dissertation, is the best available treatment of the role the Great War played in the composition of Céline's masterpiece and is the inspiration of this chapter.

Rather, he saw the loss of so many lives (over three million died on the Western front alone) for a spurious cause both wasteful and degrading. The way in which this disgust is registered – and in this he is different from Barry – is through the development of a style that breaks with all literary norms. Henri Godard is one of the best analysts of Céline's use of language and he notes: '*Il est de ces livres qui surgissent dans l'histoire de la littérature en rupture avec la production contemporaine et qui s'imposent à l'instant. Avec les années, ce qu'ils perdent en pouvoir de scandale, ils le gagnent en profondeurs peu à peu découvertes*.'[2] This is an important observation that states that a work like *Voyage* moves from its initial status as 'un succès de scandale' to reveal depths that take time to sink in. Godard's view is that the rebellion evident in Céline's language, which is a vital ingredient of *Voyage*:

> *L'accent propre de* Voyage au bout de la nuit *est d'abord celui d'une formidable protestation, dont la force tient à la fois à la diversité des facteurs d'écrasement contre lesquels elle s'élève, et à la langue dans laquelle elle se formule, ce français populaire que Céline réintroduit dans la littérature*.[3]

Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way* was published in 2005 and it highlighted in a vivid manner the Irish involvement in the Great War, an involvement that has caused embarrassment for those who would prefer to forget that thousands of Irish soldiers volunteered to fight on the side of the Allies during this conflict. By juxtaposing the exploits of those who rebelled against British colonial rule during the 1916 Rising with the Irish soldiers who fought in the British armed forces in World War I, Barry succeeds in making his readers critically evaluate the motives of both groups. He also throws into question the issue of what constitutes a just war. His approach is obviously very different to that of Céline. His classical style is a joy to read and yet the horror of his subject matter and his exploration of what goes through men's minds when faced with the prospect of death allows room for a fruitful comparative study.

The two novels treat of the Great War and the impact it exercises on the main protagonists, Bardamu and Willie Dunne, but in the case of the

[2] Henri Godard, *Voyage au bout de la nuit de Louis-Ferdinand Céline* (Paris ; Gallimard, 1991), p.11.
[3] Godard, p.11.

latter there is also the added issue of the 1916 Rising, a seismic event in Irish history. The Northern Ireland poet and critic Tom Paulin has stated his frustration with the obsession he observes in southern Irish culture in relation to the Rising. In his view, you cannot open *The Irish Times* or attend a cultural event without someone standing up and saying that their grandfather was in the Post Office in 1916.[4] Some discussions of the uprising fail to take into account the fact that the insurgents did not enjoy popular support at the time for their actions. Declan Kiberd maintains that those who did take up arms had a definite grievance with British occupation: 'The frustrations of *all* the fighters were cultural: they wanted a land in which Galeic traditions would be fully honoured'. He continues: 'They rose in the conviction that further involvement by Irish people in the Great War would lead to far more bloodshed than their Rising, which they hoped would take Ireland out of the war altogether'.[5]

So there was a sense in which the leaders of 1916 were attempting to turn public opinion against Irish involvement in the Great War. If Willie Dunne's and Bardamu's experience is anything to go by, the horror of the trenches would easily surpass the idealistic and fatally doomed Dublin rebellion. At least there was idealism among those who made a symbolic strike for freedom, heroism in the stoicism with which their leaders accepted their plight and faced up to execution. Their cause seemed noble to them, something that would be hard to say about the ordinary soldiers who were butchered during the Great War and who ended up, if they survived any length of time, wondering what really separated them from the soldiers at the other side of No Man's Land. A number of factors contributed to the change in the public reaction to the 1916 rebels. First of these was the rash decision taken by the authorities to execute the leaders, who suddenly assumed the mantle of martyrs. But there was also the symbolism of their choice of Easter for the playing out of the street theatre they were initiating:

> The selection of Easter Monday – when most British soldiers were on furlough at Fairyhouse Races – was not just a sound tactic, but another brilliant symbolization, since it reinforced Pearse's idea of the

[4] Quoted by Raita Merivirta, *The Gun and Irish Politics*: *Examining National History in Neil Jordan's* Michael Collins (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), p.40.
[5] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*: *The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), p.198 and p.199.

> cyclical nature of history. Easter brought renewal, spring-time, new life to a dead landscape: and so it helped to justify and explain all previous abortive uprisings, for it wove them into a wider narrative, a myth of fall, death and glorious redemption.[6]

Céline's hero, or anti-hero, Bardamu, enlists in the army after witnessing a group of soldiers marching past the café where he is seated with his friend, Arthur. Overcome with enthusiasm, he decides to join their ranks. Soon they are far from the cheers of civilians on the streets and Bardamu begins to regret his decision. But is too late: 'They'd quietly shut the gate behind us civilians. We were caught like rats'.[7] It is in this way that he inadvertently and rather foolishly finds himself in the midst of a most bloody conflict. The disillusionment kicks in quickly: 'No two ways about it. I was suddenly on the most intimate terms with war. I'd lost my virginity. You've got to be pretty much alone with her as I was then to get a good luck at her, the slut, full face and profile. A war had been switched on between us and the other side, and now it was burning!' (19). In the case of Barry's Willie Dunne, the motivation for enlisting is nobler. He joins the Royal Dublin Fusillers because of his loyalty to the British monarch. His father, a Catholic member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, a force that contained very few Catholics at the time, is proud of his son's decision. The Dunnes belong to the Irish Catholic loyalist tradition, a group to which Barry's own family can also be traced, and a dilemma arises for them when events in Ireland (mainly revolving around the repercussions caused by 1916) begin to fuel anti-British sentiment, placing Willie's father in an awkward position vis-à-vis the angry citizens of Dublin and making Willie himself wonder if the cause to which he has signed up is fatally flawed.

Thousands of Irish nationalists joined the British army at the outbreak of World War I in the belief that such a display of loyalty would be rewarded at the end of the conflict by Home Rule being granted. The Dunnes, however, were not that keen on severing links with the British Crown. On arriving in Belgium, Willie notes:

[6] Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p.207.
[7] Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*. Translated by Ralph Manheim (London: John Calder, 1988), p.16. All subsequent references will be to this edition, with the page numbers in brackets.

> It was this country he had come to heal, he himself, Willie Dunne. He hoped his father's fervent worship of the King would guide him, as the lynchpin that held down the dangerous tent of the world. And he was sure that all that Ireland was, all that she had, should be brought to bear against this entirely foul and disgusting enemy.[8]

Such certainty wanes as the war progresses: 'When they came into their trench he felt small enough. The biggest thing there was the roaring of Death and the smallest thing was a man' (24). The enemy doesn't seem all that different from those wearing the uniform of the Royal Fusillers. When Willie kills his first German soldier, he realizes that this man is a mere pawn in the German war machine. All the soldiers are dehumanized by what they are forced to endure: 'The war was like a huge dream at the edge of this waking landscape, something far off and near that might ruin the lives of children and old alike, catastrophe to turn a soul to dry dust' (101). They experience all manner of pain and horror, see things that no human eyes should have to contemplate. The poisonous gas that curls menacingly in the trenches is described as 'a long monster with yellow skin' (48), something at once threatening and alluring. But then Willie realizes its sinister symbolism: 'He thought horribly of the Revelation of St John and wondered if by chance and luck he had reached the unknown date at the end of the living world' (49). Such thoughts must have struck many in similar circumstances. What were they doing in such a hell? Was this the end of the world, the apocalypse?

It is only natural when one returns home on leave after such experiences as those endured by Willie that one should feel different, changed. The violence that erupts on the streets of Dublin while he is there throws Willie into added turmoil, however. The tracts of paper he and other members of his regiment see stating the 1916 rebels' support for their 'gallant allies in Europe' (95) evoke disbelief and anger. Are they not representing their countrymen in the fight against these so-called 'gallant allies'? Willie then witnesses the death of a 19 year-old rebel who says to him: "I only came out to win a bit of freedom for Ireland. … You won't hold that against me?" (93) Everything now becomes blurred. The sight of Dublin's buildings ablaze and the Volunteers being rounded

[8] Sebastian Barry, *A Long Long Way* (London: Faber&Faber, 2005), pp.22-23. All subsequent references will be to this edition, with the page numbers in brackets.

up stay with Willie and the other soldiers as they return to their posting in Belgium. In an illuminating article on Barry's portrayal of Irish history, Roy Foster notes the unjustified attacks that have been made on the writer. For example, Foster takes issue with John Kenny who in a review of *A Long Long Way* accused Barry of providing 'in-service reading for a fairly standardized brand of revisionism'. Another reviewer, Elizabeth Cullingford, claimed that he was recognized as 'an ideological ally by the conservative British paper the *Daily Telegraph*', a view that Foster considers equally unjust. He argues instead that the 'complex layers of Barry's versions of Irish history […] come more clearly into focus in *A Long Long Way*' and he further maintains that the writer's view of Ireland's part in the Empire 'is very far from a simple effort at rehabilitating a forgotten tradition'.[9] There is still a residual reluctance among certain critics to accept a presentation of Irish history from what is a non-traditional viewpoint. For example, Barry's treatment of Michael Collins in other work as a charismatic lost leader is read by Cullingford as 'a way of attacking Republicanism, both the historical and the contemporary varieties'. Foster is of the view that it is doubtful that 'such a *parti pris* political judgement would be leveled at – for instance – Neil Jordan'.[10] It is thus necessary to be aware that *A Long Long Way*, like Céline's *Voyage*, though to a far lesser degree, had the capacity to divide public opinion, especially in relation to its portrayal of historical events. The impact the Rising has on Irish soldiers serving in the British army is evident in their divided views on the matter. Willie questions his comrade in arms Jesse Kirwan about whom exactly the insurgents represent:

> 'Those volunteers you mentioned, your crowd', said Willie, 'were they the crowd firing at us?'
> 'What? No, you gammy fool, that's the other Volunteers. You got to keep up, William. We were one and the same up to the war breaking out, and then some of us said we could do what Redmond said and fight as Irish soldiers, you know, to save Europe, but a few of them – well, they didn't want that. You know. A handful really.' (95)

[9] Roy Foster, "'Something of Us will Remain': Sebastian Barry and Irish History", in Christina Hunt Mahony (ed.), *Out of History*: *Essays on the Writings of Sebastian Barry* (Dublin and Washington: Carysfort Press and the Catholic university of America Press, 2006), pp.183-197.
[10] Foster, p.187.

The situation was complex, even for those who lived through those times and were acquainted with the motives of various groups. While understandably annoyed that the rebellion should have taken place at a time they were putting their lives on the line in Flanders, there is still disquiet among the Irish soldiers at the news that the 1916 leaders have been executed: 'The executed men were cursed, and praised, and doubted and despised, and held to account, and wondered at, and mourned, all in a confusion complicated infinitely by the site of war' (144). During his next leave in Dublin, Willie is scorned by a section of the inhabitants because of the uniform he is wearing and cold-shouldered by his father for daring to express in a letter his anxieties about war and the executions. To cap it all, he is abandoned by his fiancée, Gretta, who was informed in an anonymous letter (written by his friend O'Hara) that Willie was with a prostitute in Belgium. O'Hara is driven to this foul deed by Willie's horrified reaction to the story of what his friend and another soldier did to a young Belgian woman at the beginning of the war. She had had her tongue cut off and had been raped repeatedly by the Germans. In a moment of brutal violence, the Allied soldier raped the woman again as O'Hara held her shoulders to keep her still. Willie reflects on the dehumanizing impact of war:

> There had been hundreds, thousands of the people from all these ravaged districts killed no doubt, women like that woman, and old men and their women, and the children of Belgium, all swallowed up in the mouth of war. (169)

Which brings us to Céline's powerful portrayal of war. Whereas Barry's Willie Dunne experiences a strange calm on hearing Fr. Buckley's powerful invocation of God to the troops as they depart for the front, Céline had no faith in the healing power of words. For him, the truth of this world is death, and silence is thus the only reasonable choice open to man. All too often words have been used to justify war, to make it inevitable, attractive, heroic. Just as the idea of 'death sacrifice' had an appeal to the 1916 rebels and their leaders, so it is that countries on the brink of war stir up people with ideas of glory and patriotism, before sending them forth to meet their horrible fate. Tom Quinn charts the difficulty involved in presenting an alternative view of the Great War in the years immediately after its conclusion. The attempts made to preserve a particular glorious image of the conflict coincided with the objectives of the

political elite, especially in France, to justify the loss of so many soldiers, the cost of such carnage. Slowly, however, the silence was broken:

> In 1928, as traditional memory massively commemorated the Great War, its silences began to crumble. In 1929, a series of literary accounts of the war appeared, whose voices, breaching traditional memory, allowed pain, disillusionment and protest to be heard. These narrative accounts favoured imagination and story over direct telling and revealed a public need for story as a means of remembering and mediating the experience of war. The works of Remarque, Hemingway and Graves were a site of shared memory of war and forerunners of *Voyage*. Their books, to a greater or lesser extent, offered a dissenting counterpoint to the way the war was remembered within the exalting framework of official commemoration. *Voyage*, when it appears in 1932, enters this dynamic of dissent.[11]

The 'dynamic of dissent' that Céline became part of when composing *Voyage*, inevitably exposed him to public outcry, most significantly by those who were seeking to control the 'memory' that was propagated of the Great War. In the person of his anti-hero Bardamu, the writer charts the path from enthusiasm to despair in a quest that rarely provides enlightenment for its main protagonist. Drunk on his meaningless rhetoric during his conversation with Arthur, Bardamu subsequently finds himself trapped in the army. As already noted, Céline uses comedy to convey what was a deadly somber business. But there are instances where one detects a serious tone.

> After a while the flame went away, the noise stayed in my head, and my arms and legs trembled as if somebody were shaking me from behind. My limbs seemed to be leaving me, but then in the end they stayed on. The smoke stung my eyes for a long time, and the prickly smell of powder and sulphur hung on, strong enough to kill all the fleas and bedbugs in the whole world. (22)

Having had direct experience of the war, some of Céline's descriptions of the conflict have an obvious ring of authenticity. Nevertheless, he was distrustful of the danger of falling into propaganda. Between 1914 and the publication of *Voyage* in 1932, the writer had struggled to come to terms with what he had seen of the war, with the trauma that words could

[11] Tom Quinn, *The Traumatic Memory of the Great War*, p.87.

not adequately convey. That is why he chose humour, a better tool than anger to register his disquiet. One should never underestimate the pain that went into the novel's composition. Writing about the war was in a very real way remembering and reliving it. The American to whom *Voyage* is dedicated, Elizabeth Craig, witnessed the toll it took on its author:

> As soon as he closed the door to his studio he became a different man…. Hunched over his papers, he looked like an old man, his face looked old, everything about him looked old. It made me wonder: *Is that Louis*? (Quinn, 139)

I should explain that Céline's real name was Louis Destouches. Although – or maybe, because – the hero is closely modeled on himself, Céline does not intend for us to take him too seriously. This is why there is so much tongue-in-cheek about the way in which Bardamu portrays himself as a coward who, once he discovers what war is really like, seeks every means at his disposal to escape from its grasp. The eeriness of the setting is counterbalanced by the humour:

> I know only one thing about the blackness, which was so dense that if you stretched out your arm a little way from your shoulder you'd never see it again, but of that one thing I was absolutely certain, namely, that it was full of homicidal impulses. (27)

He sees his colonel laid low by a shell blast, his belly 'wide-open and he was making a nasty face about it. It must have hurt when it happened' (V, 22). The matter-of-fact tone, totally unsuited to his material in so many ways, explains why French people were outraged when *Voyage* was first published. The colonel is shown to be stupid because of his refusal to take cover when the shells start landing all around them: 'When you have no imagination, dying is small beer; when you do have imagination, dying is too much' (23). When Bardamu meets Robinson, his alter ego, for the first time, the latter is not afraid to tell him that he is a deserter. During his flight, he comes across his captain, whose stomach is open and who is passing blood from every orifice while screaming for his Mammy. Robinson feels no pity and says: '"Mama! Mama! Fuck your mama"… Just like that, on my way past, out of the corner of my mouth!' (44).

Raw descriptions and vulgarities are prevalent in *Voyage*. Language is reduced to its bare essentials and there is no attempt made to prettify or romanticize what is happening: 'Blood and more blood, everywhere, all over the grass, in sluggish confluent puddles, looking for a congenial slope' (25). The important thing is to give a true record of exactly what happened, because one must not forget:

> The biggest defeat in every department of life is to forget, especially the things that have done you in, and to die without realizing how far people can go in the way of nastiness. When the grace lies open before us, let's not try to be witty, but on the other hand, let's not forget, but make it our business to record the worst of the human viciousness we've seen without changing a word. (28)

An unusually serious note is struck in these lines, one that should encourage us to contemplate their meaning most carefully. Céline wishes to describe what he experienced during the war without masks or artifice, without embellishment of any kind. Veterans of the war were tormented by the fear that their sacrifices would be forgotten and that people who had no active participation would control the memory of what happened. The reality of death is as ugly as it is arbitrary. It reduces man to an animal screaming with pain. According to Patrick McCarthy: 'In *Voyage* there are no famous last words, dignified mourners and graveside eulogies. Such things would lighten the burden. Céline stresses that death has absolute dominion' .[12] Thus, when Bardamu returns from the front, he is shocked to discover that people at home are infected with the same fever that had led him to enlist. As someone on whom a *Médaille Militaire* has been bestowed, he is well placed to profit from the general frenzy surrounding war. The American nurse Lola finds him irresistible until she discovers that he has no desire to go back to the front. He knows that this is because of the lies that are being told in newspapers, posters and on the radio. In such circumstances, it is impossible to make the truth be heard: 'At a time when the world is upside down and it's thought insane to ask why you're being murdered, it obviously requires no effort to pass for a lunatic' (62). Which is exactly what he does to ensure he is not sent back to fight.

[12] Patrick McCarthy, *Céline* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), p.51.

What awaits Willie Dunne at home is also less than wholesome. His father has lost some men in the Dublin riots and knows that the old order is under serious threat from this new wave of nationalist fervour. He this turns his bile on his son:

> 'You stand here, Willie, in the uniform of your gracious king. Under solemn oath to defend him and his three kingdoms. You stand here in your own childhood home, your father a man that has strove to keep order in this great city and protect it from miscreants and the evil of traitors and rebels, for love of you all and in memory of your mother.' (247)

Willie returns to the front with these harsh words ringing in his ears. The subsequent letter of apology written by his father never reaches him, as he is killed before it arrives. War has changed everything in his life: his relationships with his father, fiancée, country. Politics do not mean much when you're up to your waist in mud, excrement and dead bodies. Perhaps it's as well to die rather than to carry memories like the following with you: 'Willie could feel the pulverized flesh still in the destroyed uniforms sucking at his boots. These were the bodies of creatures gone beyond their own humanity into a severe state that had no place in human doings and the human world'. (174)

The problem for Bardamu is similarly how to live with the images of 'creatures gone beyond their humanity' after his involvement with the war is over. The voyage of the title of the novel is a metaphor for his journey towards an accommodation with the world, an accommodation that is never properly attained. In Africa and America, where his travels take him, he sees the same corruption of human nature was evident during the war in France. When he practices as a doctor in the Parisian suburbs (where Céline also practiced medicine), the death of an innocent child, Bébert, rekindles the futility of his struggle with evil. Writing, however painful, however futile, is necessary, as is clear from the following quotation: 'There's nothing terrible inside us or on earth or possibly in heaven itself except what hasn't been said yet. We won't be easy in our minds until everything has been said once and for all.' (290) The literary process was a catharsis of sorts for Céline who, in the view of Patrick McCarthy, is closely aligned to the fictional Bardamu:

> The reader is left with a nagging question. Who is Bardamu and what is his relationship to his creator? It is clear that Céline is an autobio-

> graphical writer. His novels draw closely on his life and he never fails to use the first person narrator. As already seen, his novels are an extension of his life and also a distorsion of it. This means that the narrators are neither Céline himself nor objective characters. When Céline goes into his hallucinated, creative fit he brings out of himself other selves. It is a process of self-transformation, of projecting one part of himself into the realm of his imagination. Characteristically he sees it in terms of death: the man Destouches dies and the fictional character, Bardamu, replaces him.[13]

In an interview with Kevin Myers, Sebastian Barry railed against how so many Irish men who served in World War I could be written out of history in the way they were: 'These men deserved a most wondering thanks for their ordinary, divine courage. That they were not thanked when they came home was a profound indictment of a state that could not find in its narrowing heart – though in its own way a brave narrowing heart – to include them.'[14] There is a fair degree of indignation in this comment, justified indignation when one considers how the sacrifice of these men was often occluded in a censored version of Irish history. Willie Dunne is derided for being in the army by his own countrymen and feels like 'he was a man with bits of himself broken' (281-2). Barry wanted to tell the story of this neglected group of Irish men and the success of his novel did much for their rehabilitation in the public psyche. Céline emerged from the war with a gaping wound that would never subsequently heal. Patrick McCarthy notes: 'He (Céline) searched for a truth which no one wished to hear and which finally destroyed him'.[15] Tom Quinn goes further and supplies a most appropriate summary of the points this chapter has been endeavouring to make:

> He could never forget, never accept, never forgive the cruelty of the war's sacrifice, the folly of its blood-letting, the staggering, belling brashness of its lies, the pantomime of its pretences, the awfulness of the truths it revealed about humanity. … His memory of war, so long a prisoner to silence, could not be held at bay. *Voyage* surged from beneath Céline's own traumatic memory of death, replete with its cargo of fear and nightmare, static, circular, horrendously unrelenting

[13] McCarthy, *Céline*, pp.80-81.
[14] "My War". Interview between Kevin Myers and Sebastian Barry, in *The Irish Times*, 4 April, 2005.
[15] McCarthy, *Céline*, p.31.

> and unforgiving, informed by the unique genius if its own despairing art.[16]

I hope this discussion of two works of fiction that approach the topic of war from different perspectives conveys enough similarities for the reader to see value in the comparison. Good art transcends the boundaries of time and culture and conveys experiences that strike a chord in all human beings. It is impossible to fake the revulsion inspired by the needless death of so many men and the pain of those who felt their loss so keenly in the course of the Great War and its aftermath. Trauma, rebellion, desolation, incomprehension are but a few of the nouns that could be used to sum up the reaction of the characters of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* and *A Long Long Way*. In evoking such emotions, the novelists must have immersed themselves in the mud and corpse-filled landscape that transformed the lives of a generation. They must have heard the haunting, plaintive cries of the dying, felt the piercing pain of bullets or bayonets sinking into human flesh and experienced the agonizing despair of hell on earth. Their fictional depictions allow us to experience vicariously what it must have been like to live through such horror and for this we owe Céline and Barry a debt of gratitude.

[16] Quinn, *The Traumatic Memory of the Great War*, p.356.

Chapter 12 Paula Murphy

No Country for Willie Dunne: Revolution and Nation in Sebastian Barry's A Long Long Way

This essay investigates Sebastian Barry's World War One novel *A Long Long Way*, which focuses on the fictional Irish protagonist Willie Dunne, who enlists in the British army and fights in Belgium. The essay's title plays on the famous opening line of Yeats' 'Sailing to Byzantium': 'That is no country for old men'.[1] For Barry however, it is not only old men who do not belong in this Ireland: Willie too, a young man, is adrift from his country, like many of his peers, by the end of the novel. I will argue that Barry's narrative posits a deconstruction of national identity through the juxtaposition of Willie's experiences in the battle fields of World War One in Europe with the events surrounding the Easter Rising of 1916 in Ireland. The deconstructive nature of the novel in relation to concepts of revolution and nation will be examined through five overlapping Derridean ideas: the violence of the foundation of nations, the spirit of revolution and its spectre, the nation as different from itself, nationalism as a *philosopheme* and revolution as a demand towards the future.

Nations are Founded in Violence

The Irish path to independence was a bloody one, and according to Derrida, this is typical of the birth of a nation: 'All Nation-States are born and found themselves in violence. I believe that truth to be irrecusable'.[2] As soon as the Nation-State exists it is divided within itself between the illegal violence that creates the State and the law which the State institutes. A revolution occurred to form the Republic of Ireland. When that revolution became successful, a new State was founded, and as Derrida says, 'the moment of foundation, the instituting moment, is anterior to

[1] W. B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzamtium", in *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited), p.163.
[2] Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.57.

the law or legitimacy which it founds. It is thus outside the law and violent by that very fact'.[3] The Irish State became a lawful republic because of unlawful rebellion and killing. In *A Long Long Way*, Barry focuses on this innate paradox in the foundation of the State, and in doing so, begins to unravel the concept of nation. At the same time in the novel, participation in another landscape of violence, the First World War, becomes a defining feature of Irish identity, though for different reasons for different individuals, depending on their political leanings. When Willie is asked 'What did the Irish ever do?', he replies, 'Lost a lot of lads at Mons, that's what…And Ypres, and the Marne. Loads and loads of young lads. That's what we Irish did, lately'[4] (*L*, 82). For Willie, serving in the War creates a bond with other Irish soldiers, which buttresses communal national identity. However, when he returns to Ireland on leave, and witnesses the unrest in Dublin city, he realises that not everyone feels the same about his enlistment.

Willie's fellow soldier, Jesse Kirwin, is a Redmonite volunteer. Willie is ignorant of the diverse and often antagonistic political motivations for joining the British army. When Willie admits, 'I don't understand this volunteer thing…You're volunteers, you say – but, you know, I'm a volunteer too – I volunteered for the army', Jesse replies:

> Ah Jesus, Willie. That's different altogether. You're a volunteer for fucking Kitchener. You can't be this thick. Look it, boy. The Ulster Volunteers were set up by Carson to resist Home Rule. So then the Irish Volunteers were set up to resist them, if necessary. Then the war came, as you may have noticed, and most of the Irish volunteers did as Redmond said and came into the war, because Home Rule was as good as got. But a few broke away and that's who you just saw on the lovely streets of Dublin! (*L, 95*)

As Barry states in interview: 'we are a country born out of impatience and violence'.[5] The confusion that Willie feels is mirrored by the scenes he witnesses on Dublin's streets. Union Jacks wave to cheer the arrival of the British army soldiers but another group of militia, a contingent of

[3] Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, p.57.
[4] Sebastian Barry, *A Long Long Way* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p.82. Subsequent quotations from this text will be indicated by *L*, followed by the page number.
[5] Sebastian Barry, "Interview with Paula Murphy", unpublished, pp.9-21, p.11.

cavalry, storms up Sackville Street and they too are cheered on by the crowd. Willie hears rifle shots coming from the GPO and has no idea what is happening: he thinks that the Germans have invaded (*L*, 88). A citizen gives him a leaflet and Willie is reprimanded and told 'Don't parley with the enemy' (*L*, 88). Willie's reply, 'What enemy?' (88), highlights his bafflement that an Irishman could be considered his foe. When an armed man threatens to take Willie prisoner calling him a 'Tommy', he does not resist, and Willie's captain has to intervene and shoot the assailant. Willie asks the wounded man if he is German. He replies, 'German? What are you talking about? We're all Irishmen here, fighting for Ireland' (*L*, 92).

When they return to Belgium, news filters through during Easter week of the rebels being shelled from gun-boats on the Liffey (*L*, 103) and Willie sympathises with the destruction of Dublin's buildings because he has seen it happening in Europe: 'Men would come, he supposed, to build them again. It was no more than the towns and cities of Belgium. Dublin and Ypres were all the one' (*L*, 124). When he hears that the Irish rebels are to be court-martialled and shot, conflicting loyalties arise. On one hand, 200 soldiers from the British army have been killed in Rising and, since the Irish rebels hoped for German aid, Willie understands that the Irish volunteers for the British army are consequently the enemy of the rebels. On the other hand, he confides to his father in a letter about his feelings on the shooting of the rebel leaders: 'I wish they had not seen fit to shoot them. It doesn't feel right somehow' (*L*, 139). Barry's narrative highlights the bloodshed and bewilderment of the beginnings of the Nation-State's institution, and implies that the concept of a unified nation is created only in retrospect, making it possible for the author to 'unbuild' this concept; to deconstruct it. Derrida argues that 'by its essence [the foundation of a Nation-State] tends to organise amnesia, sometimes under the celebration and sublimation of grand beginnings'.[6] Barry's novel can be read as an attempt to lift this 'amnesia' in relation to Irish independence.

The Spirit and its Specter

The ambiguous position of Willie Dunne as an Irish soldier serving in the British army, at a time when Ireland is forcefully seeking independence

[6] Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, p.57.

from Britain, can be explored through Derrida's ideas on spirit and specter. He comments on how Marx tries to oppose '"the spirit of the revolution (*Geist* der Revolution)" to its specter (*Gespenst*)'.[7] But the word 'spirit' is also a synonym of specter, as both denote ghosts, so the opposition is difficult to sustain. In fact, Derrida states, 'The semantics of *Gespenst* themselves haunt the semantics of *Geist*'.[8] In *A Long Long Way*, the reader is shown how the spirit of the Irish rebels is haunted by the specter of British rule, and it seems that they are intimately connected, not only semantically but also ontologically, and even ultimately essential to each other. This relationship between spirit and specter is seen in the very fact that so many Irish men are fighting in the British army. As Sergeant Christy Moran says, 'The fucking British army is full of us. It should be called the fucking Irish-British army' (*L*, 55).

Willie's own family is a synecdoche of the spirit/specter relationship. Although he feels sympathy for the rebel leaders, his father James Dunne, as chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, is a servant of the British Crown. As Eamon Maher points out, 'The Dunnes are Catholic loyalists, a group of people who have been exised to some extent from Irish history'.[9] Before enlisting, Willie was a disappointment to his father, because, as he was small in stature, it soon became clear that he would not meet the height requirement for the police force and could not follow his father in his profession. After joining the army however, his father's attitude towards him changes. On returning home on leave, filthy and ridden with lice, his father tenderly bathes him: 'So James Patrick, a man of six foot six, stood his son William, a man of five foot six, into the steaming zinc bath as indeed Willie's mother had done a thousand times when Willie was a boy' (*L*, 74). When Willie thanks him for writing letters, his father replies, 'My God Willie…It was my honour to write to you' (*L*, 73). But Willie now thinks differently about his father, in light of the Easter Rising rebels. He cannot help but remember 1913, when four men were killed after a DMP action that was initiated under his father's orders; a probable reference to the 1913 lockout. The

[7] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*: *The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.134.
[8] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p.134.
[9] Eamon Maher, "A Franco-Irish View of the Great War", in *Doctrine and Life*, 57: 3 (2007), pp.27-35, p.28.

Irish Trade and General Workers Union, under the leadership of James Connolly, was 'vehemently opposed to the war and waged a vigorous campaign against its members joining up'.[10] That Willie joined the army was probably interpreted by his father as evidence that his son was on his side in this dispute. Now, Willie is neither able to get that day out of his mind nor the image of his father at home in unlit stillness afterwards: 'That silence in the dark room puzzled him that time and it still puzzled him. It terrorized him' (*L*, 72). In interview, Barry states that the 1913 lockout was 'the most important moment in Irish history … because it's the most reviled moment and the most misunderstood moment'.[11] In the brief allusions to the 1913 lockout in the novel, and in the reactions of Willie and his father to their ostensible political loyalties, Barry draws out the complicated intertwinings of the relationship between the spirit of the rebels and the specter of the British Empire.

The response of Willie's division to the news of huge fatalities in the Ulstermen's 36th Division is also telling of the deep connection between Nationalist Ireland and Unionist Ireland; perhaps another example of spirit and specter. Keith Jeffery says that Willie's 16th Division has 'come to be seen as most nearly fulfilling the Redmonite 'project'',[12] though Willie enlists ignorant of these broad political forces, thinking only that 'if he could not be a policeman, he could be a soldier' (*L*, 15). The 36th Division on the other hand was 'an unambiguously unionist and Protestant formation, drawing on the Ulster Volunteer Force'.[13] When Willie's division hears that two thousand Ulstermen have died, 'the news of it confounded their hearts. There was odd love there for the brave Ulstermen; what could a man do against that love? Nothing at all, only add to it by thinking and weeping privately' (*L*, 150).

James Dunne breaks off contact with his son because of Willie's sympathy for the Irish rebels. His sister sends him a letter instead, saying 'He is angry Willie…He says you must not be asking him about Red-

[10] Niamh Puirséil, "War, Work and Labour", in *Our War*: *Ireland and the Great War* (Thomas David Lecture Series), edited by John Horne (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), pp.181-194, p.186.
[11] Sebastian Barry, "Interview with Paula Murphy", p.17.
[12] Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.39.
[13] Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.39.

mond' (*L*, 189). His father too is unable to separate the spirit of the Irish rebels from the spectre of British rule. If his son has turned his back on the Crown, it tarnishes his position as Chief Superintendent; it implies that he is not serving his country well, and it is his country too. As Roy Foster states, in Barry's work 'the connection between allegiance and identity is a recurring theme, as well as the necessity of reconciliation. Both these themes are also wound into the thread of family relationships which unites much of his work, particularly the tension between fathers and sons'.[14] When Willie confides to the army chaplain, Father Buckley, about the row with his father, the priest reassures him that he is 'fighting for Ireland through another', repeating it like a mantra (*L*, 214). But when Willie returns home on his second spell of leave from Belgium, he is spat at, hit with stones and called a Tommy: the attitude towards him from people on the street has palpably changed. When a group of youths shout at him to 'go home', he mutters to himself: 'I am at home, you little bastards' (*L*, 254). Perhaps the ultimate symbol of the of how the spirit of the rebels is haunted by the specter of British rule is the medal for bravery won by Sergeant Christy Moran, which he gives to Willie before he leaves for Ireland for a second time, saying: 'It has a little harp on it and a little crown, and I reckon between the two it might get you home safe' (*L*, 241). The condensation of British and Irish iconography can be interpreted as a symbol of Derrida's view that 'if the two [spirit and specter] remain indiscernible and finally synonymous, it is because…the specter will first have been necessary, one might even say vital to the historical unfolding of spirit'.[15]

Nation as Different from Itself

Another reason why the symbol of harp and crown is so appropriate in this deconstructive exploration is that according to Derrida, all identity is different from itself: difference is within as well as without. He states:

> there is no culture or cultural identity without this difference with itself … This can be said, inversely or reciprocally of all identity or all identification: there is no self-relation; no relation to oneself, no iden-

[14] Roy Foster, "Sebastian Barry and Irish History", in *Out of History*: *Essays on the Writings of Sebastian Barry*, edited by Christina Hunt Mahony (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2006), pp.183-197, pp.183-4.
[15] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p.134.

> tification with oneself, without culture, but a culture of oneself as a culture of the other.[16]

If internal difference is acknowledged, if the other within is recognized, displacing fear or even hatred onto the external other is more likely to be avoided. In *A Long Long Way* Barry foregrounds the internal difference of Ireland as a nation and it is succinctly captured in Willie's forename. In the opening lines of the novel the reader is told 'He was called William after the long-dead Orange King, because his father took an interest in such distant matters. On top of that, an old great-uncle, William Cullen, was yet living in Wicklow, across the mountains as they used to say, where his father himself had been reared' (*L*, 1). His forename bears witness to the history of British domination, but also his family's long history as native Irish people. In the army, Willie's name bears the weight of yet more association when the Major teases him about its Germanic significance: 'The fucking Kaiser's son, yes? Little Willie' (*L*, 120).

That a nation is always different from itself, to itself, in itself, is evident from the variety of attitudes to the war from various political and geographical groups mentioned in the novel.[17] Those who enlist include:

> men of the Aran Islands who spoke only their native Irish…boys of the Catholic University School and Belevedere and Blackrock College in Dublin. High-toned critics of Home Rule from the rainy Ulster counties and Catholic men of the South alarmed for Belgian nun and child…[Ireland] could go to war as a nation at last – nearly – in the sure and solemnly given promise of self-rule…the Ulstermen joined up the selfsame army for an opposite reason, and an opposite end. (*L*, 14)

This internal difference is part of the Irish nation pre-Independence. Post-Independence, there is an attempt to externalise some of these internal differences as one political view gains legal authority. Another instance of this internal difference is the fact that Willie's uniform becomes

[16] Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading*: *Reflections on Today's Europe*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp.9-10.

[17] A nation can be defined either as a State, or as a group of people living in a geographical area with shared history, language and descent. In referring to pre-Independence Ireland as a nation I am employing the latter definition.

stained with the blood of the Easter Rising rebel who attacks him. The stain will not wash out and 'he carried the young man's blood to Belgium on his uniform' (*L*, 97). The blood of an Irish rebel on the uniform of an Irish recruit for the British army functions as a symbol of the internal difference within the Irish nation at this time. When Willie writes to his father in April 1916, the King-loyal Chief Superintendent whose once-respected position is now under attack, and re-assures him of his contribution to Ireland, the reader gets a sense of this internal difference again: 'There is not a man in Ireland that has served Ireland better than you. No one will ever know how much it has cost you' (*L*, 105).

During some rare recreational time amongst the army troops, Willie sings a song for the soldiers which Barry suggests is affecting because of its combination of familiarity and strangeness. He sings 'Ave Maria' in his clear high voice, and the men understand that 'it was just the Hail Mary all dressed over in another lingo, the prayer of their childhoods and their country, the prayer of their inmost minds, that could not be sundered, that could not be violated, that could not be rendered meaningless even by slaughter' (*L*, 134). Yet, there is also comfort in its foreignness: 'the Latin itself allowed the men to keep the song from catching in the nets and snares of memories' (*L*, 133). The song may be read as an image of ideal nationhood, where what is familiar and what is different are valued equally; where what is known and what is unknown rest easily side by side. This ideal nation certainly does not come about in *A Long Long Way*. Rather, Barry creates many occasions where characters attempt to externalise; to eject, the other. When Willie goes to visit Jesse Kirwin, who has been detained for refusing to obey orders, the soldier guarding the door claims to be jubilant at the news of the executed rebels in Ireland. Yet he relates how, almost unconsciously, he listed out the names of the executed rebels and the dates of their death to Major Stokes: '8 May, Kent, Mallin, Colbert, Heuston, and so on and so on – Yeh, and how did I remember them, well I don't know, burned into the fucking brain' (*L*, 153).

Willie's father too, attempts to deny his 'other', the Irish republicans, and subsequently his son, for his sympathy with the rebel leaders. In contrast to the tender affection expressed by his father on Willie's first visit home from war, on his second period of leave, his father confronts him angrily: 'They put a mark on Dublin that can never be wiped away, a great, spreading stain of blood, Willie. And I read in a letter from my own son that he feels for them some stupid, ruinous feeling' (*L*, 246).

This stain of rebel blood on James Dunne's orderly Dublin city, echoes the stain of rebel blood carried on Willie's uniform to Belgium. For Chief Superintendent Dunne, there can be no alliance with that which is different, no accommodation of otherness, no acknowledgement that a nation is different from itself. And so he ousts the otherness, in the form of his son Willie, who is forced to leave his father's house.

When Willie is convalescing after a wound received in battle, he is surprised when a nurse asks him about his tattoo. Having none, Willie examines the source of her inquiry to find that the medal given to him by Christy Moran has been branded into his skin with the heat of the explosion; the harp and crown a physical deconstructive symbol of a self's difference from itself, and a nation's difference from itself. Writing about the title of his book *The Other Heading*, Derrida states that it 'can mean to recall … the *heading of the other*, before which we must respond, of which we must *remember*, of which we must *remind ourselves*, the heading of the other being perhaps the first condition of an identity or identification that is not an ego-centrism, destructive of the other'.[18] Difference, whether internal or external, is not a foe with which the self or the nation must battle in order to acquire identity. On the contrary, otherness and difference is a prerequisite for identity, as Barry's novel suggests. That Willie is capable of embracing difference is evident from the letter he writes to his father from hospital:

> I have been thinking about all that has happened to me, and many another thing. And how some of those things made me start thinking in a different light about things, and how that offended you so grievously. And I understand why. But it cannot change the fact that I believe in my heart that you are the finest man I know. When I think of you there is nothing bad that arises at all. You stand before me often in my dreams and in my dreams you seem to comfort me. (*L*, 279)

Willie still feels loyalty to England and respect for his family's history of loyalty to the British Crown, but he also feels sympathy for the Irish rebels. He is able to acknowledge and accept that his country is different in itself; and to do something much more difficult, which is to realise his father does not accept that difference in itself, and accept that.

[18] Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading*, p.15.

Nationalism as a Philosopheme

In *A Long Long Way*, through the protagonist Willie Dunne, national identity is expressed as a complex, ambiguous and shifting entity. That some Unionists and Nationalists are convinced of the truth of their definition of Ireland exacerbates the painful, muddled nature of Willie's thoughts on the subject. Derrida supports the view of nationalism as a fragile, floating concept rather than a fixed entity and suggests that 'national hegemony is not claimed – today no more than ever – in the name of an empirical superiority, which is to say, a simple particularity. That is why nationalism, national affirmation, as an essentially modern phenomenon, is always a *philosopheme*'.[19] Derrida argues that no tangible superiority or distinguishing trait is needed to maintain national hegemony – it is not necessary for a people to believe that they are 'better' than other nations in certain areas for national hegemony to exist. Moreover, in transnational Europe, it is acceptable to be both European and Irish, or European and Dutch; mostly, one does not threaten the other. This is why Derrida refers to nationalism as a *philosopheme*, which is a philosophical proposition; a tenuous proposal that is created in spite of prevailing similarities amongst men and women of different racial and geographical origin.

The fragile nature of nationalism is accentuated by Barry's references to common experiences that link not only Ireland and Britain but humanity in general. On the day of Willie's birth, the reader is told of the Dublin sewers that 'The blood of births was sluiced down there too, and all the many liquids of humanity, but the salt sea at Ringsend took everything equally' (*L*, 3). Similarly, Willie's birth is linked with the births of those overseas who will also live through the First World War:

> And all those boys of Europe born in those time, and thereabouts those times, Russian, French, Belgian, Serbian, Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, Italian, Prussian, German, Austrian, Turkish – and Canadian, Australian, American, Zulu, Gurkha, Cossack, and all the rest – their fate was written in a ferocious chapter of the book of life certainly…flung on the mighty scrapheap of souls, all those million boys in all their humours to be milled by the mill-stones of a coming war.' (*L*, 4)

[19] Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading*, p.47.

In the war there are times, though scarce, when camaraderie with others dissolves the concept of nation and its associations. During one moment of particular closeness with his fellow soldiers, Willie's feelings are described: 'He had hardly a true idea who he was in that second, what he was thinking, where he was, what nation he belonged to, what language he spoke' (*L*, 35). And there are times when the terror of war unites the soldiers. When gassed with poisonous smoke, the Algerians and French, the Lincolnshire regiments and the Dublin Fusiliers exhibit the same instinct for survival: 'Everyone was gripped by the same remorseless impulse: to flee the site of nameless death' (*L*, 48). As Maher states in his commentary on the novel, 'War brings nearly everyone down to the most primeval level'.[20] When winter arrives, they experience the same misery, regardless of nationality: 'So it was along the lines, Willie feared and knew, with French, Irish, English and German alike suffering in the raw ditches of that world' (*L*, 191). By emphasising common feelings, common experiences, common human reactions, Barry show how arbitrary divisions between nations can be, especially, and ironically, in a time of war.

Revolution as a Demand towards the Future

Barry's consideration of nationalism is confined neither to the past nor to the present experiences of his characters. Revolution is always anchored in the future; in a future that promises change and improvement. This is the case with the revolution instigated by the Irish rebels in the Easter Rising predicated on the claim to an Independent Irish republic. It is also the case with the theoretical revolution that deconstruction has heralded: every act of deconstruction carries with it the hope of a reconstruction (as there is no escape from structure) that is more ideologically open and egalitarian; embracing heterogeneity. As Derrida states, 'heterogeneity opens things up, it lets itself be opened up by the very effraction of that which unfurls, comes and remains to come – singularly from the other'.[21] This heterogeneity entails openness to the other; both within and without. Derrida says that it 'remains to come' because 'the "permanent revolution" supposes the rupture of that which links permanence to substantial

[20] Eamon Maher, "A Franco-Irish View of the Great War", p.30.
[21] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p.40.

presence, and more generally to all onto-logy'.[22] A permanent revolution is not permanent in the sense of being static, but is open to ongoing change. This is why Derrida characterises revolution as a demand: if something is demanded, it has not yet been given, and so the demand looks for satisfaction in the future. As Derrida states, 'It can never be always present, *it can be, only, if there is any*, it can be only possible, it must even remain a *can-be* or *maybe* in order to remain a demand'.[23] For Derrida, a revolution is a demand towards the future.

In *A Long Long Way*, when Willie talks to his friend Jesse Kirwin, who has refused to fight a moment longer for the British army, Jesse confides in him that

> I came out to fight for a country that doesn't exist, and now, Willie, mark my words, it never will…Maybe you think that Ireland is just fine as she is and you are fighting for that. Well Willie boy, that's an Ireland that maybe did exist two years ago as you set out but I doubt it will much longer. (*L*, 157)

Jesse expresses the frightening nature of revolution. It is a demand towards the future, but that future is uncertain, which is why is can only ever be a 'can-be' or 'maybe', as Derrida says. And in the quest for that possible future, the certainty of the old structures is lost. Later in the novel, Willie understands how Jesse felt. After he leaves his father's house and finds that the woman he loved has married another, after being hit by stones and jeered for his uniform that day, and forced to sleep in a dosshouse that night: 'He felt like a ghost, a person returned from some dark regions, no longer a human person. He felt like just wisps and scraps of a person' (*L*, 252).

With his country in turmoil, his sense of national identity ruptured, his personal identity consequently dissolving, making him feel like a ghost of a man, Willie returns to war, is wounded, recovers, and returns again. By 1918, Willie is twenty-one and is utterly traumatised by the turmoil in Dublin, in Belgium, and the effect of both on who he is: 'He didn't understand the war in the upshot, and he had thought to himself a dozen times and more that no one on earth understood it rightly…He knew that it was just that he was a man with bits of himself broken' (*L*,

[22] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p.39.
[23] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p.39.

282). For Willie, the turbulence of revolution, of war, has made Ireland and Europe alien, and he ponders on its motivations and effects: 'The wrong men were up and the wrong were down. That thought had turned Russia on her head, and made the brave French fellas down guns and tools in ' (*L*,17). A thought that had brought out the men in Dublin, and that had killed Jesse Kirwin into the bargain' (*L*, 286). Marooned in the aftermath of rebellion, the seemingly never-ending war, with the promised future yet to be glimpsed, Willie thinks to himself 'He knew he had no country now. He knew it well' (*L*, 286).

Before he is shot, this time fatally, Willie is no closer to answers that might soothe his mind, and is only beginning to form the perplexing questions:

> How could a fella go out and fight for his country when his country would dissolve behind him like sugar in the rain? How could a fella love his uniform when that same uniform killed the new heroes, as Jesse Kirwin said? How could a fella like Willie hold England and Ireland equally in his heart, like his father before him, like his father's father, and his father's father's father, when both now would call him a traitor, though his heart was clear and pure. (*L*, 287)

In a sadly fitting manner, Willie, dismayed at being an orphan of his former country, joins in with the song of his enemy, the German 'Stille Nacht' and 'they shared a tune, that was still true' (*L*, 289). The sound of his voice presumably guides the soldier's aim. Despite Willie's deep sense of loneliness, caused by his ability to feel loyalty to both Britain and Ireland, a very deconstructive view of nation and revolution, his wisdom does not go unacknowledged, although the acknowledgement does not reach him before his death. In his father's final letter to his son, returned with his uniform and possessions, he writes:

> How I love you, Willie, and what a good son you are…I have read your letter over and over Willie and I have learned something from you. I will not be so stupid again and I will ask God to forgive me. Will you forgive me, Willie? Forgive an old man stuck in other days. (*L*, 291)

Conclusion

Barry's positing of Willie as lost and detached may be seen as a positive deconstruction of national identity. Deconstruction does not simply de-

struct – it breaks down, unbuilds, in order to rebuild. Willie dies and the novel concludes before this positive deconstruction can be fully realised, but it remains a possibility in the mind of the reader. The identity that Barry tentatively posits is open to the past of Irish culture and British colonisation, like the past of ancient sages and goldsmiths conjured in Yeats' poem. It is also open to the other, whether British, Belgian, French, Chinese, American, Unionist or Nationalist, as Yeats' poet persona is open to the exotic Byzantine other, which he parallels with Ireland.[24] Moreover, it is an identity that is not confined to the past: it springs from a demand that 'may be', located in a possible future, as Derrida outlines. Foster has described "Sailing to Byzantium", as 'a point of departure' for Yeats,[25] and it is in terms of his engagement with national politics. *A Long Long Way* can also be read as a point of departure – for national identity and the politics that shape it, in its deconstructive view of an identity that it open to the tensions and paradoxes of past, present and future: to 'what is past, or passing, or to come'.[26]

[24] Roy Foster notes that ''Sailing to Byzantium' is anchored in Ireland…his chief concern was to parallel it with Ireland.' Foster, *W.B. Yeats*: *A Life II*: *The Arch Poet*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.326.
[25] Roy Foster, *W.B. Yeats*: *A Life II*, p.327.
[26] W.B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium", p.164.