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"Goldsmith, the Gate, and the 'Hibernicising' of Anglo-Irish Plays"

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In recent decades, Irish theatre-makers have frequently imposed Irish elements onto the "English" plays written by London-based, Irish Anglican playwrights. As discerning critics have long recognised, George Farquhar, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw frequently signalled their Irish origins in their plays. Often cited are their satirical portraits of the English, their subversive use of Stage Irishmen, and their inclusion of Irish topical references. However, since independence (and even more markedly since the early 1980s), Irish theatres and theatre companies have not been satisfied with such coded expressions of Irishness. Bowing to popular, narrow conceptions of Irish identity – and perhaps demonstrating their discomfort with the Irish/British cultural hybridity of these writers[1] – Irish theatre-makers have frequently had certain English, Scottish, or continental European characters in these works played as Irish, or have re-set the plays in Ireland.

When "Hibernicising" these scripts, Irish theatre-makers have, on occasion, cleverly highlighted Irish aspects of these plays which were in danger of going unnoticed, or have added an extra Irish dimension which was appealing to Irish audiences and which did not distort the plays as a whole. More often, however, their imposing of "Irishness" upon these works has been rather crude. Consider, for example, the plays most frequently re-set in Ireland: Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), and Sheridan's *The Critic* (1779).[2] If the stories told in these plays had actually taken place in eighteenth-century Ireland, certain middle- and upper-class characters would have been members of the Irish Anglican Ascendancy (the demographic traditionally called the "Anglo-Irish"),[3] while the lower-class characters, and some of the arriviste middle-class ones,

would have been Irish Gaelic Catholics or – in the North of Ireland – possibly Ulster Scots Presbyterians. One would expect that Irish theatre-makers, when re-setting these plays in Ireland, would take these factors of social class, political affiliation, and accent into account, but – as anyone who has seen or read about the "tweely played up" Irishness[4] of these adaptations can testify – they seldom have.[5] Even more bizarrely, in the case of Farquhar's play, Irish theatre-makers have ignored the fact that the eighteenth-century Irish rural tenantry would have regarded English Army[6] recruiters very differently than the English country people who encounter them in Farquhar's original script. (Consider the popularity of anti-recruiting ballads such as "Arthur McBride" and "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye" in Ireland – and, indeed, Scotland – from the seventeenth through the early twentieth-centuries centuries.)

To the Gate Theatre's credit, their "Hibernicising" of plays has often been quite subtle and effective. For instance, when deciding which foreign characters should be played as Irish, the Gate has often made dramaturgically sensitive choices. For the theatre's 1930 production of Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707), director Hilton Edwards chose to have the English, anti-Catholic servant Scrub played as Irish, thereby making him an effective "loyalist" foil to the Irish priest, Father Foigard (real name MacShane). Likewise, for the theatre's 1954 production of Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923), Edwards encouraged Siobhán McKenna to play the title role with an Irish accent, thereby highlighting the play's implicit comments on Anglo-Irish relations. (Of course, Edwards only got the idea for such a "Hibernicised" staging after seeing a Dublin performance of McKenna's Irish-language version of the play – a version which she had originally mounted at Galway's An Taibhdhearc in 1950.) And in 1985, director Patrick Mason wisely chose to have Captain Plume from Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* played as an Ulsterman (in a widely-praised performance by Ian McIlhenny). Without appreciably changing Plume's part, Mason was acknowledging that a loyal officer in the English (later British) Army could, of course, be an Ulster Protestant.[7]

While the Gate is to be praised for these instances of sensitive "Hibernicising", there have been two occasions when their imposing of Irishness onto Anglo-Irish scripts has had more mixed results, and both involve the work of Oliver Goldsmith. These mixed results are clearly related to the fact that the Gate had to take greater liberties with the original scripts in these instances to make the plays more obviously Irish. Farquhar, Sheridan, and Shaw all

wrote English-set plays in which Irish characters are central to the action, and, therefore, their works often requires less extreme "Hibernicising" (i.e., for Irish theatre-makers and playgoers, there is often Irish interest present in the plays already). The reflections on Ireland and Irishness in the plays of Goldsmith and Wilde, on the other hand, are much more subtle and understated. Indeed, in the case of Wilde, his English society plays have no Irish characters and do not lend themselves to easy "Hibernicising"; thus, Irish theatre-makers often leave these plays untouched (though Irish accents have been used in productions of Wilde's 1891 Biblical play *Salomé* and stage versions of his 1890 Gothic novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*).[8] By contrast, Goldsmith's two rollicking comedies – the popular masterpiece *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and the lesser-known *The Good Natured-Man* (1768) – have struck Irish theatre-makers, including the usually restrained Gate, as having an "Irish" flavour, and this has led them to go to greater extremes when "Hibernicising" these works.

Before examining the two instances in which the Gate attempted to re-brand Goldsmith's comedies as thoroughly "Irish", it is important to first examine the Irish elements actually present in the original scripts (and there are several more Irish references in these plays than is generally recognised). This will help us determine the degree to which the Gate effectively highlighted frequently-ignored Irish aspects of these plays and the ways in which they may have taken excessive liberties.

The Irish References in She Stoops to Conquer

When Irish critics argue that Goldsmith's work is unmistakably Irish (despite his use of English settings), they often cite the presence of the "rollicking note" in his language and "the tear and the smile" in his plots; they have also repeatedly placed him in a long line of London-based, Irish Anglican playwrights who have cast a wry, outsider's eye on the English. With regards specifically to the play *She Stoops to Conquer*, they frequently add that the plot is built around an incident (mistaking a country gentleman's home for an inn) that allegedly happened to Goldsmith himself while he was still living in Ireland, and that the character of Tony Lumpkin is based on Goldsmith's cousin and good friend, Bob Bryanton of Ballymahon, Co. Longford. In a unique take on the play's Irishness, Declan Kiberd has also suggested that Lumpkin's lifelong struggle with an overbearing "mammy" is a peculiarly

Irish theme.[9] While these are all important Irish aspects of *She Stoops to Conquer*, critics (from Ireland and elsewhere) have usually ignored the fact that there are actually numerous allusions to Ireland and the Irish throughout the play; these must be examined fully to truly understand the play's Irishness.

Perhaps the most obvious Irish reference in *She Stoops to Conquer* is the speech in which the young hero, Marlow, brags that "the Countess of Sligo" is one of the members of the Ladies' Club in London who call him "their agreeable Rattle".[10] Marlow claims to flirt with these ladies till the early hours of the morning as they play cards, and eat and drink to excess. Marlow's love interest, Kate Hardcastle, is disturbed to learn of the extravagance of these ladies' lifestyles and protests at their neglect of work and family.

Another aristocratic woman mentioned in the play is the dedicated follower of London fashion, "Lady Kill-daylight",[11] whose name not only hints at late night partying and (possibly) sinister morals but also suggests an Irish or Scottish title. The word "cill" means "churchyard" in Irish and Scots Gaelic, and, given the traditional importance of churches to the layout of Irish and Scottish villages, is therefore included at the start of many Irish and Scottish place names. Since British hereditary titles usually reference the place where the family seat is located, Lady Kill-daylight's Irish or Scottish estate would seem to be in the imaginary barony of Kill-daylight.[12] Goldsmith had extremely negative feelings about the Irish gentry (and, in spite of his aversion to aristocrats in general, relatively positive feelings about Scottish nobility, formed during his three years living in Edinburgh).[13] Given the negative portrayal of Lady Kill-daylight, it seems much more likely that Goldsmith is indicating an Irish peerage.

Goldsmith's negative view of the Irish gentry was rooted in the fact that, in his experience growing up in Longford, Westmeath, and Roscommon, Irish Anglican gentlemen "spen[t] their whole lives in running after a hare, drinking to be drunk, and getting every girl with child that will let them"[14] and habitually "spent more money on breeding horses in one season than they had in two centuries on learning".[15] He also agreed with one commentator that politicians from the Irish Anglican Ascendancy were "bred up in too much indolence and ignorance to have any influence as orators" and that they were engaged in "all the intricacies of state-chicanery" that could possibly be imagined, including "bribery" and short-sighted self-interest.[16]

Based on his depictions of the Countess of Sligo and Lady Kill-daylight, Goldsmith also seems to have had negative feelings about absentee Irish Anglican landlords who lived in England off of the earnings from their Irish estates. His picture of these ladies' extravagant lifestyles and (probably hopeless) attempts to keep up with the fashions of London high society anticipates Maria Edgeworth's portrayal of Lady Clonbrony in the 1812 novel, *The Absentee*.

In *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith also arguably reflects on the Irish gentry through the characterisation of the roguish squire, Tony Lumpkin. If Goldsmith's biographers are correct in asserting that the character is based on his Irish Anglican cousin (and scion of the Pallas estate) Bob Bryanton, it adds telling significance to Tony's statement regarding his mother and cousin that "I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such *varmint*", and to Mr. Hardcastle's belief that "the alehouse and the stable are the only schools [that Tony will] ever go to".[17]

Goldsmith was, of course, from an Irish Anglican background himself, and, although he was often negative about the Irish gentry (even reflecting disparagingly on his friend and relation Bryanton), he could easily relate to fellow middle-class, Irish Anglican people. In fact, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, there are clear allusions to two celebrated, non-aristocratic, Irish Anglican writers: George Farquhar (like Goldsmith, the son of a clergyman) and Laurence Sterne (the son of an English soldier). When Kate poses as a barmaid in the hope of winning Marlow, who is shy around women of his own class but a ferocious ladies man when dealing with working-class women, she directly references one of Farquhar's greatest plays, asking her servant: "How do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux' Stratagem*?"[18] This line not only highlights the fact that Kate bases her conduct on that of characters in plays and novels (like the heroines in the work of later Irish Anglican dramatists from Sheridan to Wilde); it also gives Goldsmith a chance to pay tribute to a writer he held in high esteem. In *The Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith praises Farquhar during the letter in which he disparages the contemporary preference for works by authors from the British aristocracy. In Goldsmith's view, "almost all the excellent production that have appeared [in Britain] were purely the offspring of necessity", written by those who were "writers for bread."[19] In Goldsmith's view, Farquhar is a shining example of someone who (like himself) was made great by having to write to survive. Additional examples, in Goldsmith's opinion, were two other, middle-class, Irish Anglican writers who

he greatly admired. In a letter to an Irish friend from 1758, Goldsmith justified his own career as a "scribbler" by saying: "I know you have in Ireland a very indifferent idea of a man who writes for bread ... [but] Swift and Steele did so in the earliest part of their lives."[20]

Whatever Goldsmith's regard for Farquhar, Swift, and Steele, he was highly critical of the Tipperary-born Laurence Sterne in two letters from *The Citizen of the World*.[21] However, it is clear from the specificity of his criticisms that he read Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (published between 1759 and 1767), and the classic novel would seem to have made a significant impact on him, since he borrows from it in *She Stoops to Conquer*. In *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne generates much humour from the fact that Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim speak of their military pasts upon the least provocation. They constantly discuss (and even re-enact) their misadventures at the Sieges of Limerick and Namur, and also allude to their acquaintance with aristocratic officers such as the Duke of Ormond. Similarly, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, Mr. Hardcastle fatigues his guests with tales of his military adventures under the command of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene. He even attempts to recount his role in the Siege of Denain.[22]

Tristram Shandy and *She Stoops to Conquer* are also linked by the fact that both works feature female maids called Bridget. In British works of literature from the eighteenth-century, this was a common name given to servants. This was partially because it could indicate a Stage Irish woman (St. Bridget being a celebrated Irish saint), but also because it referenced London's Bridewell Hospital, a "house of correction for wayward women" named for St. Bridget,[23] thereby hinting at the servant's loose sexual morals. When writers from Irish backgrounds such as Sterne, Goldsmith, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan[24] used the name, it was never merely for such shallow or reductive, Stage Irish purposes. In the case of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, he uses Bridget to overturn English theatregoers' expectations of an Irish servant, because his Bridget is anything but forelock-tugging. When Marlow wants Bridget called so that he can dictate that evening's meal to her, Mr. Hardcastle hints that she may not be very responsive to his commands. He says, Bridget "is not very communicative upon [such] occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house."[25] On the strength of this information, Marlow elects not to meet her, so, sadly, we never get to see the fiery Bridget in action.

After the allusions to Irish aristocrats, famous Irish writers, and a cook maid called Bridget, the play's remaining Irish reference occurs when Hardcastle is explaining to Hastings that he does not pay any attention to the news anymore. He says, "There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about *Heyder Ally* or *Ally Cawn*, than about *Ally Croker*."[26] Haidar Ali was the Sultan of Mysore and Ali Khan the governor of Bengal (both of whom struggled against the British encroachment into India). "Ally Croker" was a famous Irish song of the period. By comparing two Indian leaders to a barroom ballad, Goldsmith is, on one level, joking that Hardcastle does not distinguish between weighty political issues and fleeting, popular culture. On the other hand, he is linking the colony of Ireland (where he grew up) to the colony of India, as the Irish writers and politicians Edmund Burke and Richard Brinsley Sheridan would do fifteen years later at the Warren Hastings trial. Goldsmith was, of course, famously critical of English colonialism. He was naturally concerned about the harm that would come to the indigenous populations of the colonies. However, Goldsmith was also concerned that expansion of the Empire would destroy England itself. In poems like "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village" and essays like "The Revolution in Low Life", he criticises the English hunger for exotic, luxury goods engendered by Empire and highlights the ways that the greed driving the colonial project is ruining rural England.

By linking Ireland to India in this speech by Hardcastle, Goldsmith is once again commenting on Britain's rapacious Empire, but he is also engaged in what Joseph Lennon calls "Irish Orientalism".[27] British authors historically regarded both the Irish and the Asian cultures as barbaric, and even claimed that the Irish were descended from Asian Scythians; Irish intellectuals were open to this putative ancestry, regarding the East sympathetically as a possible ancient homeland and as a place where the people must experience the same alienation from the British imperial centre that Irish people do. Indeed, between the eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Irish writers such as Frances Sheridan (Richard's mother), Thomas Moore, James Clarence Mangan, and W.B. Yeats, used Eastern mythology and legends, or an Eastern animus, to express their Irish outsider perspective on the English and to indulge the British market's taste for exoticism. Goldsmith does this, of course, in the novel *The Citizen of the World* (1760), in which he poses as a Chinese philosopher living in

London, but also does so in two lesser-known pieces: “A Letter Supposed to Be Written by the Moorish Secretary in London, to his Correspondent in Fez” and “The Proceedings of Providence Vindicated: An Eastern Tale”.[28]

Irish dramatists have been especially fond of linking Ireland to colonised countries in Asia – and, indeed, to those in South America and Africa, as well. Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s 1799 play *Pizarro* treats Spain and Peru as (in Fintan O’Toole’s words) “a version ... of England and Ireland”.[29] Bernard Shaw (in 1904’s *John Bull’s Other Island*), Brendan Behan (in 1958’s *The Hostage*), and Brian Friel (in 2005’s *The Home Place*) all link Ireland to countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. While Goldsmith (through Hardcastle’s remark in *She Stoops to Conquer*) is not making as sustained a link between Ireland and other oppressed peoples as these playwrights, he is, like them, giving vent to anti-colonial views by deliberately connecting India and Ireland.

In rehearsal drafts of *She Stoops to Conquer*, there were two more allusions to Goldsmith’s native Ireland. The play’s original epilogue was written by Joseph Cradock and was to be spoken by Tony Lumpkin; this epilogue proved unusable, however, because Cradock based its content on the original draft of the play, which had been revised considerably by Goldsmith after complaints from the producer and the cast over its frequent recourse to “low” humour.[30] A new epilogue was provided by the Irish playwright Arthur Murphy, to be spoken by the character of Constance Neville. Mrs. Bulkley, who was playing the female lead, Kate Hardcastle, strongly objected to a secondary female character speaking the epilogue. Goldsmith therefore wrote a new version of the epilogue in which Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville humourously jockey for attention. The actor playing Miss Neville refused to take part in this “quarrelling epilogue”,[31] however, and Goldsmith had to supply a much tamer one to be spoken by Mrs. Bulkley as Kate Hardcastle. Among its other interesting qualities, the unfortunately-abandoned “quarrelling epilogue” is quite “Irish”. In it, Miss Hardcastle claims to prefer admirers who are intellectuals or young Frenchified dandies, while Miss Neville expresses a preference for distinguished older gentlemen, or young, virile, Scottish and Irish men. Miss Neville’s tribute to “ye brave Irish lads” is sung to an Irish air called “Baleinamony”.[32] This epilogue not only chimes with the play’s frequent disparagement of English “Frenchified fops”, it also speaks to Goldsmith’s (perhaps greater) affection for the men of his native country and his adopted home of Scotland.

In addition to Miss Neville's song in the "quarrelling epilogue", there was, at one point, another Irish tune featured in *She Stoops to Conquer*. In the play's original draft, Kate Hardcastle was to sing a song that Goldsmith had written to the air "The Humours of Balamagairy". Mrs. Bulkley was a poor singer, however, so, unfortunately, the song had to be dropped.

The Gate's "Hibernicised" Production of She Stoops to Conquer (1995)

While this "Irish" song was not included in the original production, it was restored in the Gate Theatre's Dublin production of 1995, and was sung by Rosaleen Linehan. The Gate's inclusion of this song was a significant – as well as a completely justified and satisfying – alteration to the play. The song's obviously Irish melody, combined with the script's open references to Farquhar, the Countess of Sligo, Bridget, and "Ally Croker", appropriately enhanced the audience's sense of the play's Irishness.

Less justifiable was the decision by the production's director, the great Jonathan Miller, to re-set the play in Ireland (something which the Abbey Theatre had already done in 1969 and 1982 and would do again in 2014). Miller made this decision, because – in his words – "to hear it with the rattle of Irish talk actually gives it a vigour which I think it has lost under the auspices of the English who appropriated it and I think in some ways impoverished it … [The play] starts to ring with a greater sense of authenticity."[33] The Englishman Miller was, of course, not the first to discern an Irish "flavour" to Goldsmith's dialogue, and it is most certainly there – a product of the playwright having spent the first 24 years of his life in Ireland. (Consider the lines that are clearly redolent of Hiberno-English, such as when Mrs. Hardcastle exclaims, "Oh, Tony, I'm killed" after emerging from the lake, or when Tony Lumpkin says, in a phrase first coined here by Goldsmith, "Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you know fibs".)[34] However, Miller is wrong to say that the English "appropriated" the play: Goldsmith deliberately set it in England. And part of his reason for doing so was because, like other London-based, Irish Anglican writers before and after him, he wanted to critique the English.

By transferring the action to Ireland and making all of the characters Irish, the Gate – like the Abbey – got the satisfaction of adding some Irish references to the script (mainly

place names). However, they were also forced to remove some of Goldsmith's negative reflections on the English – such as when the young Marlow laments his excessive English reserve, which he describes as "the Englishman's malady".[35] In Goldsmith's journalism, he suggests that reserve and "solemnity", which foreigners are apt to mistake for "severity" and "ill-nature", are prominent aspects of the English national character.[36] By contrast, he insists that the Irish are "remarkable for the gaiety and levity of their dispositions".[37] Removing the "English" explanation for Marlow's shyness diminishes an audience's sense that they are watching a play conceived by an Irish outsider living in London.

Excessive emotional reserve is not the only English "flaw" highlighted by Goldsmith in the play; he also strongly suggests that the English are prone to hypocrisy, publically and ostentatiously promoting values and principles that they abandon when out of the public eye. As noted above, central to the play's plot is the fact that young Marlow pretends to be a moral paragon when among women of his own class, but is perfectly happy to sexually exploit working-class women. This hypocrisy places Marlow in a line of "two-faced", English characters created by Irish Anglican playwrights; important examples of such characters (and there are many) include Farquhar's Vizard, Sheridan's Joseph Surface, Wilde's Sir Robert Chiltern, and Shaw's Tom Broadbent. Indeed, *She Stoops to Conquer* fits neatly into a tradition of plays in which Irish Anglican playwrights seem to affirm Wilde's contention that England is "the native land of the hypocrite".[38] Irish writers who grew up in Ireland when it was ruled from London have frequently depicted the English as hypocrites; this is because, during their formative years, they noted that the English people who were posted to Ireland claimed to uphold justice and "fair play" while actively perpetuating discrimination and inequality. As noted above, most attempts to re-set *She Stoops to Conquer* (and other Anglo-Irish plays) in Ireland have been unsatisfying, because adapters have ignored crucial ways in which the action and characterisations would change if the stories actually took place in Ireland. However, an even bigger objection to re-setting *She Stoops to Conquer* in Ireland and making the hypocritical Marlow an Irishman is that it actually lessens the Irish subversiveness of the play, since it elides Goldsmith's deliberately negative reflections on the English.

The Irish References in The Good-Natured Man

While there may not be as many Irish references in *The Good-Natured Man* as there are in *She Stoops to Conquer*, there are still some interesting ones included in the script. One possible Irish reference is the surname of the pessimistic character, Mr. Croaker. Croker without an "a" has been a prominent Dublin surname (of Norman origin) for centuries. Not only was it borne by the subject of the Irish ballad name-checked in *She Stoops to Conquer*, it was also the birth surname of Robert Tressell, the Dublin-born author of *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* (1914), and belonged to a neighbour of Samuel Beckett's during his Foxrock childhood, "Boss" Croker. Goldsmith uses the name in *The Good-Natured Man* to reflect his character's constant fear of doom and death ("croaking"). Interestingly, Beckett also uses the name for its implied link to "croaking" in works such as *Not I* (1972), *Rough For Theatre II* (1976), and *Company* (1980).[39] It must be admitted that, in Goldsmith's play, there are no strong indications that Mr. Croaker is from an Irish background, so, arguably, this is not a terribly significant Irish reference.

A second, possibly Irish reference is the brief story told about a young woman called Miss Macfag, who eloped to Gretna Green and "married her father's footman".[40] If Miss Macfag is a well-born (presumably Protestant) Irish woman living in fashionable London, then this could be Goldsmith's reflection on the Irish Anglican fear of "miscegenation", or mixing between people of higher and lower social standing – a fear commonly expressed in Irish Anglican writing, as I have discussed elsewhere.[41]

Just as Goldsmith alludes to two Irish Anglican writers in *She Stoops to Conquer*, he alludes to another in this play. Croaker's wife quotes a line from the operatic libretto *The Judgement of Paris* (1700), written by the English-born but Irish-raised William Congreve.[42] It should be noted, however, that Congreve was not overly keen to be regarded as an Irishman – despite being educated at Kilkenny College and Trinity College Dublin. Indeed, we get a sense of Congreve's *English* cultural allegiance from the only reference to Ireland in any of his plays: in *Love for Love* (1695), he solicits laughs through Valentine's remark that a female of his acquaintance is "harder to be understood than a piece of Egyptian antiquity or an Irish manuscript: you may pore till you spoil your eyes and not improve your knowledge."[43]

Goldsmith's Irish background is also arguably evident in *The Good-Natured Man* from his mockery of what he clearly regards as the English nation's overly-heightened fear of Jesuits.[44] However, this mild anti-English cultural critique, like the references to Congreve, Macfag, and Croaker/Croker, are relatively minor Irish traces when compared to the play's main engagement with Goldsmith's native country: the character of Flanigan the Follower.

The play's hero, Mr. Honeywood, is an overly generous and somewhat profligate young man who has gotten badly into debt. His guardian – an uncle who has been living in Italy – has gotten word of his excesses, and believes that the young man needs to be taught a lesson. As such, he pays off the young man's debts, but lets him believe that he is being arrested for debt by a bailiff, Mr. Twitch, and his "follower", Mr. Flanigan.

Twitch and Flanigan go to Honeywood's house, and, while they are speaking to him about his debt, a young woman called Miss Richland calls to the door. Because Honeywood greatly admires Miss Richland (he later admits that he is in love with her), he does not want her to know that he is in such dire financial straits. Therefore, he dresses Twitch and Flanigan up as "gentlemen" officers, in the hope that she will believe that they are two of his well-born friends. Needless to add, during the ensuing conversation between these four characters, it becomes abundantly clear that Twitch and Flanigan are not from the upper classes. (Indeed, their repartee was considered so "low" by the original London audience that the producer cut these two characters from the play after the opening night.)

There are two Irish aspects to the inclusion of these characters in the play. First, the scene involving Twitch and Flanigan is based upon a real life incident involving the Dublin-born playwright, Sir Richard Steele. (It should be noted that, in some versions of the story, Steele dressed the bailiffs up as servants rather than gentlemen, and his guests wondered why he had so many retainers standing around doing nothing).[45] Audience members familiar with this story would have seen this as an Irish trace in the play. A much more obvious Irish aspect of this scene, however, is the fact that Flanigan is an Irish surname (usually spelled "Flanagan").

The character of Flanigan is an interesting one, because Goldsmith never makes definitively clear whether he is Irish or English. The Englishman Twitch says that "there's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than" Flanigan. This is a reference to the four counties in which London was historically situated (Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, and

Essex), which means that Flanigan could be an Englishman of Irish descent or simply an Irishman who has settled in London. Later on, at the mention of the French, Flanigan says "damn the French", and Honeywood applauds him for being a "true English officer".[46] If Flanigan is played as English, then this remark has no "sting in its tale". However, if Flanigan is Irish, then it indicates Honeywood's English assumption that Irish people should be happy to be granted the title of "English" by an Englishman and should, in fact, aspire to *be* English – rather than even a supranational identity like "British".[47]

The Gate's "Hibernicised" Production of The Good-Natured Man (1974)

Flanigan's relatively few lines are not in Hiberno-English, but it would be hard for Irish theatre-makers to resist the urge to play him as Irish. This is just what the Gate Theatre did when they produced the play in celebration of the bicentennial of Goldsmith's death in 1974. (The late actor David Kelly, who played Flanigan in the Gate production, once told me that, as part of the bicentennial celebrations, it was agreed that the Abbey would produce *She Stoops to Conquer*, while the Gate "got stuck with *The Good-Natured Man*" – a work which he and the other Gate cast members regarded as a vastly inferior play.)[48] Hilton Edwards, the director of this Gate production, not only chose to have Flanigan played as Irish; he also insisted that Twitch be played as Irish. Indeed, he wrote three mini-scenes for inclusion in the production (a prologue, an interlude, and an epilogue), in which Flanigan and Twitch behave as slapstick "Stage Dubs". A type-written copy of these scenes can be found in the Gate Theatre archives at Northwestern University. As this document reveals, Edwards wrote the scenes in straightforward English, but, in a note at the top of the first page, he asks David Kelly and the actor playing Twitch (Edward Byrne) to put the dialogue into Dublinese – a task that he believes is beyond him as an Englishman.

By including these "Irish" scenes in the production, did Edwards and the Gate overly-"Hibernicise" this play? As indicated above, when Flanigan is played as Irish, it adds a dark undercurrent to Honeywood's description of him as "English". Indeed, this line acts as a subtle, subversive, "Irish" comment on England's proprietorial instincts when it comes to dealing with the Irish (and other colonised peoples). As such, the Gate's decision to play Flanigan as Irish must be applauded.[49]

With regards to turning Twitch into an Irishman, this does little to improve the script; however, it does little to damage it, either. Much more worrying is the content of these new "Irish" mini-scenes. While the insistence on over-the-top Dublinese and "cod-acting" in all three scenes are needless – and arguably Stage Irish – additions, the prologue scene positively *glories* in its Stage Irishness. Twitch and Flanigan actually purchase potatoes from a street vendor. Twitch eats his (and proceeds to talk with his mouth full), and Flanigan ostentatiously and comically indicates that his potato (thrown to him by Twitch as the characters leave the stage) is much too hot to touch.

Conclusion

Overall, the Gate Theatre's "Hiberncising" of plays by the great Irish Anglican dramatists has been much more subtle and much less haphazard than that undertaken by most Irish theatre-makers since independence. However, on two occasions, the Gate has, I would suggest, overly "Hibernicised" plays by Oliver Goldsmith. In future, if the Gate (or other Irish theatre-makers) want to produce an "Irish" version of *She Stoops to Conquer*, they would be well-advised to keep the play set in England and to have one or two deliberately chosen characters played as Irish – such as the Abbey did for their 2003 production, in which director Patrick Mason had Anita Reeves play Mrs. Hardcastle with an Anglo-Irish accent.[50] (This was a dramaturgically sensitive move, because, by depicting Mrs. Hardcastle as an Irish Anglican, it linked her hunger to go to London and to keep up with London fashions to the same desire in the corrupt Ascendancy ladies mentioned elsewhere in the play, Lady Kill-daylight and the Countess of Sligo.) Irish producers of the play might also consider featuring the "lost" Irish song (as the Gate did in 1995) and the "quarrelling epilogue" (which, to my knowledge, has never been included in any production).

In the case of *The Good-Natured Man*, there is a clear case for playing Flanigan as Irish (as the Gate did in 1974); and one might also consider playing Mr. Croaker and perhaps his wife as Irish, given their surname's connection to Dublin and to the work of Samuel Beckett. When it comes to emphasising the Irishness of these works, there is no need to do more than I have suggested, since – as this essay has demonstrated – both plays are Irish enough as written.

ENDNOTES

I wish to gratefully acknowledge the support of the Irish Research Council, as well as the Moore Institute at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

[1] Although Ireland did not technically become part of the United Kingdom until the Act of Union in 1800, eighteenth-century Irish Anglican writers such as Farquhar, Goldsmith, and Sheridan would have regarded themselves as Irish but also as contributors to a common Anglophone culture developing across England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales: what today we would call "British" (as opposed to merely "English") culture. For more on the historical development of "Britishness" (which was spearheaded by the Scots) and for more on Irish Anglicans and Ulster Scots Presbyterians seeing themselves as Irish but also – on some level – British, see David Clare. *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 125-129.

[2] *The Recruiting Officer* was re-set in Ireland by Dominic Roche for a Dublin Theatre Festival production in 1969 (the play was re-titled *The Mullingar Recruits*) and by the Abbey in 2007. *She Stoops to Conquer* was re-set in Ireland by the Abbey in 1969, 1982, and 2014 and by the Gate in 1995. And *The Critic* was re-set in Ireland by the Abbey in 1931 and by Rough Magic in 2013. It should be noted that Lennox Robinson's 1931 adaptation of *The Critic* for the Abbey transferred the action to *contemporary* Dublin. For my review of Rough Magic's 2013 production of *The Critic* (and a brief discussion of the Abbey's 2007 production of *The Recruiting Officer*), see David Clare. "Review of Rough Magic's 2013 Production of Sheridan's *The Critic*". *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 27: 3-4 (Summer 2015): 761-764.

[3] For the contentiousness of the term "Anglo-Irish" and the case for using "Irish Anglican" instead, see Clare, *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook*, 3,136. Although I – like Michael Griffin and Jarlath Killeen – prefer the term "Irish Anglican", I have no hesitation in calling plays "Anglo-Irish" when they are truly hybrid works (e.g. plays written by Irish playwrights but set in England among the English). Likewise, I am happy to refer to the Irish Anglican accent as "Anglo-Irish", since it sounds quite English to Irish ears and quite Irish to English ears.

[4] Michael Griffin. *Enlightenment in Ruins: The Geographies of Oliver Goldsmith*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 2013. 11.

[5] Even the important playwright Tom Murphy did not engage fully with these nuances when adapting *She Stoops to Conquer* for the Abbey's "Hibernicised" production of 1982. As David Nowlan pointed out in his review in the *Irish Times*, Murphy "transposed [the play] ... to an Irish setting by making only the smallest changes to the script". (David Nowlan. "'She Stoops to Conquer' at the Abbey". *The Irish Times*. 12 February 1982.)

[6] This army would not become the *British* Army until a year after the premiere of Farquhar's play, when England, Wales, and Scotland were joined together by the Act of Union of 1707.

[7] For the Gate's use of Irish accents in these productions, see the various newspaper clippings housed in the Gate Theatre archives at Northwestern University and at the theatre itself. For more information on McKenna's Irish-language production of *Saint Joan* and her use of an Irish accent in the Gate production, see the Siobhán McKenna and An Taibhdhearc papers housed at the Hardiman Library at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

[8] I base this observation on my attendance at Irish productions of these plays, the testimony of friends and colleagues who have attended productions, and remarks in Micheál macLíammóir. *All For Hecuba*. Dublin: Lilliput, 2008. 71.

[9] Declan Kiberd. *Irish Classics*. London: Granta, 2000. 107-133.

[10] Oliver Goldsmith. *She Stoops to Conquer*. New York: Dover, 1991. 35. In this paper, I am using editions of Goldsmith's plays other than those included in Arthur Friedman's justly esteemed *Collected Works* of 1966. This is because Friedman uses the first edition of each play as a copy-text and only admits corrections from subsequent editions that he believes originate with Goldsmith. I prefer to use reprints of the last early editions to include significant corrections (even if those corrections were made by editors), such as this Dover reprint of the

fourth edition of *She Stoops to Conquer* and the reprint of the fifth edition of *The Good-Natured Man* included in Richard Garnett's *Selected Works* of 1967.

[11] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 30.

[12] Irish peerages starting with "Kil" or "Kill" include those belonging to Baron Killarney, Baron Kilmorey, Baron Kilmaine, Baron Kildare, Baron Killanin, and Baron Kilbracken, and Scottish peerages starting with "Kil" or "Kill" include those belonging to Baron Killearn, Baron Killyleagh, Baron Kilmarnock, and the Earl of Kilmuir.

[13] Oliver Goldsmith. *Collected Letters*. Ed. Katharine Balderston. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1928. 10.

[14] Goldsmith, *Collected Letters*, 10.

[15] Declan Kiberd. "The Perils of Nostalgia: A Critique of the Revival". In *Literature and the Changing Ireland*. Ed. Peter Connolly. Gerards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982. 17. Kiberd is paraphrasing a passage from a 1758 letter, in which Goldsmith writes: "There has been more money spent in the encouragement of the Padareen mare there [in Ireland] in one season, than given in rewards to learned men since the times of [Archbishop James] Usher." (Goldsmith, *Collected Letters*, 29.) The extravagant amount spent on the Padraeen mare seems to have particularly appalled Goldsmith, since he also references it in *The Citizen of the World*. (See Oliver Goldsmith. *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. II*. Ed. Arthur Friedman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966. 36.)

[16] Oliver Goldsmith. *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. 1*. Ed. Arthur Friedman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966. 92.

[17] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 52; 2. Emphasis in original.

[18] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 32.

[19] Goldsmith, *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. II*, 376.

[20] Goldsmith, *Collected Letters*, 51.

[21] See Goldsmith, *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. II*, 215, 221-225.

[22] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 1, 15, 17.

[23] Melvyn New with Richard A. Davies and W.G. Day. Notes. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, Vol. III: The Notes*. By Laurence Sterne. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1984. 256.

[24] The Widow Wadman's servant is called Bridget in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, as is the mother in Sheridan's 1775 play, *St. Patrick's Day*.

[25] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 17.

[26] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 16.

[27] See Joseph Lennon. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2008.

[28] Oliver Goldsmith. *New Essays by Oliver Goldsmith*. Ed. Ronald S. Crane. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1927. 1-4; Oliver Goldsmith. *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. III*. Ed. Arthur Friedman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966. 58-66. For the definitive study examining Goldsmith's anti-colonialism and his engagement in "Irish Orientalism", see Griffin, *Enlightenment in Ruins*.

[29] Fintan O'Toole. *A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998. 350.

[30] Richard Garnett. Notes. *Selected Works*. By Oliver Goldsmith. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967. 746.

[31] Garnett, Notes, *Selected Works*, 746.

[32] Oliver Goldsmith. *Selected Works*. Ed. Richard Garnett. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1967. 658.

[33] As quoted in Fintan O'Toole. "Not Saying What He's Supposed To". *The Irish Times*. 11 May 1995.

[34] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 53; 29.

[35] Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*, 13.

[36] Goldsmith, *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. III*, 84; 85; 85.

[37] Goldsmith, *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. III*, 84.

[38] Oscar Wilde. *The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 160.

[39] Samuel Beckett. *The Selected Works of Samuel Beckett, Vol. III*. New York: Grove, 2010. 242, 406; Samuel Beckett. *The Selected Works of Samuel Beckett, Vol. IV*. New York: Grove, 2010. 434.

[40] Goldsmith, *Selected Works*, 728.

[41] Clare, *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook*, 47-50.

[42] Goldsmith, *Selected Works*, 693.

[43] William Congreve. *The Comedies of William Congreve*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005. 269.

[44] Goldsmith, *Selected Works*, 677, 733.

[45] For more on this story and its links to Goldsmith's play, see Arthur Friedman. Notes. *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Vol. V*. By Oliver Goldsmith. Ed. Arthur Friedman. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966. 45-46.

[46] Goldsmith, *Selected Works*, 704.

[47] When Flanigan is played as Irish, the fact that the English characters repeatedly refer to him as "little Flanigan" also smacks of English condescension. Irish theatre-makers can "play this up" by casting a big or tall Irishman as Flanigan.

[48] David Kelly. Personal conversation with the author. 30 November 2008. This production of *The Good-Natured Man* is noteworthy for the fact that it was the last production in which Micheál macLíammóir performed as part of a cast (he played the role of Lofty). His last performance on a stage occurred a year later, when he appeared in a one-week run at the Gate of his solo show, *The Importance of Being Oscar* (1960). Kelly told me that macLíammóir kept forgetting his lines during the run of *The Good-Natured Man*, especially the lines in which Lofty brags about all of the important people that he knows; macLíammóir solved this problem by replacing the names included in Goldsmith's script with the names of the friends and acquaintances that he saw before him in the Gate audience.

[49] In one of the copies of the 1974 script found in the Northwestern Gate archives, the description of Flanigan as a "true English officer" is cut. However, it is retained in the final prompt and sound scripts. Let us hope that, in their efforts to stress Flanigan's Irishness (and to remove any hint of Englishness), the Gate did not cut this subversively "Irish" line. In all copies of the 1974 script found in the archives, the "four counties" line is crossed out, so the Gate was definitely eager to downplay Flanigan's long residence in London.

[50] I base this observation on my own attendance at this production, but Reeves's accent was also noted by Helen Meany in her review of the play in *The Guardian*. (Helen Meany. "Review of *She Stoops to Conquer* at The Abbey Theatre, Dublin". *The Guardian*. 31 July 2003.)