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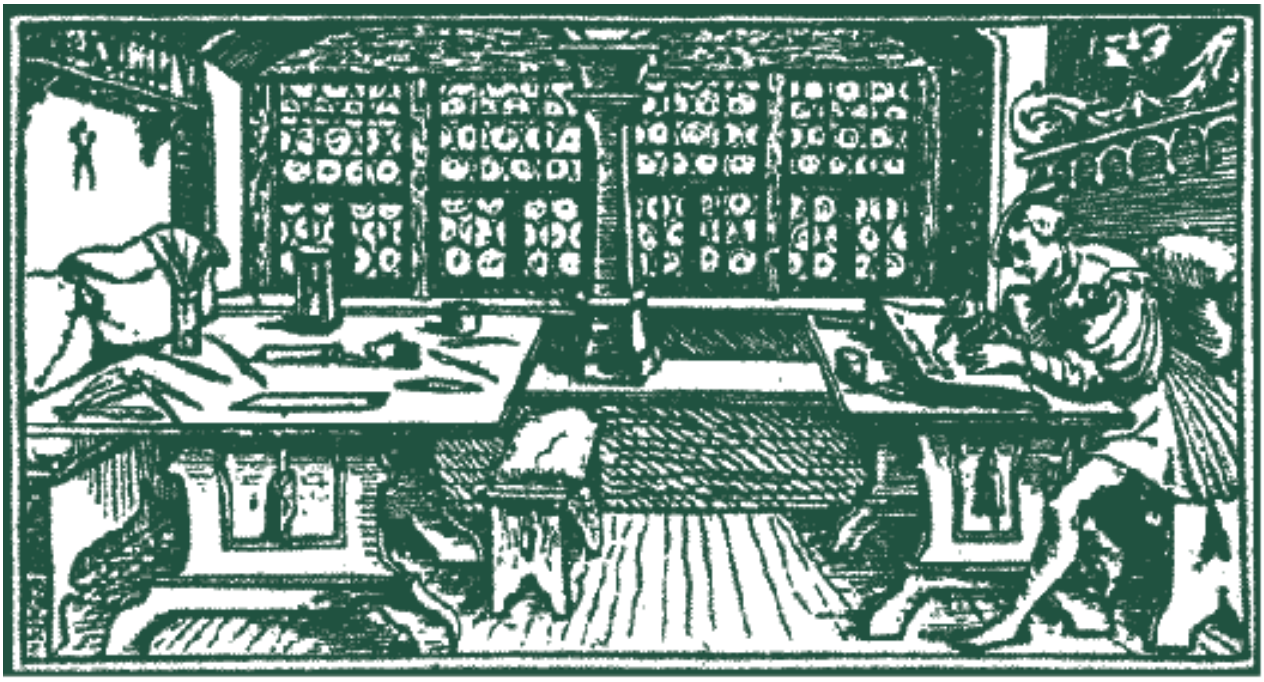

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Issue Coordinators: Sanda BERCE and Rareş MOLDOVAN

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FOREWORD

For nearly two decades, the wormhole connecting a small room in the attic of the Faculty of Letters in Cluj to "Ireland" has remained open. At the far end, an "Ireland" that is as real as it is "invented" year after year radiates itself hither, materially and ideally, to be painstakingly reconstructed, perused, and discussed. Over twenty years hundreds of students and dozens of professors have contributed to this unlikely entanglement that synchronises – relatively – the ends of our continent, the terms of our cultures across space and through a finely calibrated historical lens.

Carmen Borbely's Introduction does a brilliant job of retelling the history of this unlikely venture, which many may have deemed quixotic. Kindled by the abiding passion of one person – professor John Fairlegh – for the cultures of Romania and Ireland, helped along by the efforts of professors in Ireland and Cluj, the M. A. in Irish studies continues to this day to bring together young postgraduates around the table in the small room, and to open to them the cultural horizon of Ireland.

This volume is an homage to the scholarship that has been fostered in the area of Irish studies at Babeş-Bolyai University, and a snapshot of the work being undertaken by professors, alumni, and students. However partial, it manages to convey the varied research interests and perspectives, orbiting around several centres of gravity that bend discourses this way and that, with the huge Irish-European supernovae of Joyce and Beckett figuring prominently, of course. Still, from Irish myths to contemporary authors, the range of the collection captures something of the amplitude of preoccupations that have over the years shaped the practice of Irish studies in Cluj. The authors – distinguished guests of the programme, professors involved in teaching for the M.A., colleagues with ties to the field, recent alumni – attest the vitality of the endeavour and the dedication that characterizes this small community.

We are honoured to host in the pages of this volume three of the guest professors that have lectured for the programme: Declan Kiberd, Professor Honoris Causa of our university, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, both from the University of Notre Dame, and professor Nicholas Allen from the University of Georgia. Their presence in Cluj and in the following pages is proof of the international dimension of cooperation and education that the M. A. has succeeded in creating. We are thankful to our colleagues for their contributions, and we are especially proud of the quality of work our alumni, very young academics, have submitted. We hope they will take up the mantle of professor in the years to come. Special thanks are due to Dr. Erika Mihalycsa and Dr. Elena Păcurar for their help in putting together this volume.

Sanda Berce, Rareş Moldovan

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(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

INTRODUCTION

CARMEN-VERONICA BORBELY[1]

In an essay mapping the space of poetic imagination, Seamus Heaney, Irish Laureate of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature, reinforces the Joycean notion that the clarity of individual artistic vision may depend on one's (self)reflexive displacement from one's cultural roots, whose creative energies can best be tapped from a distant vantage point, situated on "the viewing deck of Europe" (Heaney 2012, 19). Echoing Stephen Dedalus's diary notation in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* which condenses the idea that Irishness is inescapably both a pole of departure and a horizon of expectation for the exilic artist,[2] Heaney's title – "Mossbawn via Mantua. Ireland in/and Europe: cross-currents and exchanges" – juxtaposes the birthplaces of the ancient poet Virgil and his own, showing the significance of cultural translation, with its logic of de- and refamiliarisation, for re-envisaging one's poetic identity through the unexpected lens of otherness. As Heaney says, "the Irish home ground can be reviewed in the light of certain European perspectives – classical, medieval, and modern. These planes of regard allow us to get a closer view of that ground by standing back from it and help to establish a different focus, a more revealing angle of vision" (2012, 19). "From Mossbawn via Mantua" could, indeed, be seen, as an apology of translation, which can activate the imagination by ferrying the poetic self into the "home grounds" of others, or into a multiplicity of linguistic homelands other than his own. The "shortest route from self to self is through the other", as Richard Kearney shows, pointing out the ontological dimension of translation, which refers to how one conveys one's identity to others or, to come closer to Heaney's sense, to how one comes to understand one's identity

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The author of this brief introduction to the history of the Irish Studies MA programme in Cluj wishes to express her gratitude to Professors Liviu Cotrău, Virgil Stanciu and Sanda Berce for the detailed information they offered during separate interviews in the months of May and June 2018. Special thanks must also go to Dr. Liliana Pop, Dr. Erika Mihálycsa and Dr. Rareş Moldovan, for the patience with which they have guided my reconstructive efforts, and to Professor John Fairleigh, for his inspiring account of the beginnings of the Irish Studies MA in Cluj. Not least, I am grateful to Professors Declan Kiberd and Christopher Fox from the University of Notre Dame for the opportunity of talking about Irish Studies as a Global Enterprise at the Irish Seminar organised by the Keough-Naughton Institute in Dublin, in June 2018.

[2] "[T]he shortest way to Tara was VIA Holyhead" (Joyce 2000/1916, 211).

via others (2004, xii-xv). In Heaney's case, one route of passage from European to Irish destinations, one avenue of translation back to Mossbawn is that of a detour via the poetry of the Romanian Marin Sorescu, whom he locates in a so-called province of the Hyperboreans, "inhabited by different twentieth-century poets of Russia and Eastern Europe, poets who helped me make sense of my own situation in the turbulent Ireland of the 1970s and 80s" (2012, 21).

And yet, the shortest way to his "own personal territory" can be not only via Mantua, but possibly also via Romania, the "home ground" of Sorescu, singled out as one of the "writers living in Soviet regimes who dealt obliquely and allegorically with the political conditions in their different countries. They were poets who maintained their self-respect by refusing to be co-opted by the Party and who managed instead to write poems true to their own imaginative selves" (Heaney 2012, 24). Thus, even before the fall of communism in the province of "my Hyperboreans" (Heaney 2012, 24), Irish and Romanian poets built interconnecting bridges enabling them to translate their creative visions, engaging in numerous joint publication projects. Such was the volume *The Biggest Egg in the World,* published by Bloodaxe Books in 1987, "hatched in Belfast by a clutch of poets", including Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and Paul Muldoon, who "cooked up these poems in tribute to the Romanian master chef" and produced "not hard-boiled translations but lightly scrambled versions" of the original texts (Sorescu 1987). One poem in this collection, "Fountains in the Sea", from the Romanian poet's 1982 collection *Fântâni în mare*, features the authorial signature of Seamus Heaney and is a re-translation or an act of re-imagining the aquatic tropes that suffuse Sorescu's original version. Predicated on images of overabundant water that seeps, flows and escapes confinement, "Fântâni în mare" encapsulates the affinity between the two poets' imaginary universes, illuminating the correlations between the polystratified structure of Heaney's bogland, a capsule of time layers, and the marine imagery of Sorescu's vertical fountains gushing forth into the immensity of the sea. The notion of human solidarity and community that builds up under the pressure of history will have most likely appealed to both artists: "But to keep the whole aqueous architecture standing its ground/ We must make a ring with our bodies and dance out a round/ On the dreamt eye of water, the dreamt eye of water, the dreamt eye of water" (Sorescu/Heaney 1987, 76). *The Biggest Egg in the World* was not the only Irish-Romanian project of translation that foregrounded the idea of poetry as a collaborative enterprise that can shed mutual light on one another's cultural territories. Celebrating the potential of translation, as "interlinguistic hospitality", to "inhabit the word of the Other, paralleled by the act of receiving the word of the Other into one's own home, one's own dwelling" (Ricoeur qtd. in Kearney 2014, xvi), the next two volumes I will be briefly referring to are further evidence to the rewarding work of translation in mediating the encounter between writers whose "home grounds" are positioned at the western and the eastern extremities of the continent.

In 1996, enlisting the efforts of scholars, representatives of cultural foundations and ministerial officials from both Romania and Ireland, Professor John Fairleigh from the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast conceived the project of simultaneously publishing two distinct collections of poetry, one in English, printed by Bloodaxe Books, and one in Romanian, printed by Univers Press in Bucharest. *When the Tunnels Meet* comprises a selection of poems by major Romanian poets conveyed into English by their Irish confreres, while *Flăcări himerice* is an anthology of contemporary Irish poetry (Ciaran Carson, Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and Eilean Ni Chuilleannain, among others) conveyed into Romanian by writers such as Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, Ana Blandiana, Ileana Mălăncioiu and Denisa Comănescu. Many are the galleries, cross passages and shafts burrowed across the space of poetic imagination in the two anthologies of translated poems, evincing a reciprocal effort of knowing oneself through the other, of welcoming the difference of the other into this realm of intercultural dialogue. John Fairleigh, who offered hospitality to the dialogical encounters between the Irish and Romanian poets in these poetic anthologies, was to also play an important role in fostering academic exchanges between Ireland and Romania and in setting up the Irish Studies MA programme in Cluj, a city with a prestigious academic tradition.

In the mid-1990s, when the divisions between the two Irelands were giving way to more integrative strategies of reconciliation, within the framework of Europeanisation, the moment was auspicious for launching the development of Irish Studies as a global field of inquiry. While the interest of Romanian academics in teaching Irish Literature was considerable, Irish writers were still approached under the broad umbrella of British or even English literature. Hence, the need to acknowledge the identity of a literary tradition in its own right by appointing, in the first instance, an Irish lecturer who joined the English Department faculty at Bucharest University, Professor Eve Patten being the first academic who performed this work of cultural ambassadorship, with support from both the British Council (representing Northern Ireland) and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. The next step was to invite Romanian academics with a solid interest in the Irish content of their literature syllabi to conceive self-standing, one-semester courses on Irish Literature. As John Fairleigh recollects, "the university in Cluj was distinctive for a particularly strong commitment to the Irish material by both faculty and students. Soon discussions began with Cluj with Professors Liviu Cotrău and Adrian Radu about responding to the enthusiasm – and even demand – from students for a designated MA in Irish Studies. Professors Cotrău and Radu were invited back to Ireland, together with their colleagues Professors Sanda Berce and Bill Stanciu, for a round of meetings to discuss support for the proposed MA and there was a widespread

positive response, led by then President Mary McAleese and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs" (Fairley 2018).

Set up nearly two decades ago, in October 1999, the *Irish Studies* MA programme in Cluj was, and still is, one of the few (if not the only) postgraduate degrees in Central and Eastern Europe, offering a dynamic, interdisciplinary perspective on Irish culture, history and literature and appealing not only to Romanian, but also to foreign students interested in this study field. Initially styled as *Irish Writing and Its Contexts*, the Irish Studies programme was the result of the tremendous visionary and logistic efforts of a group of academics from the Faculty of Letters in Cluj, led by Professor Liviu Cotrău, Head of the English Department at that time, in collaboration with the British Council, Belfast, the Institute of Irish Studies from Queen's University, Belfast, University College, Dublin, and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin. Structured by literary genre, the Irish Studies MA programme came under the umbrella of the Department of English Language and Literature in Cluj-Napoca and provided a substantial array of courses with a focus on Irish Literature. Run by Dr. Liviu Cotrău, *Irish Literary Issues* introduced students to essential frameworks for conceptualising contemporary Irish literary issues in light of their socio-cultural and historical contexts. Taught by Dr. Virgil Stanciu, the course on *Irish Drama and Film* surveyed the history of dramatic and cinematic representations of Ireland, across a vast timescape, from seventeenth-century Anglo-Irish playwrights to late twentieth-century film directors of world renown, such as Jim Sheridan and Neil Jordan. Approaching the works of emblematic Irish authors, such as Jonathan Swift, James Joyce, Flann O'Brien, Elizabeth Bowen, Patrick O'Connor, John McGahern, Sebastian Barry and Jennifer Johnston, Dr. Sanda Berce structured her course on *Irish Prose Writing* as a comprehensive overview of the individualising stylistic and thematic features of Irish fiction that have in time contributed to the emergence of a distinctively Irish literary canon. Delivered by Dr. Adrian Radu, the course on *Irish Poetry* charted the complex poetic landscape of Ireland, examining the multifaceted cultural identities gaining shape across the North/South divide in the poetry of Ciarán Carson, Seamus Heaney, Louis MacNeice, Paul Muldoon and Nuala Ní Dhomhnail. Dr. Rareș Moldovan, a graduate of the MA and PhD programmes at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, provided students with an introduction to *Study Skills* development. Professors Edna Longley (Queen's University, Belfast), Terence Brown (Trinity College, Dublin), Robert Welch (University of Ulster, Coleraine), and Declan Kiberd (University College, Dublin) were trendsetting module consultants for an otherwise far-ranging and in-depth exploration of Irish creative accomplishments, a project of intercultural translation to which the pioneering academics from Cluj dedicated themselves wholeheartedly.

Over the following years, particularly after 2008, the growing team of Irish Studies professors were engaged in fruitful lines of research and have expanded the programme's interdisciplinary curriculum, which now addresses a broad spectrum of issues pertaining to Irish literature, film, history, politics, and media, conveyed through advanced courses on: the poetry of *W.B. Yeats* and *Irish Feminine Writing* (Dr. Liliana Pop); *Medieval Literary Themes* (Dr. Adrian Papahagi); *James Joyce* (Dr. Erika Mihálycsa); *Samuel Beckett* and *Irish Literature and Film* (Dr. Rareş Moldovan); *The Irish Novel* (Dr. Elena Păcurar); and *Irish Gothic Fiction* (Dr. Carmen Borbely). Worth a special mention is the fact that the *Irish Language* is also part of the course offer at the University of Cluj (Dr. Adrian Radu). In addition to this, over the course of the two decades since MA programme was founded, many generations of students have been privileged to attend lectures and conferences given by our Irish guests, visiting lecturers, writers and artists, who have taught intensive modules on *James Joyce* (Dr. Brian Cosgrove, National University of Ireland, Maynooth), *The History of Ireland* (Dr. Jonathan Bardon, Queen's University, Belfast), *Northern Ireland Today* (Dr. David Harkness, Queen's University Belfast), and *Irish Media* (Lelia Doolan, Chairwoman, Film Board Ireland). Other scholars who have taught the students in Cluj over the past years include: Professors Cormac Begadon, Eleanor O'Leary and Lawrence Taylor from Maynooth University, Professor Nicholas Allen (University of Georgia, Athens), Philip O'Ceallaigh (writer), Guy Woodward (Trinity College), and Dr. Julie Bates (Trinity College). In March 2017, Professor Declan Kiberd, accompanied by two of his colleagues from the University of Notre Dame, Diarmuid O'Giolláin and Mary O'Callaghan, presented the Inaugural Keough-Naughton Global Seminar in Cluj, recognising the openness of the MA programme at Babeş-Bolyai University towards forming new connections with Irish Studies centres in Europe and across the world.

Creating a fertile ground for bridging the cultural histories of Romania and Ireland, much like the Hyperborean poets invoked by Seamus Heaney in the essay mentioned above, the faculty and the students in Cluj have cultivated exchanges and collaborative projects with other universities where Irishness is defined through the clarifying prism of its European and global dimensions: take, for instance, the grants offered to our students in past years by Queen's University, Belfast, and University College, Dublin, or the Erasmus agreements with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; Karel Josef Safarik University in Kosice, Slovakia; the University of Pecs, Hungary; the University Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, Spain; and Trinity College, Ireland. Moreover, the Irish Studies MA programme has trained numerous young researchers, who then pursued their research as doctoral and post-doctoral students both at their *alma mater* and in academic centres in Ireland, the United Kingdom and the

United States. Our students and graduates continue the work of Irish-Romanian cultural translation within a global milieu, confirming, as programme director Dr. Rareş Moldovan states, the fact that "the MA in Irish studies […] represents a model of how to organise and develop studies in an area that seems a niche, but in fact provides ample ground for wide-ranging cultural analysis and scholarship […]. The programme, we believe, continues to be a flagship for the Faculty of Letters. With it, the University and Cluj more generally have become a hotspot for the appreciation of Irish culture, and this is a trait that I hope will continue in the years to come." (Moldovan 2018).

With hindsight, at the end of this brief foray into the two decades since the launching of *Irish Studies* at Babeş-Bolyai University, we can say this has been a history marked, so far, by two celebratory moments that have entrenched the importance of re-envisioning Irish culture from the other end of the European "viewing deck" that Seamus Heaney was describing in his essay. The first consisted in awarding Her Excellency, Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, an Honorary Professorship by the Faculty of Letters in Cluj in 2008, in recognition of the dedicated support the Belfast-based academic had constantly provided to the Irish Studies MA programme ever since its inception, catalysing inter-university exchanges and ensuring the much needed logistic, cultural and material resources for the Romanian students and faculty. Speaking to an enthusiastic audience, President McAleese highlighted the importance of translation as the true European interlanguage, confessing that "I arrive for the first time in Romania on the first State Visit by an Irish President to a country which geography, but especially history, conspired to keep at a distance from Ireland. And here I find an M.A. course in Irish Studies, a showcase if ever there was one of that indomitable human spirit, that curiosity about the otherness of others that transcends all natural and artificial barriers and reminds us so powerfully of all that we have to offer each other if only we take a chance and reach out to one another" (McAleese 2008). The second moment occurred in 2017, when Babeş-Bolyai University conferred the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* to Professor Declan Kiberd, for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of the Irish Studies field throughout the world and, in particular, in Cluj. In his Address on the *Irish Revival* delivered on 16 March 2017, Professor Kiberd acknowledged the fact that "[t]his great university pioneered the pursuit of Irish Studies in Romania through the later decades of the last century. Its leaders and scholars had the vision and audacity to take Ireland, a small island on the very edge of Europe, as a test-case of the modern world" (Kiberd 2017). What all this shows is that Dublin/Belfast can be reimagined via Cluj, as the history of effervescent cultural relations connecting scholars from Ireland and Romania attests.

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HONEY, HE SHRUNK THE KIDS: SWIFT AND IRISH WRITING

DECLAN KIBERD[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Honey, He Shrunk the Kids: Swift and Irish Writing***. A study about Jonathan Swift as a founder of Anglo-Irish literature and of children's literature, this paper delves into the "story of the repressed" and is an insight into the painful motivations that make the child-adult relationship an examination of human nature's darker side of nature. This sub-genre considers the exploit of the defamiliarising effect in the tradition and types common in fairy tales of Gaelic Ireland and shows the Irish writer as a dissident and an upholder of tradition. The probability that his writing is the disclosure of any story's potentiality is assumed by questing the welded joint of the relativity of all judgments, the extreme self-confidence of those who live at either extreme, the critique of unreasoning, tyranny and absence of rational justification of power systems.

Keywords*: Jonathan Swift, Irish writing, children's literature, fantastic narratives, Gaelic tale, power elite, critique of unreasoning.*

REZUMAT. ***Dragă, a micşorat copiii: Swift şi literatura irlandeză***. Un studiu despre Jonathan Swift, ca fondator al literaturii anglo-irlandeze si a celei pentru copii, această lucrare sondează "povestea celor reprimaţi" şi discerne adevărata natură a motivaţiilor dureroase care fac din relaţia copil-adult o examinare a părţii întunecate a naturii umane. Aceasta variantă sub-generică vizează folosirea efectului defamiliarizării în tipologia şi tradiţia caracteristică basmelor Irlandei gaelice, şi îl indică pe scriitorul irlandez ca deţinător al tradiţiei şi ca dizident. Probabilitatea ca scriitura sa să fie un mod de dezvăluire a potenţialului

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oricărei povestiri este asumată de interogarea legăturii strânse dintre relativitatea oricărei forme de judecată, încrederea exagerată în sine a acelora care trăiesc în orice mod extrem de viață, critica lipsei de judecată, a tiraniei și a absenței oricărei justificări a unor astfel de sisteme de putere.

Cuvinte cheie: *Jonathan Swift, literatura irlandeză, literatura pentru copii, narațiuni fantastice, povestea gaelică, elita puterii, critica lipsei de judecată.*

At a moment of celebration of the study of Irish writing at Cluj-Napoca, it seems fitting to consider Jonathan Swift not only as a founder of Anglo-Irish literature but also of children's literature too. His case raises an interesting question. Why are so many authors of children's classics either childless (as was Swift) or hostile to children, even their own offspring (as was Enid Blyton)?

Perhaps it is because they have never fully "worked through" their own childhood that they are more assertive/competitive than parental in approach. The monomania, egotism and rage are not completely transacted, but lodged forever in the personality, a notable feature of the adult-becoming-a-child in the act of writing.

Like all children, Swift saw more of humanity than he was supposed to see. His writing, like William Blake's or Roald Dahl's, has the unpleasantness that often accompanies deep insight. He was accused of 'having blasphemed a nature a little lower than that of angels and assumed by far higher than they". No wonder that his work proved interesting to children, who have never been especially impressed by those who seek knowingly to beguile them.

Swift had no children of his own (that we know of) and, apart from advice administered to a teenaged charge, he never claimed to direct his texts at the young. But you can see why they have taken to him. His "Modest Proposal" that Irish children under the age of six be sold as roasting meat for English tables is outrageous enough to be interesting:

> Now, an American of my acquaintance, a man of excellent judgement, assured me that in London a perfectly healthy young child, well fed, is, at the age of one year, a delicious and nourishing food, either boiled, roasted, steamed or baked; and I have no doubt that it would be equally well used in a fricassee or stew. (Swift 2010, 125)

This is really a form of Fairy Tale presented as the morning news. It was discussed as such by over-literal English adults over their breakfast tables. In one sense it merely reverses the familiar trajectory of children's

literature (which is usually written for adults and then taken up by kids). The "Modest Proposal", which suggests that since the English have devoured the parents, they now have every entitlement to eat the children, seems written as a monster tale of cannibalism to frighten children, only to endure the dismal fate of being taken seriously by some adults.

There is a real sense of hurt not far below all of Swift's lines. As a boy at Kilkenny School he felt himself a loner, out on the edge of things, like fish out of water. For him the signature experience of his childhood was endure such a state:

> I never wake without finding life a more insignificant thing it was the day before… but my greatest misery is recollecting the scene of twenty years past, and then all on a sudden dropping into the present. I remember when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropt in, and the disappointment vexeth me to this very day, and I believe it was the type of all my future disappointments.[2]

Swift is usually seen by readers of that passage as identifying his loss of the big fish with his failure to land a major ecclesiastical post in England. But no mere career frustration could explain the force of that passage. His real identification is with the struggling fish itself, briefly out of water, before it falls back into the depths of the ocean. In those deeps of the unconscious, Swift may have been happiest – as in nursery rhymes and in the non-moral world of Fairy Tales, he could keep mainly to facts and avoid too many interpretations.

Detractors of *Gulliver's Travels* have said that once you have thought of the big people and little people, the rest comes easily and obviously enough. But no child has ever thought that. For children know that Swift, once he has established the laws of his genre, plays it in deadly earnest. The matter-of-fact way in which he narrates the strangest details and comes after each adventure to a rather banal conclusion recalls the dryly factual world of the nursery rhyme:

> Solomon Grundy
> Born on a Monday;
> Christened on Tuesday;
> Married on Wednesday;
> Took sick on Thursday;
> Died on Friday;
> Waked on Saturday;
> Buried on Sunday.
> That was the end of Solomon Grundy.

[2] From a "Letter to Lord Bolingbroke" of April 5, 1729 (Swift 1814, 280).

The fact that the narrator to whom these enormities happen should be a literal-minded unimaginative sea-captain merely adds to the fun of the game.

It was the hurt child in Swift who wrote of Gulliver. Like all who insure themselves against insult by claiming to expect little of humanity, he naturally expected a lot and was forever disappointed. His life, like his boyhood fishing expedition, was a preparation for something that never happened. Children have responded to this sense of powerlessness in one so capable of deep idealism; and to the sense of realism with which he documented his fantastic narrative. They are accustomed to just the sort of changes of state, between bigness and littleness, which he describes, knowing that they are but little people in the eyes of parents and teachers, but that they can become like giants when they assemble toys or summon pets.

The story goes further. With the Lilliputians, it allows children to imagine beings much smaller than they and to see how such beings cope with their own smallness (as children constantly do). But it also, through Gulliver's experience in Lilliput and then through the Brobdingnagians' experience of Gulliver, rehearses that moment when the child-reader will become a big person, one of the giants. The Lilliputians seem little more than toy people, their world fragile and easily broken; but among the giants, Gulliver as a grown man is reduced to the state of a child, pitched about and put on display, even threatened by a cat whom once he might have treated as a pet. This is the shadow-side to the injunction of Jesus that only those adults who become as little children will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Lilliput is a little like Main Street in Disneyland: its smallness (horses four inches tall, a lark the size of a tiny insect, the tallest trees not much higher than a human) serves to make Gulliver's world seem more real, even as he slowly loses his sense of the normal. As in all Fairy Tale expeditions to the otherworld, the effect is to defamiliarise our own "real" world. Soon the size of trees or birds is neither here nor there, as Gulliver becomes just an awkward physical problem, to others but ultimately also to himself. His very size relative to the Lilliputians makes him seem infantile, in desperate need of care and supervision. Even the disposal of his faeces becomes a huge problem. The Lilliputians are terrified that, if they execute him, they may not be able to dispose of his putrefying body. He is – like the future Selfish Giants of so many kids' stories – too big to fail, or to survive with any grace.

The little people see themselves generally as deft, precise and subtle, whereas Gulliver's largeness makes him feel awkward, rude and uncouth. This is not the whole story, of course, as the emperor is also vain and unaware of the vulnerability of his tiny island kingdom – just as Gulliver the monster retains, for all his awkwardness of movement, a sense of his own proportionate judgement.

In Lilliput Gulliver poses the problem of eating, excreting and wasting too much: a manic consumer. In Brobdingnag he faces the problem of being consumed: as entertainment, as a meal for an animal, or as a mere freak.

Most Fairy Tales depict bigness or littleness as a problem. Often, they are about small persons confronted by a larger, threatening world. Gulliver's Travels is unusual in portraying someone of normal adult size who has nevertheless to cope with both tiny people and with giants. If among the tiny he rapidly ceases to be a marvel and constitutes an appalling problem, among the giants he is rapidly reduced to a mere entertainment – kept in a box, exhibited on special occasions, adopted as a pet by the Queen of Brobdingnag, who thus refuses to take him very seriously. Swift may have felt himself similarly toyed with by the authorities in London: "they call me anything but Jonathan, and I said, I believe they would leave me a Jonathan as they found me" (Swift 1812, 139).

The giants of Brobdingnag are anything but appealing. Seen in close-up, their women are positively anti-aphrodisiac: "The Nipple was about half the Bigness of my head, and the Hue both of that and of the dug so verified with Spots, Pimples and Freckles that nothing could appear more nauseous" (Swift 2005, 82). Set down for sport upon the bosoms of young maidens, Gulliver is disgusted by their rank odour, and by their coarse eating habits, which cause even ladies of title to munch huge fowl between their teeth. This sort of depiction anticipates not the mysterious aura of the "blow-up" image of the film-star of the movie screen, worshipped in darkness by little onlookers: rather it evokes the sense that those who are cursed to see things more deeply than other humans will be eternally disillusioned by what they see. To view each pore of a flawed human body up close is to be denied any capacity to metaphorise it; instead, one is reduced to a painful literal-mindedness. It is as if a blind person were suddenly endowed with sight, but only that sight possible to one who suffers myopia in a fallen world, and has to hold everything far too close for comfort in order to see anything at all.

That, of course, is how the adult world may sometimes appear to literal-minded children. It is remoteness which conduces to a romanticisation, which proximity may destroy.

Part of the fascination of *Gulliver's Travels*, like that of *Robinson Crusoe*, is that it shows how a grown man, cast ashore in a strange place, has to learn the world all over again, as if he were a small child. If many Fairy Tales depict a child facing adult challenges (as Harry Potter is described confronting terrorism), Swift's story describes how an adult may have to face the challenges of childhood all over again – especially if he persistently acts like a recalcitrant child and dismisses the sensible advice of a parent. The fish-out-of-water state which overtakes Gulliver or Crusoe in their baffling new settings is akin to that

confronted by every child thrown into a baffling world. Each child fears the unknown, the dark, the danger of attack by inexplicable forces, including hunger and tempest; but each must slowly feel its way into a controllable, knowable world. In so doing, the child must vanquish its own shadow side, its tendency to give up and surrender; and, instead, it must assert a delight in building things, in constructing the set called the world.

Gulliver's Travels, though never intended as such, helped to invent entire sub-genres of later children's tales, from *Alice in Wonderland* to books like *The Borrowers* or films such as *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. In Swift's tale, the adult male again becomes a child in the very reading of the narrative, just as Gore Vidal has observed that the adult reader once again becomes a child in the act of reading *Alice in Wonderland* – and in both cases, of course, the narrative is powered by bewildering changes in size. This may hint at the problems of the early adolescent, who never feels the right age or size – big relative to infants, yet still small as compared to adults. If there is something tragic about child chimney-sweeps expected to act like men in the songs of William Blake, there may be something comical about a grown man named Lemuel Gulliver trapped in a childlike body.

What *Gulliver's Travels* shows is that every child is a kind of anthropologist, amused yet also outraged by the arbitrary, capricious nature of the codes of a seemingly mature world. Social scientists are capable of marveling at the primitive logic of equatorial tribes whose members divide a society according to the totems on their poles, yet are themselves quite capable of analysing developed urban communities in terms of divisions between white-collar and blue-collar workers. In the same way, Gulliver is amazed that wars have been fought by the Lilliputians on the issue of whether a boiled egg should be broken open at the big or little end. The deceiving, self-interested nature of all official histories written by winners is manifest in the report that all books by Big-Endians have been forbidden in Lilliput.

Two centuries after Swift, James Joyce (possibly thinking of that passage) remarked that how a man eats an egg will tell you more of his philosophy than how he goes to war. And, sure enough, a reader of Autobiographies by W.B. Yeats will find in its early pages the following memorable account of his maternal grandfather, William Pollexfen:

> His way was to hold the egg-cup firmly on its plate with his left hand, then with a sharp knife in his right hand to behead the egg with one blow. Where the top of the egg went was not his business. It might hit a grandchild or the ceiling. He never looked. (Murphy 1978, 87)

The Yeats children, in the poet's account, were intimidated by Pollexfen, whom they sometimes confused with God; but in all likelihood what terrified them was this display of childishness in so powerful an adult.

At the centre of *Gulliver's Travels* is a sustained critique of the unreasoning, capricious tyranny of power elites, who feel no deep need to give a rational justification of their systems, whose wisdom they take to be self-evident. It is the same logic of the powerful in *Alice in Wonderland* – sentence first, trial afterward – when I say a thing, it means exactly what I want it to mean. The rulers find that their rules, being good enough for themselves, must be good enough for the world. By constantly shifting perspectives, however, Swift is enabled to show how arbitrarily each system works; and the rapid changes of scale and size have the effect of showing how relative are any judgements, how random is the fate of humans, but, above all, how strange our home world can be made to seem after such weird adventures.

The Lilliputians appeal to a common childhood fantasy of exercising power over bigger people, a power achieved by the simple act of banding together through sheer force of numbers. The experience of Brobdingnag, on the other hand, leaves Gulliver feeling himself on display wherever he goes, like kids who feel that they are being watched all the time. If the Flying Island of Laputa, with its nutty professors extracting sunbeams from cucumbers and designing a suit of clothes made by quadrants, demonstrates the idiocy of much educational theory, the Struldbrugs, who live for hundreds of years, illustrate the dangers of a second childhood, a dystopic Tír na nÓg in which childlike adults become a burden even to themselves. It is indeed as if Swift saw – in the words of W.B. Yeats – 'the ruin to come". Gulliver himself is, at various stages of his journeys, a shocking example of pre-senile infantilism: someone who seems to need care, protection, even basic toilet training.

The third book has often been omitted from children's editions – a process which began in Philadelphia in the 1780s – yet it also is full of hilarious exposes of authority.

Taken as a whole, the four volumes of *Gulliver's Travels* are not encouraging to educators who might wish to think of successive books as inducting children into a print culture of increasing complexity. Well before Darwin, children were believed to reenact the evolution of the human race in their growth; but what Gulliver's Travels actually depicts is an adult sea-captain who devolves in in intelligence and capacity from book to book, becoming more rather than less dependent on others, and in the end hugely resentful of the very people who rescue him. Not only that, but the books themselves take an increasingly darker view of human nature. At the start, Gulliver is cast away by chance; then abandoned by colleagues; next he is put

upon by pirates; and finally marooned by mutineers. His own sense of self, far from being strengthened by all these challenges, is disintegrated by them, to such a degree that he becomes by the fourth book a worshipper of talking horses. The Houyhnhnms make more sense to him by then than do humans, partly because they deny the Yahoos in their midst, foul-smelling creatures who pelt Gulliver with excrement. It's easy to see how children who like to play in dirt might be fascinated by Yahoos, just as they could be mesmerised by the thought of mere animals able to seize control of an entire society. The revolutionary potentials of that story would contribute to a modern Fairy Tale by George Orwell called *Animal Farm*.

It would be too simple to say that the adult reader of Gulliver's Travels identifies with the bigger people in each episode and the child reader with the little ones: for the vanity of the little people and the insensitivity of the large is insisted upon at every turn in the narrative. What most readers are struck by is the relativity of all judgements – and the extreme self-confidence of those who live at either extreme of the human spectrum. Even more remarkable, however, is the fact that, unlike children in Fairy Tales who commute to and from a fantasy land, Gulliver appears not to grow or to learn anything new. Rather he is more and more estranged from all human sympathies.

Yet a Fairy Tale of some sort *Gulliver's Travels* undoubtedly is. It was probably based on "Imtheachta Tuaithe Luchra" ("The Events of the People of Luchra"), which Swift heard at Quilca, county Cavan, while staying as the guest of his friend Thomas Sheridan. In that tale, the king of the leprechauns behaves much like the vain emperor of Lilliput during a visit by Ulstermen, who admire the fine, unblemished skin of the little folk. Distance in this case lends enchantment. In the "Imtheachta Tuaithe Luchra" the leprechauns objected to the ugly skins and smelly breaths of the rank, robust Ulstermen; in Lilliput, Gulliver revealed great holes in the pores of his skin to those small people who stood in distraught amazement up close to him.

However, in the "Imtheachta", when the leprechaun-poet Eisirt goes to Ulster, he experiences a life like Gulliver in Brobdingnag, almost drowning in a container of ale, as Gulliver almost drowned in a bowl of cream. Many of the customs of the Lilliputians seem analogous to practices common in rural Ireland: the burying of the dead head downwards in vertical position (as at Knocknarea); the notion of an unjust curse rebounding upon its author; the removal of children from parents under fosterage systems. Gulliver has to crouch on entering Lilliput's cabins, as Swift did during his visits in the Irish countryside.

The Houyhnhnms of the fourth book initially strike Gulliver as magical shape-changers, a type common in Fairy Tales of Gaelic Ireland; but they turn out to be super-rationalists, creatures of the daylight world. In them the

rational faculty is so specialised and over-developed as to become a new form of barbarism. That volume exposes the pretensions of the super-rational horses to absolute authority as a power elite: like the colonial system, it has merely taught snobs how to neigh. The book as a whole assumes the failure of secular theory to produce human happiness, becoming (in effect) a plea for a return to a world of magic and tradition. As always, Swift has gone to extremes to project a *via media*. In his heart he is, as Orwell so astutely observed, a Tory Anarchist. Being an upholder of tradition, he acquired (like many Gaelic poet-rebels) the cachet of an insurgent and a dissident.

There is a durable legend that Swift was reminded of the old Gaelic tale when he remarked on the difference in size between the huge labourers on his friend Sheridan's farm and on the rather delicate, diminutive workers on the estate of the nearby Brooke family. Swift's visits to Cavan were marked by a real sense of involvement with local characters, as Sheridan jocosely recorded:

> So far forgetting his old station,
> He seems to like their conversation.
> Conforming to the tatter'd rabble,
> He learns their Irish tongue to gabble. (Swift 1834, 303)

Given that both giants and little people are seen as reliques from a lost world which once held sway on earth, perhaps Swift saw in the story of big and little people a way of accessing more ancient mind-sets.

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IRISH OVERDETERMINATION: STRATEGIES FOR ENTERING AND LEAVING THE GAELTACHT[1]

DIARMUID Ó GIOLLÁIN[2]

ABSTRACT. ***Irish Overdetermination: Strategies for Entering and Leaving the Gaeltacht.*** *Irish* and *Gaels* are terms that refer to historical and contemporary peoples. Both terms, however, are overdetermined, freighted both with negative stereotypes and impossible standards of cultural authenticity, such that the Irish and the Gaelic part in historical processes is distorted. This article looks at a difficult history in which Gaelic Ireland was nearly destroyed, yet from the eighteenth century, Gaelic heritage was accumulated in the capital, later providing fodder for a linguistic and cultural revival movement that reshaped modern Ireland. Marginal and yet central to modern Irish identity, the Gaelic inheritance today is threatened and thriving, and the Irish language is a minority language that has a superior constitutional standing to majority English.

Keywords*: Irish, Gaelic, identity, racism, authenticity, language, migration.*

REZUMAT. ***Supra-determinare irlandeză: strategii pentru intrarea şi ieşirea din Gaeltacht.*** *Irlandezi* şi *Gaels* sunt termeni care se referă la popoare istorice şi contemporane. Ambii termeni, însă, sunt supra-determinaţi, încărcaţi atât de stereotipii negative cât şi de standarde imposibile de autenticitate culturală, astfel încât partea irlandeză şi cea gaelică în procesele istorice suferă distorsiuni.

[1] This was given as the annual Ó Buachalla Lecture at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame on 2 March 2018. Breandán Ó Buachalla (1936-2010), Professor of Modern Irish Literature at University College Dublin (1978-1996) and Thomas J. and Kathleen O'Donnell Chair in Irish Language and Literature at the University of Notre Dame (2003-2010), was the foremost Irish scholar of his generation.

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Articolul de față discută o istorie dificilă în care Irlanda gaelică a fost aproape distrusă, și totuși, începând din secolul XVIII, moștenirea gaelică s-a acumulat ca un capital, furnizând mai târziu materie primă pentru o micare de renaștere lingvistică și culturală care a modelat Irlanda modernă. Marginală și totuși centrală în identitatea modernă irlandeză, moștenirea gaelică astăzi e pe atât de amenințată pe cât de înfloritoare, iar limba irlandeză e o limbă minoritară care se bucură de un statut constituțional superior englezei majoritate.

***Cuvinte cheie**: Irlandez, gaelic, identitate, rasism, autenticitate, limbaj, migrațiune.*

The University of Notre Dame, where I now work, has a long association with Ireland. I first visited it in 2002, and one of my first memories is of seeing a young American wearing a pair of shorts with "Irish" written across the seat. This was the first time that I became aware that "Irish" does not always mean "Irish" as I understood it then. It was only later that I learnt that the use of the word "Irish" in Notre Dame primarily refers to the university and its community and especially to its sports teams. Indeed the "Fighting Irish" is the moniker for the university's famous football team.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2018) gives other apparent inconsistencies in the usage of the word "Irish," mostly drawing on British and especially English speech. Some of them would probably confuse most young Irish and Irish-Americans today, although their parents' or grandparents' generation would wince at hearing others. One example is an obsolete Scottish usage of the word "Irish," meaning a native, especially Gaelic-speaking, inhabitant of the Scottish Highlands or Islands. Another *OED* explanation is "Characteristic or typical of Irish people, life, or culture. In earlier use frequently with derogatory connotations, esp. of foolishness." It also states that in slang, now usually considered offensive, "Irish" modifies "the names of fruit to designate a potato, as *Irish apple*, *Irish apricot*, *Irish grape*, *Irish lemon*," and it also refers to the synonym, "Irish fossil." Another example is referred to as colloquial, and "somewhat offensive" "of a statement or action: paradoxical; illogical or apparently so." Another is also given as colloquial and originally American, "Fieriness of temper; passion, anger, rage," and "chiefly with *up*, esp. in to get one's Irish up." Then there are well-known expressions such as "Irish bull," "a statement which is manifestly self-contradictory or inconsistent, esp. to humorous effect." There are less well-known expressions, such as "Irish confetti," slang, originally American, for "bricks, stones, etc., especially when used as weapons," and "Irish evidence", "false or perjured evidence." Then there is an "Irish hint," which is "a blunt statement." "Irish horse" is old sailors' slang for

"salt beef which is particularly tough, especially through being old," as is an "Irish hurricane," for "a dead calm." An "Irish promotion" is a demotion, an "Irish rise," now a rare expression, is a fall in value, especially a reduction in wages, while "Irish twins," an American colloquialism, refers to siblings born less than a year apart.

Some of these expressions belong to a rather broad category of regional or ethnic slur, stereotype or caricature, manifest in jokes and other expressions, often known by the French term *blason populaire*. Often only the social and cultural context can ascertain how offensive they are, or whether they are offensive at all. The same joke told about the Irish in England, the Poles in America, the Norwegians in Sweden, the Belgians in France, the Newfoundlanders in Canada and Kerrymen in Ireland may or may not be racist. Yet the uses of "Irish" in the expressions quoted imply violence, stupidity and a *penchant* for perjury, which is why to the Irish in Ireland or in the diaspora they evoke a well-known history of prejudice and discrimination.

The historical name that the Irish had for themselves was *Gael*, anglicised as "Gael," which is not, perhaps, a well-known term to most English-speakers, unless they have read G.K. Chesteron's

> For the great Gaels of Ireland
> Are the men that God made mad,
> For all their wars are merry,
> And all their songs are sad (Chesterton 1911, 35).

But this too seems to feed into the attribution of the illogical and the bizarre to the Irish, as in Samuel Johnson's "The Irish are a fair people -they never speak well of one another," which is funny, but uncomplimentary (Boswell 1999: 415). The adjective *Gaelach* or "Gaelic" corresponds to the substantive, *Gael*. This word seems to be originally a borrowing from Old Welsh, a derivative of the word for "forest," and meant something like "forest people", "wild men" or later "warriors." The fact that the Irish borrowed the word suggests perhaps an identity that was most obvious to foreigners, among whom we might mention a certain Patrick, abducted from Britain by a band of these wild men and set herding sheep in Co. Antrim. The Gaels spread across the water into what we now call Scotland, a word which derives from Latin *Scotia*, the land of the *Scotti*, a term first used to refer to the Gaels, and which terms initially seems to have referred more to Ireland and the Irish than to Scotland and the Scots.

"Gael" for centuries was what the Irish and the Scots of the Highlands and Islands called themselves, and their language they called Gaelic. In Scotland, the Gaelic language for a time expanded over most of the territory of

the kingdom, until it contracted in late medieval times to what is called the "Highland line," which divided the Gaelic world from the English-speaking Lowlands until well into the 19th century. The Irish at the time of Patrick were aware of the Romans – Patrick's culture, after all, was Roman and Latin was presumably his native language – and through the Romans, the Irish were aware of Gaul and the Gauls, the country we now call France and its inhabitants. The word for a Gaul, was borrowed into Irish as *gall*, and was re-applied in turn to a succession of foreign invaders.

The dictionary[3] gives *Gael* as "an Irishman, a Highlander; a Catholic." The adjective *gaelach* means "Irish, Gaelic, Irish-speaking, Irish-made, simple, unsophisticated, generous, easy-going; common, native." As "native," it is applied to certain flora to distinguish a native variety from an imported one, such as *cabáiste Gaelach* (native cabbage), *aiteann Gaelach* (native gorse). The noun *Gaeltacht*, derived from *gaelach*, refers to "the state of being Irish or Scotch; Gaeldom, Irishry, the native race of Ireland; Irish-speaking district or districts; the Gaeltacht." So, to speak of strategies for entering and leaving the Gaeltacht, we may be speaking of the use of modes of transport, a bicycle or a bus, or of processes of self-fashioning, of identity. In Scotland, in its Scottish Gaelic form, *Gàidhealtachd* also refers to the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and islands, though not in a precise geographical sense given that the Gaelic domain has shrunk over the centuries.

Next, let us look at the word *gall*, according to the dictionary "a foreigner; applied in succession to Gauls, Franks, Danes, Normans and English; *al*[so]. a Protestant," and, in Scottish Gaelic it means a Lowlander. The corresponding adjective, *gallda*, is glossed "foreign, strange, surly; pertaining to an Englishman; Protestant." The noun *Galldacht*, derived from the adjective, means "foreign manner or tendency; using foreign airs; state of being fashionable; ... English association; the Englishry or foreign race of Ireland," and in its Scottish usage also means the Lowlands (Dinneen 1927).

These terms show a certain fuzziness. If *Gael* also meant Catholic, what happens if a Gael became a Protestant? The expression in Irish was "*d'iompaigh sé/sí ina Shasanach*," "s/he turned English," *Sasanach* denoting an English person as well as a Protestant of the Anglican denomination. A well-known Irish poem by Laoisioch Mac an Bhaird, probably from the beginning of the 16th century, admonishes a man who, in the words of the poem's editor, "adopted the dress and manners of a Tudor courtier" (Bergin 1970, 49-50 and 231-32; for a perceptive interpretation of this poem, see McKibben 2010, 24-36). "*A fhir ghlacas a ghalldacht*," "O man who follows English ways," begins the

[3] *Gael* is the modernised spelling. The dictionary I cite, Dinneen's venerable work, originally published in 1904, uses the historic spelling, *Gaedheal*.

poem, and it unfavorably contrasts this man with his brother Eóghan Bán, both of them sons of a man called Donnchadh:

> A man who never loved English ways is Eóghan Bán, beloved of noble ladies.
> To English ways he never gave his heart: a savage life he chose.

A *savage* life? The word is chosen, of course, partly because *alltacht* rhymes with *galldacht*, but it might be better to see its meaning coming from a semantic spectrum that would include, besides "savage," both "wild" and "natural," i.e. closer to nature. If in contemporary Ireland, the English administration used a discourse of civility that was contrasted with the manners and customs of the "wild Irish," could Mac an Bhaird then be making an ironic comment? After all, Eóghan Bán would hate – among the items of apparel or fashion accessories mentioned in the poem – to wear stockings and a jewelled spur, a cumbersome gold ring, "a satin scarf down to his heels," and to carry a "blunt rapier that would not kill a fly," which is what his brother does, the man who rejects *Gaeltacht*, Gaelicness or Gaeldom. Rather than on a feather bed, Eóghan Bán would rather lie on a bed of rushes. Not for him such effete behavior, rather:

> A troop of horse at the brink of a gap, a fierce fight, a struggle with foot-soldiers, these are some of the desires of Donnchadh's son -and seeking battle against the foreigners!

From the 12th century Anglo-Norman conquest, there were two recognised ethnic groups in Ireland, the *Gael* and the *Gall*, the Irish and the new, mostly English-speaking, settlers, subjects of the English King who from this time claimed the title of Lord of Ireland. The Reformation and the ensuing English conquest helped to bring *Gael* and *Gall* together in a new identity as Irish Catholics, and it is in the 17th century that we find Irish-language writers using a new umbrella word that transcends the divide. The name of Ireland in Irish is *Éire*, and the country's inhabitant is the derivative *Éireannach*. A semantic shift in its meaning is noted in the early 17th century, especially in the usage of the Franciscan writers in the Irish College in Leuven in Flanders, when "the word takes on a more restrictive application, denoting an inhabitant of Ireland either of Gaelic or Old English stock who is characterised by allegiance to the Catholic faith" and to the king of England – as long as he respects their rights (Mac Craith 2005, 194). Thus *Éireannaigh* (plural of *Éireannach*) includes one category of English, henceforth called the Old English, who are Catholic, and excludes the "New English," the Protestant colonists who were in the process of conquering Ireland and dispossessing the Irish Catholics.

One of the most influential books ever written in Ireland was *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, a history of Ireland from the Flood to the Norman invasion, by Geoffrey Keating (Seathrún Céitinn), a Tipperary priest, poet and theologian. Completed about 1634, it updated the traditional history of the successive invasions of Ireland by adding one more, that of his ancestors, the Anglo-Normans, which was legitimate because it was a "Christian-like conquest," it did not try to destroy the Irish language, and the Norman lords frequently intermarried with the Gaelic Irish. Ó Buachalla characterises the work as "the origin legend of the emergent Irish Catholic nation" (Ó Buachalla 1987, five). In gathering sources for the work, Keating faced a certain hostility in Ulster, the hostility of Gaels towards a *Gall*. Two centuries later, in 1844, the Anglo-Irish antiquarian Thomas Crofton Croker, referring to Keating, wrote that it was 'a matter of notoriety in the history of Ireland, that English settlers and their descendants, or, as they are termed, “the degenerate English,” have always been more inimical to English government than the genuine Irish’ (Croker 1844, 8).

If the Protestant English conquerors of the 17th centuries saw Irish cultural difference in terms of nationality, of an "Irish" culture, the conquest itself integrated the Irish into a new political order and under a new ruling class. From then on, Protestants, whether English or the Anglo-Irish descendants of the 17th century conquerors, saw a "popular" culture. All of Gaelic society, whether the remnant of its upper classes or the popular classes, was subjected to the dominance of a non-Gaelic ruling class hostile to it. The conflation of Gaelic learned and popular traditions in such pioneering Anglo-Irish works as Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789) and Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796) is an effect of this subaltern status.

For various reasons, Daniel O'Connell's movement for Catholic Emancipation and for the Repeal of the Act of Union was not influenced by Romanticism, but Romantic influences appeared from the 1840s in the works of the writers of Young Ireland who were, however, largely ignorant of the Gaelic tradition. Gaelic culture had, of course, already made an impact with the *Ossian* poems in the 1760s, though James Macpherson, their Scottish author, downplayed the Irish connection. For a brief moment, indeed, Macpherson brought the Gaelic world to the centre of European literary modernity. The German philosopher Herder, a great admirer of *Ossian*, argued that each nation had its own artistic genius, its *Volksgeist*, expressed both in the works of those writers who were true to their own native traditions, and in folksongs, the artistic products of the most authentic and least cosmopolitan stratum of the people. Romanticism intensified these developments and

facilitated a much more positive evaluation of the Celtic and Gaelic tradition, although often infused with a dose of cultural pessimism. Irish Romanticism's assimilation of elements of the Gaelic tradition and in particular its perception of a lingering Gaelic world were a key characteristic that, by the end of the 19th century, was to become central to the Anglo-Irish tradition (Dunne 1989).

There was a temporal as much as a spatial distancing in the representation of Gaelic Ireland. Antiquarians had characterised Gaelic culture by its pastness since "the most genuine and least adulterated form of Gaelic culture was that of the past, before the contamination of the English presence in Ireland," contends Joep Leerssen (1996, 49). Yet if Gaelic culture came to be categorised in this way, intellectual developments in the 19th century provided two different ways of judging its pastness, an evolutionary, and what might be called a "devolutionary" perspective (Dundes 1975). The one saw Gaelic culture as a living fossil from a more primitive past, a "survival" to use the term of the anthropologist Edward Tylor made famous in *Primitive Culture* (1867). The other saw it as a fragment of a former golden age that survived the vicissitudes of history, a thread that still linked us to a glorious past.

The Gaelic League, founded in 1893, became the motor for a new type of Irish national movement, one that placed the emphasis on language and culture above religion and land. If Gaelic Ireland came to be seen by many as a reservoir of national authenticity in this period, the keeper of a national genius and a creativity lost by other sectors of Irish society, it continued to be seen by others as a backward region that could only be integrated into the benefits of modernity by a process of development. In general, state intervention in social affairs in Ireland in the 19th century was much greater than in Britain and was, according to Niall Ó Ciosáin (1998, 93), "in response to what was seen as acute economic crisis and continuing violence and disorder." Gaelic Ireland, then, represented either the Irish nation at its most essential and most authentic or it was a "congested"[4] and miserable region awaiting the benefits of modernisation, and the decline of traditional Gaelic society was experienced either as national disaster or as the inevitable march of progress.

The writings of Séamus Delargy, director of the Irish Folklore Commission (1935-1970), are very eloquent in this regard. He expressed his anguish at the death of the Irish language in South Kerry and the attendant loss of a wealth of tradition:

> The real importance of the living language that still lives on the lips of the old people of the *Gaeltacht* was not understood – and many people

[4] The reference here is to the Congested Districts Board, established by the British government in 1891 to deal with the problems of poverty and high population on lands of poor agricultural quality.

> still do not understand it. When they are dead that will be the end of the Middle Ages in Western Europe, and the chain that is still a link between this generation and the first people who took possession of Ireland will be broken. (Ó Duilearga 1977 [1948], xii)

A crisis of authenticity was one of the spurs to the Gaelic Revival. The Gaeltacht became an ideal of authenticity and, in a time when new nation-states were being built on a Herderian model of national language and culture, the Irish national movement co-opted Gaeldom as its yardstick of authenticity. Gaeldom hence was not only an ideal. It also became a project, a means for de-Anglicising Ireland, for correcting the deviation caused by conquest, colonisation and modernisation, and for reconciling the country with its *Volksgeist*.

In Ireland, the modern period began with conquest and colonisation: Beckett's *The Making of Modern Ireland* (1966) begins in 1603, Cullen's *The Emergence of Modern Ireland* (1981) begins in 1600, Foster's *Modern Ireland* (1988) begins in 1600, Bourke and McBride's *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (2016) begins in the 16th century.[5] Modern Ireland was built on the ruins of Gaelic Ireland. Yet, from the 18th century, there was a gradual accumulation of Gaelic heritage in the capital city as emigration, language shift and modernisation reduced it everywhere else, and this was only to intensify with independence. The Royal Irish Academy, Trinity College, the National Library and later the other universities, the Irish Folklore Commission, the national broadcaster Radio Telefís Éireann and other national institutions gradually developed a metropolitan semi-monopoly of the Gaelic heritage. From these resources a national culture was posited and synthesised, Dublin, once the core of the Pale, the center of Anglicisation in Ireland, now spearheading the modern movement to recuperate a Gaelic tradition for modern Ireland and more or less dominating all modern Irish discourses of Gaeldom since then.

The Gaelic Revival succeeded in attributing Gaelicness to all the Irish and making Irish everyone's ancestral language. Henceforth, and especially with the founding of the Irish state, Gaelic identity in Ireland was both a given – children being given Irish versions of their names in school – and a matter of self-ascription. It undoubtedly helped that, unlike Scotland with its Highland Line, there never had been an acknowledged and long-standing Gaelic boundary in Ireland; the notion of the Pale[6] seems to have begun in the fifteenth century and ended with the Tudor conquest. The fact that the Irish

[5] J. C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London: Faber, 1966); L. M. Cullen, *The Emergence of Modern Ireland 1600-1900* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981); R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988); Richard Bourke and Ian McBride (ed.), *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[6] A region around Dublin with shifting boundaries that was directly controlled by the English crown in the late medieval period.

language had been so marginalised socially, politically and geographically in Ireland by the second half of the 19th century made it impossible for the relatively few natives of Irish-speaking districts to define the terms of the cultural nationalist debate. This task was taken up by a new Irish-speaking intelligentsia that was renewed in every generation, partly biologically, partly through a self-ascription that was actively facilitated after independence by the state, both through an educational system that provided the possibility of fluency in Irish (since Irish was made mandatory from elementary school onwards), and through a public sector that provided intellectual positions for Irish speakers (and indeed made Irish a requirement for such jobs).

Once an Irish state was established, it became the most powerful supporter of Gaelic culture in Ireland, with an official policy promoting Irish in the educational system and the public service and with various state institutions, from the Presidency down, giving a greater or lesser degree of support to the language. The state supported research into Irish language and Gaelic literature, the collection of folklore from Irish-speaking districts, the publication of text books and creative literature, the broadcasting of Irish, grants for Irish-speaking children, the industrial development of the Gaeltacht, and an Irish-language educational system.[7] It created an Irish-speaking intelligentsia, largely situated in Dublin and in state employment. The state thus became central to the role of Irish in modern Ireland while at the same time the Irish language bestowed a historical legitimacy on it and asserted a historical continuity that could be traced through an Irish-language learned culture from today back to the Middle Ages. It is not a coincidence that the inauguration of Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League, as first President of Ireland in 1937 was greeted by de Valera with the following words: "In you we greet the successor of our rightful princes and, in your accession to office, we hail the closing of the breach that has existed since the undoing of our nation at Kinsale[8]" (cited in Ó Crualaoich 1986, 53).

The Gaeltacht as a geographico-cultural entity was, initially, at least, imagined through the Gaelic League and, later and more concretely, by the policy of the state, which established its limits (see the Coimisiún na Gaeltachta

[7] For example, the School of Celtic Studies at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies was established by *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) Éamon de Valera in 1940, the Irish Folklore Institute was founded in 1930-and its successor the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935. The state publishing house for the Irish language, An Gúm, was established in 1925. State broadcasting began in 1924 with 2RN, which also broadcast in Irish, as did its successors Radio Éireann and RTÉ. The development of the Gaeltacht was the remit of Gaeltarra Éireann, founded in 1957, and its successor Údarás na Gaeltachta (1980).

[8] At the Battle of Kinsale (1601), the English defeated the Irish and their Spanish allies and sealed their conquest of Ireland. This is why the histories of modern Ireland begin at this time.

[Commission of the Gaeltacht] Report of 1925). The state thus became central to the definition of the Gaelic in Ireland, yet the state Gaelic apparatus was largely aimed at people in the Galltacht and at inculcating a Gaelic memory in them. In certain ways the Gaeltacht was written off. More than eighty years after independence there is still no Irish dictionary (all the existing dictionaries are bilingual), and the syllabus in Gaeltacht schools has always been the same national one aimed largely at learners in the Galltacht, presenting no intellectual challenge to native Irish speakers: this is something that Breandán Ó Buachalla justifiably criticised. The fact that the Gaeltacht was a specific region with specific needs, not least those peculiar to a separate linguistic community, was lost between an official discourse that elevated the Gaelic to a paragon of national authenticity and the hard economic facts on the ground: it is estimated, for example, that some two thirds of native Irish speakers left the Gaeltacht in the 1950s for the UK or the USA. It was to be the late 1960s before a new discourse of civil rights challenged some of these contradictions.

Still, the achievements of the Gaelic Revival are not insignificant, not least through the dissemination of an identification with Gaelic heritage throughout Ireland, for a time even transcending nationalist and unionist politics. So, when did the Irish state begin to withdraw from the promotion of a Gaelic Ireland? In 1941, more than half of all schools, both primary and post-primary, were teaching some if not all classes through Irish, but by the early 1960s, the aim of restoring Irish as the national spoken language had been largely abandoned and opposition had grown to compulsory Irish-medium education. By 1973 "only eleven primary schools (outside of the Gaeltacht) and five second-level schools were still teaching solely through Irish" (Mac Gabhann 2004, 95-6).

The categories with which we understand the Gaelic – as an ideal, as a project – are products of the 19th and early 20th centuries, of a specific type of modernity, that Ulrich Beck calls the first modernity. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, has pointed out that the modern state worked to make national identity "a duty obligatory for all people inside its territorial sovereignty" (Bauman 2004, 20). Four developments are undermining this first modernity according to Beck. Firstly, individualisation, secondly, globalisation, thirdly, underemployment or unemployment, and fourthly, an ecological crisis that challenges the whole industrial mode of production (Beck 2001, 206). He contends that the characteristic sources of collective and group identity in industrial society that had maintained their vigor into the 1960s – national identity, class consciousness, faith in progress –are disintegrating. But today, in the move to the second modernity, people are released from the national industrial societies of the first modernity into a much more individualised

world. With the weakening of the nation-state and social class it is up to the individual to make his or her own identity, biography and livelihood and organise them in relation to others: "traditions must be chosen and often invented, and they have force only through the decisions and experience of individuals" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, 25-26). Beck and Bauman were writing before the economic crash of 2007 and the recession that followed, and some of the premises of globalisation have been questioned in its aftermath, especially in the rise of populist governments. It is doubtful, however, that they have much chance of realistically undoing globalising processes and closing the relatively open societies, on which their economic prosperity largely depends.

Culture has become more and more a part of the private domain as the state became either indifferent to, or at least in a real way helpless to challenge, cultural and ethnic pluralism within its boundaries. In other words, there has been a tendency towards what Bauman has called "the privatisation of nationality" (Bauman 1990, 167). The retreat of the Irish state from an active role in promoting the Irish language has been balanced by civil society. The dynamic movement for Irish-medium schools, *gaelscoileanna*, has shown extraordinary results in recent decades: from eleven primary and five post-primary schools in 1973 to 305 and 72 respectively in 2017. Of the latter figures, 145 and 44 respectively were outside of the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland and 35 and 6 in Northern Ireland (Gaelscoileanna 2017). This has been driven exclusively by parents, language activists and teachers, even if state support was eventually received. Pressure from civil society too has been largely responsible for the establishment by the state of a dedicated Irish-language radio station, Radio na Gaeltachta (in 1972), and television channel, Telefís na Gaeilge (in 1996, later TG4), and for the recognition of Irish as an EU working language in 2007.[9]

Today Ireland has one of the most globalised economies in the world. Representations of Irishness and Irish Gaeldom are recognised parts of global popular culture, from the ubiquitous Irish pubs with their Gaelic kitsch to *Riverdance*. It seems to me that the question of the survival or continuation of a Gaelic culture in Ireland is distorted by the late 19th and early 20th century terms of the debate. The notion of cultural authenticity still hovers in the background. The changes that have come about in our notions of community, of place, of nation, of class have changed the terms of the debate and those concepts, key coordinates for mapping the Gaelic, have become hollowed out.

Authenticity has represented a corrosive ideal for Irish-speaking communities, The people of the Gaeltacht in a modern world could never be

[9] When Ireland joined the then European Economic Community in 1973, Irish was given the status of "treaty language," but not of working language.

authentic enough. Hence the commonly voiced complaints that the spoken Irish language has deteriorated in every generation, has become little more than a *patois*. But such challenges are experienced by many languages today, a result of the centrality of digital media in our lives as compared to traditional literacy, of the predominance of English in popular culture and of widespread bilingualism among the educated. In principle, we expect that the training in language that is adequate to the demands of life in a modern society should be supplied by the educational system rather than by some essential native quality, and this applies as much to literary creativity as to more functional domains of language. There are battles being fought over the control of digital technology and over the ownership of cultural heritage. In 2018, 53.1% of all Internet websites used English, followed by German at 6.3%, Russian at 6.1%, Spanish at 5.0%, Japanese at 5.1%, and French at 4.2%. This particular web technology survey only includes languages of 0.1% or more of Internet websites, and thus excludes Irish, and it covers a total of 39 languages, none indigenous to Africa and only 11 from Asia, including Turkish and Hebrew. It is rather shocking to see how disadvantaged all other languages are compared to English (W³Techs 2017).

A recent report by META, the Multilingual Europe Technology Alliance, assessed the level of technological support for 30 of the approximately 80 European languages and concluded that most are unlikely to survive in the digital age. It found that digital support for 21 of the 30 languages investigated was either non-existent or weak at best. Languages such as Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Greek, Hungarian and Polish have only "fragmentary support," according to this survey (META-NET 2018). In early 2018 *The Guardian* correspondent Jon Henley carried an article from Iceland on this very problem. "In an age of Facebook, YouTube and Netflix, smartphones, voice recognition and digital personal assistants, the language of the Icelandic sagas... is sinking in an ocean of English," he wrote. An Icelandic expert spoke to him of "digital minoritisation," which he explained as "When a majority language in the real world becomes a minority language in the digital world." Young Icelanders were spending such a large part of their time in an entirely English digital world that secondary school teachers reported 15-year olds carrying out whole playground conversations in English (Henley 2018). Irish does not come out too badly in this kind of comparison if we accept that no language other than English does.

Pascale Casanova pointed out that "[h]istorically, where a centralised state fails to emerge, neither the attempt to legitimise a vulgar tongue nor the hope of creating a national literature is able to succeed" (Casanova 2004, 55) and this is why the language question has been intrinsic to European nationalism, and why the citizens of countries shaped by 19th and 20th century national

movements know that language cannot be taken for granted. Speakers of Irish have a deep historical understanding of the challenges that languages may face over time, challenges that speakers of many other European languages, perhaps, do not fully appreciate. A cheese shop in Amsterdam was ordered to be closed last year as part of a restriction on the number of shops in the historic center of the city aimed only at tourists, not because its signage was only in English, but because the English-only signage, advertising and pricing were an indication that it was aimed only at tourists (Boffey 2018).

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity was signed, and it has been ratified to date by 196 countries. It made clear that biological diversity depended on cultural diversity. To date 176 countries have signed the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which dates from 2003. Other such instruments include the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the 2003 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.[10] Implicit is the notion that difference should not die, whether because each ecosystem, each culture, each language is a separate bank of information that may offer different solutions to various problems of the human condition now or in time to come – rather like the Svalbard Global Seed Vault stored on a Norwegian Arctic island that holds more than a million samples – or because the recognition of diversity is an effective means of broadening cultural citizenship. The local, once a source of diversity that threatened political unity, is now often seen a bank of diversity essential to the future of the human species, or as a proof of authenticity in a globalised world: an *appellation controlée*. This has provided a new means to validate cultural and linguistic difference.

The state has always had a major role in promoting a symbolically Gaelic Ireland but with a declining participation in cultural activities. On the other hand, a discourse of equality and diversity in Ireland can only benefit Irish, and it is not insignificant that a rejection of that discourse has led to the collapse of the Executive in Northern Ireland.[11] The digitisation of Gaelic

[10] The texts, the signatories and other information can be found on the appropriate websites: https://www.cbd.int/convention/ for the Convention on Biological Diversity; http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/intangible-heritage/convention-intangible-cultural-heritage/ for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

[11] This is Northern Ireland's devolved government, established following the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. It collapsed on 9 January 2017 and, at time of writing (September 2018), remains in suspension. For the connection between the proposed Irish Language Act and the fall of the Executive, see "Explainer: What is the Irish Language Act and why is it causing political deadlock in Northern Ireland?" at http://www.thejournal.ie/irish-language-act-explainer-3851417-Feb2018/.

literature and folklore and their being made available online offer huge possibilities to make this patrimony available not just to Irish or Scottish Gaels or to the Irish and Scots in general or to their diasporas, but to a much wider world that can identify it as a heritage of all humankind. Indeed in 2017, the Irish Folklore Commission's collection was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, where it joins the Book of Kells, added in 2011.[12]

Irish-speaking networks move back and forth between the Gaeltacht, Irish cities, America, Britain and continental Europe (the establishment of a pool of Irish-speaking interpreters in Brussels is an interesting new development in this regard). They intersect with English-speaking Irish or non-Irish communities in Belfast, Dublin, Chicago or London. Irish-speakers text and e-mail each other in both English and Irish. Those who grow up with Irish also grow up with English and navigate their way through both (and sometimes a third) linguistic landscape.

Ireland will not be predominently Irish-speaking again. But it will probably never be as English-speaking again either. Today's western cities are particularly diverse in language and culture owing to globalised patterns of official and unofficial labour migration, refugee movements spurred by war and ecological degradation, and tourism. Ireland will most likely remain a relatively diverse country even if migration levels drop significantly. According to the 2016 census, 17.3% of the Republic of Ireland's population has foreign nationality. A quarter of all children born in the state in 2012 had a non-Irish mother. The 2016 census showed roughly 13% of the population to be speakers of languages other than English and Irish, and 30% of those were Irish-born. The most common foreign languages spoken at home were Polish, Romanian, Lithuanian and Spanish, but in all over 180 different languages were spoken from all over the world. The Irish language and Irish-speaking communities or networks are part of Ireland's cultural and linguistic diversity, bolstered by official status at national and European level, and there is every reason to expect that, just as the children of immigrants are now playing hurling and Gaelic football, they will also contribute to the next generation of Irish-speaking intellectuals. It has been claimed that some parents choose Irish-medium *gaelscoileanna* so that their children will have less contact with immigrants; if this is true it certainly represents the perspective of a very small minority. Any attempt to remove the obligatory position of Irish from the school system could further such an agenda and make it much more difficult for immigrants to appropriate Irish as part of their heritage too. But it must be said that the atavism of a section of the Gaelic revivalists of the past

[12] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/access-by-region-and-country/ie/.

has been largely replaced by a progressive Irish-speaking intelligentsia, familiar both with minority rights discourse and open to other linguistic and cultural experiences. By and large, the prospects for a continued presence in and relevance to Irish society of the Irish language and of Ireland's Gaelic heritage are, in my opinion, reasonably good.

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KEVIN BARRY'S ATLANTIC DRIFT

NICHOLAS ALLEN[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Kevin Barry's Atlantic Drift***. Kevin Barry is a contemporary Irish novelist, short-story writer, dramatist and publisher whose work is set on the island's coastal fringes. This essay is a reading of some stories from There are Little Kingdoms and of his first novel, The City of Bohane. In tracing the importance of liquid and maritime imagery it suggests the importance of a sea-side perspective in his writing, and situates this perspective in wider conversations about ideas of islands and archipelagos.

Keywords*: Coast, Archipelago, Water, Estuary, Tidal, Island*

REZUMAT. ***Deriva atlantică a lui Kevin Barry***. Kevin Barry este un romancier, nuvelist, dramaturg şi publicist contemporan irlandez, a cărui operă este plasată în spaţiul de coastă al insulei. Eseul de faţă este o lectură a unora dintre povestirile din *There are Little Kingdoms* şi al primului său roman, *The City of Bohane*. Subliniind importanţa imaginilor acvatice şi maritime, se sugerează importanţa unei perspective maritime în scriitura acestuia, plasându-se această perspectivă într-o discuţie mai largă despre insule şi arhipelaguri.

Cuvinte cheie: *coastă, arhipelag, apă, estuar, mareic, insulă*

Kevin Barry is a short-story writer, novelist, dramatist and editor, with his partner Olivia Smith, of *Winter Papers*, an annual anthology of contemporary Irish writing. His work is steeped in music, film and television, and owes a debt to a wide range of literary influences, many of which are slight and fleeting[2]. Underpinning this is an attachment to Dermot Healy and John McGahern, two novelists of the mid- and hinterlands whose importance to a writer like Barry makes all the more sense from a coastal, and an archipelagic, perspective. This

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[2] In an interview with Tom Gatti, Barry joked of the HBO series *Wild Wood* that "I robbed so much from it… that they could almost have sued me" (Gatti 2016, 48).

is a thread made of books like *A Goat Song* and Healey's experiments with *Force Ten*, and of the intense attachment to waterways and beaches in McGahern, who is more frequently read as a novelist of the interior, both human and landscape. Barry adds to this mix an uncanny gift for dialogue and a savage humor, which prevails in his most recent short story collection, *Dark Lies the Island*. The binding theme of these sketches is disappointment, as all stays against disaster are temporary in Barry's work, and perhaps more moving for their fragility; his lyricism is braided into the tragic perspective his characters and his narrators have of the human condition, which is for the most part a tilting balance between anxiety and drink[3].

These edgy narratives are often set in wet weather by the sea and as so often in this book, the coastal margin operates as a porous landscape in which the boundaries between innocence and experience fragment and shift. In this, and perhaps in this only, Barry's writing is related to a novel like John Banville's *The Sea*, and also to Neil Hegarty's *Inch Levels*, the pulse of the tides and rain a metaphor of a rhythmic, and a partial, revelation[4]. Barry's writing is less dramatic than Banville or Hegarty in that it does not often rely on the revelation of some hidden secret for its narrative propulsion. But it does share a similar eye for the weather and the water, both of which brim with uncertainty for his characters, as they do in the closing passage of the story from which the collection takes its title. "Dark Lies the Island" is a troubling narrative of self-harm, which imagines a young woman alone in her parent's home, but for the internet. Her family are abroad in Granada and her father has left the family's various kitchen knives in place as a kind of plea for her to stop. She does, and the story ends with her throwing the knives out into the silent bog, which absorbs them. The bog is another kind of internal wetland that bears comparison to coastlines and estuaries, which are visible in this story through the distant view of Clew Bay with its "hundreds of tiny islands", "inky blobs of mood against grey water" (Barry 2013, 162). This meditation begins Barry's journey to his later novel, *Beatlebone*, which is an uproarious imagination of John Lennon's fictional attempt to visit the Mayo island of Dorinish, which he bought sight unseen. The germ of the idea is here as she skips through the old CD collection, racing through *Synchronicity* and *Astral Weeks* to pause on *Revolver* and her father's claim that he could see Lennon's island from a high point beside the house. The story finishes with her own vision of Dorinish between the night cloud:

[3] Maebh Long argues that Barry's melancholy represents his work's engagement with the contemporary outcomes of historical brutality: "The pace, vernacular and grit of *City of Bohane* calls to the dissolution of Patrick McCabe's 'bog gothic' and Roddy Doyle's 'dirty realism'" (Long 2017, 82).

[4] For more on Neil Hegarty's *Inch Levels*, which traces the aftermath of a child's death on the coastline above Derry, see my brief commentary, "'A momentary balance': memory and forgiveness in Inch Levels", *Irish Times*, 19 September 2017.

> She looked down on the dark of Clew Bay and the tiny islands that pay in the murk. The cloudbank shifted, a fraction… and light fell from the quarter-moon and picked up a single island – a low, oblong shape – and it was lit for a moment's slow reveal… Darkly below the moving sheets of water were reliable, never-changing, mesmeric. The hill shapes picked out against the night; the islands, and the Atlantic beyond (Barry 2013, 170-1).

Barry's language is cinematic and ironically lyrical, the always shifting ocean appearing for one moment to be permanent in its motions. The view from the edge is taken to its literal extreme in *Dark Lies the Island*'s exceptional story, "Fjord of Killary", which was first published in the *New Yorker*. In its bare parts it is a lock in drawn in the grey shades of local color, the new owner of this west coast hotel living some dream of escape from the responsibilities of middle-aged life. Except that one set of cares is replaced by another, the staff and the customers as unpredictable as the weather, and the Atlantic its own strange self, an ocean that "turned out to gibber rather than murmur… Gibber, gibber – whoosh" (Barry 2013, 30). Barry is brilliant at writing these sonic signatures, which give so many of his stories a weird and unsettling soundtrack, which his characters try to drown in a chorus of swearing. They exist in a state of constant sensory overload, for which metaphors of floods and downpour are the perfect companion. This story's narrator is a poet and the near disaster of the flood that abates just in time provokes him to "random phrases and images" that would soon take "their predestined rhythms" (Barry 2013, 45). The mountains, the sea and the narrow strip of human habitation are the basis for Barry's larger aesthetic, the energy of his writing in direct relation to the dolour of his surroundings, the "bleakness, the lapidary rhythms of the water, the vast schizophrenic skies" (Barry 2013, 37).

The psychedelic effect of the western weather creates a visionary aesthetic that runs throughout Barry's work, however demotic. His stories give the reader the impression of being only lightly tethered together, much as his characters are thrown together in rag-tag groups whose fractious interactions drive the dialogue and the narrative. They move in shifting packs through an archipelago that extends in a maritime circuit from the north west coast of Ireland south to Cork and from there north-east towards Wales and Liverpool, a city that features frequently in his writing, and they do so in the wake of larger political and economic realignments, of devolution, recession and the death of the Celtic Tiger. Barry's fiction wanders this Atlantic fringe in fog, rain and the occasional glimmer of sun, and the melancholy that attends this climate is of a piece with his interest in those moments where a character's imagination meets provincial reality. This is the source of his association with McGahern, which is a shared foundation for his two otherwise very different novels, *The City of Bohane* and *Beatlebone*. Water at all times represents for Barry a medium by

which to describe, but not contain, the fluid conditions of a mental life; "we all have our creeks", he writes in "Last Days of the Buffalos", and lagoons, riverbanks and estuaries are a key part of his literary landscape. Each also shares certain narrative structures, which are common to the coastal work in the period of late empire and after, and each is a miniature epic of space and time, intimately tied to the material and cultural history of the places in which they take place. Despite the novel's futuristic setting, Kevin Barry establishes Bohane early on as a classic city in this mode.

> Our city is built along a run of these bluffs that bank and canyon the Bohane river. The streets tumble down to the river, it is a black and swift-moving rush at the base of almost every street, as black as the bog waters that feed it, and a couple of miles downstream the river rounds the last of the bluffs and there enters the murmurous ocean. The ocean is not directly seen from the city, but at all times there is the ozone rumour of its proximity, a rasp on the air, like a hoarseness. (Barry 2011, 7)

If Barry nods towards Joyce in his prose, he extends the logic of a global exchange of goods to the immigration of new populations to the island of Ireland since *The City of Bohane* is home to unexpected ethnicities of Asians and Caribbeans, which has the further effect of shifting the social taboos of settled society by the central role travellers play in the narrative[5]. The social architecture of post-independence Ireland still exists, but its power is now symbolic, as if nationalism lost the long war against the continual migration of people within and across state borders. So Barry describes the life of De Valera Street as an ethnic promenade:

> Here came the sullen Polacks and the Back Trace crones. Here came the natty Africans and the big lunks of bog-spawn polis. Here came the pikey blow-ins and the washed-up Madagascars. Here came the women of the Rises down the 98 steps to buy tabs and tights and mackerel… De Valera Street was where all converged, was where all trails tangled and knotted… (Barry 2011, 31)

This Ireland is not made of ideals but signs, and objects signal the global networks of which Bohane is a fictional part[6]. Irish nationalism's obsession with

[5] For more on this subject read Mary Burke (2009).

[6] Annie Galvin takes this argument in a different global direction with her reading of 'Barry's novel as an exemplar of post-crash fiction that develops a trenchant critique of the age of austerity via its literary aesthetics. An extremely violent speculative fiction set in the year 2053, *City of Bohane* differs from other post-crash Irish novels that deploy gritty realism to confront the wreckage of financial collapse and subsequent austerity' (Galvin 2018, 2). In this, Galvin compares Barry's novel to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart* (2013) and Colin Barrett's *Young Skins* (2013).

cultural purity can be read as a postcolonial reaction to imperial sovereignty; another perspective might suggest that the relationship between characters and things is the most constant guide to the continual migrations that are the push and pull of coastal life. Ireland exhibits this condition strongly as one island attached by history to another, the archipelago of which extended across the oceans. If that global empire has long receded into political history, its material structures still remain, sedimented now with the history of the nation states that followed it. The crisis that these modern states face are still global and Barry's novel emerges as uncertainty grows that nationalism can answer the financial and environmental challenges it faces. This uncertainty registers in Bohane's condition as a place of seepage, the peninsula on which it is built "a many-hooked lure" (Barry 2011, 31) for the senses. The sound of *fado* carries over a variegated landscape of bogs, poppy fields and turloughs, in which memory is a rendition of the city's global past, as registered in the presence of clothes, scents and furnishing. The Gant approaches an old lover, Macu, and finds her in a "pair of suede capri pants dyed to a shade approaching the dull radiance of turmeric, a ribbed black top of sheer silk that hugged her lithe frame, a wrap of golden fur cut from an Iberian lynx…" (140) This is a description at once historic and fantastic, the old association of the west of Ireland with Spain dressed now in the fur of a wild animal. The description is in tune with the novel's sensuous tone; Bohane is a city of distraction and desire, a place of fairs, pubs and opiates. This, again, is a coastal condition. In a passage reminiscent of scenes from Jack Yeats's sketches, Barry describes the arrival of carnival to the dockside of Bohane:

> And of course many a carnie was sprung from the peninsula originally. We would be the sort, outside in Bohane, who'd run away with the Merries as quick as you'd look at us. (Barry 2011, 266)

The king of this fair day scene is Logan Hartnett, and he too is dressed in a worldly fashion, "a pair of Spanish Harlem arsekickers" and a "dress-shkelp in his belt, ivory-handled" (245). Ivory is an established symbol of Ireland's imperial connections at least since Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*[7] and is an essential part of the material fabric of Bohane's social system, a system built with the flexibility of the coastal place in mind. This is the last point to make of *The City of Bohane*, which is that the city and the sea are partners in the construction of human habitation. The infrastructure of this mutual possession begins at the coastal fringe and seeps into the city through estuaries, docksides, quays and

[7] In one vivid passage Stephen Dedalus imagines empire and India through the recitation of schoolboy Latin, a gesture itself to the twin powers of Rome and London in his formation: "The word now shone in his brain, clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants. Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur. One of the first examples that he had learnt in Latin had run: *India mittit ebur*…" (Joyce 2007, 156.

wharfs. The motion of water throughout represents a liquid transition between the expanse of the ocean and the interlocked streetscapes of the city. Barry describes this as a "North Atlantic drift" (Barry 2011, 249), a transitional space between land and sea that is defined by its colour and conditions:

> Bohane was green and grey and brown:
> The bluish green of wrack and lichen.
> The grey of flint and rockpool.
> The moist brown of dulse and intertidal sand (249).

As the borders of the coastal city peter out in the intertidal zone between land and sea the coastal work's origins in the novel form may be traced back to the fictions of Erskine Childers and James Joyce, both of whom observed the coastal margins of island life as symbolic terrains of global modernity[8]. Patterson and Carson renovated this tradition in their books about Belfast a century later, but all are connected by their attention to the long decline of the British Empire and its legacies in Ireland. Barry returns to the early twentieth century's fascination with the western seaboard in his treatment of a fictional city, but he too integrates Ireland with a world tide of objects and ideas, his imaginative territory a seeping ground that is both land and sea.

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[8] Erskine Childers published his classic work of maritime espionage, *The Riddle of the Sands*, in 1903. Its combination of literary flair, knowledge of sailing and warnings of a war with Germany gave the book a reputation for insight that it still enjoys. Childers had a turbulent and fascinating life as a British establishment figure, Irish gunrunner and eventual victim of the Irish civil war. See, for example, Andrew Boyle (1977).

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REVIEWING FAMILY HISTORY: RECENT IRISH FICTION AND THE AVATARS OF MEMORY

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ABSTRACT. ***Reviewing Family History: Recent Irish Fiction and the Avatars of Memory***. This article endeavours to demonstrate that in the fiction produced by writers of Irish origin towards the end of the 20th century a discernible feature is the renewed interest in history, this time not in the great historical upheavals that have always fascinated novelists and playwrights, but rather in the "little histories"of individuals and families. Sewn together, these patches of family history can be seen as being an unofficial (fictional?) biography of the nation.

Keywords*: fictional biography, imagined past, multi-layered form*

REZUMAT. ***Revizuind istoria de familie: ficțiunea irlandeză recentă și avatarurile memoriei***. Articolul de față încearcă să demonstreze faptul că una dintre trăsăturile detectabile în romanul irlanez al sfârșitului de veac XX este interesul reînnoit pentru istorie, de această dată nu atât în marile schimbări istorice care au fascinat întotdeauna romancieriii și dramaturgii, cât mai degrabă față de „micile istorii" despre indivizi și despre familii. Împletite împreună, aceste frânturi de istorii de familie, pot fi citite drept o biografie neoficială (ficțională?) a unei națiuni.

Cuvinte cheie: *biografie ficțională, trecutul imaginat, formă multi-stratificată*

Plato tells the story of the Egyptian god Thoth, who invents writing and proudly offers it to the Pharaoh, calling it "a potion of memory and wisdom." The Pharaoh, however, is unmoved and tells him: "This invention will bring oblivion to the souls of those who use it. No longer will they have to cultivate

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their memory, as they can rely on the written word, rather than on their own ability to recall things. So, your discovery is not a medicine for memory, but for nostalgia. As for wisdom, you arm your disciples only with its appearance, not with its essence."

The Pharaoh's words challenge perhaps the fundamental reason of the existence of history, which, after all, was Plato's main concern. When it comes to literature, however, the added dimension of nostalgia, far from inducing a false representation of the world as it was, helps giving it a human, sentimental colouring without which it would be reduced to the dryness of historical records. The story of Thoth's invention may be taken for an early metaphor about how the past is brought to the present and fictionalised, which is exactly what the literature of historical inspiration does, whether in the form of fictional biography or autobiography, straightforward historical fiction or "historiographic metafiction."

Can nations have biographies? Can we see the sum total of historical and fictional writings about a nation's past as constituting a multi-layered form of biography? Or of autobiography, if the authors who weave their strands of personal memoirs or fictionalised autobiographies into the collective tapestry belong to the same nation? We do use words such as 'motherland'or 'fatherland,' and mothers and fathers are certainly subject to the universal paradigm of human life: they are born, they grow up and then grow old, they die. There is a film called *The Birth of a Nation*. There are several books on the agony and death of empires: the Roman Empire, the empire of Napoleon, the British Empire, the Soviet Union.

For decades the Irish novel has been obsessed by the main problems besetting the national history, particularly Ireland's quasi-colonial status, the struggle for home rule, the Civil War, the religious and political conflicts in Ulster. This article contends that, of late, many novelists have made considerable efforts to approach the past from a different vantage point, a more personal one, focusing on individual and family histories, seen against the background of Irish social and political history. Thus, if their investigation of the Irish national identity has become less concerned with the open, public facets of the problem, it has gained more depth and complexity in the area of human interest. Rather than ascertained historical fact, memory, with its many avatars, has been foregrounded. Mnemosyne has played an important role in recent Irish fiction, as memory, honed by a fine imagination, has contributed significantly to the building of personal, alternative and sometimes secrets histories of Ireland (also see such tell-tale titles as Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture*). Or patches from the biography of Ireland. One finds in them the chronology of the main moments of the country's history and raw biographical or autobiographical revelation,

blended together in an indirect, meandering approach that touches briefly upon family history, family pathology and private suffering, criss-crossing decades and unfolding the micro-histories that are part and parcel of the macro-history of Ireland. Margaret Drabble has recently published a book called *The Pattern in the Carpet: A Personal History with Jig-Saws*. It is, as the title rather crudely suggests, a memoir interspersed with bits of social and national history, the main theme of which is the extent to which choice can affect one's destiny. Can we, that is, unmake our beginnings, or are we always acting on the promptings of the past? It seems to me that this is also the stuff of which many contemporary Irish novels are made, and the structural model of the jig-saw, which eventually creates a "pattern in the carpet," is put to work in many of them.

The paper intends to discuss in precedence of the mentioned perspective novels by John McGahern, William Trevor, John Banville and others, not so many as I would have liked to include.

As Eve Patten shows, "a recurrent fictional outlook […] was retrospective. Ireland's history, and the recent past in particular, came under intense scrutiny as the testing ground of present-day cultural and political uncertainty. The revisionist controversy which engaged academic historians in the period filtered into popular consciousness through the novel, as fiction writers simultaneously began to exercise a 'robust skepticism about the pieties of Irish nationalism and geared their writing towards the subversion of official and causal narratives of the modern nation's evolution."(Patten 2006, 259-60) Therefore, Patten contends, "Irish historical fiction provides a relevant departure point for a survey of the contemporary Irish novel. Though still attached to the 'Big House' structures and the binary of dissipating Protestant aristocracy and ascendant Irish peasantry, the historical novels of the 1980s and 1990s introduced a methodological self-consciousness to the profiling of Irish national experience, gaining impetus from revisionism's scaling down of broad national narratives towards the micro-histories obscured by summary and generalisation. The imagined past became a well-documented one, resourced with analytical skill and authentic data, even across a range of genres" (Patten 2006, 260). It is to be discussed whether Patten's categorisation of the fiction of the contemporary period as "post-national" and "post-colonial" is not highly exaggerated. Let's just say for the moment that self-consciousness with regard to the representation of history is not a new development by any means. J. G. Farrell and Francis Stuart, among others, had already drawn attention to the charged intersection of Irish history and fiction. But, as Patten states, "the pertinence of key contemporary Irish historical novels undoubtedly hinged on their proximity to a revisionist historiographic culture and a *fin-de-siècle* interrogation of causality and grand narrative" (Patten 2006, 260). One cannot help observing that such an agglomeration of

literary works at the intersection of fiction and history, in the case of Ireland, is due to the close identification of self with nation at key points of historical development. Before Patten, Declan Kiberd noted that:

> Certain masterpieces do float free of their enabling conditions to make their home in the world. Ireland, precisely because its writers have been fiercely loyal to their own localities, has produced a large number of these masterpieces, and in an extraordinarily concentrated phase of expression. The imagination of these art-works has been notable for its engagement with society and for its prophetic reading of the forces at work in their time. (Kiberd 1995, 4)

Irish fiction has been under steady pressure to represent the dynamic evolution of the nation through the lens of personal aspiration. Thus, in Seamus Deane's masterful construction of politicised self-imagining *Reading in the Dark* (1996), the history of a typically disunited family is reconstructed through a long sequence of reminiscences by the unnamed narrator, by means of which family burdens and political violence are transformed into something vividly poetic, though heartbreaking:

> Everything has to be exact, even the vagueness. My family's history was like that, too. It came to me in bits, from people who rarely recognized all they had told. Some of the things I remember, I don't really remember. I've just been told about them, so now I feel I remember them, and want to, the more because it is so important for others to forget them. (Deane 1996, 225)

Irish autobiographical fiction would appear to have the most popular appeal when constructed along these lines, exemplified by Eve Patten with "Michael Farrell's hugely successful semi-autobiographical saga of the 20th century, *Thy Tears Might Cease* (1963)", while "the defining text in this respect is, undoubtedly, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, with its orchestrated revolt against all forms of Irish authority, but in which the antithesis artist – Irish social order is hightened and the dilemma remains unsolved, due to the protagonist's *non serviam* stand", imposing the form of the *Künstlerroman* as the frame of the (auto)biographical material used by fiction-makers (cf. Patten 2007, 52-3).

In 1979 the Booker Prize was awarded to the novel *The Sea, the Se*a, written by a Dublin-born novelist, Iris Murdoch, in whose fictional world Irish identity and the Irish ethos are but dimly reflected. In 2005, the same prize went to a book that had only half the title and dimensions of Murdoch's work: John Banville's *The Sea*. The author, also Irish, considerably consolidated through this work his reputation of one of the most outstanding stylists in the literature

written in English. His books also pay little heed to the vital themes and motifs of Irish literature – which are relegated to the background – and, if the two novels we somewhat fortuitously mention together have anything in common (particularly the central situation, in which a protagonist who belongs to the creative world of art – a stage director with Murdoch, an art historian with Banville – but has grown old and tired of life, withdraws to the sea-side, far from the tumultuous active life, to ponder on the past), their authors are separated by a sea of difference. Murdoch is prolix, repetitious, slightly melodramatic, philosophy-prone but also sarcastic; John Banville is economical, construction-wise impeccable, more tempted by psychological depth, more lyrical and metaphorical, less inclined to ethical judgements.

The current view of Banville is that he is a stylist and a formalist, with little consideration for politically or ethically inspired plots, an author who guides himself by the principle of "art without an attitude" (McMinn 2000, 79-80). This obviously sets him apart from most Irish novelists, whole-heartedly engaged in the effort to promote a specific ethos, in a more or less realistic manner. But he is part of the tradition of the Irish non-figurative novel, convincingly illustrated by Joyce, Flann O'Brien or Beckett. Banville's formalism is, nevertheless, deceptive, because even in novels whose protagonists are thinkers in love with abstraction and hidden symmetries one finds expressive and suggestive references to the time and the space narrated, even though they may often be stylised or geometricised. Although introvert, almost solipsistic, Banville's prose (especially *The Sea*) can also be read as a counter-balance to grim Irish realism, which has itself reached a high degree of essentialisation, e. g., in the novels of the late John McGahern, an acknowledged master for Banville.

John Banville has a poet's love and respect for the language, saying at one moment, "It's not the characters that have the power, it's language that has all the power;" furthermore, he says, "I regard the sentence as the greatest invention of human kind. What else have we invented that's greater than a sentence? Everything springs from it" (Banville 2009). "What holds the world together is nothing more than a style", is Declan Kiberd's comment on him (Kiberd 1995, 635). Owing to their subjects and themes, his books possess an intellectual quality which can slow down reading, but in almost all of them there is a constant concern for the clarity of expression, at the level of the language and the style. His biographies of learned men are not historical novels, but fictionally disguised epistemological debates. Banville is attracted to moral indeterminacy, the falseness of public life, the hidden sin, the fake confession, the contorted biographies. This rich thematic range is visible in the trilogy made up of *The Book of Evidence, Ghosts* and *Athena*, often compared, not always with justification, to Beckett's trilogy *Molloy, Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*. The

protagonist of this series, Freddie Montgomery, whose identity becomes increasingly obscure as one wades through the text, is an art lover who, in a long confession written in jail, tells how his passion for beauty drove him to murder (as it did O. Wilde's Dorian Gray). While in prison and asked to recount in his own words what had happened, Frederick Charles St. John Vanderveld Montgomery can review his own life. Just like Oscar Wilde in *De Profundis*, he is offered ample opportunity to re-examine his life and write it down in a confession, which is a form of selective autobiography:

> Everything was gone, the past, Coolgrange, Daphne, all my precious life, gone, abandoned, drained of its essence, its significance. To do the worst thing, the very worst thing, that's the way to be free. I would never again need to pretend to myself to be what I am not. (Banville 1991, 124)

Feeling himself excluded from the world ("That is how I seem to have spent my life, walking by the open, noisy doorways and passing on, into the darkness" – Banville 1991, 217), though he has commited theft and murder, his greatest crime, in his view, is his lack of imagination:

> Yet, that failure of imagination is my real crime, the one that made the others possible. What I told the policeman is true: I killed her because I could kill her and I could kill her because for me she was not alive. And so my task now is to bring her back to life. I am not sure what that means, but it strikes me with the force of an unavoidable imperative. (Banville 1991, 218)

The mood this novel sets is very much like the one in Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. Banville does not restrict himself to imagining surprising stories, but adds to them the elegance of a carefully refined prose, in which well-chosen words are strung together like the notes of a musical score.

The Sea is an exercise in memory, Proustian in the delicate reconstruction of fleeting thoughts and emotions, its style generating its own nostalgia and complementary sadness. The narrator, art historian Max Morden, has the consistency of a shadow (in fact, his name actually suggest the realm of shadows, as critics did not fail to observe). After the death of his spouse, Anna, wasted by cancer, disoriented and feeling that his ties to the present have been severed – "the past", he says, "beats inside me like a second heart" (Banville 2005, 13) – he seeks mental comfort in the small Irish spa of Balyless, where he had lived an unforgettable summer in his youth, fifty years before. At the Cedars, the luxurious villa where he had become acquainted with the fascinated life-style of the affluent Grace family, Morden reminiscences freely the more

recent past – his love affair with Anne, her illness and death – which is superimposed on the more remote one, of a holiday at the seaside and of his first loves, for Mrs. Connie Grace and for her daughter Chloe. The shy teenager of yesteryear had been fascinated by the Grace twins, Mykes and Chloe, and secretly enamoured of beautiful Constance Grace, before exchanging "an unforgettable kiss" with her daughter, the all-too-cruel Chloe, in the darkness of the local cinema. Half a century on, the distant ghosts of youth are resurrected in the storyteller's memory, at the beginning fondly and with a little bit of humour, in a calm, mellow light, soon darkened by a drama evoked very discreetly, in a delicate, allusive manner. The narrator's sadness is made even heavier by the belated understanding of the true significance of events to which he had been an indifferent, hurried witness. The main philosophical conclusion he reaches refers to "the absolute alterity of other human beings." Morden's drug, therefore, is the reconstruction of the past, i.e. of the fragmented vision of it that can be achieved with the help of the shadows and shards retained by memory. "And yet," he asks himself, "what existence does it have, really, the past? After all, it is only what the present was, once, the present that is gone, no more than that. And yet" (Banville 2005, 61). Naturally, the sea, with its waves, storms and calm periods that allow for an in-depth vision, is a metaphor for human memory, also indicating the autonomy of memory from spontaneous feelings. The novel brings to life an entire epoch with its colours and scents, in a delicate and melancholy vision, informed by the implicit meditation on the the flow of time and the slow but inevitable erosion of human lives. The feeling of the existential isolation of the individual radiates plainly from this prose obsessed by the authenticity of life experience, the quality of perception, the clash between imagination and reality. The novel is a perfect illustration of the author's thesis regarding the investigation of the past: "We always assume that our time has learnt all the lessons from the past, that we aren't doing what they did, but of course we are, in different ways" (Banville 2009). As evoked by Max, the past has no substance and his own former identity (a ball of thoughts, sensations and emerging sentiments) is too fragile and elusive to be defined. "The past doesn't exist in terms of fact", Banville states in an interview after the publication of *Doctor Copernicus* (1976). "It only exists in terms of how we look at it." (Kiberd 1995, 635)

Banville's novel *The Infinities* is seen by critics as being related to *The Sea*. "But whereas *The Sea*, framed by the present, revisits a haunting past of subtle tragedy, *The Infinities* uses its present frame and past recollections to considerably lighter effect, foregrounding the present and imbuing the past with as much comedy as darkness" (Messud 2009).

All of John McGahern's novels contain an identifiable autobiographical element, but perhaps his second one, *The Dark*, most clearly reflects his struggle

as a young, aspiring young man to free himself, like Stephen Daedalus, from the typically Irish stern authority of father, religion and family. *The Dark* is the most representative example of what critics call "the Irish Bildungsroman" getting its impulse from Joyce's autobiographical novel. McGahern's short novel revolves round the plight of an unnamed young man who tries to work out his future – to join his father's farm, seek a priestly vocation, or, perhaps, leave for England. If one reads McGahern's *Memoir*, one understands that this fictional character – like Moran, the father in *Amongst Women* – is based on the writer's real father, a former guard turned farmer, whom he spent all his life trying to understand. The same is true about the mothers in McGahern's fiction – or rather their absence. His real mother died of cancer at a young age and his first novel, *The Barracks*, fictionalised the sad event – it is a first-person narrative told from the perspective of a woman contemplating the prospect of an early death. In *The Dark*, which was banned in Ireland immediately after publication, because of the abundance of four-letter words in it and the unabashed descriptions of masturbation and rape scenes, the adolescent hero is torn between two conflicts: one is with his widowed father, who does his best to keep him in line, while at the same time abusing him sexually; the other, an inner one, a conflict between a positive approach to life, in which the joys of life may be enjoyed to the full, and the fear of death and the Last Judgement, indoctrinated by the Church, which prompts the unnamed hero to give up earthly pleasures and embrace priesthood. The father–son conflict is sometimes widened into a conflict with the social community. In the second half of the novel, the fatherly repressions are replaced by comparable repressions at the hands of Father Gerald, who is more cunning and subtle in making the boy feel ashamed and mortified because of his sins. Both elderly men are metaphorical projections of traditional Irish symbols of authority: the physical and the spiritual father. The father-son relationship is actually a blend of hatred and love permeating the whole novel. Love gets the upper hand eventually, and the adolescent hero can say in the end: "I wouldn't have been brought up in any other way, by any other father" (qtd. in Imhof 2002, 218). More significant, maybe, is the second conflict. On the one hand, there is the dream of a woman, who stands for the pleasurable temptations of life, symbol which gradually becomes coupled with hankering after a peaceful bourgeois life. On the other hand, there is the fear of the Purgatory, inculcated by an education grounded on the doctrines of the Catholic Church, a fear that orientates one's whole life toward one's death. The boy is not mature enough to make a good choice. But the desire for security and his feeling of freedom in the countryside are responsible for his deciding against an academic career and his choosing of the safe if tedious career of a civil servant. Moreover, he feels at the end that he has become a man among men and able to

take his father's place. "While McGahern's material is undoubtedly autobiographical," Eve Patten observes, it evokes a more general kind of experience. The author's choice of formal devices seems to point this out: the protagonist remains anonymous, the story is told, in turns, in the first, second and third persons, "cutting through the limits of the autobiographical and implying a fluid, representative self (Patten 2007, 66).

After the passing away of John McGahern, William Trevor became the unchallenged leader of Irish fiction-makers, although he chose not to live in Ireland, but in London, where he settled in 1960. His first novel, *The Old Boys* (it does seem odd that Trevor should have chosen to write a book on old age at a time when he was still relatively young) was published in 1964 and secured him the Hawthorden Prize. Little by little, Trevor consolidated his position of an outstanding novelist through 14 novels, writing mostly about ordinary people caught in the mechanisms of a complex society. "All my work", he once stated, "is about communication – a thing that is at once very sad and very comic". A definition which would fit as a glove the work of his more illustrious countryman Samuel Beckett, but one should beware the error of thinking that there are many similitudes between the two. Unlike Beckett, for instance, Trevor has been considered a master of the short story. He has published a considerable number of volumes of short stories and many of his best pieces have been reprinted in mass circulation anthologies like *The Stories of William Trevor* (1989/1983 first edition), *Ireland: Selected Stories* (1995) and *Outside Ireland: Selected Stories* (1992). His short stories and novellas cover a great range of subjects, from the Irishman's plight in his own country and abroad to the problems that also get preferential treatment in his novels: disappointment with life, the loss of stable values and ideals, the faithlessness of modern times, the exemplary model set by simple living, family relationships, the impact of time and history upon ordinary people, the psychology of old age, faith and agnosticism, the intricacies and foibles of human nature. The tone is sober, with dramatic, often tragic, accents: as he himself acknowledges, William Trevor is fundamentally a pessimist. By his preference for trivial, unspectacular subjects and modest characters, he reminds one of Chekhov (being actually considered an Anton Chekhov of Ireland), but he also continues in a brilliant manner the minimalist tradition of life-scenes in which the Joyce of *Dubliners* excelled. But Trevor does not restrict himself to investigating Irish domestic and public life (though Dublin may figure as a provincial *locus* in his tales), but, as an author who continues the tradition of liberal humanism in the post-structuralist age, he is preoccupied by the universalia of human nature. The tone of his short stories is carefully poised, matter-of-fact, rarely dependent on techniques that sound out psychologies, like stream-of-consciousness, Trevor being, amongst

other things, a master of the Hemingway understatement. He is particularly fond of vignettes and epiphanies, in the solid Irish tradition, substructures which, as his commentators have pointed out, he also uses in his novels, many of which seem to be, on the surface, agglutinations of scenes and moments concurring to the achievement of a unitary effect.

Trevor's novels illustrate, on a larger scale, the same themes and subjects that the Irish writer has dealt with in his short pieces. The unmistakable world of the Irish countryside is given depth and amplitude, as well as an enviable clarity of detail. The plots explore the peculiar history of Ireland, but especially the relations between "John Bull's other island" and England, the tensions between Catholics and Protestants (as a Protestant, William Trevor might easily be suspected of Unionist sympathies). Many of them become the chronicles of isolated, disintegrated communities, "Big House novels" which, to a certain extent, resemble William Faulkner's fictional chronicles of the American South. Declan Kiberd remarks that Trevor is appreciated by the Irish especially for his short-story "The Ballroom of Romance", a study of the disillusions brought about by old age, and for the novel *Fools of Fortune* (1983), texts that, by examining the effects of the Civil War upon some families in County Cork, position him closer to the canonical traditions of Irish fiction (Kiberd 1995, 583). His first novel, *A Standard of Behaviour*, was given the cold shoulder by the critics. The following three, *The Old Boys, The Boarding House* and *The Love Department*, published between 1964-1966, are mostly comic and possess a structural characteristic to be met in some of the later novels as well, particularly in *The Silence in the Garden*: instead of focusing upon one protagonist, they intertwine the stories of several characters, bound together by their belonging to the same family, social group or institution. The three novels in question are set against a South London background, but William Trevor explained (in an interview to Radio 3) that he had lived for a while in South West London, where he had got married and that, in his opinion, to write fluently about a place one must not necessarily know that place well. He also admits to being fascinated by England and by London, an attitude which singles him out among Irish writers. In the novels mentioned above, as Rüdiger Imhof says, "Trevor expertly modulates between comic surface and psychological depth"(2002, 140), which, I hasten to add, is a hallmark of all his fiction. Also, as early as that, an undercurrent of violence can be felt beneath the placid or comic surfaces – another distinctive flavour of Trevor's narrative recipe. Kristin Morrison has drawn attention to certain other literary devices employed in these beginner's novels that were to become established features of Trevor's subsequent work: the use of comic tag names and tag behaviour, the use of comic ironies and reversals, and, most distinctively, "significant simultaneity," which she calls "that special technique of Trevor's"(Morrison 1993, 39).

It was only with *Fools of Fortune* (1983) and *The Silence in the Garden* (1988) that Trevor began to tackle topics of an essentially Irish nature. *Fools of Fortune* strives to cast light on Ireland's troubled history by engaging with the topic of political violence as well as deploying novelistic conventions of one of Ireland's oldest novelistic genres: the Big House novel. The two contrasted houses are Woodcombe Park in Devon and Kilneagh in County Cork. In the former, history is sold to paying tourists; in the latter, the place has lapsed into economic and cultural decadence, its sorrow-laden history being evoked in the elegiac voices of the narrative. Kilneagh, the Quinton estate built in 1770, represents the emotional focal point of the three narrative consciousnesses. Willie Quinton spent his childhood and adolescence there and inherited the estate. Marianne Woodcombe, his English cousin, identifies the place with Willie; her love for him, in spite of many reasons to the contrary, has bound her to an almost completely gutted house. Finally, Imelda, the daughter of Willy and Marianne, vegetates in what appears to be a mentally deranged state. In her, the terror and the glory of the family's history unite. "*Fools of Fortune*," Imhof notes

> … concerns itself with the thematic paradigm of innocence and experience. At its centre lies the tension between history and the individual, between political ideology and personal values. […] Finally, *Fools of Fortune* hints – albeit implicitly – at a way of solving some of Ireland's major politico-historical conflicts. The innocence-experience paradigm works towards painting an almost tragic picture of men and women as 'fools of fortune', [playthings of history, *my note*] especially when they find themselves caught in a certain political context. (Imhof 2002, 159)

Like John McGahern, William Trevor thinks that the condition of women in Ireland (until recently a patriarchal, exaggeratedly traditionalist culture, ruled over with an iron fist by an inflexible Catholic moral law) is a rich narrative ore to exploit and also lends itself to potentially subtle psychological investigations. This is possibly the reason for which his female characters are better delineated than his male characters and why his heroines outnumber and dominate his heroes in the novels written in the second half of his life. Some titles send us directly, in good 18th century fashion, to the female characters that will constitute the pillars of the narrative. Such is *Felicia's Journey* (1994), Trevor's darkest tale, closest in structure and tone to the formula of the thriller. The heroine of that book is a young Irish lass who, seduced and abandoned by an English soldier, leaves home and embarks on a quasi-tragic search of her lover, the father of her soon-to-be-born baby. While desperately searching for him in the

industrial wastelands of England, she becomes the victim (scarcely resigned or passive) of a serial killer passing himself as an innocuous catering manager. A book about hope and despair, revolt against paternal authority and stiff Catholic morals and the need of faith, *Felicia's Journey* is a proof of Trevor's correct intuition of feminine psychology and of his adroitness in pulling the strings of a fiendishly clever plot. Another book whose title explicitely tells the reader what subject it treats is *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002). Through the eyes of Lucy, the girl who would not leave her native land, Ireland becomes an overwhelming presence, nostalgically presented in this novel. *The Story of Lucy Gault* is considered the second major historical novel of the period (after Eugene McCabe's *Death and Nightingales*, 1998). Very well and successfully defined by Eve Patten as "Essentially a Big House novel," which "might be considered allegorical," this is basically "the tale of a missing daughter and the subsequent dislocation of a family, marriage and parenthood combining with the pressurised historical backdrop of Ireland during and after the War of Independence to produce a sutained comment on Irish historical sensibility." (Patten 2006, 261) *The Story of Lucy Gault* becomes a demonstration of "the spiritual, emotional and psychological management of the past", Patten contends, in "what ultimately comes to constitute 'history'" in the form of "Irish historical narrative, and gives a philosophical lead to a problematic contemporary historiography" (Patten 2006, 261).

The Silence in the Garden (1988), winner of the Yorkshire Post Book of the Year Award, is a family chronicle written in the minimalist style, which subtly sketches the atmosphere of provincial Ireland in the 1930s. Coloured by nostalgia, but with many remarkable comic effects, the book falls into the category of Big House novels, as it presents the rythms and scenes of family life in a remote corner of Ireland, tracing the destinies of several of its members. The Rollestons, owners of the Carriglass estate, situated on an island off the coast of County Cork, came to Carriglas in the 17th century, following Oliver Cromwell's campaign, "with slaughter in their wake," as Sarah Pollixfen puts it in her diary. The family history is long and complicated: driving away the original owners, the Rollestons took possession of the land by violence. Nevertheless, during the Great Hunger, the generation known as the "Famine Rollestons" proved to be compassionate and found work for the tenants or even gave away portions of their land to them – plots that the solicitor Finnamore Balt, following his marriage to Villana, is trying to recover. Closer to the present, the Rolleston children committed an act of unspeakable cruelty, chasing and frightening a red-haired boy, Cornelius Dowley, who afterwards became a member of the IRA and, as an act of revenge, tried to blow up members of the Rolleston family, but only killed their butler, Lynchy, by mistake. Subsequently, Dowley was killed by the Black and Tans, but he continued to cast a long, black

shadow over the family, whose guilt was intensified by the fact that Dowley's mother killed herself by walking into the sea. When the book begins, all these events belong to the past and the author only reveals such historical information gradually, scattering it carefully in the text. Mrs Rolleston is the person who stores up the family history and insists that it become known by having Sarah mention these acts in her diary. She also makes the decisions that might set the balance right again, the most important of which is that the estate should be inherited by Tom, Linchy's illegitimate son.

Again, with the exception of Tom, most of the active characters of the story are women. The three stories constituting the backbone of the novel are that of Villana's marriage to Finnamore Balt (the aristocrat compromising with the rankless moneyed class), that of Mrs Moledy's unsuccessful wooing of John James Rolleston (the sub-plot that provides most of the moments of comic relief in the novel) and, most important of all, that of Tom, his persecution by the religious fanatics because he is an illegitimate child, his gradual transition from innocence to experience and final, but quiet, triumph. Like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness*, *The Silence in the Garden* is a novel about the decay of the old Ascendance aristocracy, haunted by the mistakes of the past. As old Mrs Rolleston comments about her children: "Chance had supplied a gruesome plot: in another place and another time they would have grown up happily to exorcise their abberations by shrugging them away" (Trevor 1989, 187). The novel, nevertheless, does not end on a note of hopelessness, but rather with the heartening thought that redemption is still possible: Tom's eventual triumph, though perhaps not so very important to him as an individual, can be seen as an illustration of the Christian belief that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

Interlocked, the stories of the various members of the Rolleston family and of the persons they come in touch with form a representative, albeit miniaturised, fresco of life in old Ireland, with its well-known disturbances, frustrations and hopes. It is not exaggerated to say that the real protagonist of the framing story is Ireland itself, the long and painful history of the Catholic/Protestant conflict, the conservatism and obscurantism of small communities, the crumbling away of family traditions, everything suggested via a carefully stylised prose which does not ignore Trevor's favourite themes: badly-invested love, senseless violence, family haughtiness, religious bigotry, the impact of civil war and of religious and political discord, fighting pre-conceived ideas. Despite its reduced dimensions, *The Silence in the Garden* is a formally complex novel that contains straightforward realist narrative, but also flashbacks and diary entries which make the violent past coexist, at least in the memory of the characters, with the troubled present that it determines. The

buildig of the bridge that will connect Carriglas with the Irish mainland is itself a symbol of the end of an era: the bridge – which, ironically, will be given the name of Cornelius Dowley – indicates the end of the Rollestons' haughty autonomy, a symbol of integration, at loggerheads with the symbolic value of the island itself.

Asked by John Tusa for Radio 3 whether he would have been a different kind of writer had he belonged to the Irish Catholic majority, rather than to the protestant minority, William Trevor answered: "I don't think so. I think I would have been, I would have been very similar. I think one of the things you do as a writer is you have to get into, literally, into the skin of your characters and I, I creep into the skin of many a Catholic in my writing and I have great sympathy with the Catholic church, incidentally. I'm more of a Catholic than a protestant now, if I am anything at all and I don't, I really don't feel those divisions any more than I really feel that in literary terms the division between Ireland and England. I …, I'm a huge admirer of English literature. I read it all the time. I just don't, I just don't feel they're there. I feel that writers, writers of fiction, do belong in a no-man's-land, some place, and I certainly feel I do" (Trevor 2006).

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EMERGING STORIES: THE (AUTO)BIOGRAPHICAL GAME

SANDA BERCE[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Emerging Stories: The (Auto)biographical Game***. The paper is an inquiry into "the game with the (auto)biographical", as part of the Irish modern and contemporary experimental and innovative prose. The special status of these writings emerges from the self-representational impulse and defines a novel typology about temporality and time-control by the twin action of imagination and memory. The paper refers to the memoir as a complex merging of fiction and non-fiction in an *interpretive field* where the borderline between the historically verifiable facts and the fictive (constructed) events is unveiled. The Irish contemporary "memoirs", containing a mixture of analysis and an (auto)biographical game, are viable responses to the emergence of the new and unfamiliar Ireland.

Keywords*: experimental, (auto)biographical game, memoir, life-writing, interpretive field, self-representational impulse*

REZUMAT. ***Istorii emergente: jocul (auto)biografic***. Lucrarea este o investigaţie asupra "jocului cu (auto)biograficul", ca element al prozei irlandeze moderne şi contemporane, de factură experimentală, inovatoare. Statutul special al acestui tip de proză îşi are sursa într-un impuls de auto-reprezentare şi defineşte o tipologie romanescă ce are drept principal scop a controla timpul printr-o acţiune îngemănată a imaginaţiei şi a memoriei. Lucrarea se referă la memorii ca la o formă complexă de combinare a elementului ficţional şi a celui non-ficţional, într-un câmp interpretativ în care zona de delimitare dintre faptele verificabile istoriceşte şi evenimentele fictive (construite) este revelată. Conţinând o mixtură de analiză şi "joc cu (auto)biograficul," memoriile din literatura irlandeză contemporană sunt răspunsuri viabile la apariţia unei Irlande noi şi nefamiliare.

Cuvinte cheie*: experimental, jocul (auto)biografic, memorii, naraţiuni biografice, câmpul interpretării, impulsul autoreprezentării.*

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> "*To restore great things is sometimes a harder and nobler task than to have introduced them.*"
>
> Erasmus

The introduction to the *Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* postulates that all experimental literary practice shares the attribute of continuous questionings "on the very nature and being of verbal art itself" and, while "*unrepressing* fundamental questions" (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 1-2), experimental literature is likely to set going new ways of writing by 'reconceptualisation' and 'reconfiguration.' Such quests and questionings reflect a special topography which cannot be delineated from wider contexts. The sense that Irish experimental literature is, in particular, focused on the values and spaces of identity is the familiar disposition of this literature, setting as goal the breaking of traditional approaches and the change of the socio-cultural spheres by a multivocal query. Thus, interrogations are transferred from the nature of literary creation to the field of traditional structures of identity as well (Donnan, Wilson 1999, 36). Seamus Deane's firm appraisal, in the "General Introduction" to *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, of the distinct political and historical context of *the* island where a genuine literature and art emerged, is widely appreciated for the debate it later generated on the principal cause and peculiarity of Ireland's complex cultural identity: the island's ethnic topography is framed by the human ability to transfigure, re-work and comprehend the conflict-grounded local and regional history, thus leading to the outstanding forms, shapes and patterns given to the macro- and micro-narratives of the place. The first, and of highest rank of importance, is the proliferation of micro-narratives such as the autobiographical writings. "There is a *story*… a meta-narrative", says Deane, "which is …hospitable to all the micronarratives that, from time to time, have achieved prominence as the official version of the *true* history, political and literary, of the island's past and present" (Deane 1991, XIX).

Along the years, Irish literature has seen the presence of several important prose writings intended to represent the thoughts, feelings and life experiences of their protagonist and the complexity of the protagonists' heritage: from Jonathan Swift's novels to Patrick O'Connor's *Exile*, James Joyce's short stories and novels, from Flann O'Brien to Elizabeth Bowen, Jennifer Johnston, John McGahern or Colm Tóibín, to mention only a few. A complex heritage most often involves conflicting views regarding history and personal identity, a systematic or an oversimplifying inspection on personal experience,

charged and faced with contradictory notions, just waiting to be lifted and sorted out. Two operations are important in the process: one of them is dependent on the context or cultural sphere, because like the readers, the writers and authors of books perform in a field of experience and imagination. So that they must find *ways of working* with both when they write about contexts – either of their immediate known world, or when they deal with other popular genres. This *other* way is articulated and revealed in the use of such genres as fantasy and travel literature. The tendency of the writer to address them was identified in world literature whenever "author and reader share cultural spheres which are not familiar" or when "literature does not circulate within a nation or bordering cultures" (Rosendahl Thomsen 2010, 44). Visitation of such genres by Irish writers, as well as Irish authorship's 'world orientation' towards travelogues or the passing of experience form the 'local' and 'regional' to the diversity of culture and history becomes a support of innovation and experimentation ever since the 18th century and *Gulliver's Travels*. Consequently, issues of *history* (and time) and *memory* (and space / context) may require further considerations, only to disclose an (auto)biographical *game* within the well-known Irish narrative, which presents a very strong continuity between personal and collective perception about events, facts and experiences. We decided to use the notion of "game" in order to define an evasive, trifling and manipulative activity or behavior of an author (such as in 'word games'), and not an activity providing entertainment or amusement. The hypothesis we partially tend to confirm in the paper, is that the Irish autobiography – while focusing on personal issues – also tends to explore the problems of the community, shattering the boundaries of knowledge and becoming an *informal* history of the times and one *version* of experimental literature – one among the many which the Irish creative mind has explored throughout the centuries. The novels create universes that simultaneously refer to an existing historical environment or background, but in so doing they can be read for more than their historical accounts, causing the novel to develop in ways unimaginable.[2]

We assume that such 'informal histories' are adamant to these writers' cause and effort in incessantly changing the people (the readers) and their country, in the long process of modernisation, and that literature had an outstanding function in this process, beginning with the early 18th century. This

[2] See also Thomas Kilroy, *Tellers of Tales* (1972) and *The Autobiographical Novel. The Genius of Irish Prose* (1985); Linda Anderson, *Autobiography* (2001); Richard Kearney, *On Stories* (2001), *Modern Irish Autobiography*, Liam Harte ed. (2007): the exploration of the amount of details lifted and sorted out – with an impact on the development of the sub-genre from *scéal* [Old Irish *for story*] and *A Portrait...* or *Ulysses* to the modern and contemporary games with (auto)biography).

type of literature is designed to converse with the readers and speak to their mind-set. As previously stated, experimental literature is also meant to break the boundary of knowledge which is seen in the "Introduction" to *The Routledge Companion*, as the upholder of modernity with "scientific connotations:"

> Experiment promises to extend the boundaries of knowledge, or in this case, of artistic practice. Strongly associated with modernity, it implies rejection of high-bound traditions, values and forms… Experimentation makes *alternatives* visible and conceivable, and some of these alternatives become the foundation for future developments […]. (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 2)

Still, experimentation in Irish literature of the modern times does not involve a 'rejection' of tradition; it rather exposes means of grasping tradition as experienced and experimented by the writer with the diverse modes of the continuous reinterpretation. The possible inter-connectedness of the works, as a dialogue to the modern and the contemporary, shows the essential point of the work's novelty, and it also shows the work's tendency to defy the shaped outline by its previous forms, leaving it open to being *assimilated* into existing patterns. To some extent, this *is* a 'play' (the act or manner of engaging in a 'game' or manner of dealing with it) on engrained perceptions of tradition, meaning that the mind-set of the present, equipped with a certain set of values of tradition, identifies and traces out the ways in which the set of values have proliferated in literary texts. A subtle network of interconnections can be detected, and influences of canonical figures of Irish writers from the outset of the 20th century are constantly found in contemporary writers. Their novels – most than often a *way of writing* as a *way of reading* – appear as an accumulation of details from the life of their authors as seen by themselves or by a narrator-character, a "void-voice" of literary history intended to express tensions. As compared to this astute feature of the British contemporary novel, in the Irish novel, as Thomas Kilroy observes, the "chromosome of the story" has constantly remained "in the DNA of the Irish fictional tradition" (Kilroy qtd. in Brown 2006, 205). In addition, Richard Kearney looks for the roots of such a tradition and he notes that "the need for stories has become acute in our contemporary culture," providing us "with one of our most viable forms of identity: the communal and the individual" (Kearney 2002, 4). The act of *storytelling* as such may generate understanding (and, inevitably, misunderstandings) of the self/inner and the Other/outer, a correspondence modelled by the storytelling situation itself. Authentic forms of the storytelling tradition may be identified, from the Irish novel of the modern times (Patrick O'Connor to Joyce, Flann O'Brien, etc.), to

the writers of the post-war period and the present. Beginning with the early 1940s, and considerably developed in the Irish contemporary novel, forms of narrative are used to disclose *the* overt tension between author and subject, resulting from their narrators function as outsiders. The *writerly-readerly* text, successfully encoded in experimental forms and venture in 'the new,' involves *an* authority and *the* means to record the distance between himself/herself and society's cultural standards. The 'distance' as well as the 'tension' between author and subject amount to the various ways in which Irish writers regard their material, without being either independent from it or feeling entirely at home with it. This process was closely observed and analyzed by George O'Brien, the Irish born American academic, when considering the Irish travelogue canonisation process (O'Brien 2006, 266). He sees in the 1940s' absence of mobilities because of the war and the *re*-turn of the written material to the *local*, the *regional* and to the Irish writers' background knowledge and life (O'Brien 2006, 265-7) the emergence of a distinctive sub-genre of travel writing, only later to find real and full recognition.[3]

This subgenre reverses the material from mere travelogue to an additional marked autobiographical dimension. The principal characteristic of the 'new' literature is the contemplation of "the connected presences" of self and world, O'Brien maintains, as both "a note of cultural critique" and "a sense of formal documentation about the native country (O'Brien 2006, 466). With the subgenre's well-known flexibility, such works further mature and expand into a mixture of *record-keeping* about changing places and life-writing. Still, as shown previously, the new form did not appear in a vacuum; it was the effect of the Irish tradition of storytelling (Kilroy 1972, Kearney 2002), and of the experience of isolation and insularity. Emerging as a hybrid genre, it developed into 'forms' of represented life-experience in narrative, the so called "life-writing," far beyond formal documentation (Grubgeld 2006, 223). The 'sources' are well-known, as life-writing in the twentieth century developed from "the same paths in fiction"(satire - the realist techniques - the guised storytellers - the confessional 18th century mode- the 'postmodern enquiry"), nevertheless,

[3] George O'Brien, "Contemporary Prose in English: 1940-2000", pp. 421-47, Chapter IX of the *Cambridge History of Irish Literature* explores the sources of the main (culturally characteristic) tendencies in the Irish modern and contemporary literature with such sub-genres as the memoir, the travel-writing, the Big House novel and the (auto)biographical novel. See also Elizabeth Grubgeld (2006) "Life-writing in the Twentieth Century" in John Wilson Foster (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*, pp. 223-37. The sub-genres are associated with "the literature of fact" – history, travel writing, confession, letters and the diary/memoir and with the parallels between fiction and life writing – the salient tradition in Irish literature – from "James Joyce's chronicles - his coming of age in a third-person narration about young Stephen Dedalus" to "writers as diverse as Patrick Kavanagh, Mary Costello and Seamus Deane" (223).

outlining the continuity of this tradition across centuries (Grubgeld 2006, 236). The phrase "life-writing" is Elizabeth Bowen's who, in 1942, said about her own book (*Bowen's Court*) that "the experience of writing this book has been cumulative: the experience of living more than my own life" (Bowen qtd. in Grubgeld 2006, 236).

Life-writing as a *cumulative experience* is what O'Brien called "the connected presences" and Grubgeld defined as "the achievement of Irish life-writing." It is the condition of articulating not only one life but one form of narrative identity – in a blended perspective, "one shared with others" (Grubgeld 2006, 236). Stories are *told* under the auspices of 'forms' in order to make sense of life – of one's own and of other people's lives. This is one obvious reason why *personal narratives* (of famous or less famous people) have become such a *trend* in contemporary literature. Since the comprehension of the world itself is constructed within *a* story, personal (individual) or relating to a group of individuals, it is seen as a necessity: "we are all formed by, and complicit in 'telling stories,'" says Widdowson, "why not, personal stories – our system of knowing, meaning and making sense are all textualized narratives" (Widdowson 1999, 103). Moreover, personal narratives respond to a *self-representational* impulse (Ricoeur 1999; 2004). However, in the case of the Irish literature, referring to the impelling force of the 'cultural revitalisation,' with effects on the displacement of long-standing historical patterns and nationalist discourses, Liam Harte argues that the new discourses of the 'new' literature still retain much of the 19th century currents, including the antinomies of tradition and modernity (Harte 2014, 5). Quoting Carmen Kuhling, Liam Harte accounts for the 'peculiar nature' of Irish modernity which must attend to this "diverse and antagonistic character of modernization" (Kuhling qtd. in Harte 2014, 8). The well-known phrase "living in an in-between world, in-between cultures and identities – an experience of liminality" was created by Kuhling and used by Harte to explain the inclusion and presence of antinomies of tradition and modernity in the Irish literature of the present. The idea is also integral to another perspective about the emergence, expansion and canonisation of the subgenre we are discussing, and the intricate connections it has with the events and facts of Irish history, as comprehended by individual witnesses and transferred into personal (his)stories. With this perspective, the notion of an "invented Ireland" in the great Irish tradition has been assumed to be true several times in a decade. In an incisive critique of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991), edited by Seamus Deane, Colm Tóibín stated that 'an Ireland' has been invented by every artist in order to survive and to keep things going, while 'wrapping and distorting through contact with foe:' "Each artist in the great Irish tradition has invented an Ireland. Each has done so in order to

survive… They are made-up, embellished, worked on, imagined, *invented*. The genius of the work comes from that making up" (Tóibín 1992, 121). According to him, the 'Irish personality' from the Field Day Collective and its work seems untouched and uninfluenced by the onset of either modern capitalism, multinational industry or the cultural impact of the past decades because they *imagined* an Ireland of their own as "a world of haw lanterns, wishing wells, station islands, hedge schools and cross-roads dancing" (Tóibín 1992, 122). With a literary canon deliberately created to support the same distorted and (perhaps) one-sided version of Irish tradition, that of "Ireland's story[making] that has been told" (Tóibín 1992, 124), the idea that the *Field Day Anthology* – the first complete anthology of Irish literature ever published – or the beginning of 'living in the real world' is thoroughly analysed by Declan Kiberd in his meaningful view "on the extraordinary capacity of Irish society to assimilate new elements through all its major phases [while] taking pleasure in the fact that identity is seldom straightforward and given, more often a *matter of negotiation* and exchange" (Kiberd 1996, 1). For it is only a community/society which has this capacity for *negotiation*, *transaction* and *exchange* as principal means to cast open processes of modernisation (Serres 1993, 121) that could creatively assimilate new elements, in an innovative way. The question is whether this feature of Irish society is one of the sources of the great experimental literature or whether there is a genuine property of such sources that challenged *the* assimilation in which "No one element should subordinate or assimilate the others: Irish or English, rural or urban, Gaelic or Anglo" while "each has its part in the pattern" (Kiberd 1996, 653). As early as the mid-1990s, Declan Kiberd indicated that experimental literature was one of the important modes of expressing the Irish authenticity, that *experiment* is 'coded into its texts' – standing for "the Ireland of the future." With it, Professor Kiberd also acknowledged what he called "the immense versatility, sophistication and multiplicity of viewpoint," showing the Irish a "vibrant nation, despite all their frustrations" (Kiberd 1996, 652).

With this assumption about the importance of experimental literature in Irish literary history, the purpose of this paper is to make known what we call 'the game with the (auto)biographical' as part of the experimental and exploratory procedures, as well as this novel's special status within the self-representational impulse – viewed as an *outsource* of the subgenre. In it, this function is delegated to the writer as an exterior source and to the author as an interior one, while, as a novel typology, it is aimed to control time by the *twin action* of imagination and memory. The thesis that we are aiming to discuss is that the subgenre's flexibility is featured not only by the complex merging of fiction and non-fiction but also by the *ways* used to lay open the border between

the historically verifiable *facts* and the *fictive* (constructed) events. The explanation we suggest in this study, on the basis of the limited evidence we rely on, is that this is *how* the (auto)biographical game and the novel-biography is constructed, by *adding up* non-fictive and fictive elements in 'an image world' that the reader is invited to accept. It simply develops 'different purposes' with corresponding 'different effects'. Among the well-known and devoted 'memoirs' of recent years, such as John McGahern's *Memoir* (2006) or Hugo Hamilton's *The Speckled People* (2004) and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* (2006), there is a marked difference of generational vision about progress and change – from one focused on issues of religion, home and fatherland of the post-Joycean type (McGahern), to the view that Ireland is naturally part of a rapidly globalising world reflected in the contemporary icons that needs to find an alternative sense of belonging for itself (Hamilton). A proliferation of this novel typology gradually devours the authority of the text-as-novel, expanding the 'life-story genre' and encouraging variation on the biography-(auto)biography, in order to diversify representations of identity: "A further instance of diversifying representations of Irishness," says George O'Brien, "is the *proliferation* of autobiography… which [either] transposes autobiographical materials to a fictional setting, resulting in both the affirmation and critique of the complementarity of memory and invention [or] implies or combines the coexistence of the local and the national, or post-national, leaving the autobiography to be the main preserve of regional interests" (O'Brien 2006, 467). A closer examination of some novels of the first half of the 20th century (from O'Connor and Joyce to Flann O'Brien and the Balsket novels) shows that (auto)biography or games with it are intended to preserve the tradition of regions and of their local spirit. There are other cases when an author may decide to write *on behalf* of somebody else and *in* somebody's style (as is the case of Elisabeth Bowen and Jennifer Johnston). Such novels, defined as "autobiography conveying an unfamiliar inside story" (O'Brien 2006, 467), are mainly encountered in the Big House category (the Anglo-Irish authentic thematisation of "life-writing"), or in those concerned with life in Northern Ireland communities – with quick backward look into teenagers' growing to maturity and flashes into childhood spent in rural areas. However, such retroactive perspectives may also feature contemporary novels with childhood focuses on life as flow and flux (as in McGahern, Sebastian Barry, Jennifer Johnston, Anne Enright, or Hugo Hamilton). Interpreted as "an unconscious aversion to the rapid recent changes in Irish society" (O'Brien 2006, 467), they are, instead, multiple ways of self-definition as well as quests of self-identification in a community where individuals "are never Irish enough" (Hamilton 2004, 8). The above mentioned writers' imagination plays an

important function in the process, welding either non-fictional or fictional elements. In the process, while imagination is the *right* of the writer, hypothesis is always the *instrument*, as is the case of the biographer. Setting forth and articulating the biography or an (auto)biography, gaps are filled when documentation is missing and the process is reinforced by hypotheses.

A biography is a *hypothetical reconstruction*: it chiefly "historicises memory," selecting whatever useful from the available recollections about facts, events and very often statements uttered in the name of a person who is a '*character*' of the biography. A mixture between the objectivity of the form and the subjectivity of the style, the (auto)biography written as a 'novel' authenticates biography itself or, as Ricoeur claims in *Time and Narrative*, the problem of personal identity would in fact be condemned to an 'antinomy without solution' without the support of the narration framed by the autobiographical moment (Ricoeur 1988, 246). The operation of emplotment is conveyed to the character because "characters (…) *are*, in themselves plots" (Ricoeur 1992, 143), and it may preserve a narrative identity that is reciprocally related to the story line itself. The term used by the French philosopher and literary theorist to define this kind of preservation refers to the inherent "duality" of the character's identity that is emplotted. With its 'duality' (i.e. the person and the narrative identity it acquires in the story line), the character is one constituent of the specific dialectical and dynamic nature of narrative identity which, on the basis of 'imaginary variations,' may mediate between the essential facets of identity, thus turning literature into a laboratory of "thought experiments." (Berce 2010, 251-73)

An illustration of the case of "character as plot" and the the nature of "thought experiments," is Patrick O'Connor's *Exile*. Published about the same time, but earlier than *A Portrait*, *Exile* serves as a typical and ideal example for the canonisation of the subgenre with confessional-subjective roots. Firmly situated in the tradition of the Irish storytelling and life-writing pertaining to experiences of radical changes suffered by individuals and country on their way to modernisation, the nature of experiments clarify the source of fury, anger, wrath, loneliness and insecurity. Taking into account Patrick O'Connor's well-known biography, it is clear that *Exile* defines itself as an extension of the narrating Self, invested with authority by an editorial note placed at the end of the novel. O'Connor conceived his novel as an experiment with the subjective mode: someone's life story is articulated by a character (in the 1st person) in the form of a diary. The diary ends *with* and *when* the life of the author ends. The single character of the novel becomes the plot itself, a plot resolved by the symbolic death of the character – a victim of urbanisation and alienation. As a scholarly example for canon formation, in content and in its form, *Exile* relates

harmoniously to the historicist dimension featuring in the literary canon formation. The idea that historical awareness is crucial for a proper understanding of all progress and of all processes, Terence Brown defines canon formation as acknowledgment of historical awareness:

> Canon has been usefully adjusted and added to by what has taken place…[by] a strong sense that history happened and that, while we do not have total access to it, we have the capacity to reconstruct it to a degree that is representative of something which did actually occur… (Brown 1996, 137, 132)

The second problem raised by autobiography is its functioning as *experiential* fact (i.e. involved or based on experience and observation) and inspired by the wave of cognitive approach to the plot-centered formalism of early narratology. The demonstration itself is foregrounded in the premise that narrativity is located in 'experientiality,' which is the human *ability of reworking experience* in terms of its emotional and value judgment significance: "the quasi – mimetic evocation of real life-experienece"(Fludernik 1996 12). Accounting for the fact that narratives are sequences of events which, in turn, are simple sentences that describe a character's action or a state (i.e. not dynamic), we read in the 'story' a reconstruction of the person's experience as remembered and told at a particular point in the time of their life. Therefore, 'experientiality' refers to the *re*-presentation of those lives, as told to us or as observed, and reflected by our emotional and value judgment. The correlation of 'experientiality' with narratives relating personal experiences is backgrounded in the cultural-historical Irish context and it is evidence for the writers' urge and energy in creating third-person narrative novels, in which the focus of experience relates to the protagonist (and "I-as-protagonist"). Especially (and intentionally) contemporary novels are designed to create a typical *fictional situation* like the one outlined by Käte Hamburger ever since 1958: "Epic fiction is the sole epistemological instance where *the I-originarity* (or subjectivity) *of a third person* qua-third-person can be portrayed" (Hamburger 1993, 83, my italics). The novels paying special attention to extensive portrayals of characters' *consciousness*, or of characters' vision of the self are paradigmatic of 'experientiality,' as they usually extend fiction's inherent potential for the representation of third-person consciousness resulting from continuous negotiations with ethical and ideological difficulties and turning them into an advantage. Irish literature explores a creative aesthetic space for such problems as race, ethnicity and religion (Irish, Anglo-Irish, Catholics, Protestants), outlined by rare accounts about "family," "home," fatherland" and "church," and foregrounded in the vibrant fabric of "the Irish matter" and are clearly articulated in the Irish canonic prose writing. So that,

'experiencing a subterranean cultural life,' as Terence Brown put it in an interview, was to the 'advantage' of the authentic literature – at the price paid to censorship, and it was not only the expression of the nationalist drive: "…the Irish inhabited the world view that censorship was predicted upon them and how many people lived with it as if they were inhabiting some sort of totalitarian reality…, a kind of subterranean life" (Brown 1996, 136). Kearney's observation in his preface to *Transitions* about the guarantees of identity in the Irish communities is founded on his belief that "there is a critical relationship between the past and the present on Irish culture, between the heritage of cultural memory and the shock of the new" (Kearney 1988, 4).

A fact which makes culture – national or otherwise – alive is the 'multiplicity of voices' that "keeps history open, encouraging us always to think, to imagine and to live otherwise" (Kearney 1988, 12). Taking responsibility for *the story of the other* and approaching tradition in a process of reinterpretation, the modern and contemporary Irish fiction or non-fiction circumscribe themselves into a trend of *critical revision* based on the models of 'exchange of memories' and 'of forgiveness' viewed as 'specific forms of the revision of the past,' a re-telling and changing of the past 'not as a record of facts and events,' but in terms of its meanings for us today (Ricoeur 1996, 8, 9). The "past views in terms of their meaning" is the version constructed in the Irish modern and contemporary novels, by fitting and uniting the parts – not exactly as the 'world' which *is*, and no longer *depicted* by means of the characters' gaze and perceptions, but by means of their words, rendered as narration, in the first person or in the third person – either as indirect or free indirect speech, description, or dialogue. Characters narrate themselves and others, either in oral form (through conversations with interlocutors) or in written form, through writing their own story in memoirs, diaries, letters to family or friends: "We are walking novels," says Hugo Hamilton in a conversation hosted by Kouadio N'Duessan, "[because] we make up our lives out of what we remember." In *Speaking to the Walls in English* he maintains that "(…) perhaps this is the fundamental…question that forced me to become a writer. I wrote five novels and a collection of short stories in which I attempted to address these issues of belonging" (Hamilton 2007). Hamilton's object in this confessional text is his difficult identity, the living in-between and among (not only linguistic) borders and his experience of being trapped in three languages: German (his mother-tongue), Irish Gaelic (his father's language) and English (the language of everyday): "(…) so, we are the speckled Irish, the brack Irish. Brack home-made Irish bread with German raisins" (Hamilton 2004, 8).

As defined by Lejeune and other authors, autobiography is the life story of a real person written by himself/herself (Lejeune 1975/1989) and it

certainly is a referential text. In "Autobiography as De-facement", Paul de Man considers the attempt to define autobiography a major problem because in such a text "timing has been manipulated" and any classification becomes undecisive and incomplete while autobiography is neither a genre, nor a mode of writing, but rather a "figure of reading or of understanding, that occurs, to some degree, in all texts" (De Man 1979, 921). Focused mainly on *factuality*, rather than on the fictitious character/ the voice of autobiography, Lejeune is interested in the 'boundary' between autobiography as non-fiction and fiction and he finds out "the possibility of autobiographic narration in the third person" (Lejeune 1975/1989, 5). And, indeed, the incredibly heterogeneous realm of contemporary literature numbers several such instances described/defined by both Käte Hamburger and Philippe Lejeune. Theorising about the "division between fact and fiction in autobiographies," Linda Anderson (2001) is strongly challenged by the later developments of the subgenre, especially after the year 2000, with the extreme heterogeneity of recent autobiographical works. Terminology has been created, but such versions as 'fictionalised autobiography' or 'autofiction' do not really work out the answer or solution to the matter, they rather *name* some prose typology – a kind of welding of two paradoxical styles.

The idea that one can possess only 'partial information' about anybody (including himself) and about everything and that one may fill in gaps while writing (including gaps about one's life) holds true so that any such writing may end by questioning the nature of truth. Firstly, because it is impossible to present a full retrospective analysis of one's life. Secondly, because information is submitted to personal *selection* in any narrative, either factual or fictional. Furthermore, there is a full process of *interpretation* of what you get from selection and organisation of information. In an interview in August 2005 to Sean O'Hagan, John McGahern recalls the events that influenced his fiction and non-fiction and shaped him as a writer of remembered detail and emotional intensity. The difference between writing a memoir and writing a novel is given special importance in the interview, as testimony of McGahern's involvement in understanding of the inner processes leading a writer to recreate/ representing past events: "One thing to find out while writing a memoir", says McGahern, "is what an uncertain place the mind is. There is not the same freedom in the memoir as there is in the novel. Fiction needs to be imagined. Even events that actually happened have to be reimagined. With a memoir you can't imagine or reinvent anything. You have always to stick to the facts" (McGahern, O'Hagan 2005).

There are cases (such as this one) when, *with* the mind and comprehension capacities of a child, the writer of memoir explores and questions the *reconstruction* of both the mind and the way of thinking of a child. Such processes do not mean either mimicking or impersonating the mind but being-

in-the mind of a child and understanding what happens to him. As accredited by McGahern, this is a difficult task:

> I never felt a victim. One becomes responsible for one's life no matter how difficult that life may be. No matter what happens to you…I firmly believe that unless the thing is understood it's useless and that the understanding of it is a kind of joy. It's liberating. (McGahern, O'Hagan 2005)

Similarly, for Hugo Hamilton, the author of *The Speckled People*, writing a memoir is an act of interpretation and of 'understanding without judgment:'

> It was more the challenge to *interpret* these historical events, to recreate this language war through the eyes of a boy. I had to revert, in many ways, to the childhood experience itself in order to understand without any sense of judgment or overt adult analysis, the kind of confused world that we entered into. (Hamilton, 2007)

In addition to accounts of his father's behavior incorporated into the novels and stories, John McGahern's *Memoir* (2005), later to be published in the US as *All Will Be Well: A Memoir* (2006), contains passages that comment on the father-son relationship and are, therefore, helpful in understanding it in the writer's obsessive reiterative story about his father's authoritative figure and behavior:

> I remember feeling the wild sense of unfairness and a cold rage as I fell… I rose and went straight up to him, my hands at my sides, laughing. He hit me. I fell a number of times and each time rose laughing. I had passed beyond the point of pain and fear. He and I knew that an extraordinary change had taken place. (McGahern 2006, 202-3)

One of the finest achievements of Hamilton's memoir, *The Speckled People*, is the interpretation of facts gathered about the life of a person whose name is Hugo, and the capacity to double-mirror the life experience of *the* individual within *a* community, with the final revelation – which is not only Hamilton's but the reader's as well – reminiscent of the idea of the "multiple belongings" (Casal 2009, 49). With a carefully woven *network of facts* recounted with a *touch of nostalgia* for the perennial value of childhood, Hugo Hamilton proves once more that the legacy of an author is his writing, it is *what* he writes and not *how* he lives:

> In my book I describe how we had no idea what country we belonged to…We had the Germany that my mother was often *homesick* for. We had the ancient Irish Ireland that aspired to go back to my father with such

> ruthless dedication and self-sacrifice, to the point that he used us as his weapons, his foot soldiers in a *language war*. And, finally, outside our hall on the street was different, far away country, where I could hear the gardener 'clipping the grass in English'. (Hamilton, 2007)

Compared to McGahern, Hugo Hamilton grows up in a very atypical Irish family background, in the aftermath of WWII, and is aware of his 'role' as "soldier in a language war" (Dave 2004, 269): he lives in-between the worlds represented by the 'homesickness' of the German mother and the 'language wars' waged by the Irish Gaelic speaking father. He becomes a conscientious prisoner of the past like his mother and holds his writing as a shield against the conflicting views he has experienced in his childhood, later to become in ways unimaginable, the source of confusion, the sense of dislocation, instability and alienation from both cultures:

> My mother dressed us in Lederhosen and my father, not to be outdone, bought us Aran sweaters from the west of Ireland. So we were Irish on top and German below. We were the 'homesick children', struggling from a very early age with the idea of conflicting notions of Irish identity and history, and German history. (Hamliton, 2007)

Remembering the past, he is called to engage himself in the interpretion of the historical events and in recreating – with the eyes and mind of a boy – of the field of conflict and of 'word battle' for domination, within an unfamiliar context of personal history and with a re-interpreted notion of Irishness. Since a child cannot understand contradictions because they are abstract, unformed and unshaped in the child's mind ("As a child, it was impossible to explain…these contradictions to myself", Hamilton Powells, 2007), this writer carefully considers the option of *the* "European home" as an equivalent of a physical space to live in: "We're trying to go home now. We're still trying to find our way home, but sometimes it's hard to know where that is anymore" (Hamilton 2004, 286). Whether this is the creation of an alternative sense of belonging or of the willingness of the Irish to find *their* sense of belonging in the world, it is for the writer and his other future books to answer. But it is for sure a *reverberation* of the Joycean belief in the European (continental) descent of his nation, the Europe of the peoples (the "entrenched and marshalled races"), as verbalised in *A Portrait*:

> The spell of arms and voices: …*their tale of distant nations*… And the voices say with them: We are your kinsmen, making ready to go, shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth. (Joyce 1977, 228)

The autobiographical pact, in *The Speckled People*, becomes indeed "the phantasmatic pact" (Lejeune 1975/1989, 27) and, as a reference to the living person (Hugo *in* his family), it also means reference to the many more persons embodied in the languages spoken, a reference to the multiple belongings of one and the same person who is the character, the author and the writer of his own narrated life. Hugo Hamilton, the name, only "authenticates" the absence / presence of certainty:

> He said Ireland has more than one story. We are the German-Irish story, we are the English-Irish story, too. My father has one soft foot and one hard foot, one good ear and one bad ear, and we have one Irish foot and one German foot and a right arm in English. We are the brack children…We sleep in German and we dream in Irish. We laugh in Irish and we cry in German. We are silent in German and we speak in English. We are the speckled people. (Hamilton 2004, 282-3)

As early as 1988, Aleid Fokkema assigned this type of authorial presence to the notion of 'author relocation:' "not the abolishment of the author but a relocation and a reconsideration of his (its) function" (Fokkema 1988, 39). Among other (perhaps more important) functions, is the author's re-creation of a child's consciousness by selection and organisation of information, in the *story-frame* (as a retrospective-retroactive perspective). In each and every interview, Hugo Hamilton referred to his interest in 'recreating the mind of the childhood' or 'the acting childhood mind' in a careful and diligent way. Relying on the first person narrative, in the memoir as in almost all his novels, with the *mind-of-the-child* he observes the difficult realities in a family whose values and identity were neither recognised nor accepted by the Irish society of the 1950s and '60s ("At a time when Ireland itself was very remote and isolated from the rest of the world"). He also encounters all kind of meager and painful experiences – including seclusion and perplexity, violence and frustration seeking and finding ways of facing the bullying majority, such as in a famous scene of the stoning of a stray dog – an exercise of imagination and impersonation of film characters: " I threw stones at him [at the dog] because I was Eichman. I was the most cruel person in the world. I laughed like the Nazis in films and would not let him up the stairs again" (Hamilton 2004, 28). The echo of this scene is so powerful that the writer turned the effects into an obligation – that of identifying and internalising the deep causes, the 'point of origin' – winding the story, with facts and figures, backwards in time. In "Speaking to the Walls in English," the 'point of origin' is identified in the sense of guilt and punishment:

> At a time when Ireland itself was very remote and isolated from the rest of the world, we were called Nazis and put on trial. The Nuremberg trials

> and the Eichman trial which were prominent in the news at the time were re-enacted in a mock seaside court where I became Eichman facing justice and summary execution. (Hamilton, 2007)

So that when, two years later (in 2006), Hugo Hamilton published *The Sailor in the Wardrobe*, his second memoir (with its US version published as *The Harbour Boys: A Memoir*), it was clear to anyone that for him 'writing memoirs' went beyond the comprehensive understanding of the world – be it his own 'little world' of family bonds and relatives, or the 'great world' – and, instead, he echoed the voice of a generation of writers contemporary to him: "It's the country I belong to, one without a flag" (Hamilton 2006, 227).

We tend to believe that this is not only the overt expression of cosmopolitanism but of *the kind* of self-assertion that becomes possible in an ever increasing globalised world, within complex cultural heritage, beyond and above confrontation with stereotypes. George O'Brien defined the new experience "a post-national ethos," understanding by "post-national" a sense of collective identity assessed conscientiously as 'an answer to the demanding the participation in the global economy' and as a signal of the country's "evolution from nation to society" (O'Brien 2006, 473). And such works, containing a mixture of analysis and (auto)biography are responses to the emergence of *an*-other story, not only one, but the many stories of Ireland, of the new and unfamiliar Ireland.

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CHECK IMPULSE: TRAVERSING HADES

RAREŞ MOLDOVAN[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Check Impulse: Traversing Hades***. The paper considers the "Hades" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses* with a view towards the concepts of mobility, urban space and impulse interwoven therein. A traverse of the city as pre-modern and modern arrangement of space and social dynamics, from street to cemetery the chapter gathers the various meanings of social mobility, together with their socialised impulses and checks. Outer mobility and inner impulsivity are analysed in their interrelation in macro- and micro-contexts.

Keywords*: James Joyce, Ulysses, urban space, mobility, socialised impulse*

REZUMAT. ***Verifică impulsul: traversând Hades***. Articolul discută episodul "Hades" din *Ulise* de James Joyce, din perspectiva conceptelor de mobilitate, spaţiu urban şi impuls, care se întrepătrund în text. O traversare a oraşului ca aranjament pre-modern şi modern al spaţiului şi dinamicii sociale, din stradă la cimitir capitolul înmănunchează sensurile varii ale mobilităţii sociale, împreună cu impulsurile şi obstacolele lor socializate. Mobilitatea exterioară şi impulsivitatea interioară sunt analizate în interrelaţia lor în macro- şi micro-contexte.

Cuvinte cheie*: James Joyce, Ulise, spaţiu urban, mobilitate, impuls socializat*

The immense mobility of *Ulysses* is overdetermined and overanalysed terrain, chiefly on the *macro-scopic* scale; it has been scoped copiously, usually in relation to its Homeric architext and to formulations of modern urban space and its ensuing urbanities. These two major axes are not as far apart as one might assume; they are convergent in intention, and co-present in the fabric of the fictional Dublin of *Ulysses*. The macroscopic mode of symbolic super-imposition

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that criticism has accustomed us to[2] can be reshaped so as not to separate generically between action and canvas, or between archetypal myth and modern mythologies. As David Pierce puts it, "Joyce uses Homer as his civilising guide to life in the modern city. Bloom never confronts the city as some huge backdrop to his fate" (2006, 62). The urban make-up of the novel is Bloomian, that is, urbanely intersectional rather than oppressively super-impositional:

> As a result, a certain modification in the relation between the built city and the human city occurs, with Joyce at once reflecting and conveying the imprint of human consciousness on the city. (Pierce 2006, 64)

This looping structure creates the spaces of the novel and their ambivalence. Of course, stylistic mobility accompanies physical and phantasmal mobility throughout, it grows, peaks and wanes with the characters. The main purpose of this essay, however, is to analyse the articulations of mobility and space, where space – with Joyce almost exclusively *urban* space – is not conceived as mere "background", "container" or "scene" for aspects of mobility, but as that which is continuously being created and effaced. Not a "one-way street" but pockets of coalescence. This interpretation occurs at the intersection of mobility as impulse – that is, in the dynamics of *impulsivity* – and a matrix of checks.

Joyce was perhaps the first Irish writer in what was - before and a while after him – a predominantly rural imaginary landscape, to grasp the complexity of the city as the site of the modern, with all its pre-modern anachronisms packed in. One trait of the city as modern *arrangement* is its domineering quality, as an image of the enabling "totality"; and, as Joyce's faultless intuition told him, this was true for "every city in the world". The city as modern dominant disseminates its dominance into the matrix of what it allows. The "city dominates", as one accurate critical diagnosis states, before anything else, by its "chief work", that is, architectonically:

> [T]he city appears architectonically to dominate the lives of its inhabitants, whose conscious agency is repeatedly revealed to be subordinate to the requirements of the city as a rationally integrated system. (Lanigan 2011, 91)

As Liam Lanigan shows[3], this domination connects arranged space(s) – which the city *is* – with behaviour, a relation whose implicit intent is that most modern of intentionalities: control. Still, this should not lead one merely to the

[2] "The myth of the Odyssey is superimposed upon the map of Dublin" (Levin, 1960, 76).

[3] The apt example in this line of thought is Le Corbusier, where the geometry of a planned city "instills" behavior, see (Lanigan, 92-93).

thoughts of *restraining, forbidding, channelling* and the like, that is, not to the mere negation of free mobility. Rather, as a paradigm of inhabitation, the city as matrix makes possible behaviour *within which* inhibited mobility is one of its poles, an extreme that makes little sense without its own challenging opposites: *freedom of movement*, *disobedience*, *wandering* or *loitering*. No wonder most modern cities abhor loiterers, although it is only in cities that one encounters them. Subversion, with its plethora of urban possibilities, occurs within this matrix and has no real sense outside it; just as the sea and the archipelago grant the possibility of Ulysses' wandering, the city and its fixed land-marks enable Joycean perambulation. Between trajectory and wandering, and the revenant of destination, the city is not only space, nor mere place, map, structure, or expression of power, but it a ceaseless "reading", a never-ending interpretation. Pierce notes:

> In a parallel way, Joyce's city functions independently of the reader, but at the same time it is dependent on the reader for the flow to be noticed and information processed or retrieved. All these are ironies, asymmetries, stretched comparisons, even points of contradiction, an example of an economic base at variance with its ideological superstructure. (2006, 67)

The city and its phenomenal presence are readings within readings: the reader's interpretation of the character's reading or misreading of place, an idea consonant with what Roland Barthes, applied to Joyce by Laningan, calls "the signifying role of the city", ever at odds with the "rational" arrangement of structured space. It is by the constant irritation of private observation against general rationality that the *meaning* of the city is formed. It is the urban if not always urbane friction of the *syntagmatic* observation (critics usually call it "consciousness") against the *paradigmatic* model of the city that is interesting to the writer:

> [T]he process of signification in which the urban dweller engages each day necessarily creates conflicting and constantly shifting understandings of the city. […] In Barthes' interpretation, therefore, one's experience of the city emerges not from the functional designation of its spaces according to an abstract logic, but through the interaction of the perceiving consciousness with that logic. (Lanigan 2011, 100)

It is worth noting, although the observation is to us rather self-evident, that both "functional" and "rational" – or their "harmony" as thought of, say, by Le Corbusier – are, with one word, euphemisms. The visible hand behind the curtain, the mover and the shaker, is the historical deployment of power, the politic in the polis, the ghost in the city-machine, which has since been distilled and identified:

> In Joyce's case, subjective consciousness is often defined in terms of a spatial environment created both by the myriad forces of modernity and by the specific system of authority represented by the British imperial presence in Ireland at the turn of the century. (Spurr 2002, 18)

The sweeping, large-scale forces of "reason", "harmony", "modernity", "ideology" or "colonial power", or whatever one might want to call them, act as exteriority, the outside of the city, formatting it from without ceaselessly, but also from within as they are imprinted, unseen, in internalised behaviour. This inflow and outflow of the within and the without, which Joyce pursues in "Hades" and elsewhere in *Ulysses*, this inextricable co-presence, takes the place beyond the distinction between the "city" and the "country", the metropolis and the province, the street and the interior of the house or the grave. When detected in characters, it also presents a peculiar problem for the reading of impulses: our habitual conjecture that they arise from within becomes tenuous. So does the *impulcity* they create.

Four men enter a carriage

"Hades" is stylistically austere and dynamically restrained. Joyce's prose holds back from excess for the sake of precision. Its mobility is at least doubly hindered: by the destinal *finis* of the final destination, and by the confined coffin of the carriage as vehicle and "vicus". In this chapter, Joyce's style in motion has all the drawing restraint of the samurai sword used only for single lethal cuts. Unpropitious terrain for effusions – not that some don't try – it is however excellent ground for the micro-impulses to be detected in the fading background radiation. Its opening move, its own little *introibo*, juxtaposes entry into immobility, confinement and mock-hierarchy:

> Martin Cunnigham, first, poked his silkhatted head into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself. Mr. Power stepped in after him, curving his height with care. (6. 1-3)[4]

"First", "height", and, why not, Mr. Power "after" are all the check-marks of social ritual *in actu* – hierarchy honed and *observed* in the high note just short of the ridiculous. The verbs affixed to each gentleman range from a vaudevillian gesture of indiscretion ("poked his head") to caricatural majestic pose ("curving his height") to puzzling ambiguity, perhaps recovery from due reverence ("Mr. Dedalus covered himself quickly"). They enact mobility *already* fused with the

[4] All references are to the Gabler edition, 1984.

social prescription so finely that the impulse for each motion is at once personal and generic: Cunningham is cautious about the language and the mores but sometimes indiscrete, Mr. Power is careful to not bump his head but also affects required gravitas, Mr. Dedalus has shown enough respect at the house of dead Dignam and his impulsive nature breaks through in his impatient gesture and in his hasty repetition, "yes, yes". These are readings, but also misreadings – different meanings could be found for each – but the point is that the impulse is at the limit of the perceivable, and there's a high risk of it being misinterpreted, by the reader, but also by other characters.

Impulse is deadened by social checks, one assumes, as too is often the action that might have followed; but the evacuation of impulsiveness in an urban environment (our carriage is a test tube in this regard) results contrapuntally in behaviour which is highly ambiguous. The solidity of macro-social prescriptions such as "reverence" or "care" is lost on the micro scale of impulse-into-action. The dissolution of the paradigm makes the roles and the role-playing relatively uncertain. Social readability, which is crucial, is constantly on the verge of failing ("Hades", after all is also composed of a series of failures of understanding).

Bloom is initially neutral and blank, an empty occupant – "Mr Bloom entered and sat in the vacant place" – but he is silently pushed into subservience here. In fact, critics have long discussed his position as an outsider in the episode, as well as elsewhere in the novel. Still he suddenly fills the available spot by action and attitude: he completes the closure of the micro-environment by dutifully slamming the door "until it shut tight" (Joyce emphasises "tight" by firing the word twice in rapid succession). He then assumes a position that is again difficult to read: with an arm through the armstrap, he "looked seriously from the open carriage window at the lowered blinds of the avenue". Does he anchor himself into the situation, adapting his countenance to the sombre occasion, after having *slammed* the door? The imponderable legibility of the character at the nodes where impulse and social mark coalesce is generally a consequence of the urban paradigm and of its complexity: unsurprisingly, the tighter the focus the more improbable one's reading becomes.

Traverse

Similarly, the city outside becomes improbable through the screens of the carriage windows: repeatedly characters will see or fail to see someone of particular interest to them (Mr Dedalus will not see Stephen, Bloom will not see Boylan), yet their presence is announced and reconstructed inside the carriage or the mind. The course will also appear uncertain ("What way is he taking us"?, Mr Power asks), as will the reasons for stopping. The outside turns ghostly yet

present, and the gentlemen strain to see in order to ascertain the space and the place; the disquiet Mr Power asks his question "through both windows", a gesture that compresses time into something more ardent than casual curiosity: the urgency of the desire to see instantaneously.

The journey to Glasnevin cemetery is mobility channelled; its course is checked by its end from the very beginning, by the inevitable landmarks of the city as well as by the ghost-marks of the Homeric parallel, and the lingering, rekindled spectrality of the dead and the past. It is social observation staged, with more than a passing ironic nod to the Stendhalian "passing a mirror down the street", the mirror is here the see-through; an outdated class act in a de-classed vehicle. Yet it is also a *traverse*: it does not merely follow but moves, seemingly at all times, across and against the city, and also across and against Hades, and while checking the myth by correspondence, it irritates the shadowy gloom of "Hades" with the material resistance of metal and stone: the carriage creaks and clatters, the wheels chatter and rattle, the felly – famously – "harshes against the curbstone". The traverse is a *versus* – movement against the grain and across and beyond material or ethereal barriers. The *versus* is harsh: a grating soundscape and a ripped up, uneven cityscape. Bloom repeatedly fantasises in this chapter about flow as a possibility of motion, a more fluid transport, when imagining for instance a journey down waterways or cycling to Mullingar to see Milly, or when thinking about tram carriages to take people to the cemetery and cattle down to the ship. Potential but unrealised (i. e. *dynamis* in the etymological sense) ghost-flows that are only legible *versus* the actual city, against its arrangement, and destined for places afar and outside.

The figment of the fast and fluid, of an almost frictionless glide (itself modern), stumbles against the anachronisms of the pre-modern (of which the carriage is itself an instance). The spectre of the Gordon Bennett automobile race over on the continent, in Germany, is itself traversed by the mental image of a race of corpses "upset" from their coffins, hurrying to be the first to turn the corner at Dunphy's pub. A constant physical and mental rubbing against the fabric of the city (its buildings, its stories), of city life, the abrasion of the living dead, as Joyce says, reversing the meaning in Bloom's correct misreading, "in the midst of death we are in life" (6.759). If one of the traits of the modern city is to keep death and its immediate materiality out of sight, whereas the town exposes the anachronistic passage of the hearse and cortege to elicit predetermined reverence ("a fine old custom", as Mr Dedalus calls it), Joyce through Bloom explodes exposure by imagining Paddy Dignam "shot out and rolling over stiff in the dust" (6.422), grey-faced, mouth open, insides quickly decomposing. Black humour and dark satire of the resurrection, no doubt, but the most graphic among all the images in "Hades" – a *versus* in relation to the

mere shadows of Homeric gloom – is part of a larger effort in the chapter to traverse the limits set to what is visible or displayed as if they weren't there.

Visibility, legibility, and the "through" impulse

What I call the "through" impulse is widespread in "Hades". It aims at accessing "insides" through walls, partitions, separations that are, more often than not, opaque and impenetrable. It may be an impatience of frustrated vision, a sought reprieve from abrasive materiality and the numbing immobility of postures. A drive is active everywhere in this chapter, looking to turn matte surfaces into ghostly translucence and then into traversable airy nothing. The first occurrence of this starts from direct but partial visibility, the quintessentially urban visibility of the window and the blind:

> … the lowered blinds of the avenue. One dragged aside, an old woman peeping. Nose whiteflattened against the pane. Thanking her stars she was passed over. Extraordinary the interest they take in a corpse. Glad to see us go we give them so much trouble coming. Job seems to suit them. Huggermugger in the corners. Slop about in slipper-slappers for fear he'd wake. Then getting it ready. Laying it out. (6.12-17)

This is the (already) familiar Bloomian monologue, the assemblage of fragmentary observation, thought, surmise, interpretation, evaluation and judgment, the simulation of "mind". The social prescription of the "lowered blinds" is in place, blinding the inside to the cortege, death marched down the avenue with all its sombre pomp and dynamics, and the fearful *dynamis* of its return, but its transgression is also present, spurred by another's impulse to see ("an old woman peeping"). The opaque gaze of the other stops at street level visibility, at what the cityscape provides, whereas the through impulse meets it at an angle, observes it, becomes overpowering conjecture and pierces the zombie-like alterity – Declan Kiberd spoke of a "city of the walking dead" in relation to "Hades" (2009, 101) – injecting it with (im)plausibilities of interiority, being not at once but in extremely quick succession within and without ("Slop about in slipper-slappers for fear he'd wake", for instance). Kiberd is right in see these scenes as a cinematic rendition, but I'd add the note of an ectoplasmic cinematics created by the impulse to traverse all barriers – walls, blinders, flesh, thought – the all-piercing gaze of the dead and the gods.

Hades – and, indeed, the entire novel – are rhythmically populated with short-circuits of the through-impulse, in repeated gazes that render the opacity of the face, or even of one single detail, legible as presumed sociability:

> Mr. Bloom glanced from his angry moustache to Mr Power's mild face and Martin Cunningham's eyes and beard, gravely shaking. Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. (6.72-74)

> His eyes passed lightly over Mr Power's goodlooking face. Greyish over the ears. *Madame*: smiling. I smiled back. A smile goes a long way. Only politeness perhaps. Nice fellow. (6.242-44)

Joyce marks the casual nature of these gazes (glanced, passed lightly); but they make short work of collapsing the trait and the meaning into a simultaneous perception (angry moustache, mild face, goodlooking face). This first-sight legibility of the face is always traversed towards a surmised meaning, with various degrees of certainty: selfwilled man, full of his son, only politeness perhaps. Such perceptions seem "judgments" of others in the never-ending play of available sociability. They may be conceived, however, as a peculiar mode of mobility, an ever mobile *dynamis*, the dynamic of potentiality ever collapsing into punctual judgmental crystallisations. As readings of sociability, they are opposed to socially sanctioned readings such as remembrance, gossip, the eulogy or the obituary. They are, so the speak, the "living" impulse against the impulse deadened and are, as such, inscribed contrapuntally in the larger dynamics of "Hades".

The corresponding check to this impulse is staged for good measure in the episode, in explicit relation to the social haste of judgment, but Joyce makes it help along the expression of an impulse:

> — It is not for us to judge, Martin Cunningham said.
> Mr Bloom, about to speak, closed his lips again. Martin Cunningham's large eyes. Looking away now. Sympathetic human man he is. Intelligent. Like Shakespeare's face. (6. 342-45)

We don't know what Bloom would have said, possibly something along the same lines, as the mention of sympathy would suggest, but that is not really the point. In this moment, Joyce renders sociability (within its concentric shells: the individual, the carriage, the journey) in its free-flows and barriers, in a traverse from the generic to the *entre nous*. The pairing of the invitation to non-judgment and the sudden impulse to silence are channelled into a "sympathetic" communication by gaze only, itself shying away from directness. The moment traces and forestalls two social grey areas: judgement, of course, generically, and another social, unspoken, rule of silence regarding suicides, revealed explicitly later in the chapter ("I was in mortal agony with you talking of suicide before Bloom", 6.527), but shared in the retraction of the gaze ("He looked away

from me", Bloom reads Cunningham's visibility, judging it. "He knows", 6.358). The partiality of sympathy, the limit it checks but won't traverse, are legible in the looking away. Secret and condemnable knowledge is shared, but not empathetic understanding; only the mere form of "human" sympathy, but not perhaps the content of compassion.

"Seeing through" another and "getting through" to another are distinct functions of the impulse, and both socialised in their respective ways, although they may superimpose in socialisation, sometimes to indistinction. The former ("seeing through") runs the gamut from rushed judgment to insult ("bastard", "coward", "coon"), and ends in the impenetrable grey surface of M'Intosh. The latter – a failure here in "Hades", achieved, as critics have argued, later in the novel between Bloom and Stephen – is associated by Joyce with an enigmatic, almost tautological doubling: "sympathetic human man". A silent prefix sounds perhaps in Bloom's thought, as an indirect reflection on the others in the carriage.

The terms of the distinction may be connected also to the dichotomy in "Hades" and elsewhere in the novel between *evocation* (e.g. "Great card he was", 6.57; "Poor Dignam" etc.) and *invocation*, a modality of the (making) visible which is closer to the sense of the Odysseic *nekya*, bringing out the dead. To conclude the example above, even a short-lived sympathetic encounter triggers in Bloom something more of an invocation (rather than an evocation) of the scene of his father's death. A powerful, ineluctable saccade of flashes ("The room in the hotel with hunting pictures. Stuffy it was. Sunlight through the slats of the Venetian blind.", 6.359-60), it conjures the haunting place bereft of the father's ghost, traversed by that of the "son Leopold". A reversed haunting in the midst of still life.

Ghost/Monument

"What is a ghost?", Stephen asks in "Scylla and Charybdis", "with tingling energy", and he immediately answers: "One who has faded into impalpability, through death, through absence, through change of manners." (9.147-9) Stephen circumvents the spiritual "nature" of ghosts, rejecting the penchant for dodgy spiritualism he mocks A.E. for in "Scylla and Charybdis". The definition is impersonal and engages the perceptual impossibility of the living, the senses of seeing and touch[5].

[5] "Yet, Stephen's definition is more complicated than it may first appear; to begin with, it subverts the commonplace notion that a ghost is the soul of a dead person. […] The ghost is that which is ambiguous, that which cannot be touched, that which cannot be immediately experienced. In its "fading", the ghost joins the many metaphors of incompleteness that suffuse *Ulysses* and Joyce's other writings" (Weinstock 1997, 347).

The dead are to be evoked, blandly. In invocation, as seen above, it is the subject that becomes ghostly and, as Luke Gibbons shows, haunted (2015, 37)[6]. In "Hades", the city as the place of the travelling *nekya* appears devoid of the ghosts of the dead and populated with the spectres of the living; no dead arise and the living fade to remote impalpability. Opaque materiality of the mineral (the curbstone grating against the wheel, the "mounds of rippedup roadway", 6.45-6) or the biological (such as Bloom imagining decomposition, 6.776-96) abides, but worked upon by ceaseless disintegration. The array and disarray of "all that was mortal", as Hynes says towards the end of the episode, the level of the remnant and the residue, of the putrefied, the liquified and the gaseous (treacle and the "gas of graves", or the "running gravesores", 6.999).

The dead – who answer to no impulse and, as such, traverse "Hades" merely as corpses – aren't simply missing in action as ghosts; Joyce employs a sleek substitution and sublimation by the statuary:

> Crowded on the spit of land silent shapes appeared white, sorrowful, holding out calm hands, knelt in grief, pointing. Fragments of shapes, hewn. In white, silence: appealing. The best obtainable. (6.469-62)

> Dark poplars, rare white forms. Forms more frequent, white shapes thronged amid the trees, white forms and fragments streaming by mutely, sustaining vain gestures on the air. (6.486-9)

The statue and the spectre: opposites. The statue is all-palpable, the essence of remote palpability, but Joyce, sly Aristotelian that he is, uses another word, a single term *via* two synonyms: shapes, forms[7]. Palpability is taken away from the statue, not merely pushing it closer to a spectrality that haunts not, but "morphing" it *back* to an original *eidos*. Angelic, hieratic forms, the petrified yet immaterial order that intersects the material city, almost at a single point ("hewn"). Since form is *eidos*, it is in a very true, yet unreal, sense "the best obtainable" though not the real form of the dead. In the double-entendre of this syntagm, the spiritual-philosophical meaning and the stonecutter's advert collapse together hopelessly.

Some twenty lines apart, these two fragments say the same things, in the same order, with the same cadence, in Joyce's authorial high-modernist pitch, which isn't perceptual, nor is it descriptive, but rather a fixing of the formal features of the place, the non-place between "Dublin" and "Hades". There

[6] I cannot expound here on the hauntology of *Ulysses*; Gibbons' study is a good spectro-meter in that respect. I am merely concerned with the dynamic that creates ghosting effects in the narrative of the episode.

[7] A statue is called a statue in the joke about Mulcahy from Coombe (6.717-31).

is a single difference: the ghostly forms, once moved across the wall to Prospect, move: they throng and stream and gesture, as if their translation from hewn form to "rare" ghost form were complete.[8] Joyce injects motion into the statuary to achieve this ghosting effect, and he also places the source of motion *beyond* "the eye of the beholder" (e.g. "The high railing of Prospect rippled past their gaze", 6.486), *past the observer*, as it were, as if the space itself moved. The motion effect is there, I would contend, to sustain the dynamic of dematerialisation in the episode, to render the monumental – and within it the entire register of the memorial – ghostly.

The monumental impulse is one of the "sweeping forces" that shape the city, as we see time and again in *Ulysses*. The resulting monument is the knot twisting the strands of life/death on the one hand, place/memory on the other; also the material sign by which fixation on all sides of these distinctions is socially fixed. Joyce proceeds to untie the knot, to undo a very "human" and a very Irish fixation, the latter, for instance, by casually replacing the contents of Parnell's grave with the very material phantasm of "stones" – the matter of monuments –, which would keep him not really "alive", but a "living ghost[9]. Elsewhere, as shown above, the ghost supplants the dead and the statue the ghost; the statue is then rendered ghostly, yet Joyce is not done. Once within Prospect, and the burial complete, the effect itself dissipates and the morphology crumbles back to stone:

> Mr. Bloom walked unheeded along his grove by saddened angels, crosses, broken pillars, family vaults, stone hopes praying with upcast eyes, old Ireland's hearts and hands. (6.928-30)

"Grove" is odd here, especially "his grove", as Bloom is an intruder in terms of faith, and also "unheeded". "Along his grove" would make him a minor (psychopomp?) deity in a grove of crumbling statues and hopes, a very Greco-Irish allegory, and maybe he is played up by Joyce ironically only to be brought low at the end of the episode. Still, "groove" sounds behind "grove", "along his groove", the dynamic of *Ulysses*, the mobility propelling the character along pre-established trajectories that gather and channel impulses (even those which directly irritate it, such as, at this point Bloom's impulse of imagining a ghost future bereft of the monumental knot and with only a minimal memorial moment: "Plant him and have done with him. Like down a coalshoot. Then lump them together to save time", 6.932-3).

[8] As commentators have noted this passage is reminiscent of a vision of the underworld in the *Aeneid* (Gifford & Seidman 2008, 115).

[9] Gibbons discusses the disseminated spectrality of Parnell, a familiar Joyce ghost, in *Ulysses* (2015, 207-25).

"Old Ireland's hearts and hands" is a song (Gifford & Seidman 2008, 123) of "straying" and memory ("Oh, Erin" etc.). Bloom's free association, in its Joycean groove, connects them to the statuary ("stone hopes"), the statues from which all that is ghostly has been removed. The song also mentions "love knots years have made/ With Ireland's hearts and hands"[10]. All along the groove, an unseen hand has been reaching into "Hades" and patiently, silently, untying.

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[10] It would take another article to unpack the many uses of "heart" in "Hades" and the traverse of its potentialities, from the reductively physiological to ghostly symbolic.

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WHEN STORYTELLING BECOMES HERITAGE

ADRIAN RADU[1]

ABSTRACT. ***When Storytelling Becomes Heritage***. Ireland is a country with an almost unique experience in storytelling. The stories represent a treasury of what for centuries used to be the oral tradition of the Celts, a people whose civilisation dawned in Europe but who found in Ireland a sheltered place where their original culture could be preserved. These tales take us to a fabulous and fascinating world, where reality blends with fantasy with unequalled lack of any restraint and where time, as we conceive it, practically does not count. Their setting is both ancient Ireland and the mythical world of the Sídhe, the enchanted Otherworld of the faeries (Gantz 1981, 2). It is the aim of this article to concentrate on a few of such stories or tales considered more representative and examine how they became the essence of the inherited Irish spirit and were transmitted from generation to generation and constituted what is now called Irishness.

Keywords*: Tuatha Dé Danaan, Ulster, Cú Chulainn, Macha, Finn MacCool, Fianna, Oisín, dinnsheanchas, imram, echtra, buile, Sweeney*

REZUMAT. ***Când arta povestirii devine patrimoniu***. Irlanda e o ţară cu o experienţă aproape unică a povestitului. Poveştile reprezintă un tezaur a ceea ce a fost vreme de secole tradiţia orală a celţilor, un popor a cărui civilizaţie îşi are originile în Europa, dar care a găsit în Irlanda un spaţiu ocrotit, în care cultura lor a putut fi păstrată. Aceste poveşti ne conduc într-o lume fabuloasă şi fascinantă, în care realitatea se îngemănează cu fantezia fără limite, şi în care timpul aşa cum îl concepem noi de fapt nu contează. Acest tărâm este în acelaşi timp Irlanda antică şi lumea mitică a aşa-numitelor Sídhe, fermecata Lume de Dincolo a zânelor (Gantz, 2). Articolului de faţă intenţionează să se concentreze

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asupra câtorva dintre aceste povești dintre cele considerate mai representative și să examineze cum au devenit esența spiritului irlandez, transmise din generație în generație, constituind ceea ce se numește azi specificul irlandez.

***Cuvinte cheie**: Tuatha Dé Danaan, Ulster, Cú Chulainn, Macha, Finn MacCool, Fianna, Oisín, dinnsheanchas, imram, echtra, buile, Sweeney*

The earliest stories can be associated with Irish prehistory. To these, new ones were added while the form of the existing ones changed as they crossed from one century to another and acquired new features in accordance with the new periods in which they were processed as literary products. The initial forms of transmission of such narrative material must have been oral, as storytelling was a favourite entertainment among the Celts. Storytellers probably memorised the outline and filled in the details extemporaneously, with personal additions, and all kinds of incongruities and inconstancies that may derive from this medium (Gantz, 19).

It is astonishing that all this extremely rich lore of myths, legends, sagas and tales managed to survive. Two are the main causes for this fact according to Marie Heaney (Heaney 1994, ix.). The first is that the Romans never invaded Ireland. The result is that, unlike in other Romanised countries, Roman culture did not marginalise or replace indigenous culture. The second is that the Irish were among the first peoples outside the Roman Empire to develop the art of writing. But even before they learnt the Roman alphabet and developed their own script, they were already in possession of a rich store of native learning which had been preserved by the strong oral tradition in Irish society. Their body of knowledge had been maintained by the druidic schools and when the technique of writing came to Ireland with Christianity, the scribes in the early monastic settlements wrote down not only sacred texts in Latin, but the stories that were familiar in their Irish vernacular.

These stories are peopled with a significant number of notable characters that have imposed themselves in the Celtic world. The information about them is not accurate, as we owe everything to a strictly oral tradition kept alive only through the stories of the *fíle* or the bards. As is well known, they dramatised the new events and entertained the courts with their long and stylised narratives. Later on, the monks in the monasteries materialised their thirst for knowledge and culture by writing down such old poems and sagas. They had no fear or horror of the old heathen sagas, they just introduced some Christian elements, or sometimes substituted a Christian theme, but they never tried to erase what they had inherited. The only problem is that with these tales

we may never arrive at the actual facts because the sagas were aimed at the aristocrats of the day and not at the posterity – they told the kings and courts what they wanted to hear.

Traditionally and conventionally these stories were assigned to four groups or cycles based on the common material they contain, such as facts or characters, situations, adventures or settings (Gantz 2).

The stories assigned to The Mythological Cycle are contained mainly in the fictitious or legendary history of Ireland called *Leabhar Gabhála* (*or Lebor Gabála Érenn – The Book of Invasions*) and revolve mainly round the Tuatha Dé Danaan (or Danann), the semi-divine and legendary people of Earth-Goddess Danu, a race of pre-Christian divinities, said to have been skilled in magic. Because of their knowledge they were banished from Heaven and descended on Ireland in a cloud of mist and in a great fleet of ships. They were well accomplished in the various arts of druidry, such as magic and occult lore. Their arrival is recorded in the tale called *Caith Maige Tuaired* (*The Battle of Mag Tuired*).

Historically, we do not know if the Tuatha Dé Danann really existed, since beyond legend there is hardly any archaeological evidence of their presence in the Irish space. Their appearance in the history of Ireland is mythical, as it is signalled only in stories that belong to a culture and a tradition with a long, highly elaborated oral tradition.

Tradition has it that the Tuatha Dé Danann established themselves at Tara and brought with them the four great treasures of their tribes from the four cities of the northern islands, places which they had inhabited and where they learnt their druid skills (Heaney, 3). One of their treasures was Lia Fáil (the Stone of Destiny) placed on a hill in Tara which screamed with a human cry when a rightful king sat on it. Another one was Lug's spear. The spear could be kept at rest only if its head was stepped into a special brew made of poppy leaves; anyone who held it was invincible in battle. Nuada's irresistible sword was their third treasure. No one could escape it once it was unsheathed. Dagda's giant cauldron was the fourth of their treasures. No one ever left it hungry. The cauldron bears close resemblance with the episode in the New Testament when Jesus Christ offered to the hungry masses never-ending supplies of fish and bread.

With the Tuatha Dé Danann we have the mention of the druids. As Gantz points out (10), they were neither the blood-thirsty human-sacrificers nor the great, moral and wise people, as they appear represented in many conventional instances. Their presence in Irish stories is surrounded by a halo of magic and supernatural. Their powers were unlimited – with their help, men could take different shapes: the shape of another human being or of an animal or a bird. They had powers on the essential elements, especially on fire and they could bring about terrible thunderstorms and destructive arsons. There is no strict delimitation between good druids and evil druids – they could cast their spells,

destructive or beneficial, according to no discernible criteria. They also possessed a surgeon's skills as it becomes visible in the story of their king, Nuada (or Nuadha or Nuadu Airgetlámh – Nuadu of the Silver Arm) as found in *Caith Maige Tuaired* (*The Battle of Mag Tuired*). Nuada had lost his arm in the battle and the story tells how two famous druids, Dian Cécht and his son Miach, were able to restore his arm, first as an arm made of silver, then as a flesh-and-blood but imperfect one and, finally, as his real arm which, perfectly embalmed, was given functionality by the two skilled druids. Thus, Nuada could now become king again – one of the Tuatha's laws said that one had to be perfectly healthy in order to be king. When Miach died, on his grave, a miraculous growth of herbs had sprung up, herbs that had healing powers.

The tales of the Tuatha revolve around two major aspects. The first is the continuous fight against the Fomorians, a semi-demonic race that lived on the islands scattered around Ireland. The central mythological figure that dominates this fight is Lug of the Long Arm, grandson of the Fomorian king, Balor of the Evil Eye, and son of Cian, the Sun God. The second is the fight against the Milesians, a wandering people who used to travel from the area they originally inhabited, the Iberian Peninsula, to distant places. To Ireland they came from the North of Spain. This time the Tuatha's enemies are no longer presented as evil or destructive. On the contrary, they are much like the Tuatha themselves – they too are skilled in magic, they are good fighters and talented poets.

The Milesians finally managed to conquer Ireland. When they arrived, they were met by three goddesses – Banbha, Ériu and Fódla – each of whom asked them that the island should be named for her. They chose Ériu and gave the country its Gaelic name of today, Éire or Éirinn. The Milesians settled there forever, establishing the country's final division into four provinces: Ulster in the north, Munster in the south, Leinster in the East and Connacht in the west, with Tara at the centre. Each province had its own king, chief and champions, but the High King, who lived in Tara, ruled the country helped by the provincial kings and chiefs. During their ascendancy, the heroic age of Ireland began and a powerful aristocracy and many dynasties that survived well into the Christian age were established.

Because the Tuatha were a divine race, they did not die when they were defeated but went underground and became the people of the *sídhe* (or *sídh*), or the People of the Underworld. The *sídhes* are those earthworks or circular enclosures surrounded by an earthen wall – called *raths* – that are scattered all over Ireland. After the final defeat by the Milesians, the Tuatha Dé Danann went underground and joined the people of the sídhe. Ever since, in folklore and legends, the Irish will remember them as the Little Folk, the Good People or the Faery. From time to time, these mysterious beings would enter the mortal

world, especially on Hallowe'en or May Day – two important days which are celebrated today, everywhere where the Irish live. They would mingle with the humans and come and go in their affairs in much the same way as they wander in and out of the other cycles of early literature. Sometimes they fall in love with human beings and at other times they hold the humans in thrall with their beauty and haunting music. But their kingdom is that happy Underworld under the earth and they always go back there.

The People of the Sídhe were extremely good-looking. They had no worry and sorrow and they stayed young forever. In their wonderful world below the ground, rivers ran full of mead and wine. As mentioned above, now and then they would interfere with the mortals, as it happens in *The Wooing of Étain*, the wonderful love story of Midir and Étain (Heaney, 22-36) contained in the trilogy *Tochmarc Étaíne*.

The presence of the people of the sídhe in everything that means Irish – existence, thinking, lifestyle – is indispensable to the minds of many, old and young. It is no wonder that even today, in some rustic parts of Ireland, people will leave on the thresholds of their houses a bowl of milk for the fairies that might visit them at night. And there are many people – not necessarily children – who believe in the existence of the *banshees*. They are females who live in this Otherworld; they have malevolent powers and inhabit the hillocks, the streams and the lakes to which they were originally consigned and often attack animals and humans.

The Ulster Cycle is the richest and, probably, the best-known collection of stories, since it contains the *Táin* (*An Táin Bó Cuailgne – The Cattle Raid of Cooley*), one of the most powerful and famous sagas of tales in the Irish lore, about the dynastic struggle between Ulaid (Ulster) and Connachta (Connacht) whose main hero is the Ulster hero Cú Chulainn. Besides him, as important figures of the stories that belong to Ulster Cycle, are Conchobar (Connor) Mac Nessa and the Red Branch Knights, who probably lived in the 1st century AD. The action is located in the north of Ireland, around the great fort of Emain Macha (Navan Fort), the capital of Ulster, whose remains can still be seen in the neighbourhood of Belfast. The name of 'Emain Macha' is linked with the name of another important character, Macha.

One of the best-known stories about her, also included in *The Táin* (*The Táin,* 6-8)[2], tells how Macha, wife of Crunniuc (or Crunnchu) came one evening to his house and offered to stay with him, cook for him and take care of him and his house. He married her and soon she got pregnant with twins. One day there was a fair in Ulster with games, contests and races. Crunniuc wanted to go there to watch the races. Macha bid him not to go as he would let everyone know she was with him. He promised to keep silent, but he could not hold his mouth and

[2] In Thomas Kinsella's version of *The Táin* it is included in the section called 'Before the Táin'.

boasted that his wife could beat a horse-drawn chariot in a foot-race. Though Macha was near her delivery and suffering from the pains of childbirth, she did not get any sympathy from the indifferent king of Ulster and the men watching the races and was made to run in that race. She won with an ultimate effort and just at the finishing line she gave birth to two baby twins, a boy and a girl. That place was called Emain Macha (or E(a)mhain Mhacha, i.e. 'the twins of Macha') afterwards. But she also put a terrible spell on the cruel Ulstermen:

> From this day on you will be afflicted by this weakness [of childbirth] because of your cruel treatment of me. At the hour of your greatest need, when you are under attack, every Ulsterman will become as defenceless and helpless as a woman giving birth to a child. For five days and four nights you will remain in that state and your descendants will be afflicted by the same weakness for nine generations. (qtd. in Heaney, 68)

Only young boys and one man, Cú Chulainn, were not affected by the spell. This story belongs to the so called *dinnshenchas* stories that make up the lore of prominent places, which tell how they came to be so or how they got their name.

The main hero of the Ulster Cycle is, undoubtedly, Cú Chulainn (or Cuchulainn, or Cú Chulaind), the only man untouched by Macha's terrible curse, and, as such, the one who could help the Ulstermen in their fight against Connacht. His heroic, extraordinary deeds, against the men of Connacht, ruled by their queen Medb (Maeve), a kind of goddess of sovereignty, and her husband, the king Alill, constitute most of the material included in *The Táin*.

Cú Chulainn is said to have been a semi-divine hero as his origins were half divine – his father was Lug of the Long Arm, the legendary leader of the Tuatha – and a half human being; his mother was Deichtine (or Deichtire, or Dechtire), the sister of Conchobar Mac Nessa, King of Ulster. One day Deichtine drank some water with which a tiny creature passed into her mouth and her body. Apparently, the creature was Lug himself, according to some versions. Sleeping that night, she dreamed that she was visited by Lug. The result was that she became pregnant and the child that she delivered was named Sétanta. But soon his name was changed into Cú Chulainn (Cullan's Hound) to record his promise to act as Culann's watchdog after having killed the man's original hound.

Cú Chulainn became a brave and wise young man. His physical appearance was that of a short, dark, beardless man. His hair was of three colours, brown at the roots, blood-red in the middle and blond at the crown. He had seven pupils in each eye, seven toes and seven fingers, each with the grip of a hawk. In spite of these fearsome traits he is described in many tales as handsome and attractive to women. But above everything is his courage, prowess and heroic power and stature; he was the hardest man that had ever

existed in Ulster. He is thus portrayed by Fergus (Medb's servant) to her in *The Táin*, in a passage with remarkable oratorical qualities where repetitions and similes follow swiftly one another:

> You'll find no harder warrior against you – no point more sharp, more swift, more slashing; no raven more flesh-ravenous, no hand more deft, no fighter more fierce, no one of his own age one third as good, no lion more ferocious; no barrier in battle, no hard hammer, no gate of battle, no soldiers' doom, no hinderer of hosts, more fine. You will find no one there to measure against him – for youth or vigour; for apparel, horror or eloquence; for splendour fame or form; for voice or strength or sternness; for cleverness, courage or blows in battle; for fire or fury, victory, doom or turmoil; for stalking, scheming or slaughter in the hunt; for swiftness, alertness or wildness; and no one with the battle-feat 'nine men on each point' – none like Cuchuainn. (*The Táin*, 75-6)

Before going to battle, the hero is seized by his battle frenzy (*ríastrad*) – terrible, destructive spasms of excitement – which take away any sense he possesses. When this happens, he annihilates himself and becomes a fearsome, hideous and shapeless figure as his body undergoes monstrous transformations:

> His shanks and his joints, every knuckle and angle and organ from head to foot, shook like a tree in the flood or a reed in the stream. His body made a furious twist inside his skin, so that his feet and shins and knees switched to the rear, and his heels and calves switched to the front. The balled sinews of his calves switched to the front of his shins, each big knot the size of a warrior's bunched fist. On his head the temple-sinews stretched to the nape of his neck, each mighty, immense, measureless knob as big as the head of a month0old child. His face and features became a red bowl: he sucked one eye so deep into his head that a wild crane couldn't probe it onto his cheek out of the depths of his skulls; the other eye fell out along his cheek. His mouth weirdly distorted: his cheek peeled back from his jaws until the gullet appeared, his lungs and liver flapped in his mouth, his lower jaw struck the upper a lion-killing blow, and fiery flakes large as a ram's fleece reached his mouth from his throat. His heart loomed loud in his breast like the baying of a watch-dog at its feet or the sound of a lion among bears. Malignant mists and spurts of fire […] flickered red in the vaporous clouds that rose boiling above his head, so fierce was his fury. The hair of his head twisted like the tangle of a red thornbush stuck in a gap; if a royal apple tree with all its kingly fruit were shaken above him, scarce an apple would reach the ground but each would be spiked on a bristle of his hair as it stood up on his scalp with rage. The hero-halo rose out of his brow, long and broad as a

> warrior's whetstone, long as a snout, and he went mad rattling his shields, urging on his charioteer and harassing the hosts. Then, tall and thick, steady and strong, high as the mast of a noble ship, rose up from the dead centre of his skull a straight spout of black blood dark and magically smoking like the smoke from a royal hostel when a king is coming to be cared for at the close of a winter day. (*The Táin*, 150-1)

Here once more imagination is let loose, the doorstep between reality and fantasy is crossed over again in a passage obviously meant to impress the listener/reader, saturated as it is with unexpected associations and exaggerations, with extended epithets and enumerations.

The *Táin* is one of the most important medieval sagas in Irish literature, one of the oldest stories in European vernacular style. The epic dates from about the 8th century and is contained in the following manuscripts: The *Book of Dun Cow*, in a fragmentary way, the *Book of Leinster* where it appears integral and in a more polished version, itself completed in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*.

As Dooley argues (2006, 5), *The Tain Bo Cuailnge* is the work that best represents various stages of the 'epicisation' of Irish saga writing so that, from a generic point of view, it is at certain moments legitimate to invoke for it the major structural model of a purely epic work in which the accents often shift from characters to the plot appropriately structured as a succession of events.

Cú Chulainn's presence becomes extremely significant in the *Táin*. He is the one who manages to withstand the Connacht forces and protect his province single-handedly in this saga. He is, undoubtedly the actor in the narrative who plays the hero, both for himself and for his own exploits, but many of his deeds, as Dooley remarks (113), are also in the register of service to the king Connor MacNessa and the nature of his exploits is also viewed from this perspective of loyal subject, guardian of the kingdom. Indeed, loyalty to the king extends from acts to gestures such as when he carries both the king and the king's son back with him as honourable burdens to Emain Macha.

In the *Táin* – just like in many other Irish stories – a rather trivial detail, in this case a bull, triggers an overblown reaction, here a call to arms and a subsequent invasion, skilfully wound around the central theme which is a cattle raid.

One evening, queen Medb (Maeve) and her husband Alill, king of Connacht, decide to compare their wealth (*The Táin*, 52-3). When doing this, she discovers that she has not got one thing that Alill had: a bull named Finnbenach, the White-Horned Bull. News come to her that in Ulster there is a chieftain who has a bull just as powerful as Alill's bull. Its name is Donn Cuailnge, the Brown Bull of Cooley. This is how this bull is presented in the saga. Here again the text displays declamatory features conferred by the succession of alliterations (expertly preserved by the translator, Thomas Kinsella), hyperboles and enumerations:

dark brown dire haughty with young health
horrific overwhelming ferocious
full of craft
furious fiery flanks narrow
brave brutal thick breasted
curly browed head cocked high
growling and eyes glaring
tough maned neck thick and strong
snorting mighty in muzzle and eye
with a true bull's brow
and a wave's change
and a royal wrath
and the rush of a bear
and a beast's rage
and a bandit's stab
and a lion's fury. (*The Táin*, 49)

Since the Ulster bull's master refuses to give him, the men of Connacht start a raid against Ulster to seize the animal by force. As his brothers-in-arms are suffering from Macha's spell and are not able to defend Ulster, Cú Chulainn, seized by his battle frenzy, fights alone for 3 months, using Gáe Bulga, the magic spear that he casts with the foot. Eventually, the Ulstermen win the war but, in the meantime, the brown bull has been safely sent to Maeb's residence. Here Donn Cuailgne starts to fight fiercely against Finnbenach, kill him and scatters his carcass and horns all across Ireland, before dropping dead himself (*The Táin*, 251-3).

Characteristic to the saga is the fabulous mixture of reality and fantasy. The background is authentic ancient Ireland – the stretch of land between Roscommon and Dundalk – and Irish aristocratic and tribal society of the time, but the characters are fantastic, and their acts are narrated with absolutely no restraint, whatsoever. The book is filled with amazing and often surprising twists of imagination and exaggerations: Cú Chulainn seized by his battle frenzy kills hundreds of the Connachtmen with his sling-shot, he splits Etarcomal to the navel with his sword, the heroes fight for days without exhaustion, Cú Chulainn's weapon is shoved inside Ferdia's rectum and it kills him as it opens inside his body, on her retreat Medb menstruates and fills three trenches with her blood, the fleshy remains of the White-Horned Bull are scattered everywhere across Ireland, etc. Gods and goddesses like Lugh and Morrígan appear and take an active part in the story – one should not forget that Medb is also a goddess herself and Cú Chulainn is a demigod. The *geis*[3] is copiously used in its function of taboo and given several shapes – such as the one made of a tree

[3] The term *geis* is synonymous with 'taboo' and is a ritual prohibition or prescription, a supernaturally sanctioned order to refrain from or perform certain actions (cf. Welch 1996, 212).

trunk split into a fork and stuck with severed heads to stop the Connacht army from advancing. The world that the *Táin* creates is a wonderfully fantastic and mythic world where the gigantesque and the monstrous are given real dimensions and are served as intellectual delight to its readers.

The name of The Fenian/Ossianic Cycle is given by its two main heroes, Fionn mac Cumhaill (Fionn/Finn Mac Cool) and his son, Oisín. Very many of the constituent stories are contained in the *Book of Leinster*. The tales are recurrent celebrations of the beauty of nature and birdsong, mountains, rivers and the seashore in frequently vivid and sensitive language. A collection of Finn tales also appears in *Acallam na Senorach* (*Colloquy of the Ancients*) in which pagan and Christian elements are reunited and where conversations are exchanged between a number of the surviving Fianna of Christian Ireland in the late 3rd century AD and St Patrick.

Finn Mac Cool and his band of followers, the Fianna, are the undeniable heroes of this cycle. These men roamed all over Ireland about three hundred years after Connor Mac Nessa and Cú Chulainn had gone from Emain Macha. They were an army of fighters and hunters, the most efficient and the first standing force of the High King of Ireland. Their headquarters were located in Leinster, in Almu, or the Hill of Allen but their expeditions covered larger areas, in Scotland and in the islands around Ireland. The Fianna are not a mere legend – their presence mattered and still matters for the Irish people.

There are many arguments that sustain this statement, of which one could be that the stories – of the *dinnsheanchas* (or *dindshenchas*) type, namely the lore of famous places – about the Fianna are embedded in the very landscape of Ireland: there are passes between mountains which are believed to have been cut by their swords, there are caves and 'fingerstones' (bare vertical rocks) that are associated with them, hills and woods still resound with their legends, rivers and valleys bear their names or are linked with the memories of their extraordinary deeds. For example, Slieve Nub (the Mountain of the Pig) got its name after one of Finn's deed: he killed with a spear a huge boar that had attacked him.

The Fianna conducted themselves after a very rigorous code of rules and values. There were several conditions that a young man who wanted to join this brotherhood had to fulfil (Heaney, 167-8). The first condition was that the family of the newcomer accepted his joining the Fianna and that there would be no compensation if he was wounded or killed; they would not avenge his death as only his comrades-in-arms could do that. It is quite surprising that the second condition was that the young man must have studied the art of poetry – he had to be able to compose and appreciate poetry and be familiar with the old texts. This condition is just another argument that comes to support the opinion that the Irishmen are a strange combination of this desire to fight, to prove their

courage and their natural inclination for poetry and fantasying. Naturally, the third condition was the perfect mastery of weapons.

These conditions were sealed by solemn vows which had to be taken when entering the brotherhood: that the candidate would choose a wife, not for her dowry but for herself; that he would never dishonour any woman; that he would help the poor as best he could; that he would behave courageously to fight single-handed as many as nine enemies in one go.

Besides that, the newcomer had to take an oath of allegiance to the commanders of the Fianna and swear to remain faithful to them. After this, his skills as a hunter and proficiency as a soldier were tested.

As a child, Finn Mac Cool managed to gain divine knowledge. When he was only 7 he became an apprentice of the poet and teacher Finnegas (or Finnéces), who had been waiting for 7 years to find the salmon of knowledge. Finnegas caught the salmon from the river Boyne and was roasting it on a spit when the boy touched the hot fish; he burnt his finger and thrust it into his mouth. In this way he bestowed upon himself the divine and eternal knowledge that the salmon contained.

Finn also had to prove that he was a poet, in order to be worthy to take command of the elite band of men. He had to be seen as a commendable poet and warrior and hunter.

When Finn became the Fianna's captain only the noblest, the bravest, the swiftest and the strongest men were accepted to join the Fianna. Lead by him, they defended the state, supported the king, and protected the safety and the property of the people. From November till May they patrolled the coast looking for invaders and pirates. They collected fines and put down riots and punished public enemies. In the summer months they were not paid and had to provide for themselves by living off the land: they fished and hunted and sold the skins of animals for income.

When speaking of Finn and his warriors that were also poets, it would be impossible not to mention the Fianna's greatest poets: Finn himself, Oisín, principal son of Finn Mac Cool and a skilled warrior, and Caoilte (or Cáilte). Their lyrics celebrated

> [...] the hills and the valleys of Ireland, and the life they led with their companions roaming the country. They praise the singing of the birds in summer and the bellying of the stags in winter, the excitement of the chase and the stories they told around the campfires, the companionship of their friends and the code of honour by which they all lived. (qtd. in Heaney, 169-70)

Caoilte meets St Patrick and they travel Ireland together, narrating the lore of the places that they pass, intermingling reality, myth and legend. The two

end their circuit at Tara where they find Oisín. Both narrators tell then the story of their combats.

Oisín and his poetic talents provide the opportunity for discussing an essential Irish trait: adventurousness and love for the sea and the far and away west. This feature found its materialisation in the shape of the voyage-tales – of the *imram* and *echtra* type – which involve fantastic realms where time is suspended. The best-known of such stories are *Imram Brain* (*The Voyage of Bran*), a narrative of the 7th or 8th century about a man who left Ireland in search for the Island of Women – another version of the blissful Otherworld – and *Laoi Oisín i dTír na nÓg*.

The Irish have their specific restless heroes who depart from Ireland in search of miraculous, new territories. The Celtic imagination developed the voyage-tale in its own, particular way. It seems that the Ocean, with its extraordinary sunrise and infinity had always excited this overwhelming imagination. The idea of an earthly paradise to the West was well-accepted in Christian times. One could notice that for the Irish, neither armies, nor immigrants ever arrived from the West, as they did from other directions. The Celtic hero leaps into the Western sea and travels across it to the Land of the Young, where everything is young and beautiful, rich and happy. As a rule, this wonderful world is located on an island, where humans and animals are endowed with amazing talents. The young man is driven away by passion and restlessness. Sometimes he is carried away by a lovely maiden on the back of the winged horse, sometimes in the swift boats of skin and wood, the *curraghs*, which fishermen still use in the West. Usually the hero returns to Ireland, forced either by objective circumstances or by devastating homesickness since residence in the Promised Land can only be temporary for a human.

Oisín in the Land of Youth is one of the most representative Irish voyage-tales. It is widespread in the oral tradition but was also covered in literary version in Micheál Coimín's *Laoi Oisín i dTír na nÓg* of about 1750.

One day the beautiful Niamh of the Golden Hair, the daughter of the king of the Land of the Young, comes to Oisín to lure him and persuade him thus to leave with her for the Land of the Young. Here pleasure, wealth, love and youth are eternal.

Oisín cannot resist the temptation so beautifully presented by Niamh. Sadly, he leaves Finn, his father, and plunges into the sea, directing his curragh to the West. But his trip proves to be difficult and full of adventures. Terrifying monsters, such as the giant Formor, endanger his life more than once but he manages to kill him in a fight. Eventually he reaches the Promised Land and spends some three hundred years there. All of Niamh's promises are entirely fulfilled. But this terrestrial paradise can be no mortal's abode save for a limited period of time. Therefore, Oisín, troubled by memories of the Fianna, becomes

homesick one day and wants to return to Ireland. The maiden warns him that if he goes there, he will never return. As he persists in his longing, she advises him at least not to dismount from his horse or he will become old, withered and blind and he will never be able return to her again, lost forever to the Land of Young.

Once he is back home, Oisín finds a totally different Ireland, people and places that he cannot recognise. Finn and his followers disappeared a long time long before and their names are mentioned just in old men's stories. The places where they used to live are now in ruins. He realises that the time he spent in the Tír na nÓg meant three centuries for those he left. And one day the inevitable happens: answering the call of some men who are trying to lift a stone into a wagon, he dismounts from the horse and grows old in a short time.

His horse will return to the Otherworld, but Oisín will spend the rest of what is left of his life travelling from one place to another, telling people about the extraordinary deeds of the Fianna.

In some oral versions, probably made to merge the events in the story with Christianity, Oisín meets Patrick and talks to him and tells him about himself and the Fianna. The idea was to show that the past and the Celtic ways were connected to the realities of a new period brought to Ireland by the Christians.

The tales that make up the Historical / King Cycle were composed between the 9th and the 12th centuries but refer to persons and events between the 6th to 8th centuries. They tell about rulers, dynastic conflicts and battles, and also events of historical records. The most famous story is *Buile Shuibhne* which developed from materials included in this cycle and included historical events placed in mythical and religious contexts.

The story of Sweeney, very widespread in Irish literature and associated with the Historical Cycle, is connected with the term *buile*, which is Irish for 'madness' and 'frenzy'. This buile, or frenzy is a motif that recurs in Irish literature and has in common with other cultures the reserved place that is set aside for the knowledge and wisdom of the madman, and of the outlaw. These figures reflect the perennial concern in Irish literature with the age-old polarities between culture and art, nature and technology.

There are two main aspects of the *buile* motif. The first of these encompasses the storytelling cluster that has to do with transcendental vision, and the effects that *buile* has upon it. It is very important that significant personages in early Irish society are often depicted in its literature as having transcendental or otherworldly experiences at crucial moments of transformation or initiation.

The second aspect of the *buile* motif is related more immediately to the material world of objects than it is to vision, that is, to the objective concrete world of phenomena rather than the transcendental world of vision that is affected in the aforementioned aspect of the frenzy. This second feature involves a broad panorama of perception in which the actual physical terrain of Ireland is perceived in relation to the frenzied person's state of mind, i.e. trees,

plants, animals, rocks, seascapes, harbours are named and recollected in a fluid panorama of vision of the *dinnsheanchas* type.

The key text is the twelfth century *Buile Shuibhne* (*The Madness of Sweeney*). This story, probably composed at Armagh (Northern Ireland), relates the aftermath of a battle which took place at Moira, an early 7th century event of great historical importance. The story's main protagonist is Suibhne (or Sweeney) who – as Seamus Heaney sees him in his modern rendering of the tale – is no longer a mythical figure but, conceivably, a real character, probably based on an historical king also called Sweeney.

According to the story, he is driven mad by the noise of the battle and flees the scene of the combat. He arrives at a place where a cleric called Rónán is erecting a church. Sweeney finds the cleric at the time glorifying the King of Heaven and Earth by merrily chanting his psalms with his lined, beautiful Psalter in front of him. Sweeney takes up the Psalter and casts it into the depths of the cold-water lake which was near him. Then he seizes Rónan's hand and drags him out through the church after him, and he does not let go the cleric's hand until he hears a cry of alarm. The Psalter is recovered intact from the water by an otter, but the consequence is that Rónan puts a curse put upon Sweeney, the result of which is that Sweeney has to undergo a series of purgatorial adventures and spend many years is a state of nakedness, or very sparsely clothed, levitating "in a frantic cumbersome motion/like a bird of the air" (qtd. in Heaney 1994, 9), living in tree tops and lamenting his situation:

> Without bed or board
> I face the dark days
> in frozen lairs
> and wind-driven snow.
> Ice scoured by winds.
> Watery shadows from weak sun.
> Shelter from the one tree
> on a plateau.
> Haunting deer-paths,
> enduring rain,
> first-footing the grey
> frosted-grass.
> I climb towards the pass
> and the stag's belling
> rings off the wood,
> surf-noise rises
> where I go, heartbroken
> and worn out,
> sharp-haunched Sweeney,
> raving and moaning. (Heaney, 51-4)

Sweeney's *buile* or frenzy is inherent in his celebrations of nature which he makes in lyrical verse as in the following lines charged with pictorial ethos where he praises the trees of Ireland:

> The bushy leafy oak tree
> is highest in the wood,
> the forking shoots of hazel
> hide sweet hazel-nuts.
> The alder is my darling,
> all thornless in the gap,
> some milk of human kindness
> coursing in its sap.
> The blackthorn is a jaggy creel
> stippled with dark sloes;
> green watercress in thatch on wells
> where the drinking blackbird goes.
> […]
> But what disturbs me most
> in the leafy wood
> is the to and fro and to and fro
> of an oak rod. (Heaney, 36-8)

In his wanderings Sweeney meets a fellow madman from Scotland with whom he converses on their situation, and intermittently recovers his sanity. Finally, his wanderings bring him into the house of Saint Moling (Mullins) where he is welcomed by the saint and his church and dies there. Sweeney's penitence is now over, and he can find absolution and peace of mind now when the curse put on him by a member of the church is repealed by another member of the same church.

Buile Shuibhne unites the material of Celtic wisdom (in relation to the distortion of the visual and the material world) with the penitential and the eremitical strain in early Irish Christianity. In addition, Sweeney's story is the Irish version of the Wild Man in which a lot of motifs are inserted, many of them associated with rites of passage and the transition from one state into another (Welch, 69). According to Seamus Heaney, the tale can also be read "as an aspect of the quarrel between free creative imagination and the constraints of the religious, political and domestic obligation."

Underlying this amalgam of Celtic native wisdom and Christian penance is a tension that was to prove dominant in Irish literature and thought. A distrust of the world, a doubt about the effectiveness of institutions and a denial of the possibility of human comfort were inherent in the sentiment.

The present article briefly examined a scant number of stories of the old lore and they all reveal the fact that storytelling is a hugely important part of Irish culture and heritage. For many Irish novelists and poets, musicians, playwrights and film-makers, storytelling is paramount. Irish people are a naturally sociable race, so storytelling is an inherent part of interactions between the natives, whether in the form of a joke or a longer account of an event or situation. In this context, tradition becomes important as recounting stories may be a way of teaching children important life lessons; this is how family histories were passed down to new generations, and how the various myths and folklore of the country stayed alive and became part of everyday life and gave definition and substance to the concept of Irishness. Very much of what social, cultural and heritage Ireland is today is the result of storytelling: people visit Tara and try to sit on Lia Fáil, Cú Chulainn is seen as the supreme embodiment of patriotism, Macha has a whole city to herself (Armagh), many place-names record in their Irish names the exploits of Finn MacCool and his Fianna, the people of the sídhe are yearly invoked during Hallowe'en, the best part of Ireland or of an Irish home is the west where Oisín's Otherworld was situated, many political organisations in Ireland reuse the rules and structure of the Fianna. Very much of the Irish psyche or collective consciousness of today is the result of century-old periods of accumulation and experience that storytelling only could record and transmit.

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ON "MAKING ODDKIN" IN SARA BAUME'S *SPILL SIMMER FALTER WITHER*

CARMEN-VERONICA BORBELY[1]

ABSTRACT. ***On "Making Oddkin" in Sara Baume's Spill Simmer Falter Wither***. This study argues that in its figuration of the protagonist's complex engagement with the dog that enables him to articulate his autobiographical self, Sara Baume's 2015 novel *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* adopts a critical posthumanist stance on the abyssal rift conventionally understood to separate human and non-human animals. Tapping the potential for dismantling the anthropocentric mindset, the odd kinship Ray forms with One Eye becomes a way of disrupting essentialist conceptions of selfhood and articulating alliances that catalyse the narrator's reconciliation with personal trauma and his ethically responsible repositioning in the world at large.

Keywords*: Sara Baume, Gothic, companion species, Donna Haraway, oddkin, Jacques Derrida, l'animot*

REZUMAT. ***"Înrudiri bizare" în romanul "Spill Simmer Falter Wither" de Sara Baume***. Argumentul studiului de față este acela că prin configurarea unei relații de ordin simbiotic între câine, ca specie de companie, și protagonist, ca animal autobiografic, romanul *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015) de Sara Baume se raliază unei poziții critic-postumaniste asupra faliei abisale care, în mod conventional, trasează linia de demarcație între uman și nonuman. Având potențialul de destabilizare a mentalității antropocentrice, straniile alianțe dintre Ray și One Eye devin o modalitate de bruiere a concepțiilor identitare esențialiste, proximitatea animalului catalizând reconcilierea naratorului cu trauma personală și repoziționarea sa etic-responsabilă în lume.

Cuvinte cheie*: Sara Baume, ficțiunea gotică, creaturile de companie, Donna Haraway, stranii alianțe, Jacques Derrida, l'animot*

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Asked to describe in one sentence *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* (2015), Sara Baume's answer was "Monologue to dog, with birds, trees and sea-junk" (2016). Arguably unequivocal, the author's terse description was somewhat at odds with her novel's richly textured, mellifluous prose and intensely atmospheric descriptions of Ireland's coastal and inland nature. Structured as a four-tiered narrative that follows the progression of the seasons, *Spill Simmer Falter Wither* traces the touching encounter and ensuing companionship between Ray, a 57-year old misanthrope who harbours dark family secrets and lives isolated in an Irish village by the sea, and One Eye, a mutilated dog with an aggressive penchant for other canids. Over the course of the spring, summer, fall and winter they spend together, the recluse and the ratter become symbiotically entwined, forming a "kinship of misfits" (Clark 2017). Ray compassionately assists in the dog's physical recovery from a badger attack and, in exchange, seeks solace in the proximity of the animal that he has taken into his care and confidence, recounting to it, to the reader or, ultimately, to himself a story of parental abuse, trauma and guilt.

Hailed as a "vivid debut" that deserved praise for its "poetic and heartbreaking meditation on life after grief" and for its "visceral descriptions of human and animal life" (Magennis 2015, 45), the novel received a plethora of accolades in both Ireland and the UK, winning that year the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature, the Hennessy New Irish Writing Award and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. Admired for the Beckettian untranslatability of a title that "begs to be misremembered" (O'Connor 2015) as its paronomastic suggestiveness captures the dissonant effects of the changing seasons on the natural world, Baume's novel has also been commended for its Shandean technique of digressive narration, which spurs the protagonist to break down of the boundaries of his self-enclosed world and impels him to offer hospitality to the animal "interlocutor" or for its McGahernesque apprehension of nature (Clark 2017). To top this, Estévez-Saá points out that like fellow contemporary Irish writers Deirdre Madden, Eimear McBride and Caitriona Lally, Baume shows a Joycean interest in the decipherment of the "most subtle intricacies of the human condition" and in representing the "most radical crises" an individual may be facing in the process of character construction (2018, 213).

What many reviewers, entranced by Baume's intriguing paean to Ireland's rural landscapes, have failed to notice is, however, the subdued Gothic mode in which the protagonist's self-narrative is recounted. In Baume's text, Ray relates a haunting tale of self-estrangement from a family whose very memory becomes the locus of actual horror for him. It is a memory whose telling is, for many years, forestalled by the uncanny realisation that what he perceived as the inhumanity of Robin, his father, who terrorised him as a child,

may have been replicated in the questionable humanity of his own unspeakable act: passively attending the ghastly spectacle of his parent's accidental death. If the humanity of "natural" bonds within Ray's family is cast into doubt in this Gothic plot of dysfunctional relational dynamics, an alternative to blood kinship is provided in the (anti)Odyssean section of the road trip, mapping the manifold entanglement of Ray's life story with One Eye – the aptly named, scarred badger-baiting dog, whose injuries bear testimony to the inhuman treatments it received from its previous owners. Including One Eye in the narration of Ray's flight from the ancestral home decentralises the dominantly human viewpoint, supplementing it with nonhegemonic perspectives on the vulnerability and fragility of life across the animal spectrum. The "unnatural" kinship (in the sense of alliance) that develops between Ray and One Eye pushes towards the "situated emergence of more livable worlds" for both human and dog (Haraway 2003, 51). Their ecology of interconnectivity unsettles the father's presumptuous humanist legacy that man represents the ultimate measure of all else and teaches Ray how to be human by allowing himself to nurture his kinship with the nonhuman other. This post/human symbiosis releases the human and the animal from their respective associations with the inhuman. On the one hand, Ray redeems his unethical gesture of retaliation against the injustices Robin inflicted upon him. On the other hand, One Eye's co-option in the production of Ray's narrative shakes the solidity of the culture/nature or animal/human dichotomy, suggesting that animality can be reconceptualised as the "constitutive inside", rather than as the abjected outside of what "properly" constitutes humanity (Oliver 2009, 11, 20-21).

Human, all too (in)human

Like Seamus Deane, John Banville, Claire Keegan, Patrick McCabe and Neil Jordan, Sara Baume approaches typical Irish Gothic themes: fractured genealogies and savage domestic relations, undisclosed secrets and ghostly revenants, Oedipal crises and transgressive excesses that foreground the family as a space of unnatural attachments and pathological deviations. Margot Backus has summed up the range of generic tropes that trigger uncanny psychological effects in Irish Gothic narratives that are bent on deconstructing the notion of the family as a nurturing space of domestic intimacy and on highlighting it as a hostile, alienating environment: "the guileless protagonist, a forbidden liaison, secret pacts, a labyrinthine interior space in which normative social values are inverted, and the return of the repressed – within a contemporary, realist landscape" (Backus 1999, 1). Sharply recorded in the account of the novel's orphaned albeit aging protagonist, the dissolution of human relations within

the family and their derailment into reiterable patterns of atrocity that set the father and the son against each other is projected against the backdrop of a conventional Gothic setting, the parental house inside which Ray was forcibly cloistered for most of his early youth and which, even in late adulthood, he accepts as a place of self-exile from the outside world, a place where all he can do is "lie down and let life leave its footprints on me." (Baume 2015, 48).

The ghostliness of Ray's isolated existence prior to his cohabitation with the dog is condensed in the haunted atmosphere of the house he inherits from his father through an act of illicit property transmission and patrimony usurpation: "a salmon pink house, which is my father's salmon pink house and my solitary confinement, which is home" (Baume 2015, 12). Inside the house, the spectral traces of the dead father are everywhere: from the roof space that shelters his rat-chewed skeleton, to the tattered slippers Ray still wears or the two towels and two brushes he keeps restocking in the bathroom. Rather than accommodating the self within the folds of familiarity and domestic tranquillity, the house continues to exude the uncanny atmosphere of a site that still bears witness to unfathomable past scenes of child abuse. To be more gruesomely or grotesquely precise, it encloses, within its very walls, the decaying corpse of the father. Locked in the attic, the decomposing remains are a relentless reminder of a scene in which, echoing the inhumanising abuse he experienced in his youth, Ray disavowed his own humanity, doing nothing to prevent his father's passing. In slow motion, mapping every object surrounding that scene of death, Ray's memory activates the coordinates of a place whose immobility literalises his inability to empathise with the dying man:

> My father never got up from the table all the time he was choking. He didn't thrash around; he didn't knock anything over. It seemed like it took a very long time for the old man's choked face to drop and settle against the formica. He placed his nose neatly between the crockery and leaned the weight of his head down after it without upsetting so much as a teaspoon. I remember looking at the dash of discoloured milk at the bottom of the bowl from which he'd eaten his bran flakes, at the smears of grease on the plate from which he'd forked his sausages up. I remember noticing there weren't any pieces left. The one he choked on must have been the last. (Baume 2015, 231)

Echoing the defining *topos* of Irish Gothic fiction, the decrepit and derelict Big House, with its attendant anxieties of carceral interment or illegitimate emplacement in the absence of the father's rightful authority, the "salmon pink house" is conveyed as a psycho-spatial hub of Oedipal transgressions, of muted rebelliousness and repressed anguish. "I haven't fought in any wars or fallen in

love. I've never even punched a man or held a woman's hand. I haven't lived high or full", Ray confesses about his "squat, vacant life" (Baume 2015, 48). Uncomplicated ways of managing the limits between inside outside, like making a phone call or answering the doorbell, are beyond his grasp. Ray's (self)concealment like a shameful, abject secret in the house, whose boundaries he could not cross even to negotiate the slightest exchange with the village community, coupled with other unresolved traumas of his youth – for instance, his abandonment in the wilderness by his father and his return home with the help of a stranger or his not being allowed to play with the other children and go to school despite his avid reading habits – provided sufficient reason for his amnesiac blockages or for his inability to speak out his grievances:

> Whatever the name of the woman who drove me home, I knew my father told her I'd run away, and wouldn't come back, and couldn't be found. Because I wasn't a right-minded little boy. I wasn't all there. I was special. See how that explains why nobody came to ring the bell again? It explains why I never started school, never lined up with all the other little boys and girls, all those all there and right-minded and unspecial. It explains why I never got a chance to play on the straightforward swings and slides and see-saws. Now do you see? Now I see. I see how uncourageous I was. I see how I only asked about the neighbour woman because I was yet too afraid to ask about my mother woman instead. The old man was dead and still I hadn't the nerve to confront him. (Baume 2015, 233-34)

The Gothic house, Ian Duncan, shows, "insistently thematise[s] the structure of a dislocated origin" encapsulating, "in settings of decayed ancestral power […] the malign equation between an origin we have lost and an alien force that invades our borders, haunts our mansions, possesses our souls" (2010, 23). In Baume's novel, the inhumanity of past child-rearing practices cannot be erased in the present, despite the disappearance of the irresponsible father who may have turned his own progeny into a scapegoat of his own fallibilities and vulnerabilities. As the author suggests, Ray walks a thin "line between situational unhappiness and mental illness" (Clark 2017). Indeed, granted the reliability of Ray's narrative standpoint, his father deployed his entire energies towards disavowing their kinship and erasing the mark of paternity from his child, seeking to deny the latter's sanity and normality or to restrict his access to networks of sociability.

In turn, Ray's recollections of growing up in the shadow of a tyrannical father are so anguishing that he occasionally fantasises about obliterating all biological ties to him or to an ever-absent mother, pretending that "I was born all alone without any fuss, without any gore. And right here, in my father's house. I like to believe the house itself gave birth to me, that I slithered down

the chimney, fell ignobly into the fire grate and inhaled my first breath of cold, swirling ash" (Baume 2015, 13). We learn that his phantasy about the primal scene of birth from which all human presence is written off becomes a symptom of his later aversion to mankind, hearkening back to a debilitating memory implanted in young Ray's mind by his father, who held his offspring responsible for the early demise of his wife Ruby during childbirth. However, towards the end of the last section, "Wither", when the narrator discovers his mother's tombstone during one of his strolls with the dog, he eventually realises that her death, which actually occurred when he was a two-year old, was unrelated to his coming into the world:

> To find my mother, my mother's grave. But there's no need. Now I find her easily. All the years I never looked, and now here is my mother. Here she was all along. OUR DEARLY BELOVED RUBY. On a plain grey slab in the perpetual downpour. DIED 1956 AGE 23 the headstone says. I answer by saying it out loud.
> 'Nineteen fifty-six,' I say, 'when I was two.'
> You know I believed she died when I was born, because I was born, and that my father always blamed me. I believed I'd never known her, and now I see I knew her two whole years and can't remember a single moment. And so I wonder why he blamed me anyway, and if he didn't blame me at all, why was he always so unkind? (2015, 243)

Whereas the humanity of the father's conduct continues to be shrouded in uncertainty, particularly since the legacy of pain he bestowed upon his son defies all rational explanation, unravelling the secret surrounding the loss of the mother raises the possibility that his father may also have been susceptible to suffering. Insufficiently processed, the grief caused by Ruby's death led her husband to cease communicating with Ray, who paradoxically grew up as a sort of feral child within the household, with all but a precarious grasp of language as a social skill and with no tools for carrying out his own work of mourning for his father. Left unaddressed, past trauma seeps across generational boundaries, violently erupting into a present whose spinning out-of-kilter is, nonetheless, provisionally put on hold by the new alliances and kinships the protagonist forms outside the realm of the human and beyond the Gothic trap(ping)s of the familial house.

Nonhuman, all too (post)human

Suppressed for decades, Ray's childhood memories of his father's absenteeism, maltreatment and the psychological harm he inflicted upon him surge into a life narrative that can be voiced neither in the proximity of other humans, nor in the intimate space of selfhood, but in "conversation" with the

animal that "becomes a projection of the narrator's desires, losses and thwarted longings" (O'Connor 2015). Opening up a space of enunciation that does not belong exclusively to the narrating "I" but also includes the "you" of his companion and would-be interlocutor, the dog Ray has saved from the pound, Baume's text appears, therefore, to be dialogical, in its positing of the dog as the direct addressee of the narrator's autobiographical confession. In an attempt to fathom the innermost recesses of human memory, a memory haunted by debilitating grief and foreclosed mourning (for the dead mother) and by the secret of unutterable guilt (for the death of the father), Ray's second-person narrative expands its compass beyond the bounds of his insulated self and disseminates across a network of "distributed reflexivity" (Wolfe 2008, 116), in which the monologising self cedes primacy of vision and ethical agency to the animal other.

In its questioning of the deeply embedded dualisms underpinning anthropocentric thought and practices and in its representation of the new relationalities made possible by Ray's empathetic response to the animals' plight, Baume's text participates in the posthumanist Derridean critique of the "abyssal rupture" deemed to separate human and nonhuman animals, grounded in the idea of man being superior to the other species, which are consigned to a domain of abject, disposable otherness (2008, 28-29). Thus, like Derrida's dizzying recognition, in *The Animal That Therefore I Am,* that the cat's gaze reciprocates his own, impelling his interrogation of the limits and polar divisions between the singular species ("we men" or "I, a human") and the countless other species collapsed under the same appellative ("what we call animals"),

> It can look at me. It has its point of view regarding me. The point of view of the absolute other, and nothing will have ever given me more food for thinking through this absolute alterity of the neighbour or of the next (-door) than these moments when I see myself seen naked under the gaze of a cat. (2008, 11)

Ray senses that his ontological security is destabilised when the dog returns his gaze, albeit from the photographic frame of an objectified representation. From the outset, while collecting the dog from the animal shelter, Ray recognises the deep-seated connection he shares with One Eye, going as far as to claim it is the animal that has found him and not the other way around:

> You're sellotaped to the inside pane of the jumble shop window. A photograph of your mangled face and underneath an appeal for a COMPASSIONATE & TOLERANT OWNER. A PERSON WITHOUT OTHER PETS & WITHOUT CHILDREN UNDER FOUR. […]
> Your photograph is the least distinct and your face is the most grisly. I have to bend down to inspect you and as I move, the shadows shift with

> my bending body and blank out the glass of the jumble shop window, and I see myself instead. I see my head sticking out of your back like a bizarre excrescence. I see my own mangled face peering dolefully from the black. (Baume 2015, 3)

Meeting across the interstitial surface of the window pane are their overlapping facial outlines. The piercing detail that jams and clears, at the same time, Ray's field of vision is the composite structure of the "bizarre" shape he forms together with the dog, activating his awareness of the "heterogeneous multiplicity of the living" that the animal other encapsulates (Derrida 2008, 31). As an "inappropriate/d other" himself (Haraway 2004, 69), Ray refuses the tyranny of the limit. His keenly discerning eye detects myriad problematic areas of interspecies relations. He notices, for instance, how the nature reserve in his village, squeezed amidst an oil refinery and a power station, barely suffices as breeding ground for the mallards, grebes and herons: "sandwiched by the tunelessness of industry, the birds shriek and sing, defiantly" (Baume 2015, 14). Moreover, the jumble shop becomes the "tiny refuge of imperfection" where the pictures of countless incarcerated animals presage an intimation of his shared vulnerability with them:

> I always stop to gawp at the window display and it always makes me feel a little less horrible, less strange. But I've never noticed the notices before. There are several, each with a few lines of text beneath a hazy photograph. Altogether they form a hotchpotch of pleading eyes, foreheads worried into furry folds, tails frozen to a hopeful wag. The sentences underneath use words like NEUTERED, VACCINATED, MICROCHIPPED, CRATETRAINED. Every wet nose in the window is alleged to be searching for its FOREVER HOME. (Baume 2015, 4)

As Derrida points out, the reciprocating animal gaze "offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man" (Derrida 2008, 12). The animal responds not by immersing itself in language, but by prompting a response from the human in the form of a self-interrogation. The animal – rendered through a portmanteau term coined by Derrida, *l'animot*, with its twofold connotations of plurality and verbality – compels a reconsideration of the logic of the limit, not by effacing all differences between humans and nonhumans, but by "multiplying its figures, […] complicating, thickening, delinearising, folding, and dividing the line" (Derrida 2008, 12). Like Derrida's *animot*, One Eye elicits Ray's self-introspection and a redefinition of the limits of his humanity in the form of the autobiographical story he tells. It is a story in which he discards all claims to species superiority, refusing to cordon off the

animal's living space from his own or to issue commands that might discipline or constrain the dog's movements:

> 'BOLD!' I holler, 'BOLD BOLD BOLD!' But I know it's wrong of me to scold what's natural to you. I'm sorry, I shouldn't holler […]
> I don't want to turn you into one of those battery-powered toys that yap and flip when you slide their switch. I was wrong to tell you you're bold. I was wrong to try and impose something of my humanness upon you, when being human never did me any good. (Baume 2015, 38)

True, dogs do not speak "furry humanese", as Donna Haraway states, barring temptations of sentimentalising anthropomorphism (2003, 49). Nor do they *not* have a capacity to respond, for as our "companion species", they are "relentlessly becoming-with" and co-evolving with humans (Haraway 2016, 13). Living-with the animal drives Ray to attempt envisaging the world from a canine's perspective and he even claims to reconstruct One Eye's back story by dreaming as his dog might: "I dream I'm inside a pen with a water dish but no food bowl. […] Tonight, I dream of the place where you came from, the place where you were starved" (Baume 2015, 35). The manifold entwinements between Ray and One Eye – their "strangeness", their disfigurement and reclusiveness – probe and push the limits of the human-animal binary, as their "ontological choreography" (Haraway 2003, 51) blurs, confuses and admixes the boundaries that ought to separate human and dog, creatures that "inhabit not just different genera and divergent families, but altogether different orders" (2003, 1).

For Ray, as seen above, blood kin is the mark of corrupted genealogies that ensure the transmission of violence, guilt and trauma within the family across generations and that block the process of individuation and selfhood formation. Even as he approaches old age, he feels that to face the pressures of human sociality, he must wear an invisible "spacesuit which buffers me from other people" (Baume 2015, 9). The alternative of a family that is hollowed out of compassion, affection and support is the trans-species kinship he forges with the dog, with which he builds those new relationalities and reciprocal "response-abilities" that should intimately bind humans and non-humans in post-anthropocentric times: in other words, "making kin as oddkin rather than, or at least in addition to, godkin and genealogical and biogenetic family troubles important matters, like to whom one is actually responsible" (Haraway 2016, 2).

The "relationship is the smallest possible unit of analysis", as Haraway insists in her seminal text about the cyborg, that other trope of "heterogeneous associations", "queer confederacies" and compulsory symbioses (besides the coyote, the vampire or companion species) that has enabled her to reconfigure the notion of kinship in contemporary technoculture (2004, 315, 128). "Where

were you last winter?", Ray asks One Eye as the end of their journey together approaches. "I find it hard to picture a time when we were simultaneously alive, yet separate. Now you are like a bonus limb. Now you are my third leg, an unlimping leg, and I am the eye you lost" (Baume 2015, 40). While embracing the messy complexity of his co-constituted subjectivity in the presence of the animal, Baume's narrator simultaneously acknowledges the irreducible difference of the animal other and engages responsibly and empathetically in telling, at once, a story of self-realisation and a narrative of man's "thinking-with" and "becoming-with" what Haraway describes as "naturalcultural multispecies" – the reciprocally shaping encounters between species or the areas of interspecies relationality that render the nature/culture distinction inoperable or indiscernible (2016, 40). Tapping the potential for dismantling the anthropocentric mindset, the odd kinship Ray forms with One Eye becomes a way of disrupting essentialist conceptions of selfhood and articulating alliances that catalyse the narrator's reconciliation with personal trauma and his ethically responsible repositioning in the world at large.

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FEASTING ON THE TEXT: THE *ULYSSES* CENTENARY IN ROMANIAN PERIODICALS

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ABSTRACT. ***Feasting on the Text: the "Ulysses" Centenary in Romanian Periodicals*.** The aim of this paper is to revisit a selection of the Romanian periodical issues dedicated to James Joyce's fiction up until the 1980s. Our investigation of the main themes and topics published before and after the year 1982 reveals an alignment with an already established shift of perception in Joycean studies: the author is glorified as an Irish and/or Irish-European modernist writer whose assignment to a specific, local culture is the pre-condition of his modernity and innovative style.

Keywords*: reception, translation, Romanian periodicals, Irish modernism, the European canon*

REZUMAT. ***Ospățul textual: centenarul James Joyce în publicistica românească***. Lucrarea operează o selecție a câtorva reviste și ziare românești care au dedicat spațiu editorial ficțiunii scriitorului James Joyce. Analiza noastră, care face referire inclusiv la câteva dintre temele abordate de aceste reviste în jurul centenarului Joyce, reflectă o schimbare de percepție în studiile joyceene în general. Această modificare vizează receptarea lui Joyce ca scriitor irlandez și/sau irlandezo-european a cărui apartenență la o cultură specifică este temelia modernității și a inovației sale stilistice.

Cuvinte-cheie*: receptare, traducere, periodice românești, modernism irlandez, canonul european*

A survey of some of the key moments in the reception of James Joyce in Romania will automatically offer an overview of the mechanisms involved in the editorial practices concerning the (local) translation and dissemination of

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international canonic writers in the 20th century. The non-linear history of Joyce's reception (in our country, as well as in other parts of the world) records early responses to the Irish writer's fiction and attempts at translating fragments of his works – which are symptomatic for the efforts invested in grasping the meaning of innovative forms of expression. Modernist literature in general and Joyce's texts in particular found an oblique way of gaining the attention of their contemporary readers and critics, which at that time was via translation. Our paper will operate a selection of some of the most illustrative episodes in the century since the serialisation of *Ulysses*, with a focus on the centenary of Joyce's birth and the respective festivities dedicated to accommodating such uneasy literature within the local linguistic, cultural and certain political constraints.

James Joyce had typed the first three episodes of *Ulysses* by March 1918; promises of the novel's serialisation in the United States were confirmed at the end of the same month, when "Telemachus" appeared as "Ulysses I" in the *Little Review*. Fragmentary translation into French would mediate the access of the Joycean text to the Romanian readership. Thus, as early as 1922, Romanian periodicals (*Cugetul românesc* and *Cuvântul*) reacted by denouncing the novel as pornographic. One notable (and slightly belated) exception to the series of negative responses to *Ulysses* was signed by Ion Biberi in his 1935 article published in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* and simply entitled "James Joyce". Where previous periodicals had identified vulgar material, Biberi would read signs of "authenticity" (of experience and language alike):

> A gaudiness of tone, of language. Any decency of expression, any literary convention gone. These serve when one is in the world, in a certain position, when sparing someone of something or when one wishes to respect the rules. What about when one is naked or alone? Does one still have the time to work on their speech, to follow the rules and observe the norms? (…) Joyce's people, seen on the inside, are very much authentic and alive. (Biberi 1935, 395, my translation)

While Biberi continues to praise Joyce's interior monologue as a reaction against the stylistic norms of the time, which arguably promotes the Irish writer as "the creator of a new poetic alphabet" (1935, 403), he sees *Work in Progress* as a less accessible experiment denounced as artificial:

> In this new *Work in Progress*, the author tries to experiment with a much deeper technical revolution, aiming to work with the very essence of poetic expression: the *word* itself. (…) Verbal genius aside, Joyce's self-conscious construction is deemed artificial. The text loses its fluidity, thus becoming a merely obscure, indecipherable notation. (Biberi 1935, 406, my translation)

Ion Biberi is among the few Joycean readers to articulate an intuition regarding the debates around the exhaustion of the novel as the most suitable means of expressing a new sensibility. What the Romanian writer and critic hints at when describing *Work in Progress* as the "expansion of the *univer-Joyce-au*" (1935, 406, my translation) is this ability of Joyce's fiction to challenge not only the limits of language, but also those of time, as "(…) the novelty of expressive means, the daring authenticity of his creation can only be duly assessed over a longer period of time." (1935, 406, my translation) Biberi additionally alludes to the ongoing debate on the European literary scene about the novel (and its survival) as the most appropriate artistic formula of the time. In the concluding remarks on *Work in Progress*, he states that "[n]either the publication of the volume, nor its translation will bring a definite solution to an open debate." (1935, 406, my translation) Thus, the critic echoes the contemporary concerns about the exhaustion of the novel and its expressive means, José Ortega Y Gasset's *The Dehumanisation of Art* being one of the staple titles in this respect:

> Anyone who gives a little thought to the conditions of a work of art must admit that a literary genre may wear out. (…) It is erroneous to think of the novel – and I refer to the modern novel in particular – as of an endless field capable of rendering ever new forms. Rather it may be compared to a vast but finite quarry. (…) present-day writers face the fact that only narrow and concealed veins are left them. (Ortega Y Gasset 1968, 57-58)

Biberi's knowledge of the contemporary changes in the literary sensibility, in the cultural and commercial tastes of the readers is by no means singular among the Romanian literati; weekly gazettes such as *Vremea* would occasionally publish a short section entitled "Curierul strein", which featured references to the ongoing European or American polemics and debates. The May 1931 issue of *Vremea*, for example, hosts the well-known French publisher Bernard Grasset's observation that the novelists of the time had lost the creative energies necessary to revitalize a tired and tiresome genre: "We must acknowledge the fact that the audience has grown tired of the novel… In what I am concerned, I have decided to brutally dismiss all false novelistic talents. By that I mean nine out of ten novelists today." (1931, 8, my translation) Ion Biberi's prediction that the test of time would confirm whether the Joycean texts had exhausted all possibilities for the survival of the novel as a genre is later echoed in Romanian periodicals; indeed, a temporal leap of almost five decades entitles Virgil Stanciu to claim that "[…] there was no Joyce model, in the sense that he left no room for similar works to be written […], thus fully exhausting its vision, clearing it of anything it could offer anymore." (1982, 50, my translation) In a recent book review of Mircea Mihăieş's *Ulysses 732*, *Romanul romanului* (Polirom, 2016), Virgil Stanciu reiterates the idea that writers such as Proust or Joyce had opened the door to narrative and stylistic innovation, while, at the same time,

closing it on any potential followers or proselytes. Approaching such works as those pertaining to authors labelled by Moravia "the gravediggers of the 19-century novel" (Bergonzi qtd. in Roberts 2016, 422) became increasingly difficult in countries where editorial practices and censorship only added to the difficulty of accessing certain titles in the original language. Some of the first attempts at translating Joyce into Romanian (usually via French) were published in the 1930 and 1934 issues of *Adevărul literar și artistic* which featured the translation of *Eveline* by two subsequent anonymous translators (known as A. and M. respectively), along with a fragment of *Ulysses* signed by Al. Philippide. The subsequent "silent" decades in the reception of James Joyce in Romania until the mid-1960s can be traced back to the context of Romanian communism. The years following Joyce's death coincided with the intensification of the Stalinist regime, when, as Arleen Ionescu recounts, Joyce's name gradually "disappeared from literary journals which […] failed to absorb and reflect on what the rest of the world has to offer." (Ionescu 2014, 97)

The gap marked by this cultural silence in Romania is bridged by later efforts invested in recuperating Joyce's texts, the years of relative liberalisation and cultural opening (1964-1971) bringing forth certain key developments in the configuration of a Romanian readership. In the process, the role of the cultural and artistic magazine entitled *Secolul 20* was decisive, as it had become one of the most important vehicles for the translation and dissemination of contemporary literature in the years of intense censorship and political propaganda. Despite the fact that it was kept under the close scrutiny of the communist authorities, the magazine still managed to publish a generous amount of "Western material", from philosophy to literature and to performance arts. As Arleen Ionescu shows in her 2014 book on *Romanian Joyce. From Hostility to Hospitality*, several issues of *Secolul 20* were allowed to include translations of Joyce into Romanian from the mid-1960s up until 1984 when the first complete and (to this day only) Romanian version of *Ulysses* eventually saw the light of print. Bridging the translation gap was made possible by a 1965 issue of *Secolul 20* (2/1965), which was entirely dedicated to James Joyce's fiction. While it contained heterogeneous (biographical, critical) material, the editorial event undeniably marked the beginning of a growing interest (though, at times, interrupted) in researching and translating Joyce's works. Issue no. 2/1965 accommodated: translations from *Dubliners* (Frida Papadache), *Chamber Music* (Marcel Breslașu, Taşcu Gheorghiu, Petre Solomon), *Telemachus* (Gellu Naum and Simona Drăghici), critical studies (Dan Grigorescu – *Joyce irlandezul*, Ion Biberi – *Monologul interior la James Joyce*, Simona Drăghici – *Contemporani și urmași* etc.). Frida Papadache completed the translation of *Dubliners* in 1967, while the Romanian version of *A Portrait* was signed by the same translator and published in 1969.

The 1970s issues of *Secolul 20* witnessed the beginning of the serialized translation of *Ulysses* by Mircea Ivănescu or that of the international

canonic studies and approaches to Joyce's fiction which would hail him as a British modernist writer. Issue no. 2/1977, for example, released translations from Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (and his claim that Joyce belonged to a pre-determined literature of the English canon, 1977, 50) or from Michel Butor's study on Joyce and the "modern novel". The early 1980s are marked by a change of vision in the pages of *Secolul 20*, particularly with reference to Joyce's reception as an Irish writer, towards acknowledging the existence of an Irish literature and its inclusion in the European literature and culture.

Issue no. 4/1982 marks Joyce's centenary and it represents a piece in the series of UNESCO anniversaries. It is well worth looking into for several reasons, one of the most important being Joyce's canonic status by his inclusion in the Irish-European literary canon. The opening pages recycle extracts from Joyce's "company" of critics, such as: T. S. Eliot, E. Wilson, Yvan Goll, Italo Svevo, V. Larbaud, S. Zweig, W B Yeats, Ezra Pound, Marcel Brion, Carola Giedion-Welcker, Michel Butor or Richard Ellmann. Most of these selections gloss Joyce's blend of Irishness and Europeanism, his belonging to a specific, local culture within a larger, more inclusive tradition. Similar critical approaches will be adopted by Romanian critics and theorists, such as Ion Ianoşi, Andrei Brezianu or Radu R. Şerban; the latter celebrates Joyce's irony as quintessentially Irish, since the writer:

> […] often adopted the ironic pose that the Irish background gave him. He often tries to extricate himself from that background, to become a citizen of the globe, but Ireland and Catholicism would remain there, against his will. Fighting against these, Joyce confirms them and himself as an Irishman tied to the prejudice and the austere beauty of Ireland. (Şerban 1982, 82, my translation)

Several key translations find their place in the centenary issue, among which: "Cyclops" (Mircea Ivănescu), "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" (Andrei Ionescu) or Raymond Porter's "The Cracked Lookingglass – Joyce and the Image of Ireland" (Lidia Vianu). Almost twenty years had passed between the first attempt at opening the first pages of *Ulysses* up to the Romanian readership in 1965 and the completion of the translation and subsequent publication of the book in 1984. A comparative reading of the two versions of *Telemachus* (the 1965 version translated by Gellu Naum and Simona Drăghici vs. the 1984 one by Mircea Ivănescu) reveals several differences that become illustrative for the changes in the local translation and editorial practices between the 1960s and the 1980s in Romania. As Arleen Ionescu points out in her book on *Romanian Joyce*, ideological constraints led to several instances of ambivalence and/or (self-) censorship in the process of translation and texts managed to reach a Romanian through a similar bypass:

> Translations from foreign works had somehow to adopt a similarly ambivalent line of conduct and the expedient most resorted to was to

> insert translator's introduction or editorial notes which would proclaim the translator's dislike of, and scorn at, the original context of the literary work. (Ionescu 2014: 155)

With Joyce alone, when textual *loopholing* alone seemed risky, certain words, phrases and, sometimes, even fragments disappeared in the target language as a result of silencing taboos such as sexuality, religion or food/drinks. The first pages of *Ulysses* are a case in point: both the 1965 and the 1984 versions feature ellipses which, on a return to the original text, point to the extraction of some religious lexical items or phrases. Even a superficial reading of the opening pages will reveal the liberties vs. the limitations the translators assumed in the temporal distance which separated them. In the next lines, we offer a brief selection of illustrative fragments.

In Buck Mulligan's parody of the words Jesus uttered to his disciples and mockery of scientism and transubstantiation, the original text quotes:

> He added in a preacher's tone:
> — For this, O dearly beloved, is the genuine christine: body and soul and blood and ouns. Slow music, please. (Joyce 1993, 1.20)

In the 1965 version of the paragraph, Gellu Naum and Simona Drăghici opt for a more interpretive translation variant and provide a Romanian equivalent of the medieval blasphemous oath for "blood and ouns" rendered as "fir-ar să fie" ("damn it"), as well as a replacement of "music" with "organ", bringing the register closer to a religious context:

> Şi adăugă pe un ton de predicator:
> — Pentru că aceasta, o, prea iubiţii mei, e cea mai fină Cristină, trupul şi sufletul, *fir-ar să fie.* Mai încet *orga*, vă rog. [(…) body and soul, *damn it; organ playing* slower, please – Joyce 1965, my emphasis]

Mircea Ivănescu, on the other hand, chooses the literal translation of "blood and wounds" and preserves "music" in:

> Adăugă pe un ton de predicator:
> — Căci aceasta, o mult iubiţii mei, este o adevărată Christină: trupul şi sufletul, *şi sângele şi plăgile.* Aicea, *muzica înceată*, vă rog. [body and soul, and *blood and wounds. Music playing slower*, please – Joyce 1984, 5, my emphasis]

A similar mechanism of lexical and semantic expansion/contraction is deployed in the lines where Mulligan irreverently continues his mock re-enactment of the mystery of the Mass: "*He peered sideways* up and gave a *long slow whistle of call*…" (Joyce 1993, 1.24, my emphasis) As in the previous extract, the 1965 translation further manipulates the religious context, with

the lexical pinpointing of "up" as "sky" and an added semantic value of the authoritative register hinted at in the text:

> *Mijindu-și ochii spre cer*, Buck Mulligan scoase *o șuierătură profundă și poruncitoare*... [*squinting toward the sky* with *a deep, imperative whistle* – Joyce 1965, my emphasis]

More faithful to the original version, Mircea Ivănescu prefers the focus on the movement rather than (a specific) object and a less ceremonial rendition of the auditory element:

> *Își ridică pieziș privirile* și scoase un șuierat prelung, grav, ca o chemare... [*He gazed upwards sideways* and gave *a long, low whistle, like a call* – Joyce 1984, 5, my emphasis]

At other times, the translator's passing glance gives way to slips of the tongue or errors; one such example is Mulligan's extended invitation to Athens: "We must go to Athens. Will you come if I can get the aunt to fork out twenty quid?" (Joyce 1993, 1.42-3). Interestingly enough, the translation into Romanian seems to be different in the versions dated 1965 and 1984 respectively. Gellu Naum and Simona Drăghici render a less colloquial, albeit (partially) more accurate conversion of the text, with a preference for semi-formal future tense in: „Trebuie să mergem la Atena. *Ai să vii* cu mine dacă se hotărăște mătușa să scuipe *douăzeci de lire*?" [We must go to Athens. *Will you come* if my aunt decides to fork out *twenty quid*? – Joyce 1965, my emphasis]. In the 1984 translation, the passage regains the conversational tone of Mulligan's typical discourse, with the present tense (with future meaning) for the verbal invitation and a taste for contracted forms; yet, a translator's error makes its way in the target language (where *twenty quid* becomes *forty quid*): „Trebuie neapărat să mergem la Atena. *Vii și tu dac-o* conving pe mătușă-mea să scuipe *patruzeci de lire*?" [We must absolutely go to Athens. *Are you coming* if I get my aunt to fork out *forty quid*? – Joyce 1984, 6, my emphasis].

It has been repeatedly claimed that, by the 1980s, the thematic treatment of sexuality, religion or gastronomy had posed a series of difficulties for authors and translators alike, often leading to efforts of "trimming and re-stylizing any passage" (Ionescu 2014, 168) that would fall prey to controversial interpretation. It seems, therefore, all the more surprising to have the possibility of recovering some of the thematic overtones from previous exercises in translation, such as the 1965 "Telemachus". The exchange between Stephen and Mulligan regarding the presence of the Englishman Haines goes almost unnoticed in both the source language and in the 1984 translation:

> — Tell me, Mulligan, Stephen said *quietly*.
> — Yes, *my love*? (Joyce 1993, 1.47-8 – my emphasis)

> — Spune-mi, Mulligan, zise Stephen încet. [Tell me, Mulligan, Stephen said *quietly*.]
> — Da, *iubitule*? [Yes, *love*? – Joyce 1984, 6, my emphasis]

The previous version, on the other hand, is faithful to the style adopted in the translation of the first episode, in general, with the gradual insertion of lexical items that are inexistent, as such, in the English text, most of which help enhance the ironic treatment in the (mock-) religious register:

> — Ia spune-mi, Mulligan, începu Stephen, *paşnic*. [Tell me, Mulligan, Stephen started *peacefully*.]
> — Ce, *îngeraşule*? [What, *angel*? – Joyce 1965, my emphasis]

The same pattern is repeated in the subsequent lines, where Mulligan's irony is directed at Haines and Stephen both in: "You know, Dedalus, you have the real Oxford manner. He can't make you out. O, my name for you is the best." (Joyce 1993, 1.53-5), where Ivănescu steers away from (religious) allusions with:

> Ştii, Dedalus, *tu* ai adevăratele maniere de Oxford. Ăsta nu reuşeşte să te înţeleagă. O, *tot numele pe care ţi l-am găsit eu e cel mai potrivit*... [You know, Dedalus, *you* have the real Oxford manners. He can't make you out. Still *the name I have found for you is the better one*… – Joyce 1984, 6, my emphasis]

On the other hand, Gellu Naum and Simona Drăghici seize the opportunity to embed the religious element in the semantic assimilation of *naming* and *baptizing*, but prosaically end with a cacophony (*şi încă cum*):

> Tu, Dedalus, tu ai adevăratul stil de Oxford. El nu te poate întrece. *Mai întâi fiindcă te-am botezat eu,* şi încă cum... [You, Dedalus, possess the real Oxford *style*. He can't *outrival* you. First *because I baptised you*… – Joyce 1965, my emphasis]

In her analysis of the Romanian reception of European modernism in general, and Joyce's fiction in particular, Arleen Ionescu revisits Derrida's *hostipitality* (a coinage of *hostility* and *hospitality*), which, in her vision best captures the uneasy transfer of the Joycean text to the Romanian literary market before 1989. Our attempts to mirror the two translations point to the efforts[2] invested in the progressive assimilation of Joyce's modernism at a time when postmodernism was already making an entrance on the international literary scene. Difficult as this process might have been, the 1984 complete translation of *Ulysses* into Romanian is,

[2] As Mircea Mihăieş points out in his 2012 article published in „România literară", entitled "Joyce şi alţi clasici" ["Joyce and Other Classics"], M. Ivănescu did not have access to essential instruments for his translation, such as D. Gifford and R. Seidman's *Ulysses Annotated. Notes for James Joyce's* Ulysses.

to this day, the only one available. Subsequent reprints of the book (1996, 2012) brought nothing new to the content of the translated text. Arleen Ionescu's investigation of *Romanian Joyce* concludes on a positive note by claiming that:

> In spite of, but occasionally perhaps also thanks to, all these alterations, mis/re-interpretations and textual tamperings, Joyce's texts thus managed to *live on*… (Ionescu 2014, 193)

The survival of *Ulysses* and inexhaustibility of Joyce's fiction have, time and again, led readers, critics and translators alike to interrogate the very "substance" that the text feasts on in order to live on. Joyce's hailed modernism is, in its turn, the object of theoretical investigations which, in turn, feed an entire industry still stating that "the question of where his modernism sprang from is difficult to answer." (Stewart 2006, 133) While, for some of his contemporaries, Joyce was a Euromodernist by opposition to being "local" (in Ezra Pounds's words: "He writes as a European, not as a provincial", Pound qtd. in Stewart 2006, 134), more recent critical approaches praise his *camouflaged* Irishness as the writer's initial and constant project, and one that still seems open to interpretation and debate:

> […] Joyce was Irish and therefore implicitly pre-modern; yet, he was also European in his own estimation, regarding Ireland as 'an afterthought of Europe' (*SH,* p. 52) and the Irish as the 'most belated race in Europe'. Just as he aimed to make Ireland European, effecting a juncture between medievalism and modernity might be regarded as the chief intellectual task that he set himself in early manhood. (Stewart 2006, 135)

Joyce's professional readers have become less concerned now with underlying the alleged antithetical relationship between his Irishness and his Europeanism/universalism and more inclined towards professing the interdependence of these two dimensions woven together in Joyce's modernity:

> […] Joyce the European and Joyce the Irishman are no more contradictory than Joyce the modern and Joyce the medievalist. What unites all of these is his uniquely perspicacious grasp on the true complexity of the modern world and a corresponding ability to translate it into radically innovative literary fiction. (Stewart 2006, 150)

Irish modernism (the "un-English modernism" in Adrian Frazier's words, 2006, 113) managed to accommodate both and, quite successfully, supplied European modernism some of its main resources: Moore, Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, to name but a few. While Irish modernism has been drawn in the European literary canon and further marketed as such, critics have recently claimed it back for its uniqueness and idiosyncrasies: "Irish Modernism has in truth a good deal in common with that of other European peoples, but it also has

features peculiar to itself." (Kiberd 2006, 33) An illustration in point would be *Ulysses*, the book that celebrates "everyday life" by virtue of its peculiarity of form and style and whose accurate pinpointing remains a problem to this day:

> *Ulysses* is clearly something more than an exfoliation of short stories and many in fact be written in an evolving Irish genre for which as yet there is no name. That genre seems to feed and celebrate the impulse to tell micro-stories, which are partly linked without ever quite being permitted to join in a seamless narrative. (Kiberd 2006, 33)

In the opening page of his massive 2016 study, Mircea Mihăieş firmly states that *Ulysses* is the novel "that never died […] and never will." (Mihăieş 2016, 9). It would be safe to conclude, therefore, by saying that the readers' persistent appetite for such texts is proof that the test of time, as well as that of (cultural, artistic, spatial or ideological) distance, can be justly reclaimed by fiction.

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"THERE WAS A BLACK GAP WHERE THE DE HAD BEEN:" DISPOSSESSING DISCOURSE IN AIDAN HIGGINS' *BALCONY OF EUROPE*

PETRONIA POPA PETRAR[1]

ABSTRACT. "***There Was a Black Gap Where the DE Had Been*": *Dispossessing Discourse in Aidan Higgins' "Balcony of Europe"***. My paper attempts to explore a novel by Irish writer Aidan Higgins from the perspective of the so-called "ethical turn" in the study of narrative by arguing that both its form and its content explicitly thematise the ethical risks of the first-person discourse when it comes to representing the other. Using Dorothy J. Hale's notion of the voluntary "self-binding" fiction requires from the "responsible readers," I examine the strategies through which Higgins pits the narrator's failure to represent otherness against the imminent disintegration of the European landscape, history and identity under the pressures of a discourse of possession and rigid localisation. To these pressures, the text responds by suggesting the language of fiction has the potential to criticise and counteract possession as a model for identity through the effort it imposes on the readers to simultaneously exert and limit their individual freedom.

Keywords: *narrative ethics, linguistic (dis)possession, fictional representation, otherness.*

REZUMAT. *„În locul lui DE era o gaură neagră:" deposedarea discursului în "Balconul Europei" de Aidan Higgins*. Lucrarea de faţă îşi propune lectura unui roman aparţinând scriitorului irlandez Aidan Higgins din perspectiva „întoarcerii la etică" în studiul naraţiunilor, pornind de la premisa că forma şi conţinutul acestuia pun explicit în temă riscurile etice ale discursului la persoana I în ceea ce priveşte reprezentarea alterităţii. Utilizând definiţia dată de Dorothy J. Hale noţiunii de „autolimitare" impusă de roman cititorilor „responsabili," lucrarea investighează strategiile prin care Higgins suprapune eşecul naratorului de a reprezenta alteritatea dezintegrării iminente a peisajului, istoriei şi identităţii europene sub presiunea unui discurs al posesiei şi al localizării rigide. Textul

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răspunde acestei presiuni prin sugestia că limbajul ficțional are potențialul de a critica și a se opune posesiei ca model identitar prin efortul cerut cititorului de a-și exercita și limita simultan libertatea.

***Cuvinte cheie**: etica narativă, "deposedare" lingvistică, reprezentare ficțională, alteritate.*

The "ethical turn" in literary criticism took a long time to arrive, but in the age of fake news and the social media, it may need to be here to stay. It is perhaps more necessary than ever, now that we no longer need to prove the fact that there is no speech act devoid of values (whether admirable or reprehensible), or, as Wayne Booth kept reminding us in the face of text-centered and structuralist challenges to the notion of literary morality, there are no speakers, nor are there "listeners" (Booth 1998) whose beliefs do not inform the discourse they are producing and interpreting. Booth never abandoned the idea that "ethical criticism is relevant to all literature, no matter how broadly or narrowly we define that controversial term; and such criticism, when done responsibly, can be a genuine form of rational inquiry" (Booth 1998, 351). As Jeremy Hawthorn and Jakob Lothe put it,

> Ethical concerns are not a supplement because there is no narrative that is free of ethical issues, no reading, viewing, or listening to a narrative that does not require some ethical sensitivity and the exercise of moral discrimination on the part of reader, viewer or listener. (Lothe and Hawthorn 2010, 6)

Lothe and Hawthorn themselves quote Booth's defense of an ethical approach to fiction on the grounds that the former does not have to imply forcing the message of the story into the straitjacket of a particular moral code, but identifying its "overall effect on the *ethos*, the *character*, of the listener." This effect does not restrict itself to the reader's openness to change in values, but "must include the very quality of the life lived while listening" (Booth 1998, 353).

The "quality of the life" produced while reading has been variously defined, depending on the initial critical assumptions of each particular orientation within the field of narratology. It is possible, however, to discover commonalities among the otherwise diverse approaches to the ethics of fiction. In an essay published in 2007 in a special issue of *Narrative* dedicated to the critical legacy of Wayne Booth and entitled "Fiction as Restriction: Self-

Binding in New Ethical Theories of the Novel," Dorothy J. Hale remarks on the surprising convergence of critical efforts to reassert the ethical significance of novels and novel reading. Even more importantly, this convergence includes theories that explicitly dissociate themselves from the humanist premises of Booth's work. Such junctions rest on foregrounding the "ethical value of the readerly self that is produced from 'within' the novel, through the experience of novel reading" (Hale 2007, 189) rather than unveiling the extratextual, societal pressures addressing or producing subjectivity through ideological discourse. In this view, what makes the novel as a genre inherently ethical is its capacity to produce effects on the world through the demand it places on its audience to accommodate, in the very act of the individual reading, with its uniqueness and unrepeatability, a radical form of alterity. Novels call upon the reader to perform an act of "self-binding" that consists in freely choosing to abandon the comforts of personal autonomy and self-sufficiency bestowed on the liberal humanist subject and expose himself/herself to the irruption of an Other who can never be fully grasped. Exploring the differences between contemporary theories and traditional explanations of the moral function of the novel in the wake of poststructuralism, Hale points at the need to identify "an anti-humanist or post-humanist way of conceptualizing the emotions of the engaged novel reader as a noncolonizing translation of social difference into a positive basis of community and political reform" (190). By voluntarily acquiescing to the rule of the narrative, the *responsible* readers place themselves in the conundrum of having to interpret while being aware that conferring meaning on an event or a character irrepressibly reduces their singularity to a form of all-encroaching sameness. The stakes are provided by the possibility the text opens to welcome "alterity beyond apprehension, as defined by illimitable potentiality" (195). Focusing on the question of difference, rather than categorising identities, carries with it the risk of accepting the lack of grounding of interpretive decisions and ethical judgments, of testing both the possibility and the limits of translatability. The social benefits and practical consequences thus ascribed to narratives consist of the opportunity to rehearse the deliberate binding of the self through the availability to produce the Other by submitting to its laws and allowing its irreplaceable difference to occur.

One illustration of Hale's theory is provided by Adam Zachary Newton's seminal *Narrative Ethics* (1995), whose analysis of first-person accounts as constructions of life stories imbued with important ethical implications, especially in their figurations of otherness, is especially relevant within the context of the resurgence of fictional (auto)biography in contemporary fiction. Following premises borrowed from Emmanuel Levinas,

Mikhail Bakhtin and Stanley Cavell, Newton investigates the ethical nature of narrative seen as performance, enacted both in the act of telling, and during the individual reading. "Performing" the story enables the intersubjective relation to take place, bringing into being the simultaneous freedom and restriction the reader is allotted through the staging of "recursive, contingent, and interactive dramas of encounter and recognition, the sort of which prose fiction both crystallizes and recirculates in acts of interpretive engagement" (Newton 1995, 12). These dramas connect authors, tellers, listeners and audiences in fleeting configurations of appellation and response rooted in the historical concreteness of the situation, but which always end up by placing upon the reader the responsibility of interpretation:

> In part, it means learning the paradoxical lesson that 'getting' someone else's story is also a way of appropriating or allegorizing that endangers both intimacy and ethical duty. At the same time, however, one's responsibility consists of responding to just this paradox. (Newton 1995, 19)

Aidan Higgins's novel, *Balcony of Europe*, originally published in 1972, may be read as an allegory of the demands imposed both on the teller of lives (one's own and those of other people), and the reader as a cooperative listener (to use Booth's preferred term) to the story. It takes the discursive shape of an effort by its first-person narrator, Dan Ruttle, a middle-aged Irish painter, to piece together the shattered fragments of the time spent in Spain having an affair with young Charlotte Bayless, a Jewish-American married woman. Ruttle's narrative (if we can call it that) emerges from a series of vignettes and digressions probing the characters' past and present, interspersed with scenes from Spanish or European life and interrupted by the intrusion of various figures making up the picturesque crowd gathered in the sea town of Nerja. What is surprising about the novel's publication history is that the second edition, issued in 2010 by the Dalkey Archive Press, was drastically revised by the author. Higgins eliminated the original framework of the Spain episodes – a prologue set in Dublin and narrating the decline of Ruttle's family, including his mother's traumatic death, and an epilogue set in the Aran Islands – a move he imposed as the condition for the re-publication of a text he had obstinately refused to allow back into print for several decades (see Neil Murphy's "Afterword" to the 2010 edition). Higgins's argument was aesthetic inevitability; through the lenses of an ethical reading, aesthetic necessity is translated into the text's insistence to criticise fixed origins and the "discourse of possession" in favor of a loose, nonhierarchical constellation

of occurrences only impressionistically attributable to the same source. This resonates with the decision to give up conventional plot and replace it with rapidly sketched scenes presented in the shape of memories: "I wanted to dispense with plot, do it that way: tenuous associations that would ramify, could be built upon, would stay in the mind better than the plotted thing – all lies anyway (Higgins, quoted in Beja 1973, 172)."

As with most of Higgins's works, the novel draws heavily on the author's own experience, especially during his self-imposed exile. According to Neil Murphy, Higgins's texts often share an uncertain ontological status due to their attempt "to create universes of highly imaginative flickers of real life, neither fiction nor autobiography in the traditional sense" (Murphy 2002, 38). Thus, especially in the light of the morally controversial facts it presents and of the difficulty to decide on the soundness of the narrator's principles (since his brutal sincerity occasionally reveals estranging instances of pettiness or severe cognitive limitations), the novel raises important questions on the ethical implications of life writing, the relationship between fiction, autobiography and biography, the reader's responsibility during the process of interpretation, and the representational capacity of language. While one might not disagree with Neil Murphy's integration of Higgins's writing into "the critical tradition in Irish fiction because, like Joyce and Beckett, he interrogates the meaning of language, memory, perception and existence in an effort to respond to the debate initiated by Modernism" (38), the text seems to pose insuperable difficulties when it comes to any kind of categorisation, whether one considers its "Irishness," or its belonging to any of the "-isms" of the twentieth-century. A more productive approach could be offered via an ethical reading of theme and form as an indictment of the narrator's claim, and failure, to understand and "possess" his lover (itself an act of betraying the trust of both his wife and her husband).

Adam Newton describes three dimensions of narrative ethics: narrational (having to do with the act of telling and the participants it involves), representational (having to do with the recognition of the values within the story world), and hermeneutic (related to the interpretive endeavors enacted both by selves internal to the text and by readers outside it):

> One of the discursive worlds [narrative prose fiction] inhabits is an ethical one, manifesting certain characteristics which resemble features of everyday communicative experience. In the order they appear in my analysis, those characteristics are: first, the formal design of the storytelling act, the distribution of relations among teller, tale, and person(s) told (narrational ethics); second, a standing problematic of recognition, an anagnorisis that extends beyond the dynamics of plot to the exigent and collaborative

> unfolding of character, the sea change wrought when selves become either narrating or narrated (representational ethics); and last, "hermeneutics," as both a topic within the text and a field of action outside it, that is, a narrative inquiry into the extent and limits of intersubjective knowledge in persons' reading of each other, and the ethical price exacted from readers by texts (hermeneutic ethics). (Newton 1995, 25)

My analysis of *Balcony of Europe* focuses mainly on the first and third levels, whose intertwinement foregrounds the acts of telling and of interpretation. Ruttle's discourse constitutes both an attempt to represent Charlotte's life and identity (to "possess" her in language, but also literally, in his sexual pursuit), and an effort to interpret, an invitation at comprehension extended to the reader. One of the most fascinating aspects of the text is the way in which it constantly tempts the reader to accept Ruttle's version of the events and of Charlotte's character, only to end up signaling not only his unreliability, but also his ethical deficiency and therefore the necessity to distance ourselves from his account. By the end of the novel, Ruttle himself is turned into a reader – significantly, he is finishing Ford Maddox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, while, the same time, ending his relationship with Charlotte. "A tale without moral point told by a narrator with moral inertia," (368) he exclaims, completely missing the point of Ford's novel. However, pushed into the awareness of the text's plot mirroring the plot of *The Good Soldier*, the reader is also forced to recognise the limits of Ruttle's narration, as he becomes contaminated with the failures of Ford's John Dowell, the narrator who had been incapable of understanding his wife's deceptions. Interestingly, Ruttle describes the cover of his copy of *The Good Soldier* in great detail, which shows a couple kissing while being observed by "a featureless female who stood close by" (367): "Why did the woman watch so closely? Was it to give herself more pain? Were the others unaware of their being overlooked? Or were they taunting?" (368). It is the voyeuristic gesture of watching which is equated to Ruttle's attempt to "possess" Charlotte in language, given also his profession as a painter.

Abundant intertextual allusions provide only one of the ways in which the strangeness of the text is emphasised. Notwithstanding the apparent preoccupation with memorialistic authenticity, a closer look at the text reveals it is also intensely aware and deconstructive of fictional conventions. Self-reflexivity manifests itself not only in the awareness of formal dispersion intended to mimic the workings of memory, but also in the fragments specifically focusing on the status of fiction within a disintegrating world of violence, chaos and suppression of freedom. The Baron Alex Leopold von

Gerhar is writing "a novel. An autobiography really. However, I do not anticipate finishing it." (46) The impossibility of completion is explained by the Baron through the imminence of a global catastrophe to be triggered by the Cold War, which would wipe out humanity and turn book writing into "a supremely futile occupation." Presented initially as an intriguing and exotic figure, the baron is soon exposed as a former Nazi, whose expansionist form of autobiography threatens to do violence to the diversity of the world.

Balcony of Europe stages and therefore exposes the "passive culpability" engendered by "witnessing, overhearing, even reading" (Newton 1995, 22) about other selves, with their incommensurability. Indeed, it is the very staggering multiplicity of the briefly sketched episodes recollected by the novel's narrator, many focusing on as many diverse characters, that dramatises the solitude of the protagonist and his incapacity to envisage the Other ethically. Ruttle's intense self-isolation, despite his attraction to Charlotte, or his association with the colorful band of artists and holiday-makers, only serves to foreground the failure of any narcissistic, colonising attempt to translate alterity into one's own language, rather than allowing its strangeness to define one's limits. It corresponds to what Morris Beja, in one of the earliest readings of *Balcony*, described as "a world that is insistently claustrophobic," "arising from our imprisonment within ourselves" (1973, 163).

The novel's title, coupled with its protagonist's profession as a painter, ironically captures the erosion of totalising perspectives and the inadequacy of distant vision to function as a metaphor for knowing the world outside. Form and themes conspire to show the impossibility of the authoritative and omniscient position, whose dissolution has left its traces on texts, landscapes and people alike. "Balcón de Europa, formerly Bar Alhambra" (Higgins 2010, 15), the preferred haunt of the English-speaking bohemian residents in Nerja, becomes the symbolical setting of dispersed identities emerging as irredeemably creolised in the vortex of history. In this light, the vignettes appear as geological samples crystallising the flow of the times into unstable, shattering strata informing the choices made by the characters with the arbitrariness and violence of historical shifts. With its allusion to the Muslim conquest of Spain and the traces of European and civil wars culminating in the global catastrophe of the Holocaust, the "balcony of Europe" reveals itself as an uncomfortable territory, despite its apparent privileged station above the maelstroms of the times and landscapes. Erotic encounters between Ruttle ("from [his] tired forty-six Christian Old World years") and Charlotte ("from her bright twenty-four Jewish New Old years") (Higgins 2010, 26-27) take place against the background of the Cold War and are constantly interrupted by the intrusions of Franco's militarised regime. In a world whose contours

are dissolving, where nationhood is represented in conflictual terms, there is no outside, spectator-like position available – or if there is, it is disclosed as a dangerous illusion, eaten away at by swarms of invisible parasites that damage its foundations. This is illustrated as early as Amory's introductory letters in an ironical and subversive digression explaining the name of the place that provides the title of the novel:

> King Victor Emmanuel named this *paseo* the "Balcón de Europa" because of the view. During the Peninsular War it was a Limey gun-site. The Limeys, being no respectors of Catholic churches knocked the top off a church that stood here formerly, to get a better field of fire. The church – most of it – fell into the sea. What was left was reconverted into a poor-class pension, with a colonnade (the old cloisters) for foundations, undermined by a colony of rats. *Su tropel de ratas*. Nowadays, what with the rats, rare tidal disturbances (it can blow here), sea erosion and general wear and tear, not much is left standing. One hears talk of a luxury hotel to be erected on the spot. I'll believe it when I see it. There's always talk in Spain: talk of improvements, modernization, urbanization, *progreso* – nothing much comes of it, I'm glad to say. (16)

The seditious insertion of past British violence against the history and geography of Spain (the "Limey gunsite" defined by the destruction of a Catholic church, reminiscent of Irish history itself) does not only hint at the unrest that has brought the European landscape into being, but also it is also a stab at the dubious temptation to turn the outside (both in its temporal guise as the past, and its instantiation as an exotic land visited by tourists) into an object of consumption: the church, a former center of authority and spirituality, is converted into a "poor-class" pension infested by a colony of rats. The use of the colloquial term "Limey" (North-American slang for "British") points at Amory's Canadian origins, later to be expanded in the novel, and therefore serves as a reminder of the incessant drive of colonisation, at turning alterity into sameness, that seems to characterise individuals and nations alike. The text counteracts the threat posed by this drive by obstructing the reader's attempts at closing off the interpretation through the extreme fragmentation of the form, the jumbled chronology, the ceaseless proliferation of digressions and the narrator's continual failure to understand or master Charlotte – or any other of his companions, for that matter. Moreover, even Amory's ironical skepticism is further undermined by the information we get halfway through the novel that the modern hotel *has* been built, and the bar "has reverted to its old name, and was now Café-Bar Alhambra, as of old" (194).

Ruttle and Bob Bayless contemplate the neon sign that announces the name of the new hotel: "BALCOИ DE EUROPA, it said in white light," (194) "BALCOИ EUROPA it said, the preposition had disappeared, there was a black gap where the DE had been" (195). This is a complex scene, which superimposes the parodic subversion of both Amory's prediction and the persuasive force of the consumerist sign to attract customers over the narrator's feelings of guilt towards Bob Bayless and his unspoken fear of a possible confrontation. The meaning of the words "Balcon de Europa" starts flickering in the manner of a neon light through the inversion of the letter N (a mirror-image suggesting the return of the gaze, or the necessity for self-examination, but also reminiscent of the ancient Greek alphabet, with a reminder of radical strangeness that lies at the very heart of our history), coupled with the deletion of the preposition that suggests a textual equation of geographical origin with possession. The disappearing "de" in the place name counteracts the Nazi Baron's insistence on including the preposition indicating origin in his name: "I am a *von*, he said haughtily, a baron. I come from Balticum" (51). The Baron's reprehensible discourse shows the dystopian threat posed by the particle "von," with its insistence on fixed localisation and sense of ownership:

> Over-tender humanistic feelings, he argued suavely, would not get one very far. We were on the threshold of the next stage in human evolution. A point had been reached at which the physiological processes were disrupted, and we would have to make physical and functional adjustments, as the animals had already been taught to do; it was at this stage that selection operated. The philosophy of 'Survival of the Fittest,' if applied with sufficient resolution and force, would result in the creation of a new species – this was what National Socialism had understood. In one bold stroke the cancer could be removed, and one would breath a clearer air. The actual squashing process might not appeal to the squeamish, but it could be carried out with only slightly deleterious effects. (52)

To the Baron's ferocity, the novel opposes Charlotte's "strange language" (26), an Americanised version of English that has deviated from the standard; more importantly, it opposes the freedom afforded by fiction, with its transgressive, defamiliarising (lack of) structures:

> Charlotte had felt ashamed of being Jewish until she came to Europe. It had taken Christians talking about Jews to make her feel proud about being one. I thought she meant me, talking about Nathaniel West and Babel and Primo Levi; but she did not mean me. Bloom, she said. The invention of a Christian, I said. (118)

This provides further support in favor of the argument that, in addition to – or rather, more importantly than – figuring the workings of memory and subjectivity in modernist fashion, the novel's impressionistic shapelessness, coupled with its critique of the totalising gaze, addresses the issue of the impossibility to fully articulate the Other in the form of holistic discourse. It presents fragmentation as ethical positioning against the expansionism of the discourse of possession by foregrounding the impossibility of narrating oneself and the other and replacing the preposition "of" with interruptions or gaps that configure an alterity perpetually escaping representation. It creates space for a kind of reader willing to accommodate the irruption of the radical strangeness of the text by submitting to the "self-binding" demanded by the possibility of changing their views on the world.

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COFFEE, TRUFFLES AND OTHER DELIGHTS IN ANNE ENRIGHT'S *THE PLEASURE OF ELIZA LYNCH*

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ABSTRACT. ***Coffee, Truffles and Other Delights in Anne Enright's "The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch"***. Anne Enright's novel *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* follows its pregnant protagonist's journey into the city of Asunción and Dr William Stewart's away from the city, into the more innocent but war-ravaged Cordillera mountains in mid-nineteenth century Paraguay. Food and its lack are a *leitmotif* of Enright's novel, variously featuring banquets, rampant consumerism, famine and cannibalism. A fictional biography of historical figures and also a commentary on contemporary consumerism, *The Pleasure* foregrounds Eliza's embodied experience of pregnancy, with its cravings and physiological transformations, and displaces the historical perspective onto the European observer, Dr Stewart, who echoes the baffled fascination and revulsion and the patriarchal moral stance of male historians writing about the colonies. Moreover, in a country on the brink of modernisation, Stewart's ambivalent reaction to the viscerality of both sexuality and wartime violence typifies the experience of abjection that pre-dates and triggers the formation of norms and the establishment of the symbolic order in subject formation. My essay draws on Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection in order to show how Enright uses representations of food and the female body to problematise historical processes and the position of women within the order of discourse.

Keywords*: Anne Enright, The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch, Julia Kristeva, the abject, food, the female body, the mother, history*

REZUMAT. *Cafea, trufe şi alte delicii în "Plăcerea Elizei Lynch" de Anne Enright*. Romanul Annei Enright, *Plăcerea Elizei Lynch*, urmăreşte călătoria protagonistei la Asunción şi pe cea a doctorului William Stewart, care se îndepărtează de oraş spre ţinutul mai inocent dar răvăşit de război al Anzilor Cordilieri, în Paraguayul de la mijlocul secolului XIX. Hrana şi lipsa acesteia sunt un leitmotiv al romanului, într-o

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gamă care se întinde de la banchet sau consumismul neînfrânat până la foamete sau canibalism. O biografie ficțională a unor figuri istorice şi în acelaşi timp un comentariu asupra consumismului contemporan, romanul aduce în prim plan experienţa corporală a gravidității Elizei Lynch, cu poftele şi transformările ei fiziologice, şi deplasează perspectiva istorică în sarcina observatorului european, doctorul Stewart, care se face ecoul fascinației descumpănite, repulsiei şi poziției moraliste patriarhale cu care istoricii de gen masculin scriau îndeobște despre colonii. Mai mult, într-o țară aflată în pragul modernizării, reacția ambivalentă a lui Stewart la visceralitatea sexualității şi violenței războiului e tipică pentru experienţa abjecției care precedă şi totodată cauzează stabilirea unor norme şi a unei ordini simbolice în formarea subiectivității. Eseul de față se bazează pe teoria abjecției elaborată de Julia Kristeva pentru a arăta modul în care Enright folosește reprezentări ale hranei şi ale corpului feminin pentru a tematiza procese istorice şi poziția femeilor în ordinea discursului.

***Cuvinte cheie**: Anne Enright, Plăcerea Elizei Lynch, Julia Kristeva, abjectul, corpul feminin*, *maternitate*, *istorie*

One of the chapters in Anne Enright's 2002 novel *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* is titled "Truffles," another "Coffee." Most of the chapters have food items for their titles ("A Fish," "A Melon," "Asparagus," "Veal," "Champagne"); "Coffee" is the last of them, and the chapters that follow are titled "Flowers," "Clean Linen" and "A Little Dog." All the headings name luxury articles that are in keeping with the title of the novel. Yet the novel is not exclusively a catalogue of pleasures: it is a historical novel, chronicling the career of the nineteenth-century Irish adventuress Eliza Lynch in Francisco Solano López's Paraguay. The story is told in alternating chapters, by the pregnant Eliza herself, as she travels up the Río Paraná to Asunción with López in 1855, and in the third person from the perspective of the Scottish surgeon, Dr William Stewart, who has travelled with them from Europe and witnesses López's disastrous War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870). "Truffles" is the longest chapter in the novel and it offers the most lucid problematisation of historical processes and of the position of women in history. "Coffee" is one of the most gruesome sections, describing López's retreat into the mountains and his descent into madness as he loses the War. Both chapters are narrated from Stewart's vantage point. As Surgeon General of the Army and López's personal physician, he is the helpless witness of the starvation and cholera that decimate what is left of the army, and of the downfall of López and Eliza Lynch.

A richly textured postmodern performance, *The Pleasure* has been described, by Hermione Lee, for instance, as "a rich, flamboyant, mannered

book, written with condensed, self-conscious stylishness, dazzling with images and sensations and violence" (2002, 19). According to Patricia Coughlan, it is "a searching analysis of both feminine and masculine ways of being in the nineteenth-century world" and, like Enright's earlier books, a "coruscating account of 1990s Irish postmodernity at the moment just before the economic boom" (2005, 349). Investigating the "interconnected configurations of gender, class, sexuality, and race" deployed in Eliza's characterisation (Bracken 2010, 110), Claire Bracken concludes:

> …*The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch* keeps the discourses of race, gender, sexuality, and class in play, facilitating a critical examination of regressive agendas, as well as their creative disruption. The liminal arrangements of queer intersectionality, the fluid connections existing between and within variables (for example the way race and gender intersect with Eliza's foreign-national / national-subject, abject 'whore' and revered queen), disrupt and interrogate the narratives of normativity and power inequalities that structure late capitalist Ireland, while the virtuality endemic to the pre-linguistic material space creates an ongoing effect of possibility. Embedded within the actualizations of discourse is change itself, the potential for ongoing difference and transformation in life. (2010, 123)

While none of the critics quoted above mentions Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject, all three remark on the visceral immediacy of Enright's treatment of her historical subject-matter and its role in destabilising discourse. Coughlan in particular focuses on Enright's thematisation of the imbrication of bodies and food, noting that "Enright anarchically links it [eating] with love, beauty, and the ideal, thus overriding the immanence-transcendence dualism which structures Western thought about both women and the body" (2005, 355). Coughlan comments: "It seems to be Enright's project to render the physical facts of existence so opaque as to disrupt the conventional arrangement of facts and values, that is as a hierarchy where the former lead upward to the latter" (2005, 354). In a Kristevian reading of the novel, and especially of the two chapters mentioned above, this disruption of conventional norms and hierarchies reveals the tenuousness of the exclusions and rejections – from fear of defilement to the taboos on murder, incest and cannibalism – which predate the symbolic order, and therefore social order and Western thought, more broadly.

The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch is set at a time of change, when narratives of normativity are challenged. An obscure Irish *bonne vivante*, Eliza Lynch met Francisco Solano López in Paris in 1854, while he was promoting his father's modernising projects for Paraguay. She returned with him to Asunción and bore him six children, remaining his unofficial consort until his death in 1870. As a result of her participation in the War of the Triple Alliance, Eliza Lynch

has come down in history by turns as an effigy of Paraguayan dignity and patriotism, and the loose foreign woman whose greed and ambition drove López into a war he could not win.

Enright's fictional biography foregrounds Eliza's embodied experience by placing her young pregnant body, with its cravings and physiological transformations, at the centre of her story, and displacing the rational perspective onto the European observer, Dr Stewart, who typifies the baffled fascination and revulsion and the patriarchal moral stance of male historians who have demonised Lynch.[2] Moreover, Enright is careful to create a complicated position for Stewart as well, one that pre-empts the easy judgements and biased simplifications of the historians. Not only is he steeped in the materiality of the human body as Eliza's physician accoucheur and a wartime surgeon, but his physical survival during the latter part of the war is dependent on the food he is apportioned by López, and this prevents him from being overcritical of his employers' selective distribution of resources. His ambiguous desire for Eliza, on the other hand, proves to be a source of anarchic reactions to López's authority and to Eliza's political and economic influence.

Throughout the novel, Eliza Lynch is associated with desire, both as its object and as desiring subject. There is a surfeit of desirable objects in *The Pleasure*, from power positions through houses, jewellery and luxurious textiles, to bodies. Yet desire, which in Kristevian theory pertains to the symbolic, proves to be a very tenuous organising principle. There is a strong undercurrent of pleasure in Enright's novel which elicits neither desire nor the distinctions and separations of the symbolic order, but evokes instead the undifferentiated jouissance that, according to Kristeva, "alone causes the abject to exist as such. One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it…. Violently and painfully" (1982, 9). The sources of jouissance are the *objects a* of the maternal body in Lacanian terminology, which must be jettisoned for the subject to attain homogenous identity. This imperative is acknowledged without being known, it is a set of "laws, connections, and even structures of meaning [that] govern and condition me" before the advent of the symbolic (Kristeva 1982, 10). Essentially, they are pre-linguistic laws and structures of meaning that separate the individual from the maternal body and its physiological functions, and, more broadly, from that which is ascribed to the animal, particularly the acts of sex and murder, but eating as well. As Coughlan points out, food and eating are so pervasive that at times they seem to be *The Pleasure*'s "governing concern" (2005, 255). A distinction must be drawn, however, between the luxury foods that lend their names to the chapters and the increasingly scarce and basic fare of the retreating army: the former pertain to desire, while the latter are the object of appetite and

[2] See Enright's Acknowledgements page in the novel (2003, n.p.) and Enright and Kelly (2002, 235).

want, which are pre-symbolic drives. The other prevalent theme, motherhood, is equally ambivalent: maternity places the mother securely within the symbolic order as object of contention in the Freudian diagram and as the mirror Other in the Lacanian system; on the other hand, pregnancy and parturition, which are the focus of the chapters narrated by Eliza, are the primal scene of abjection as theorised by Kristeva. These distinctions concerning food and the maternal body, while not explicit in the novel, help clarify Enright's subversive dramatisation of historiographic procedures and discursive practices more generally.

As López's *de facto* first lady, Eliza Lynch became, for a short while, one of the richest women in the world. Dr Stewart, too, amassed a huge fortune for himself and his family, both from wartime profiteering and from legitimate business and, although the novel does not follow his later career, historical sources record his stellar role in modernising Paraguay in the post-War decades (Warren 1969). Yet in Enright's novel for neither Eliza nor Stewart is pleasure defined exclusively in terms of food and luxury commodities; nor is pleasure unambiguously glorified. Both protagonists are said, for instance, to derive pleasure from having sex with their partners and from raising large families, but also from admiring artefacts and landscapes. However, in both cases, there is something reprehensible, though only half-stated, about their sources of pleasure. In Eliza's case, her condition as an unmarried foreign adventuress leading a life of unimaginable luxury in a country whose economy could at best be regarded as emergent gave rise to rumours and suspicions concerning her morality, alleging everything from illicit relationships with other men to cannibalism. Eliza herself is not given the opportunity to respond to these allegations in the novel, although she is aware of the extent to which she is objectified in the public eye. She reveals her awareness in the chapter titled "Truffles," in a conversation with Stewart over coffee, in which she reflects on her condition as a woman within the sphere of political influence (Enright 2003, 148-151). However, Stewart's Victorian bias is not propitious to her reflections and Enright's project limits her heroine's self-awareness, as the novelist testifies in an interview (in Bracken and Cahill 2011, 27).

More introspective and placed in a position to reflect critically on the events he witnesses, Stewart as a focaliser has the role of disclosing the means, from rumours to historical records, whereby real-life actants become fixed in the public consciousness as historical figures. Furthermore, he is aware of the psychological processes and contingencies which generate certain types of behaviour. Thus, for instance, in the chapter titled "Coffee," he muses on his own conduct towards the end of the war:

> Stewart, not being in the thick of it for the most part, … confined himself to indifference – a narrow, whining sort of madness that might let a man die because he did not like the look of his ugly face. A civilised, smirking sort of

> thing, which stepped through the heap of enemy wounded and slit this, or that, throat. These were all pleasures. And he knew that once they slipped out of him, he could never call them back. (Enright 2003, 189)

The corrupting effects of raging destruction and of López's own mindless cruelty notwithstanding, Stewart preserves not only a sense of decorum but also of degrees of morality. His indifference, he suggests, is the result of López's influence: "Somewhere on the road, Stewart had become a creature of López. They all had. They could feel him in their blood" (Enright 2003, 188). By this time, López is rumoured to have gone mad, and the madness of the patriarch trickles into the behaviour of his people. Unlike the others, Stewart, who prides himself on being a progressive Victorian, tries to keep his impulses in check and refrains from the slaughter, plunder and rape that are running rampant all around him. His self-justification, like his degrees of morality, is suspect, and he seems aware of this as he describes his acts of indifference as "pleasures," while the others' senseless violence is an incontinence, a kind of diarrhoea, "a madness of the body that filled them to bursting and demanded egress" (Enright 2003, 189). Stewart's hypothetical "pleasures" are the more reprehensible for being "civilised," that is, they belong neither to the order of the unregulated (animal) body nor to that of psychopathology; his subjectivity is defined in contradistinction to the others, in that he does not let these pleasure "slip out of him." The imagery is deliberately scatological, contrasting the incontinent violence of the Paraguayans with Stewart's "narrow … sort of madness," i.e., their abjection with his moral discernment.

Thus, although Enright's novel has been advertised as historical romance (as the various book covers show), it might be said instead to present a psychopathology of pleasure, and one for which the physiology and disorders of the digestive system constitute a pervasive metaphor. A few instances will suffice to illustrate Enright's method of correlating historical processes with bodily functions and psychosocial development. Two are from the chapter titled "Truffles"; the others are from "Coffee."

Beginning in the middle of the novel and located in Asunción in 1865 and thereafter, "Truffles" foretells the disastrous course of events to follow, but provides the solace of civilised socialisation. Throughout the war Eliza attempts to maintain a level of sanity by decorating her increasingly more dilapidated dwelling places with great taste and by organising meals that are more lavish than the soldiers' fare. At one of the last dinner parties, the conversation turns to mothers:

> 'Oh, the English,' said Eliza. 'The English have no mothers. They grow like cabbages in a garden: they are entirely self-generated. Or if they have such a thing as a mother, it is always a matter of furniture. […]

> Frenchmen – now their mothers write novels, or burn novels in their drawing room grate, their mothers are distinguished lovers, or know how to mend a clock that has not ticked since 1693. A Spanish mother is an object of terror, and Italian's mother an object of piety absolute, but an Englishman's mother… mob-cap, a little needle-work, and a Queen Anne writing table of oak inlaid with yew.'
> […]
>
> 'And what of the Irish mother?' he [Stewart] bravely said.
>
> 'The Irish? Oh we eat them,' said Eliza. 'You should see it. We start at the toes and leave nothing out.'
>
> They all looked at the pork, and there was a small silence, […] while Stewart's mind nibbled along the legs of some poor woman to arrive at a most unthinkable place. The woman was, of course, Eliza, but it was also, a little, his poor rotten aunt, or the clean bones of his long-dead mother, and Stewart felt the violence of it so keenly he wanted to shout 'Whore!' or some other desecration. (Enright 2003, 146-147)

A mother herself, Eliza might be said to anticipate here the suffering that her children will cause her. In another chapter, while pregnant with her first son and feeling him move in her womb, she is reminded of her mother's adage: "They [your children] hit you hard and they start early" (Enright 2003, 206). Her apprehension of suffering to come includes parturition, the primal abjection "within our personal archeology," and one which, according to Kristeva, causes some anxiety to the mother as it endangers her position, as mother, within the symbolic order (1982, 13). The excerpt also alludes to the loss of some of Eliza's children. Stewart discovers later that Eliza visited the grave of her stillborn daughter with some regularity, and he will also witness her burying her dead son with her own hands at the end of the war. Yet his western sensibility is offended by Eliza's offhand deployment of stereotypes concerning the vexed relationship between mothers and children in various nations. Stewart's visceral, barely articulable sense of defilement and desecration fits Kristeva's definition of abjection. As in the cases studied by Kristeva, what Stewart objects to is the fact that Eliza frames her anxiety as an act of cannibalism whose object is woman, and more particularly the maternal body. This is a figuration of a double taboo, against cannibalism and incest. Stewart himself has trouble dissociating his own mother, not only from the aunt who raised him, but also from Eliza as both mother and woman.

In her double role as mother and woman, Eliza personifies both defilement and the ideal, both the abject and the object – the necessary difference, in being female, – against which maleness is defined, as proven by the fact that she motivates the soldiers into heroic deeds which confirm their masculinity. She is a collective object of desire and adoration for the soldiers

who lay down their lives to promote López's ambitions, but also a rumoured cannibal. Earlier in the chapter, "as the pile of food shrank and the pile of bodies grew" (Enright 2003, 134),

> …the story went about that Eliza ate the flesh of the dead. She said it tasted just like pork, but gamier – like the truffle-hunting boars you get in the Auvergne. Some said it was Brazilian flesh she liked – though there was little enough of that about – others said it was their own. The story was universally believed – it was the truffles that did it. You could not *invent* a detail like the truffles: besides, who among them had ever heard of the Auvergne? And the taste of gamey pork circled endlessly in their mouths; the wetness so bad they must spit as they thought of Eliza pulling a long strip of pale ham from an amputated joint. These were men who looked at their own arms now, during a long day in the trenches, and judged the ratio of lean to fat. And though there was a horror to it, they did not exactly blame Eliza her portion, so much as blame this gaping world, into which you threw bodies, perhaps your own body, as though the sky itself were starving. (Enright 2003, 134-135)

Hence the truffles of the title. This is a chapter which catalogues the various sources of historiography, from stereotypes, anecdotes and rumours, to rosters, lists of the dead and historical painting, that is, a chapter about the various ways in which visual representation and symbolisation can establish order in a world in which mindless violence constantly disrupts any sense of civilised harmony. Eliza's persistent presence in the middle of this male world of warfare interrupts that order in ambivalent, ill-defined ways: her frequently pregnant or newly delivered body is a constant reminder not only of the abject female, but of the maternal body, the archetypal abject, that which has to be evacuated for the individual to attain subjectivity. At the same time, the fact that she is always well dressed and, as her son points out in "Coffee," "[s]he always looks clean" (Enright 2003, 196), sets her in opposition to the filth that usually constitutes the abject.

The story of Eliza's cannibalism has no substance, but it derives its significance from the context. At this stage it is not so much that there is no food, but the soldiers have trouble eating meat in the middle of carnage, and they collectively project their sense of wrongfulness as the cannibalism taboo. The reason they project it onto Eliza is precisely that visually she represents the very opposite of the barbarity of war: whenever she visited the troops,

> her dress bouncing on its hoops, just clear of the mud, and her parasol glowing like a living membrane in the sun – her eyes were so kind, her whole air so simple and redeeming, that it was impossible to call her a

> woman at all. She was like a sister when she moved and like a dream when she was still. She was what they were all fighting for. (Enright 2003, 132-133)

In a characteristic sleight of hand, Enright glosses over the resistance of discourse to ascribing woman to the order of idea(l)s: when Eliza is at her most redeeming, language fails and instead of being called "a woman at all," euphemisms such as "sister" and "dream" are used. This discursive reluctance to hold woman in the symbolic order notwithstanding, Eliza remains associated with civilised living throughout, despite the primal violence of the war that contaminates her. The irreconcilability of civilisation and abjection still obtains in this chapter, but only just: "Then, when she appeared, the cannibal thoughts had nowhere to land. Eliza was, in all the mud-coloured world, the most beautiful thing. And they ate her with their eyes" (Enright 2003, 135). The dead metaphor of eating Eliza with the eyes suggests that she is an object not only of desire but of appetite or want, which in Freudian and Kristevian terms re-incorporate her into the pre-symbolic. Stewart's awareness of the incongruity between her civilised aspect and her participation in this muddled consumption as both subject and object both baffles him and enables him to uphold the distinctions and separations on which the symbolic is premised.

Also as in Kristeva's theory of abjection, Stewart objects the more to the men's attraction to Eliza Lynch as she attains more political power: i.e., his ambivalent loathing of her authority over her sons and soldiers alike is a kind of ritual prohibition that attempts to re-establish patrilineal power. In the "Coffee" chapter, for a brief period of respite, López's defeated army stops at an *estancia* in Tacuatí. Running a high fever, Stewart is quartered next to Eliza's rooms and through the thin walls he overhears her conversations with López. As he witnesses Eliza's tender care for López, Stewart is unable to disassociate it from her vindictive persecution of other men, López's younger brother Benigno in particular, and the recurring trope is her cannibalism: "'Take your shoes off, my dear, and put your feet on this,' said Eliza, the cannibal. Eliza the evil one" (Enright 2003, 192). Stewart knows that the rumours concerning Eliza's cannibalism are preposterous and there is no sense in the novel that he endorses them other than as a metaphoric description of her influence on Paraguayan politics. This awareness, however, does not prevent him from correlating her conspicuous consumerism with the desolation she has ostensibly caused.

In another scene, Stewart hears Eliza offer coffee to López:

> "Will you take a cup of coffee, my dear?"
>
> It was hard to tell how sick or well he [Stewart] was when sentences like this fluttered down to him. Coffee? He must be dying. He

> looked at the girl as she dipped a rag into some water and wiped his chest. The rag, the water, the girl: these things were real. The coffee could not be real. He must be careful about coffee. He must stay alive.
>
> Then he smelled it.
>
> And Steward decided that it was all real, in a way. Because the gods can make for themselves all kinds of felicity. (Enright 2003, 191)

God-like, Eliza and López manage to make a good life for themselves, against all odds. Nonetheless, this is a very illusory felicity, and short lived: in Stewart's next chapter, López and their eldest son are shot dead by the enemy army and Eliza buries them with her bare hands. The coffee, too, might be illusory: it remains unclear if Stewart is not hallucinating, as he is through much of the chapter, from exhaustion, malnutrition and fever.

A staple of the good life in the nineteenth century, coffee here serves multiple purposes. Like the rest of the food items lending their names to chapters in this novel, it emphasises the corporeality of historical figures, Eliza Lynch in particular. As with the truffles, the poignancy of the excerpt comes mainly from the context: by the time Stewart hallucinates about coffee, there is hardly any food left in the country. The *estancia* that is sheltering them temporarily provides some rustic provisions, but by and large the soldiers are left to fend for themselves, while the prisoners are fed well so they can withstand the ritual floggings and humiliations that are meant to make an example of them and pre-empt treason. Whatever supplies are left are transported on a cart, on top of which sits López's "mad mother, [who] was reported to have cried, 'I am pissing in the soup of every man here'" (Enright 2003, 179). The revulsion associated with the bodily functions of yet another of the mothers contaminating the food is a further instance of abjection among many others. The gruesomeness of the chapter is unrelieved to the end: the food grows scarcer, the coffee is a delusion, water from a spring kills a large number of people and animals, and the curative arrowroot tea is left undrunk. This is a time, the chapter suggests, not of accumulation and consumption – not of desire or pleasure –, but of evacuation and abjection in Kristeva's sense, i.e., of a certain attitude towards that which is evacuated that, although pre-symbolic and therefore inarticulable, is involved with sexual and moral taboos that guarantee a certain (patriarchal) order.

The chapter closes with Stewart overhearing López and Eliza having make-up sex after a loud quarrel in their tent farther along the way. According to a Kristevian reading, the fact that they are overheard not only by Stewart, but by their eldest son, the fifteen-year-old Pancho, and possibly by others as well, makes it less of a life-affirming conclusion. Instead, the child's presence typifies a stage in psychosexual development when the subject does not yet recognise the boundary between "me" and "mother"; it is a primitive, pre-social

stage which needs to be overcome, or cast away (i.e., "primal repression," Kristeva 1982, 12), in order for the mirror stage and the ensuing socialisation to become possible. The ambiguity of the chapter's ending enables this kind of interpretation: after they overhear his parents' love-making, Pancho turns to Stewart: "'Yay!' said the bright face of the boy," and the narrator comments: "When a man is inside a woman, he rules the world" (Enright 2003, 201). It is unclear who the "man" is here: Stewart is aware – and slightly envious – of the effect Eliza has on López, and this statement could be an allusion to the extent to which she motivates his ambition or compensates for his failure to lead his country to victory. But Pancho himself used to be "inside" this woman and while he is now old enough to understand sex, he is not completely dissociated from the mother: his mission during the war is her protection and, Stewart is stupefied to learn, that includes making her bed in the evening. The ambiguity of Pancho's response corresponds to a stage in his psychosexual development where his acceptance of the "No" of the father involves identification, rather than rivalry, and only narrowly avoids violating the incest taboo.

Enright is very careful not to sensationalise Eliza Lynch's fictional biography: neither cannibalism nor incest, nor even adultery, are plausible events of her life. Instead, Enright draws on physiology to create strong visual correlatives for Eliza's experiences, from her escape from famine-ravaged Ireland in her childhood – when a woman had looked at her and said "she would eat me, I was so lovely and fat" (Enright 2003, 207) – to her conspicuous consumption in war-torn Paraguay. While careful not to romanticise or victimise Eliza, Enright is harshly critical of the social and economic forces that fetichise consumer goods while turning a blind eye to those who produce them. Thus, the soldiers of López's army are not only cannon fodder, but also the meat on which Eliza grows fat (Enright 2003, 133). Their dismembered bodies, moreover, are eaten by the dogs, and the dogs, in turn, are cooked and eaten by the starving soldiers (Enright 2003, 135). Eliza herself only becomes a cannibal in the collective unconscious as the entire world – "the gaping world," the "starving" sky – has become one large maw; in other words, she participates in a generalised hunger. This pandemic cannibalism that involves the physical world turned autophagous thus becomes a metaphor for abjection as a necessary purifying impulse that delivers Paraguay into the modern stage of its development.

The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch follows the logic of digestion: earlier chapters are all about cravings and appetites, some of which must go unsated; "Truffles" is still a chapter about eating, while "Coffee" is already a chapter about digesting and evacuating. At the same time, as Stewart notes, the progress of López's army is from the secondary repressions of the symbolic order – i.e., of civilisation – backwards towards the "more innocent" heights of the Cordilleras

(Enright 2003, 187), that is, a regression through primal repression to abjection. Appropriately, in the next chapter, set in 1855, Eliza is delivered into her new life in Asunción, and is soon after delivered of her first child, enacting the primal separation that is the archetype of abjection. The penultimate chapter gives a brief account of the gruesome end of the War of the Triple Alliance, while the coda shows Stewart and Eliza cross paths one last time in Edinburgh a few years later. By 1873, Eliza's appetite is renewed as she attempts to recuperate her Paraguayan properties in a court of law, but will not be satisfied. Her obscure death in Paris in 1886 is not mentioned in the novel. Enright does not set out to redeem Eliza as a historical figure but to reveal the discursive mechanisms whereby flesh-and-blood women are turned into objects of collective loathing. Her problematisation of abjection shows the demonisation of Eliza Lynch to have been the result of a very primal kind of fear of the feminine and the maternal, one that is pre-symbolic and pre-rational and that overcomes even Eliza's considerable personal beauty and charm.

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SAMUEL BECKETT AND MONOLOGUE DRAMA: PERFORMING THE SELF

EUGEN RADU WOHL[1]

ABSTRACT. ***Samuel Beckett and Monologue Drama: Performing the Self***. The paper discusses four of Samuel Beckett's monologue plays "Krapp's Last Tape" (1958), "Play" (1964), "Breath" (1969), "Not I" (1972) and "A Piece of Monologue" (1979), with the purpose of delineating their structure and understanding the playwright's experimental usage of this artistic genre, as well as its role within his overall dramatic corpus. We will attempt a historical and analytical foray into the many uses of the concept of *monologue* in both literature and theatre, with the intention to clarify its various appropriations in these fields and with the hope of eliciting further research into this important topic of analysis.

Keywords*: Samuel Beckett, dramatic monologue, monologue drama, fractured discourse, performance.*

REZUMAT. ***Samuel Beckett şi monologul teatral: Performarea sinelui***. Lucrarea discută monologurile teatrale ale lui Samuel Beckett, "Ultima bandă a lui Krapp" (1958), "Joc" (1964), "Respiraţie" (1969), "Nu eu" (1972) şi "Un fragment de monolog" (1979), cu scopul de a le delimita structura, modul unic prin care dramaturgul înţelege să se raporteze la acest gen dramatic, precum şi rolul lor în ansamblul operei lui Beckett. Speranţa noastră este ca aceast demers de cercetare a monologului, aşa cum e înţeles în literatură şi teatru, va reuşi să stimuleze cercetări ulterioare asupra acestui subiect de analiză.

Cuvinte cheie: *Samuel Beckett, monolog dramatic, drama monologată, discurs fracturat, performance.*

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On the (dramatic) monologue

Indeed, the parentheses seem necessary, albeit a bit puzzling, because, at a first glance at least, both the definition and the use of the concept would appear to be devoid of ambiguity: "All monologues are dramatic. A single person speaking is always addressing that speech to someone, even if only to himself or herself." (Hurley and O'Neill 2012, 167) Why then, one might ask, the need to add the adjective "dramatic" to an art form that pertains primarily to the field of Theatre and Performance Arts, in other words, to a form that is dramatic at its core, theatrical before anything else?

Critics attempted to answer the above question and shed light on the concept by distinguishing between the *dramatic monologue* and the theatre-specific *theatrical monologue*. The former is described as "a type of dramatic experimentation, but not something intended for theatrical presentation" (Stagg 1969, 49), a poetic form to be found in genres other than drama (primarily in poetry, but also in prose, most often as *interior monologue*). The latter, the *theatrical monologue*, is defined as "a speech by a character to himself", different from the *dialogue* "in the lack of verbal exchange and in that it is of substantial length and can be taken out of the context of conflict and dialogue" (Pavis 1998, 218). The boundaries between the two concepts, however, are still unclear and fluid.

The dramatic monologue is understood as a literary form *par excellence* and it originates in late 19th century Britain, in the poetic works of Victorian poets Robert Browning (1812-1889), his poem "My Last Duchess" (1842) being often quoted as an example, and Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), especially the poem "Ulysses" (1833), "as a reaction against confessional style" (Langbaum 1963, 79). Even though this poetic form predates Browning[2], he nevertheless brought this art form to "a high level" (Stagg 1969, 49) and "survives as a major Victorian poet for the dramatic monologues" (Jones 1967, 315). It was later adopted and enriched by modernist poets such as Ezra Pound (1895-1972), W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) and, most notably, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), who "contributed more to the development of the form than any other poet since Browning. Certainly "Prufrock", "Portrait of a Lady", "Gerontion", "Journey of the Magi", "A Song for Simeon" and "Marina" do "as much credit to the dramatic monologue as anything of Browning's" (Langbaum 1963, 77). In the second half of the 20th century, through the poetic works of Richard Howard (b. 1929), James Schevill (1920-2009), Edwin Morgan (1920-2010) or Carol Ann Duffy (b. 1955) "the dramatic monologue was again taken up with innovative enthusiasm" (Hurley and O'Neill 2012, 182).

[2] See, for instance, Howard, Claud. 1910. "The Dramatic Monologue: Its Origin and Development". *Studies in Philology* 4, 31-88.

The definition of the monologue as understood by theatre practitioners is, perhaps, even more shrouded in uncertainty, and despite its apparent unambivalence – "The monologue is a form of theatrical discourse which implies the absence of a conversational partner, of the 'stage interlocutor', with the audience being the only receiver." (Ubersfeld 1999, 53, my translation) – there are still numerous unclear aspects, the concept remaining "an incredibly widespread mode spanning 'conventional' drama to 'alternative' theatre" and "soliciting questions about the very nature of theatre itself, about the nature of performance and audience response, truth and illusion, narrative and experience" (Wallace 2006, 2).

Its use in plays and performances is as old as theatre itself, assuming, over the years, various forms, either as *soliloquies* (in Greek, as well as in Shakespearian tragedies), brief *solo asides* (in comedies) or longer *interior monologue* asides (in drama), however, it is not until the second half of the 20th century that the *monologue drama* emerges as an autonomous theatrical form, "as a *genre*" and not merely as a "*dramatic device*" (Wallace 2006, 4), with the figure of Samuel Beckett at its core:

> Beyond that there is a vague sense that for drama at least, all roads probably lead back to Samuel Beckett. Beckett is indisputably pivotal. While early examples of monologue plays include August Strindberg's "The Stronger" (1888-9), and Eugene O'Neill's "Before Breakfast" (1916), it is not until Beckett begins to explore the form in the late 1950s that its experimental potential is seriously developed. (Wallace 2006, 2-3)

Specialists attempting to delineate the structure of monologue drama and to advance an unequivocal definition of the concept, with scientific interest on this relatively new subject being "diffuse and scant" (Wallace 2006, 2) unavoidably feel compelled to resort to analytical studies on the established poetic forms (the interior monologue, the dramatic monologue), "which can be seen to suggest some of the principal trajectories in contemporary monologue drama and performance" (Wallace 2006, 13). The evident disparities between *dramatic monologue* and *monologue drama* notwithstanding, concerning, first and foremost, their intention, it is generally accepted that, in essence, all monologues are characterised by three main attributes, *speaker*, *audience*, *occasion*, respectively:

> The monologue, as Browning has exemplified it, is one end of a conversation. A definite speaker is conceived in a definite, dramatic situation. Usually we find also a well-defined listener, though his character is understood entirely from the impression he produces upon the speaker. We feel that this listener has said something and that his presence and

> character influence the speaker's thoughts, words, and manner. The conversation does not consist of abstract remarks, but takes place in a definite situation as a part of human life (Curry 1908, 7).

Later researchers further nuanced Curry's structure, with Ina Beth Sessions, for instance, considering the three elements to be typical of a "formal monologue" and adding four more features, "revelation of character, interplay between speaker and audience, dramatic action, and action which takes place in the present" (1947, 508), as distinctive marks of the "perfect monologue" (see table below).

Sub-classification of the Dramatic Monologue *Approximations*			
Perfect	*Imperfect*	*Formal*	*Approximate*
1) Speaker 2) Audience 3) Occasion 4)Interplay between speaker and audience 5)Revelation of character 6)Dramatic action 7)Action taking place in the present.	1) Shifting of center of interest from speaker; or, 2) Fading into indefiniteness of one or more of the last six Perfect characteristics.	1) Speaker 2)Audience 3) Occasion	1) Speaker 2) Lacking one or more of the characteristics listed under the Formal or the Imperfect.

Figure 1. Ina Beth Sessions' categorisation of dramatic monologues (1947).

More recent studies on the nature of the theatrical monologue also acknowledge the fundamental tripartite structure of the monologic discourse, emphasising their strong interconnectivity. *Speaker* and *audience* engage, on a clearly circumscribed occasion, in interactions, either obvious or implicit. As such, monologues are never "far removed from dialogism" (Ubersfeld 1999, 53, *our trans.*), and in fact, the implied receiver (reader or spectator) is an active component of the overall configuration of the monologue:

> However monological the utterance may be (for example, a scientific or philosophical treatise), however much it may concentrate on its own object, it cannot but be, in some measure, a response to what has already been said about the given topic, on the given issue, even though this responsiveness may not have assumed a clear-cut external expression. It will be manifested in the overtones of the style, in the finest nuances of the composition. The utterance is filled with *dialogic overtones*, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance. After all, our thought itself – philosophical, scientific, and

> artistic – is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well." (Bakhtin 2010, 92)

In this form of interaction lie "both the strength and the improbability and weakness of the monologue" states Patrice Pavis (1998, 218), who differentiates in terms of "dramaturgical function" between *technical monologues (narratives)*, "a character's version of events that are past or cannot be shown directly", *lyrical monologues*, "a moment of reflection and emotion in a character who gives away confidences," and *monologues of reflection or decision*, "given a difficult choice, the character outlines to himself the pros and cons of a certain course of behavior," while at the same time defining, in his classification of monologues "by literary form", *monologue drama* (he calls it *play as monologue*) as "a play that has a single character […] or is made up of a series of very long speeches" (1998, 218).

These brief theoretical considerations on the structure and theatrical function of the monologue will represent the framework for our analysis of the dramatic works of Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) and will permit us to better illustrate the innovative style of his monologue dramas.

Samuel Beckett and the play with monologue drama

Samuel Beckett's undeniable contributions to modern literature and theatre took many forms and are, as indeed all masterpieces, susceptible to a multitude of interpretations, a strong evidence for their multilayered structure. The present study however, will focus exclusively on Beckett's experimentation with the monologue drama artistic form, in continuation of the "earlier developments in the monologue tradition, revising the work of both Victorian and modernist predecessors" (Riquelme 2014, 401). We will thus examine the structure and use of the monologue as manifest in the plays "Krapp's Last Tape" (1958), "Play" (1964), "Breath" (1969), "Not I" (1972) and "A Piece of Monologue" (1979), in "his representations of a dramatic monologue beyond the unity of interior monologue, beyond the coherence of ego and character" (Ackerley 2004, 40).

"A late evening in the future" (Beckett 2012, 259) is the first stage direction of "Krapp's Last Tape", from the very beginning both destabilising any pre-existing implicit *dialogic* relation world-character and dismantling any chance for a "perfect" monologue. In the future therefore, in his "den", Krapp, "white face. purple nose. disordered grey hair. unshaven" (2012, 259), is the character present on stage, sitting at his table and listening to a recording of his younger self. Throughout the play, the emphasis is on the *voice* and, implicitly,

on the *discourse*, as Krapp, now 69 years old, listens and critically reacts to a recording of his thirty-nine-year-old self: "Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that" (2012, 269). In its turn, the voice of 39-year-old Krapp critically comments and distances itself from the discourse of a still younger Krapp, "from at least ten or twelve years ago" (2012, 264), dismissing its point of view, style and tone: "Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! [*Brief laugh in which Krapp joins*] And the resolutions! [*Brief laugh in which Krapp joins*] (…) False ring here. [*Pause.*] Shadows of the opus… magnum" (2012, 265).

The continuous relationship Krapp-Tape from this experimental monologue drama parallels Umberto Eco's understanding of Author and (Model) Reader as "textual strategies" and his delineations of the Author-Text-Reader interconnections where "sender and the addressee are present in the text not as mentioned poles of the utterance, but as 'actantial roles' of the sentence" and "the Model Reader is a textually established set of felicity conditions (…) to be met in order to have a macrospeech act (such as a text is) fully actualized" (Eco 1981, 10-11). It is only within the fictional construct, within the recording, that these implied "model" selves, Krapp recording and the future Krapp listening, can engage in dialogue.

In a form of *reverse monologue*, or reverse relationship, Beckett constructs Krapp as a materialisation of the implied, "model" listener of his younger selves. He is *the last* addressee creating a *last* tape (a work of fiction in its turn), sender and receiver all in one. The play abounds in evidence in support of this claim. The selection the character operates before settling on which tape to listen to resembles every reader's attempt to select a book from a shelf, perusing through titles and trying to deduce from them alone what the works might be about:

> Ah! [*He peers at ledger, reads entry at foot of page*] Mother at rest at last… Hm…The Black Ball… [*He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled*] Black Ball?...[*He peers again at ledger, reads.*] The Dark Nurse…[*He raises his head, broods, peers again at ledger, reads.*] Slight improvement in bowel movement condition. …Hm… Memorable…what? [*He peers closer.*] Equinox, memorable equinox. [*He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled*] Memorable Equinox? ... [*Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger, reads.*] Farewell to – [*he turns page*] – love. (2012, 263)

Krapp and his younger selves appear to meet each other as if for the first time and this encounter is only possible under the *sine qua non* condition that one is absent (albeit implied). The discourse on the tape is conceived with a future "model" self in mind, but the actual presence on stage, the character Krapp, fails to live up to the ideal projections and seems, at times, unable to fully

grasp the complexity of the discourse, to meet the implied "encyclopaedic evidence" (Eco, 1981, 7) of the recording:

> TAPE: –back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity [*KRAPP gives a start*] and the–[*KRAPP switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on*]–a-dying, after her long viduity, and the–
> [*KRAPP switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of 'viduity'. No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word.*]
> KRAPP: [Reading from dictionary.] State – or condition – of being – or remaining – a widow– or widower. [*Looks up. Puzzled.*] Being–or remaining? … [*Pause. He peers again at dictionary. Reading.*] 'Deep weeds of viduity.' … Also of an animal, especially a bird … the vidua or weaver-bird…. Black plumage of male…. [*He looks up. With relish.*] The vidua-bird!
> [*Pause. He closes dictionary, switches on, resumes listening posture.*] (2012, 266)

In light of the observations above, it would seem that in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Samuel Beckett aims consciously towards the illustration of an "imperfect monologue", with the main character, the speaker, removed from the centre and closer to "the edge of the stage" (2012, 262), the fractured discourse assuming the focal point. Who, we may wonder, is the (ideal) receiver of Krapp's *last* tape, who is its (model) audience? Is Beckett's theatre, as Martin Esslin suggests, "overwhelmingly interior monologue" (2011, 17), with the character delivering "whatever snatches of thought come into his head, with no concern for logic or censorship" (Pavis 1998, 219), or is it something else?

Two main characteristics of the monologue drama become evident in Beckett's play, further cementing its status as an autonomous theatrical form, as if the playwright desired to dilute methodically all traditional components of the monologue (be it "formal" or "perfect") in order to reach its theatrical essence: the pre-eminence of the *fractured discourse* and its fundamental *performative* dimension. Earlier works, such as "Act Without Words I" and "Act Without Words II" (1956), both removing the discourse completely and focusing exclusively on the actions of the characters, seem to confirm this quest.

Beckett's monologue drama is an overarching artistic form that encompasses both speech and action in a clearly marked and minutely

elaborated theatrical setting, as evidenced by the abundance of stage directions methodically outlining both the set design and the actions of the title character:

> *KRAPP remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, looks at his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back, fumbles, takes out a small bunch of keys, raises it to his eyes, chooses a key, gets up and moves to front of table (…) Finally he has an idea, puts banana in his waistcoat pocket, the end emerging, and goes with all the speed he can muster backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Loud pop of cork. Fifteen seconds.* (2012, 261-262)

Krapp's discourse, his last tape, is inseparable from, we are to understand, his last actions as his last recording alone, no longer destined for a "future I", is stripped of its implicit dialogism, becoming nothing more than a sequence of words devoid of meaning. It is only within the pre-established theatrical setting that it gains in significance as one of the components of the overall performative construct, the *monologue performance*, "a form of dialogic monologue with a consciousness of audience" (Gontarski 2004, 197). In theatre, Beckett seems to suggest, the monologic discourse alone cannot account for the "dramatic action", nor bring about the "revelation of the character", but rather it requires a complex set of interdependent, although not necessarily immediately evident, elements:

> In "Krapp's Last Tape" one solitary actor, in an empty space with the debris of his life unseen in a half-open drawer, has to convey his whole world past and present. Although there appears to be nothing on the stage, there is a huge amount of work to achieve that nothingness and to find the right table, and chair and objects for the actor that are both practical and poetic. (Howard 2003, 97)

Beckett's later dramatic works would drill further into the structure of the monologue, with his 1964 "Play" explicitly dismantling both character and discourse. The title is a play-on-words, the word "play" denoting both "theatre piece" and "game", a reference both to its innovative structure and to its fundamentally theatrical essence. On stage, "front centre, touching one another", we see "three identical grey urns" (2012, 367) from which the heads of the three characters, W2, M, W1, can be observed. Their speech is activated by the rapid shifts of a "spotlight projecting on faces alone".

The three characters on stage are completely stripped of any identity, nameless, shapeless and motionless, "faces impassive throughout" and "voices

toneless except where an expression is indicated" (2012, 367). They engage in "polyphonic stage monologues" (Riquelme 2014, 397), uttering, in the order permitted by the all-powerful spotlight for whom they are mere "victims" (2012, 381), fragments of their discourse, pieces of their story which, in the absence of an immediate addressee, "reduces the value of the monologue to true only" (Teodorescu Brânzeu 1984, 141). Three parallel and sometimes overlapping equally valid versions of the same ordinary chain of events (a love triangle), three pieces of discourse are able to account for the dramatic action of the entire piece, bringing it closer to tragedy in terms of their "absolute unrecognition"[3], their incapacity to acknowledge each other's points of view and engage in dialogue. They demand recognition for themselves and their own truth – "Am I as much as…being seen?" (2012, 381) – but, confined as they are, they are incapable to recognise each other. The playwright's decision to blend these voices into a "chorus" supports this claim. Far removed from its use in Greek tragedy where it "consists of non-individualised and often abstract forces (…) that represent higher moral or political interests" (Pavis 1998, 53)", the chorus in "Play" is nothing more than a self-referential echo of the monologic discourse, both suggesting the absence of a higher "moral" authority and preventing the audience from assuming such a role. Overshadowing the character, the *fractured discourse* assumes a focal position centre-stage, absorbs the roles of character (individualised) and chorus (non-individualised), in other words, it becomes a *performer* staging his own self. A performer, argues Patrice Pavis, "is someone who speaks and acts on his own behalf […] and thus addresses the audience" distinguishable from an *actor* who "represents his character (…) plays the role of another" (1998, 262). With the character reduced to a minimum, *speech* becomes the focus of "Play", in control of the dramatic tension. Yet another crucial element, the speaker, is disconnected, without being completely eliminated, from the anatomy of the monologue, leaving the *speech in performance* as its only indispensible condition.

However peripheral, the characters in "Play" are still discernible: a man (M), possibly his wife (W1) and presumably his mistress (W2). Their discourse, though detached and quasi-independent, is still illustrative of an *I*, of an individual human being. Beckett will later explore the "speaker-speech" relationship in monologue drama in his 1972 play "Not I".

The title signals "the avoidance of the first person pronoun" (Wallace 2006, 12) and the speech uttered by MOUTH only refers to a third person,

[3] See, for instance, Vartic, Ion. 1995. *Ibsen şi "teatrul invizibil". Preludii la o teorie a dramei* [*Ibsen and the "Invisible Theatre". Prologue for a Theory of Drama*]. Bucharest, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 93-97.

occasionally feeling the need to clarify, as if responding to a question, "… what?... who?... no!... she! (2012, 444). This could very well be indicative of her refusal to "admit this wilderness of a life is hers and hers alone" (Nightingale 2005, 372), or, as there is no indication that MOUTH is, in fact, the same woman's mouth, it could be a rejection of any such association. MOUTH thus informs the audience that *It* is only the medium through which someone else's, a woman's, story is delivered. The speech is the one and only performer, "not I", the channel, the *mouthpiece*, seems to be the implication.

The *fractured discourse* as its own *performer* does not require the existence of a character (be it well-defined or barely sketched), it desires to be self-sufficient, self-explanatory, the sole conveyor of meaning and of drama on stage. But it does require an implicit (rooted in the dramaturgical construction) or actual stage and an implicit or actual audience for its full manifestation, consequently becoming *performing fractured discourse*, a speech presenting its self as disconnected from any character.

"A Piece of Monologue" (1979), the only one of Beckett's plays to have the word "monologue" in its title, takes the process of circumscribing the limits of monologue drama to completion. "Well off center downstage audience left" (2012, 497) stands SPEAKER, unnamed, "identified only by theatrical function" (Riquelme 2014, 400), delivering, in the third person, a speech whose "language projects a way of thinking and being that we are unlikely ever to have encountered or imagined", one "markedly meta-theatrical" (2014, 399). Similar to MOUTH from "Not I", SPEAKER in "A Piece of Monologue" fulfils the function of channelling the performing *fractured discourse*. He is the vehicle through which the self-contained speech is allowed to take centre stage and perform itself, "transferring to the audience or reader the means and the responsibility for generating meaning" (Riquelme 2014, 402).

Perhaps the inclusion of "Breath" (1969) in this study might seem a bit baffling. Less than one page long, this piece consists of nothing but stage directions, but we consider it can prove instrumental in exemplifying the performative dimension of the monologue drama, as it emphasises the relationship between *speech* and *theatrical context* in generating the *performance* in the absence of both character and performer. On a stage "littered with miscellaneous rubbish" (2012, 439), two brief "identical" cries can be heard, preceding a moment of inspiration (the first one) and following a moment of expiration (the second one). *Speech* (in the form of human sound) and *theatrical space* (a stage before an audience) are the only two conditions necessary for this monologic performance to find its fulfilment, making possible the spectator's/reader's "generation of varying and multiple meanings" (Riquelme 2014, 402).

Conclusions

By testing the generally accepted limits of the monologue, Samuel Beckett discovers that for *monologue drama* to exist it is not the condition of *speaker/character* that takes precedence, but that of *speech*, of *performing discourse* (albeit reduced to nothing but a "faint brief cry"). Dislocated from a character, *fractured* (its linearity challenged by either the juxtaposition of a multitude of equally valid agents/speakers, or by its own self-referentiality), the *discourse* occupies the stage and becomes performative. *Speech* and *Audience* in a distinctly outlined *theatrical context* seem to be the major underlying imperatives of the playwright's monologue dramas.

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A VISION OF A VISION

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ABSTRACT. ***A Vision of a Vision***. When readers and critics look upon the life and works of William Butler Yeats, they most often (and justifiably) focus on his poetry. Nevertheless, an interesting aspect to look into concerns Yeats' personal philosophy on life and art. It is a perspective that already begins to take shape beginning with his first collection of poetry and which is eventually set to paper in the aptly named *A Vision.* One of the few scholars to analyze this grandiose text is Harold Bloom, who sees it as "a beautiful book, a considerable if flawed major poem" (Bloom 1970, 210). Flawed or not, *A Vision* remains a fascinating illustration of the poet's belief system and the present article explores how this system is constructed.

Keywords: *A Vision, William Butler Yeats, system of belief*

REZUMAT. ***Viziunea din "A Vision"***. Când cititori ori critici îşi îndreaptă atenţia asupra operei lui William Butler Yeats, de cele mai multe ori se axează (justificabil) pe poezia sa. Cu toate acestea, un aspect interesant care merită cercetat ține de filosofia personală a lui Yeats în ceea ce privește viața și arta. Este o perspectivă care începe să capete formă începând cu prima sa colecție de poezii şi care este în final pusă pe hârtie în opera numită cu iscusință *A Vision (O Viziune)*. Printre puținii cercetători care analizează acest text grandios este Harold Bloom, care îl vede ca fiind „o carte minunată, un poem major considerabil deşi imperfect" (Bloom 1970, 210 *traducerea mea*). Imperfect sau nu, *A Vision* rămâne o ilustrare fascinantă a sistemului de credințe a poetului, iar prezentul articol explorează modul în care este construit acest sistem.

Cuvinte cheie: *A Vision, William Butler Yeats, sistem de credințe*

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Introduction

From age 24, when he published his first poems in the collection *Crossways*, William Butler Yeats began to shape his personal philosophy on life and art, a perspective that is eventually set to paper in the aptly named *A Vision.* In his analysis of this grandiose text, Harold Bloom opens by saying that "it is possible to read *A Vision* many times over, becoming more fascinated, and still feel that Yeats went very wrong in it" (Bloom 1970, 210) and goes on to name it "nothing if not literary wisdom, yet it is sometimes unwise" (ibid). To what degree Yeats *went wrong*, or in what way the text is *unwise* is debatable, however it is true that reaction to *A Vision* varied, and there were even those who considered it proof that Yeats' poetic days were over. The most ardent defender of the text was Herman Whitaker, who saw it as "serious and brilliant philosophy of history" (Bloom 1970, 211), although it is perhaps more prudent to see this text as a literary creation – a manifest on Yeats' belief system, but placed nonetheless within a literary text – than a philosophical text in any true sense of the word. In any case, Bloom is correct when he says that *A Vision* is a fascinating book. Filled with images of cones and gyres and circles, with concepts like *primary, antithetical, Body of Fate*, which seem outlandish, to say the least, *A Vision* captures one's curiosity from the get-go. The major draw-back of this text is perhaps a significant lack of clarification regarding many of the ideas, such as the association of "every possible movement of thought" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 78) with the phases of the moon, or the presence of unnamed *Instructors* who apparently tell the author precisely what to write down and how. This in turn leaves the reader at times returning again and again to the same fragment, searching for the idea of what seems to be a puzzle that's missing a few pieces. These impediments do give the text a sense of incompleteness, which in turn decreases the poetic value of *A Vision*, and this is what Bloom is actually referring to in his criticism. He even says as much, when characterising *A Vision* as "a beautiful book, a considerable if flawed major poem" (ibid). None the less, the text still provides a brilliant symbolic illustration of a complex system of belief that is worth exploring, which is what he present paper will endeavor to do.

On A Vision

The journey towards the first Book of *A Vision* is long, the reader having to first go through several texts of varying sorts, grouped up into two sections, followed by a poem, which all seem to have been placed as explanation, justification (or even excuse) for writing this major work. When we finally have

come to Book 1 of *A Vision*, entitled *The Great Wheel*, Yeats wastes no more time in presenting us with concepts that are intriguing, if somewhat hard to swallow. It begins with a geometrical illustration of two gyres, or rather two cones immersed one inside the other, spinning constantly in opposite directions one in relation to the other (see Yeats [1937] 1966, 77).

Geometric forms for Yeats "can have a symbolic relation to reality", that is to say we can use geometry to symbolically illustrate various factors of existence. In this case, what Yeats presents are *the two tinctures – primary* and *antithetical*. As is explained by Bloom, the *antithetical* tincture can be seen as "the thrust towards individuality", while the *primary* is "the counter-movement towards unity" (Bloom 1970, 217). As Yeats himself explains,

> By the *antithetical* cone, which is left unshaded, we express more and more, as it broadens, our inner world of desire and imagination, whereas by the *primary*, the shaded cone, we express more and more, as it broadens, that objectivity of mind which lays stress upon that which is external to the mind. (Yeats [1937] 1966, 73)

Together, the cones form "the troublesome hourglass shape that tends to madden or anyway bore readers" (Bloom 1970, 217). Within this hourglass, *Four Faculties* are placed, as seen in the image accompanying the text, these being *Will, Mask, Creative Mind* and *Body of Fate*. The simplest way to understand this set in general is to think of them as the four base pillars according to which any one man's nature and life are characterised. The notion of *Will* represents who a person is inside, while *Mask* is that which is most different from ourselves and that we wish (or are made to wish) to become. Because these faculties are personal, aesthetic and emotional, they belong to the *antithetical* tincture. The other two faculties are *Body of Fate*, which can best be described as the world around us (past, present and future), and *Creative Mind* makes up the set of knowledge, of wisdom that we are born with and that we acquire in time, which permits us to tackle the world. Because these faculties deal with what is exterior to our inner selves, they belong to the *primary* tincture. How the four faculties function is described in the text: "The stage-manager, or *Daimon*, offers his actor an inherited scenario, the *Body of Fate*, and a *Mask* or role as unlike as possible to his natural ego or *Will*, and leaves him to improvise through *Creative Mind* the dialogue and details of the plot." (Yeats [1937] 1966, 84).

What becomes abundantly clear early in *A Vision* is that the Four Faculties do not appear at random, occupying instead specific positions. *Will* and *Mask* are opposites, so, naturally, they must always appear at opposite sides of the double-cone system and as far apart as possible. *Will* and *Body of Fate* are

also opposites (the inner world and the outer one), so they too must be placed on opposing sides. *Creative Mind* is essentially the way in which an *individual* deals with the world, and as such it is closer to *Will* than to *Body of Fate*.

From here two major ideas arise. The first is that "a particular man is classified according to the place of *Will,* or choice, in the diagram" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 73). This is to say that the position of *Will* determines where the other three Faculties will be placed, thus also establishing what type of person he is (more *antithetical* or more *primary*). The second major idea that presents itself is that the position of *Will* is not unique to all mankind, but that it shifts, and each time it moves closer to complete *primary* or closer to complete *antithetical*, a new type of human being appears. According to Yeats, the precise number of types is 28, coinciding with the 28 days of a lunar month. These types are found on a Great Wheel, envisioned by Yeats as "every completed movement or thought, twenty-eight incarnations, a single incarnation, a single judgment or act of thought" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 81). The four most important *Phases* are 1, 8, 15 and 22.

Phases 1 and 15 are referred to as "supernatural incarnations", because the text has astutely acknowledged that no such being can be found on Earth. However, if a man of *Phase* 1 did exist, he would be first and foremost described as having "complete objectivity", with "body completely absorbed in its supernatural environment" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 183). Individual thought and expression do not exist; "mind has become indifferent to good and evil, to truth and falsehood, body has become undifferentiated, dough-like" (ibid). Thus we have a sort of blank slate, a being that is in perfect equilibrium, with which one could do anything he chooses, a being characterised ultimately by "complete passivity, complete plasticity" (ibid). *Phase* 15, as the counterpart of *Phase* 1, can best be described as a being in dream state, where anything and everything is possible to him. Unity of Being is achieved, this being a state where the two counterparts – Will and *Mask* – are united. At *Phase* 15 "*Creative Mind* is dissolved in the Will and *Body of Fate* in the *Mask*. Thought and will are indistinguishable, effort and attainment are indistinguishable […] nothing is apparent but dreaming Will and the Image that it dreams" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 135). In other words, that which a person belonging to this *Phase* would seek and be able to obtain (*Mask*) is in fact the world around him (*Body of Fate*). He would also be privy to all knowledge, and for this reason this person can only be a fictional construction, since "a human being who embodied truth would also, presumably, take the form of an image or symbol" (Harper 2006, 144)

Phase 8 is the moment when *antithetical* men appear, when individual consciousness begins to predominate over social and spiritual conformity. As Yeats explains, if "at *Phases* 2, 3 and 4 the man moved within traditional or

seasonable limits" (Yeats [1937] 1965, 115), between *Phases* 5 and 7 there occurs a weakening in the need for restrictions and blind obedience, until finally, at *Phase* 8, self-conscious man appears.

At *Phase* 22 we see the second major shift, as man turns from *antithetical* to *primary* once more, and if at *Phase* 8 we saw the discovery of strength, here we witness its breaking (Yeats [1937] 1966, 163). In this state of balance *Will* works to encompass or be encompassed by *Body of Fate*. Personality still exists, but the man of this *Phase* is no longer interested in discovering himself, but seeks to understand the world and to discover his place within this world. He no longer has any wish to change, to create, but seeks only to understand, to discover what is truth, reality, God's *Will*. And because such divine will is far too massive for one to perceive in any concrete form, he is forced (or forces himself) to create an abstract system, a code of science. The man's *Will* itself "has become abstract, and the more it has sought the whole of natural fact, the more abstract it has become" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 158). This act of discovering truth through abstraction is, however, presented somewhat as a fool's errand, for the further man tries to gain knowledge in this manner, the more this act of appropriation becomes its own goal. This is what Yeats means when he places *Mask* and *Creative Mind* together: the interaction with the world and the act of understanding the world, become the very object of desire for the man of *Phase* 22. It is similar to the way in which a person can believe that he is in love with someone, but is in fact in love with the idea of being in love, with the abstract notion of love. The concrete example that Yeats gives of a man akin to *Phase* 22 is Darwin, and in light of the poet's system of belief, this makes sense. For Darwin is nothing if not the symbol of science during Yeats' time, and the kind of man that is described at *Phase* 22 is the scientist.

The Great Wheel presented in *A Vision*, like any well constructed symbol, can be viewed from more than out point of view, applies to several facades of the greater picture, and as such may refer not only to different types of human nature, but to the evolution of a single human being, provided we take into account Yeats' belief in reincarnation, in the repetitive nature of our existence. Thus, we are born and rely completely on our mother for nurturing (*Phase* 1). Slowly we become self-aware and finally we find our personality (*Phase* 8). We develop this personality until it has reached its creative climax (*Phase* 15) and then slowly let it linger. Eventually we come to accept a higher power (*Phase* 22) and then submit to it more and more, until we die and are reborn.

Harold Bloom saw *A Vision* as "a protest against reductiveness, against the homogenising of experience, but its dialects are themselves reductive, and tend to diminish man" (Bloom 1970, 211). Indeed, in regards to the Four Faculties governing man's nature and to the 28 *Phases*, the text seems to greatly

simplify (or even reduce) human existence, however, Yeats would probably call it *simplification through intensity*. We mustn't forget that the Faculties and *Phases* are symbolic representations, and as such, simple as they may be, they are also understood to represent great complexities. Bloom's criticism towards *A Vision* stems from his opinion that Yeats, while drawing heavily from grand works such as those by Shelley or Blake, fails to create a text that lives up to the standards of either.

In *A Vision*, it is obvious that Yeats, while trying to present both *primary* and *antithetical* man objectively, takes the side of the latter, which he saw himself as being a part of. This should come as no surprise, since the former is linked to science. The poet himself was known to have a strong aversion to this field, because "an art based on the 'philosophy' of Victorian science was incapable of creating beauty" (Watson 2006, 37). As far as the *antithetical* man is concerned, his goal is to understand his *Mask*, to bring his *Will* and *Mask* into Unity of Being, so that the interplay between the two can put him into direct and conscious contact with the *Daimon*. However, the success of such a feat is a form of completion, and once made complete, a man cannot exist any longer amongst the living. Thus, it would appear that Yeats saw all life as complicated and corrupt, an impure state that the Gnostic poet must rise above – for "the anima mundi, like the collective unconscious, reveals itself only to the Gnostic poet" (Bloom 1970, 221) – so that he may look upon the *Daimon* with his own eyes.

This exploration of the *Daimon's* nature and intentions is taken further in Book 2 of *A Vision*, where W.B. Yeats transfers his ideology from the earthly to the universal (as any doctrine of faith would inevitably do). The title of this Book is *The Completed Symbol* because here Yeats professes to present the Great Wheel, as a symbol of existence, in all its complexity. And because on such a grand scale the Four Faculties are insufficient, they have now been transformed into the Four Principles. Thus *Will* shall from now on be called *Husk*, and not represent simply man's inner self, but the whole of man. *Mask* is here *Passionate Body*, and it represents all that man desires, not just that which is most opposite to his nature. *Body of Fate* is referred to as *Celestial Body*, and is not just our world, but the entire realm of the *Daimon*, which of course includes us within it. Lastly, *Creative Mind*, which deals with *Body of Fate*, is now Spirit, which deals with the *Celestial Body*. This is not to say that the Faculties are no more, but that in regards to the more general view, the Principles are considered the more appropriate points of departure. Book 2 will then continue by explaining the relationship between each Principle, as well as the relationship between the Principles and the Faculties. We should keep in mind that, like in any doctrine of faith, humanity – no matter how small

he may seem in the universe – is still at the center of this spiritual universe, for although it precedes man, without him the very existence of the universe seems meaningless.

In essence, the Faculties and the Principles both deal with man's interaction with himself and with his surroundings, but from different standpoints – one from the point of view of life looking upon death, the other of death looking upon life – and as such, *Phase* 22 of the Wheel of Faculties, when man begins to renounce his will to exterior power, corresponds to *Phase* 1 of the Wheel of Principles. This initial *Phase* is the moment of death, when

> … consciousness passes from *Husk* to Spirit; *Husk* and *Passionate Body* are said to *disappear*, which corresponds to the *enforcing* of *Will* and *Mask* after *Phase* 22, and Spirit turns from *Passionate Body* and clings to *Celestial Body* until they are one and there is only Spirit; pure mind, containing within itself pure truth, that which depends only upon itself: as in the *primary Phases*, *Creative Mind* clings onto *Body of Fate* until mind deprived of its obstacle can create no more and nothing is left but *the spirits at one*. (Yeats [1937] 1966, 189)

Already we are seeing the contours of a belief system that is inherently tragic. Man appears as having been placed on Earth to serve the *Daimon*'s own purposes, and when man dies, eventually only Spirit remains, *which depends only upon itself*, which *creates no more*, which lacks any sort of individual, personal conscience that would allow him to independently interact with the world of the dead. Thus there is a world beyond our existence, it is only our capacity for interaction (*Creative Mind*, now become *Spirit*) that survives death, while both our ability to comprehend the knowledge that would come from this interaction, and the possibility of even exerting our own conscious, independent will upon that of the *Daimon*, vanish. Under these circumstances, Book 2 would potentially confuse the reader who tries to understand why – as expressed in Book 1 – the poet would want to hasten the Apocalypse, to hasten the end, when all that makes up his *antithetical* nature would normally vanish. It seems foolish, unless we choose to perceive this struggle towards the end as one where the poet achieves what should otherwise be impossible to the human condition, which is to pass into the realm of the *Daimon* without losing his independent self. Similar to entering the world of dreams, where everything is possible, without actually going to sleep, the poet would become a self-sustaining entity that knows every bit as much as the *Daimon*; he would become the man described in *Phase* 15 on the Wheel of Faculties.

What is curious about this Book is how often Yeats refers to outside entities, known as *Instructors* when presenting his ideas. Indeed, when he says

that he is "not certain that [he] understands the statement that the *Spirit* is the future" and that he "would have understood had [his] instructors said that *Celestial Body* was the future" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 191), it is as if the author were trying to place the burden of responsibility for his notions on someone else. Equally possible is that these instructors are simply a reiteration of the *Muses* of old, however, without further explanation, this comes off as yet another reason why Book 2 of *A Vision* might leave the reader wanting.

Book 3, called *Soul in Judgment*, is far more fascinating, certainly more poetic and therefore far better than its predecessor. It is dedicated completely to what, in Yeats' belief, happens to a human soul once death has come, presenting a detailed and surprisingly clear step-by-step journey, ending with rebirth. This journey is divided into six stages of transformation, these being *The Vision of the Blood Kindred, Meditation, Shiftings, Beatitude, Purification* and *Foreknowledge*. The first three of these, which contain the notions of *Dreaming Back* and *Return* are in fact reinterpretations of a preexisting notion that when you die you first see your whole life flash before your eyes and then come to terms with everything before moving on. What is interesting here is the notion that these stages are covered at a different pace from one individual to the next and that "where the soul has great intensity and where those consequences affected great numbers, the *Dreaming Back* and the *Return* may last with diminishing pain and joy for centuries" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 228). This remark, presented by Yeats rather offhandedly, suggests that the reason why great figures appear so rarely throughout history is that it takes them centuries to pass through the stages of death and to be reborn.

Eventually, according to Yeats, a state of balance is achieved, wherein the *Spirit* is within the fourth stage of death, the Beatitude. How long the *Spirit* will remain in this state is completely unknown, but when it is over the *Spirit* enters Purification, where

> … a new *Husk* and *Passionate Body* take the place of the old; made from the old, yet, as it were, pure. All memory has vanished, the *Spirit* no longer knows what its name has been, it is at last free and in relation to *Spirits* free like itself. Though the new *Husk* and *Mask* have been born, they do not *appear*, they are subordinate to the *Celestial Body*. The *Spirit* must substitute the *Celestial Body*, seen as a Whole, its own particular aim. Having substituted this aim it becomes self-shaping, self-moving, plastic to itself, as that self has been shaped by past lives. If its nature is unique it must find circumstances not less unique before rebirth is possible. (Yeats [1937] 1966, 233)

If there ever is a 'Heaven' in Yeats' belief system, this stage would be it. Here the *Spirit* is free, able to mingle with other *Spirits* inhabiting the *Celestial Body* and is able to shape itself as it sees fit, limited only by the possibilities that its past lives have given it. Life in a new body awaits, however the circumstances must be right, and here Yeats was very witty to place the power of rebirth ultimately into the hands of the living. He does so because "only the living create" and so "it may seek the assistance of those living men into whose 'unconsciousness' or incarnate *Daimon*, some affinity of aim permits to enter" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 234). A fascinating idea is hidden within these words: that the poet's source of inspiration may very well be those *Spirits* who enter the unconsciousness of men, helping them create art, so that in turn these men could help set the necessary stage for these *Spirits* to be reborn. This rebirth is not a pleasant one, since the sixth stage of death, Foreknowledge, is one in which "the *Spirit*, now almost united to *Husk* and *Passionate Body*, may know the most violent love and hatred possible, for it can see the remote consequences of the most trivial acts of the living" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 235). Thankfully (and rather conveniently), all such knowledge is lost when the new life is born.

After merely a glance over this period described between death and life, we find that, towards the end of Book 3, Yeats states the obvious when explaining that "Neither the Phantasmagoria nor the Purification, nor any other state between death and birth should be considered as a reward or paradise" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 236). The *Spirit*'s sole purpose seems to be to pass quickly through the six stages, since "the more complete the expiation, or the less the need for it, the more fortunate the succeeding life" (ibid). If, as stated above, great personalities need more time to complete the process, then this last statement makes the entire process all the more tragic, since it effectively suggests that people whose souls have greater intensity (as for example a poet might be) are necessarily condemned to an unsuccessful life.

Interestingly, while in Book 3 one would expect the *Daimon* to appear more often than in any other segment of the book, in fact it is hardly mentioned at all. This absence only works to further remove this fragment from the realm of occult beliefs, which, when made central to the text, only every succeeded in lessening the poetic quality of Yeats' works. Book 3 is then a work that belongs wholly to Yeats, illustrating only his own views upon the afterlife.

Book 4 of *A Vision* is entitled *The Great Year of the Ancients*, where Yeats argues for the first time that the cyclic nature of the Great Wheel can be applied to history. This is, unfortunately, the poorest section in the grand text, and so we will not be spending too much time on it. Yeats starts off from an antiquated observation that the stars in the sky shift in cycles of 26.000 years and presents

an outdated, wholly unoriginal idea of history following a similar course as the celestial bodies. After this, he claims – without any real justification – to present the reader with some prediction as to what will come next. All in all, there is little to take from this Book (nothing really, if the reader has any significant knowledge of ancient culture) and perhaps it serves best only as preparation for Book 5, which, thankfully, is far more poetic and as such far better constructed.

This final segment of *A Vision* is entitled *Dove or Swan*. The title may allude to symbolic representations of time after and before the birth of Christ, since the white dove is a symbol of Christian faith, while the swan is a symbolic figure that precedes Christianity, and also because, as we shall soon see, Book 5 deals very much with eras and their significance.

Yeats begins with a notion that is true to his system of belief, that "the Christian Era, like the two thousand years that came before it, is an entire wheel, and each half of it an entire wheel" and that "each half when it comes to its 28th *Phase* reaches the 15th or the 1st *Phase* of the entire era" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 267). Here, then, we see the forming of a system of gyres within gyres, a grandiose, dynamic image that incorporates actual human history. Beginning with Chapter III, Yeats looks at the last four thousand years through the lens of his cyclical belief system, now made complete, and will separate history into three Great Eras.

The era between year 2000 B.C and year 1 A.D. thus begins with the founding of Greek civilisation, *Phase* 1, presented as being comprised of tribes, which "after a first multitudinous revelation […] established an intellectual anarchy" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 269). From a revelation that comes from outside, the consciousness of civilisation thus begins to form, and this can be seen as *Phases* 1 to 7 of the first Great Era. At *Phase* 8 there appears Homer and "civil life, a desire for civil order dependent doubtless on some oracle" and then at *Phase* 12 "personality begins" (ibid). *Phase* 15 is reached with Raphael and Phidias, a period of art in its purest form, and "after Phidias the life of Greece comes rapidly to an end" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 271). Yeats sees the conquest of Alexander the Great as *Phase* 22, when Greek civilisation is lost to Asiatic delight, and dominant belief arises (*Phase* 25). Shortly after that, the belief in God spreads and with this comes the end of the first Great Era.

The period between 2000 B.C. and 1 A.D. is considered by Yeats (who seems to completely ignore the roles that gods played in the eyes of ancient man) to be an inherently *antithetical* era, because there is no actual dominating entity existing outside man, therefore man holds here all the tools of creation and is the maker of his own world. The period after the year 1 A.D. is, however, *primary* in nature, for power now lies outside man, in the hands of God. Because

the first thousand years and the latter thousand make up complete cycles and are inherently different, they make up two separate Great Eras, each containing important periods that coincide with the *phases* of the *Great Wheel* presented in Book 1. Thus, the second Great Era, lasting up to year 1050, "God is conceived of something outside man and man's handiwork, and it follows that it must be idolatry to worship that which Phidias and Scopas made" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 274), for all that has come before the new age would interfere with man's worshiping of God. True to the *primary Phases* of an inherently *primary* cycle, at the beginning "night will fall upon man's wisdom now that man has been taught that he is nothing" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 274). Yeats continues with an intellectually delightful contemplation upon the idea that Jesus, who sacrificed Himself for us, was Love personified, and concludes that it is not *love* that he stood for, but *primary pity*, despite the *antithetical* nature of the Savior. It is the latter because love can only be expressed towards something unique; one who loves "will admit a greater beauty than that of his mistress but not its like" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 275). But Jesus claimed to love common man, and all men alike, and from the standpoint of Yeats's beliefs, his was *primary* love, and not even love in its true form, but pity.

Phases 2 through 7 are marked by the steady decline and eventual fall of the Roman Empire (up to the year 250). During this period, classical Roman architecture reaches its climax and then degrades, while the nobility appears as "an *antithetical* aristocratic civilisation in its completed form" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 277). It is now ripe; every aspect of the noble life has its conduct and modes of behavior and all is mechanical, driven only by the worship of God. And yet, once *Phase* 8 in history is reached and "Constantine puts the cross upon the shields of his soldiers and makes the bit of his war-horse from the nail of the True Cross" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 278), this act is seen as a discovery of individual strength. With this single act Constantine the Great, like a poet who makes his own the words of the Muse, appropriates the power of God, and from here on, though still under the gaze of the Lord, man will begin more and more to shape his belief, rather than letting it be shaped by an exterior force.

Phase 15 is without a doubt early Byzantium, where "maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 279). More precisely, this *Phase* existed during the reign of Justinian, when Byzantine art reaches its most perfect form. After this, history enters *Phases* 16 to 21, a period on which Yeats does not give too much detail, except to say that in some parts of the world there was an ever-increasing turn towards intellectualism, while in others there was a turn from it, and Christianity as a whole became ever more heterogeneous. *Phase* 22 is coincided with the fall of Charlemagne's Empire, after which there follows, during the last *Phases*,

"heterogeneous art; hesitation amid architectural forms, an interest in Greek and Roman literature, much copying and gathering together" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 283). Art thus becomes wholly mechanical and trivial and what made Byzantium once so beautiful and perfect is lost, or at least temporarily forgotten.

The last (or most recent) Great Era, from the year 1050 to the author's present day, begins when suddenly "the tide changed and faith no longer sufficed" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 285). This millennium will see the rise and dominance of secular law, the appearance and growth of secular science, and the foreboding signs of the fall of Christianity. It is still a whole *primary* gyre; it cannot be *antithetical* because secular law still exerts power in all aspects of our lives from an exterior force (that of the King or of the courts), while science does not look into the human soul, but into the mechanics of nature and of physical existence.

Phases 1 through 7 are marked by the appearance of the Arthurian legends and of Gothic architecture, during which time the Church has become itself more secular so that it may combat secular law, like fighting fire with fire. During this time, "nobles and ladies join the crowds that drag the Cathedral stones" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 288), thus experiencing *primary* joy. The moment, however, when strength is discovered (*Phase* 8) is when, in the 13th century, Dante Alighieri "mourns for solitude, lost through poverty, and writes the first sentence of modern auto-biography, and in the *Divina Commedia* imposes his own personality upon a system and a phantasmagoria hitherto impersonal" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 289). The period of Da Vinci and Botticelli mark *Phase* 15 of the new era, and it is a time of intense creativity, as would be expected during the height of *antithetical* expression (even within a *primary* gyre). It is followed by a moment of elevated and extremely refined intellectual thought – the writings of Shakespeare – and then a steady decline in art, as science and all things practical begin to take over. By the time we reach the 19th century, we are already past *Phase* 22 and this is a time of "social movements and applied science", purely abstract thought, from which there will "result the elimination of intellect" (Yeats [1937] 1966, 299) in the years that will come after Yeats.

In conjunction with the other four books of *A Vision*, what we have here is "the specific expressions of Yeats' system which follow after and balance against the sections that deal in abstractions" (Matthew 2012, 136). *Dove and Swan* is therefore a concretisation of how the mechanics of Yeats' system of belief play out in real time throughout history. It shouldn't be surprising then that Harold Bloom openly praises this last part of Yeats' text, saying that "when the student of Yeats passes on to Book V of *A Vision*, he can be grateful that the poet has taken over completely from his astral instructors" (Bloom 1970, 280). Indeed, in *Dove or Swan* the illusive instructors hardly appear and are largely irrelevant, thus making this section a wholly original construct and not a text

that relies heavily on its own influences, as was the case of the preceding two books. In this fifth *Book* Yeats identifies three full moons in art throughout human civilisation, and "has the confidence to fix their dates, and the dialectical cunning to remind us that these eras of *Phase* 15 are also times of *Phase* 8 or 22 in larger cycles, and so times of trouble as well as of achievement" (Bloom 1970, 282). More than a philosophy of history, Bloom sees *Dove or Swan* as a reverie on such a philosophy, without however denying the well grounded interplay that Yeats creates here between philosophical contemplation and historical fact. Indeed, one of the merits (among many others) of the way history is presented in Book V is precisely the fact that it touches so often upon real historical facts and illustrates so effectively certain cyclical trends of the past that cannot be denied, that even a person who expresses disbelief in Yeats' system of belief would have to at least consider parts of it, if he keeps an open mind. It is similar to the way an open-minded Christian must find merit in Hinduism, or the other way around.

Conclusion

Ultimately, William Butler Yeats ends up creating in *A Vision* an apocalyptic system of belief. There is wisdom and knowledge out there of infinite proportions, but these are not found among the living. Instead, they reside with the *Daimon* and the spirit realm. The tragedy for mankind seems to be, however, that even in death we cannot comprehend the knowledge that the *Daimon* holds, since consciousness disappears along with *Husk.* Hope, however, lies with the poet, who, by meditating upon his *Mask*, is able to peer through the veil that separates this world and the next, and thus gain glimpses of the *Daimon's* world while maintaining his own sense of awareness.

One question that remains is how seriously we should take Yeats' philosophy. To date, there is no such thing as *Yeatsianism*, and that is perhaps for the best. Notions of gyres and *Great Wheels* and *Daimons* that govern our actions are amusing notions to contemplate upon, but it would probably be difficult to find any authentic way in which we might identify the elements of our personal lives with much of anything that is described in this text. Perhaps the best way to view *A Vision* then is less as a universal philosophical doctrine, and more as Yeats' personal system of belief, which helped guide him throughout his literary career. Taking this perspective into account, an interesting practice then becomes that of first reading and understanding *A Vision* (as best one can) and then going back to read or reread the author's earlier works and seeing how the reader's interpretation of them might change.

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SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES: LEOPOLD BLOOM, HOSPITALITY, AND THE OTHER IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*[1]

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ABSTRACT. ***Shifting Perspectives: Leopold Bloom, Hospitality, and the other in James Joyce's "Ulysses"***. The present paper interprets the character of Leopold Bloom in light of his incorporation of the ethical necessity to "see ourselves as others see us", as well as the meaning acquired by the character when read against the context of the Great War. We propose that Bloom the redeemer, as he is portrayed on several occasions throughout the day, is not a single Messianic figure, but rather a type of human being with a distinctive attitude to the experience of the Other. The protagonist, himself an exile, is perpetually prone to shed his own point of view in favour of that of alterity, in other words, to see the world as others might see it. His acts of kindness, his generous, gentle nature, and his interactions with Stephen and Molly can all be viewed, as I will argue, as consequences of this almost in-built shift of perspective.

Keywords: *Leopold Bloom, perspective, hospitality, love, ethics of alterity, Levinas, Derrida.*

REZUMAT. ***Schimb de Perspectivă: Despre Leopold Bloom, Ospitalitate şi Alteritate în "Ulise"***. Lucrarea de faţă propune o interpretare a personajului Leopold Bloom plecând de la felul în care acesta reiterează versul lui Robert Burns, „să ne vedem cum ne văd alţii," şi având în vedere faptul că James Joyce scrie *Ulise* în timpul primului război mondial. În acest sens, Bloom salvatorul, aşa cum el este descris pe parcursul romanului, nu este propriu-zis o figură mesianică, ci, mai degrabă, exponentul unei tipologii umane cu a atitudine deosebită faţă de experienţa alterităţii. El însuşi exilat din orice comunitate, protagonistul tinde întotdeauna să renunţe la propriul punct de vedere în favoarea Celuilalt. Cu alte cuvinte, Bloom vede lumea aşa cum o văd alţii.

Cuvinte cheie: *Leopold Bloom, perspectivă, ospitalitate, iubire, etica alterităţii, Levinas, Derrida.*

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Throughout *Ulysses*, Bloom remembers a verse from Robert Burns' 1786 poem, "To a Louse," which describes the indignation of a churchgoer who witnesses the parasitic insect as it settles in a lady's sophisticated hat. There is, of course, a didactic purpose to the poem. Although the lady initially seems superior to others in the eyes of the lyrical voice, they soon realise that to a louse, all people must look the same, irrespective of their "airs in dress an' gait"; furthermore, if we only had the power to "see ourselves as others see us," we would likely be disabused of our pretensions, our pride, and our vain self-love. These ideas are intimately linked to the fact that *Ulysses* was written between 1914 and 1921, in "Trieste-Zurich-Paris" (644), against the backdrop of violence-torn, early 20th century Europe. The narrative itself deliberately takes place prior to the events erupting in 1914, while its protagonists are ostentatiously pacifist, concerned with the mere facts of everyday existence. This does not, however, indicate that the novel is completely remote from its context of writing and publication, but rather suggests that Joyce went against the expectations of his contemporary audience in order to propose an alternative to the war or, more likely, a way to move forward from it. In this light, I argue, we might better understand why Leopold Bloom is sometimes viewed as a Messianic figure. Against the backdrop of the war, which framed the publication of the novel, he maintains a unique approach to alterity, as well as the tendency to see everything from the Other's point of view. Using Emmanuel Levinas' and Jacques Derrida's ethics of alterity, I propose to interpret Bloom's interaction with non-human alterity, with his so-called "neighbours" and with Stephen, and finally, with the other sex and Molly in particular.

Although, like *Ulysses*, much of Levinas's work might initially appear to be divorced from its historical context, the philosopher paid close attention to the events unfolding in early 20th century Europe, which he viewed as "a time of human abandonment, injustice of vast scope, inhumanity and suffering" (Morgan, 2). Levinas himself suffered the horrors of Nazism throughout the nearly five years he spent in a prisoners-of-war camp; he lost members of his family in death camps, and in France, his wife and children were forced into hiding during his captivity. His ethics or "first philosophy" is grounded in such realities, his writing revealing war as an attempt to dominate that which it ignores, to annihilate an opposing force, without "seeing the face in the other" (Levinas 1987, 19). The philosopher's on-going comments on Vasily Grossman's 1960 *Life and Fate*, a novel which depicts the Stalinist regime with gruesome realism, are particularly illustrative in this regard:

> Grossman's eight hundred pages offer a complete spectacle of desolation and dehumanization (…). Yet within that decomposition of human relations, within that sociology of misery, goodness persists. In the relation of one man to an other, goodness is possible. (…) Every attempt

> to organize humanity fails. The only thing that remains undying is the goodness of everyday, ongoing life. Ikonnikov calls that 'the little act of goodness' (…) [I]t is a goodness outside of every system, every religion, every social organization. (Levinas 2001, 217-8)

In other words, in picking up on several acts of gratuitous kindness described by Grossman against the dehumanising context of a totalitarian regime, Levinas is interested not in a system or higher organisation of morality, but in the particular ethical relationship occurring between human beings, between the self and the other. He believed that "in place of systems and totalities, we need an acknowledgment and realisation of the utterly particular. This would be a 'redemption of the everyday,' in a sense" (Morgan, 33). With this in mind, we might better understand Levinas's project in his 1961 *Totality and Infinity*, which seeks to describe the primacy of such moments of "senseless kindness" through the pre-rational encounter of the self and the other.

According to Levinas, in one's encounter with the Other, the self's solitary, self-sufficient state of being is interrupted, even shattered. As an immediate effect, the Other paralyses possession, as well as enjoyment, to which it opposes "his epiphany of the face" (Levinas 1979, 170-71). The face of the Other is a breach in totality, it reveals itself by itself and therefore it escapes "the self's powers of constitution" (Moati, 37). Against the self's state of enjoyment, the face of the Other opposes a form of "ethical resistance" (Levinas 1979, 199); the self can exercise no power over the face, "not because it opposes me with a greater power, but because it transcends the register of power in general" (Moati, 149). In other words, the face does not confront the self with some kind of "counterpower," but rather suspends "my ability for power" (Levinas 1979, 198).

One of Levinas's essential contributions to the understanding of ethics remains the fact that from within the experience of the face, the self cannot escape responsibility. Levinas defines responsibility as one's response to the call of the face, so that regardless of what this response might be, it exists in any face-to-face event. In later works and particularly in *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas's earlier language is gradually replaced by a disturbing, aggressive registry, with terms such as *obsession*, *persecution*, *accusation*, or *hostage* reminding us "of what we originally are – accused before we have done anything, obsessed before we have chosen at all and in a sense overcome, persecuted by the demand made of us before we have accepted it" (Morgan, 82). Responsibility becomes a deluge of responsibility, and is therefore subtracted from the domain of subjectivity, freedom, will, or power, where it had been placed by Western philosophical tradition.

Yet Levinas also understood philosophy as "the wisdom of love" (Levinas 1981, 162): the ethical, personal, and political relations between the self and the Other "are founded on or conditioned by love" (Secomb, 67). Though referring predominantly to Agape, or "love without Eros," erotic love is

itself essential for Levinas because it implies "a transcending of self in reaching toward the other and caring for the other," even though it remains a fulfilment of pleasure and a satisfaction of desire (Secomb, 63). Desire is "the ontological state through which one experiences alterity" (Utell, 10); thus in the simultaneous experience of one's desire to reach the Other and an unbridgeable distance thereof, the self may grasp the infinite. The caress embodies this reality, as it "consists in seizing upon nothing (…) it expresses love, but suffers from an inability to tell it. It is hungry for this very expression, in an unremitting increase of hunger" (Levinas 1979, 257). The self's responsibility for the other may be, therefore, best explained through Agape, but it is through erotic love also that the self attains a glimpse of the infinite face of Other.

Indebted to Levinas in much of his thinking, Derrida was committed to the former's project, "not as Levinas himself conceived it, but as Derrida rewrote it," to the extent that what "Derrida called fidelity to Levinas was often indistinguishable from betrayal" (Hammerschlag, x), a subversion and occasional misinterpretation of the latter. Nevertheless, and even though Derrida himself never refers to it as such, his writing does propose an ethics of alterity, while acknowledging the impossibility of Levinas's pure *neighbourly love*. In a 1992 essay, "The Other Heading," Derrida defines responsibility as follows:

> The condition of possibility of this thing called responsibility is a certain *experience and experiment of the possibility of the impossible: the testing of the aporia* from which one may invent the only *possible invention, the impossible invention*. (41)

Responsibility, therefore ethics, can only be experienced as an aporia, an insoluble contradiction internal to the event itself. This is not merely to say that ethics is impossible, but rather to indicate that it becomes possible only as a result of its own impossibility. The premises for such a statement are similar to those of Levinas's work, in the sense that both thinkers write at a time when an overwhelming philosophical tradition had already inscribed responsibility in the sphere of "accountability, that is (…) of will, causality, freedom or free-will, subjectivity, and agency." In other words, responsibility had been understood by means of a subject, an initiator and perpetrator of the act, as well as the ground for imputation, thereby inevitably leading to a "semantics of power and appropriation," wherein to be responsible designated "the capacity by a sovereign subject to appropriate itself entirely in an ideal of self-legislation and transparency" (Raffoul, 413). For Derrida, on the other hand, responsibility no longer implies intentionality, freedom, or autonomy, but is the encounter of an event as inappropriable, an experience of the impossible (Raffoul, 414).

We arrive, in this manner, at the definition of responsibility and of ethics as *aporia*. In the essay "Force of Law," Derrida first explains this through the

unstable relation between law and justice. Thus, in order to be just, to avoid arbitrariness, the judge must follow the law, in other words, a rule. Yet if the judge merely follows a rule programmatically, he or she is nothing more than a calculating machine: so "not only must a judge follow a rule but also he or she must 're-institute' it in a new judgment." Since each case is different, marked by specific circumstances, each decision must be "an absolutely unique interpretation which no existing coded rule can or ought to guarantee" (Lawlor, 125). The result, ultimately, is a form of violence, because no decision can conform perfectly to institutional codes. What the judge experiences or ought to experience, therefore, is the *undecidable*, which occurs not only in a court of law, but with any ethical decision. No mere oscillation between two or more possibilities or outcomes, the *undecidable* represents the experience that "the case, being unique and singular, does not fit the established codes and therefore a decision about it seems to be impossible" (Lawlor, 125). Consequently, a decision can never be presently and fully just, yet is necessary and urgent (Derrida 1992, 24-5). It is made in an instant, a finite moment, and in the absence of unlimited knowledge, which could justify it. This is why Derrida concludes elsewhere that "a decision is unconscious – insane as that may seem, it involves the unconscious and nevertheless remains responsible" (Derrida 1997, 69). It is, paradoxically, a "passive decision" for which I am nevertheless responsible (Raffoul, 425).

The issue of *hospitality*, which occupies a significant space especially in Derrida's later works, is understood in a similar manner. In "A Word of Welcome," a speech delivered one year after Levinas's death, the philosopher proposed that, according to Levinas,

> intentionality opens, from its own threshold, in its most general structure, as hospitality, as welcoming of the face, as an ethics of hospitality, and, thus, as ethics in general. For hospitality is not simply some region of ethics, let alone (…) the name of a problem in law or politics: it is ethicity itself, the whole and the principle of ethics. (50)

As such, the ethics of alterity, to which both Levinas and Derrida subscribed in different ways, can be described as an ethics of hospitality, of the absolute openness for the arrival of the Other. Derrida further notes that, like responsibility and ethics, hospitality itself presents us with an aporia. On the one hand, the law of unconditional hospitality "requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (…) but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, (…) without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names" (Derrida 2000, 25). On the other hand, there are conditional laws of hospitality, which establish a right to and a duty in hospitality, but function by imposing terms and conditions, political, juridical, or moral, upon the unconditional law. From the point of view

of such conditional laws of hospitality, where the other has rights, but also restrictions, conditions to fulfil, and obligations, "the guest, even when he or she is well received, is mainly a foreigner" (Kakoliris, 146). Furthermore, pure hospitality is impossible because it cannot exist without "the sovereignty of the person who offers hospitality in his or her house" (Kakoliris, 148). There is, in other words, a discourse of power, as well as a certain hostility in every act of hospitality, for which Derrida coins the term "hostipitality." Thus, if for Levinas pure hospitality is the ought-to of every encounter between the self and the Other, for Derrida, hospitality can only be a continuous negotiation between the universal law and conditional laws, each of which appears to be the opposite of the other, but cannot exist without it.

Written several decades before Levinas or Derrida published their work, *Ulysses*, a novel open in its very form to the voice and the experience of the Other, remarkably anticipates the ethics proposed by the two philosophers. While Levinas formulated his ethics against the context of the Second World War, James Joyce wrote *Ulysses* while exiled due to the consequences of the First, yet their responses are, in many ways, similar. To begin with, Joyce's novel is "an extended hymn to the dignity of everyday living, when cast against the backdrop of a world war" (Kiberd, 288), which foreshadows Levinas's preference for a "redemption of the everyday." Leopold Bloom is a character seemingly built around a form of Levinasian ethics, as he repeatedly demonstrates, throughout the day, the value of both love and small, gratuitous acts of kindness in face-to-face interactions. Yet he also escapes the "deluge of responsibility" described by Levinas. He is certainly not a perfect individual, while the motivation of his deeds is often twofold or ambiguous. In this regard, the character embodies Levinasian ethics, not necessarily as the philosopher prescribed it, but rather as Derrida later amended it. This is evident is all of Bloom's interactions, both with the human and the non-human other.

For instance, while Levinas believed that the face of the Other is necessarily a human face, in "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," Derrida argues, through the notion of *animots*, that the human/non-human distinction is artificial, while animals are what the human being and its language make of them. That we have created a category, *the animals*, which can seemingly encompass all non-human species, has, at least partly, engendered the violence that these creatures have suffered at our hand. Derrida begins this essay by confessing a startling event: he refers to those moments when, naked, he meets the gaze of the cat, and feels ashamed, though faced only with an animal. He is prompted to acknowledge that the animal not only offers itself to view, but has a gaze of its own, or is the subject of a gaze whose object is Derrida. This is the source of much of Derrida's thinking about alterity, for what is the cat if not the fundamental Other.

It is surprising to note how well such notions are intuited in *Ulysses*, beginning with Bloom's own encounter with his cat. It is significant that this

encounter takes place before we learn much else about the character. In the opening lines of "Calypso," as Bloom prepares breakfast for Molly, several aspects of this first of Bloom's interactions are noteworthy. First, we notice that, throughout his "dialogue" with the animal, Bloom considers a number of things that "they say" about cats, for instance, that "they call them stupid" or that cats do not mouse "if you clip" their whiskers (46). This issue with the manner in which cats are described, alongside the fact that Bloom considers the possibility that the animal actually understands more than it is given credit for, is intuitive of Derrida's notion of *animot*, the creation of the animal, in a sense, through language. Secondly, Bloom's ability to empathise with the cat is perhaps not as impressive as the fact that, for a moment, he shifts the perspective from his point of view to that of the animal. He wonders what he might look like to the cat, acknowledging its gaze, at least instinctively. This process is essential to describing Bloom's behaviour throughout the day, as he constantly wonders how others might see him, not necessarily as a matter of vanity, but in order to understand the perspective of others. The entire exchange is illustrative for Bloom's frequent shift between his own perspective and that of others, a tendency that rests at the foundation of his different approach to alterity.

Later in the day, in "Lestrygonians," the same occurs when Bloom notices a few birds "looking for grub" along the river. When he is drawn to the shiny peels of glazed apples sold by a woman nearby, he thinks: "Wait. Those poor birds" (125). In a display of characteristic generosity, he buys a couple of cakes instead of the apples and proceeds to feed them to the hungry birds. Yet when the birds seem to ask for more, "flapping weakly," he contemplates: "I'm not going to throw them any more. Penny quite enough. Lots of thanks I get. Not even a caw. They spread foot and mouth disease too" (126). Interestingly, here and in other instances, although he constantly feels the desire to help the less fortunate, Bloom seems to negotiate his position at a healthy distance from ideas such as that of infinite responsibility for the non-human other, while at the same time maintaining a caring and generous attitude towards the latter.

In "Lestrygonians," we see this happening not only in Bloom's encounter with the birds, but also in his thoughts on vegetarianism. Early in the chapter, when the character notices the poet George Russell walking down the street, he immediately thinks of just how silly the vegetarian diet is: "Only weggebobbles and fruit. Don't eat a beefsteak. If you do the eyes of that cow will pursue you through all eternity. They say it's healthier. Windandwatery though" (136). Given these thoughts, perhaps it comes as a surprise when Bloom is nauseated at the sight of men eating at Burton's. If he had earlier contemplated the "model farm at Kinnereth on the lakeshore of Tiberias" and described the cattlemarket as an ideal, rustic slice of heaven (48), a different view takes shape in his mind after leaving Burton's:

> Pain to the animal too. Pluck and draw fowl. Wretched brutes there at the cattlemarket waiting for the poleaxe to split their skulls open. Moo. Poor

> trembling calves. Meh. Staggering bob. Bubble and squeak. Butchers' buckets wobbly lights. Give us that brisket off the hook. Pulp. Rawhead and bloody bones. Flayed glasseyed sheep hung from their haunches, sheepsnouts bloodypapered snivelling nosejam on sawdust. (140)

Following a chilling picture of the cattlemarket, described as if from the perspective of animals slaughtered there, Bloom settles for a vegetarian meal at David Byrne. It is impossible to tell for sure why he decides to do so, especially since the idea of Plumtree's potted meat had been bothering him since the morning, when he first saw its ad in the papers and inadvertently associated it with his situation at home. We might assume with more or less certainty, however, that Bloom will not henceforth switch to a vegetarian diet. He does, after all, eat "with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls" (45). Thus, he is a man who "has taught himself to question every cosy consensus and to adopt the less obvious, less popular viewpoint"; furthermore, "it is part of Bloom's equilibrium that he often proceeds to embrace a code which he has just appeared to reject" (Kiberd 80, 131). In other words, there is a certain balance to the character's thoughts and attitudes regarding the world around him. This extends to his perception of alterity, be it human or non-human, so that he often takes up the point of view of the other and allows himself to be guided by the impressions resulting thereof. At the same time, his mind is almost "guarded" by certain healthy mechanisms of self-defence, which prevent him from falling into the pits of theory divorced from practice.

Similarly, in his rapport with other people, Bloom offers several examples of generosity and gratuitous kindness which are profoundly intuitive of Levinas' neighbourly love. The manifestation of his unconditionally kind heart seems to be most obvious in his encounter with Stephen, whom he literally saves by the end of "Circe." In "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca," this translates into hospitality in a Levinasian sense, as Bloom opens his home to Stephen, in spite of having little knowledge about him and notwithstanding the possibility of Molly's angry reproach. Yet this brief interaction must be understood in light of Bloom's memory of Rudy and of the pain caused by the child's death. When Bloom first sees Stephen, he ostensibly refers to him as Simon Dedalus' "son and heir," which immediately contrasts with his own lack of a son. His thoughts drift to Rudy, as he considers if he "had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes" (73). There is no doubt that Bloom's behaviour with Stephen is not only neighbourly, but somewhat paternal. Though the protagonist does not assimilate the two with one another, perhaps on a subconscious level, his feelings for them are mixed. This is most overtly suggested in the conclusion to "Circe," where, having saved Stephen from disaster, Bloom is rewarded with a vision of Rudy, "a fairy

boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand" (497). Certainly, one cannot assume that Bloom's kindness towards Stephen results simply from the former's desire to find a substitute son. After all, the possibility of a paternal link between the two characters is dispelled abruptly when the young man rejects his host's invitation to stay overnight and leaves the house with an unknown, possibly inexistent direction in mind.

Rather, Bloom's interactions with Stephen throughout the day illustrate both the idea of pure neighbourly love and the impossibility of the latter, a mix that Derrida would undoubtedly commend. It is uncertain why Bloom chooses to follow Stephen into Nighttown and to protect him upon arriving there. It may be because the young man stirred in Bloom an unfulfilled paternal instinct. Or perhaps it is simply because the latter is characterised by a gentle nature, which we have seen him display in many instances, with other people and with non-human beings. More likely, Bloom is motivated by both of the above. This suggests that, as Derrida would put it, pure neighbourly love and hospitality are never to be found in reality. In any attempt to offer something to someone, the gesture is repaid in kind, either by the other person or by means of some interior mechanism. For Bloom, his rescue of Stephen is followed by a serene, touching vision of his son, aged eleven, and continuing the father's admittedly confusing cultural heritage. Yet this does not, in any way, detract from the significance of Bloom's acts of kindness. Ultimately, this type of aporia is one essential lesson of Derrida's ethics of alterity, masterfully foreshadowed in *Ulysses* decades before its formulation proper.

Finally, one of the most discernible shifts in perspective occurs in Leopold Bloom's interaction with women. If Joyce's readers in the early 20th century may have appreciated the protagonist's tact with other men and even his openness towards the non-human, it is far less likely that they would have tolerated what must have seemed like the character's peculiar conduct with the other sex. Indeed, we first see Bloom as he prepares breakfast for Molly, which he then serves for her in bed; throughout the day, he empathises with the "plight" of womanhood. He seems to understand the misery of prostitutes better than anyone else, while his thoughts rest for some time with Mrs Purefoy and her excruciating delivery. In addition, Bloom assimilates certain behavioural patterns that would have undoubtedly been ascribed to the female sex at the time. He is thus not an ordinary, heteronormative man, but rather Joyce's attempt to "reinstate the womanly man as protagonist" (Kiberd, 92). Bloom himself is to some extent aware of this, as becomes readily observable in "Circe," where he dramatically "experiences" not only the travails of birth, but also the humiliation of prostitution.

However, it is still Bloom, the womanly man, who engages in some uncharacteristic misogyny just hours earlier, in "Nausicaa." Following Gerty

MacDowell's limping away from the scene, Bloom muses on her "[j]ilted beauty. A defect is ten times worse in a woman. But makes them polite. Glad I didn't know it when she was on show" (301). When he is once again reminded of Molly's adultery, he considers: "Suppose he gave her money. Why not? All a prejudice. She's worth ten, fifteen, more, a pound. What? I think so" (303). It is uncertain why in these and several other thoughts throughout the chapter, Bloom loses his gentle nature, as well as his ability to empathise with the other sex. It could be that he is masking his self-disgust (Kiberd, 202), but it could also be that, after his encounter with the other men in Kiernan's pub and during a particularly stressful and humiliating day on account of Molly's behaviour, Bloom feels the need to reassert his stereotypical masculinity. At any rate, it becomes obvious that the protagonist's understanding of women and his attachment to free, non-possessive love do not come easily to him. Bloom is pressured by the social norm in terms of manhood, as is suggested in "Nausicaa" and made overt in "Circe."

Bloom's relationship with Molly is equally problematic. From early in the morning, when he delivers Blazes Boylan's letter to his wife, the protagonist is aware of the purpose of the two meeting in the afternoon. As he more or less unwillingly contemplates the matter, his thoughts of Molly's adultery mix with the possibility of Milly's first sexual encounter and "[a] soft qualm, regret, flowed down his backbone, increasing. Will happen, yes. Prevent. Useless: can't move" (55). Throughout the day, his knowledge of the affair, as well as his refusal to stop it create some of the most painfully awkward situations. Of course, the mere state of being cuckolded warranted, at the time, mockery from other men around Dublin, who very obviously bring up the topic when Bloom is around. Everybody seems to know about Molly's infidelity and feels justified or even satisfied to rub this fact in Bloom's face whenever given the opportunity. What makes the latter's situation even worse is his refusal to behave as a "normal" husband would with his adulterous wife, or differently put, his belief in the idea of "free love." Bloom does not resort to physical or even verbal violence when encountering Boylan, even though the community entitles and, indeed, expects him to do so. He does not attempt to catch Molly in the act, but rather avoids being home at all costs during the time of her meeting with her lover. Finally, he never truly intends to punish Molly, either privately or publicly. His reproach goes only as far as asking her to bring him breakfast in bed for a change.

Yet Bloom exists in a society whose norms dictate a very different behaviour for a man, and this reality does not go without consequence upon his innermost thoughts. His more feminine behaviour results in his picturing himself, at least subconsciously, as a mother-to-be or as an abused prostitute in "Circe." Throughout his hallucinatory encounter with Bello, the latter constantly puts him down by making him out to be an effeminate, impotent man or a homosexual, all of which is obviously rooted in Bloom's own doubts about his gender identity.

More than this, at one point during "Circe" Bloom imagines himself cheering for Boylan as the latter carries Molly "round the room doing it" (462): we might infer from this that Bloom, on some level, enjoys the idea of Molly having intercourse with another man. On the other hand, it might also be that Bloom's pacifist response to the situation, together with the humiliation that he has endured throughout the day and the pressure to behave like an actual "man," are tormenting the protagonist to the point where he sees himself as an accomplice to his wife's adultery. Indeed, in the eyes of the male Dublin community, to not attempt to stop Molly, to not even punish her after the fact may just as well mean to encourage her infidelity. The episode in "Circe" suggests that Bloom is poignantly aware of this perspective and that his gentle behaviour with Molly does not necessarily come easily to him. Like many of his acts of kindness throughout the day, this, too, is a choice, and perhaps the most agonising to uphold.

It is, furthermore, a choice that sends back to Bloom first meeting Molly, as well as her decision to marry him, of all people: "Why me? Because you were so foreign from the others" (311). Seemingly straightforward, Molly's words imply more than her husband's appearance or cultural background. Bloom is "foreign from the others," first and foremost, in his gentle, kind nature, and through his openness to alterity. Throughout the day, he is treated as an outsider by almost every other person he encounters, and he is more or less overtly mocked for his beliefs, but at the same time, he is distinctive in his non-aggressiveness, constant tactfulness and empathy, which allows him to appreciate the experience of the other sex. In his marriage with Molly, he manifests the same understanding. His idea of "free love" is a model of, or at least an attempt at ethical love, a relationship based on the impossibility of possession and the acknowledgement of the other's independence. In Levinasian terms, Bloom's interaction with Molly anticipates the ideas that the philosopher would later attach to the "caress," that simultaneity of the desire to reach the Other and the unbridgeable distance thereof, wherein one might experience the infinite. For Levinas, erotic love and its most poignant expression, the caress, consist "in seizing upon nothing" (Levinas 1979, 257), but they offer the moment when the self might attain a glimpse of the face of the Other. Bloom's feelings for Molly and his numerous thoughts of winning her back through little presents or surprises are set against his desire to ensure the possibility that his wife act freely. Thus Bloom functions in virtue of the Levinasian "caress," and it is no accident that his distinctive approach to the Other is most overtly expressed in the way of his love.

Bloom is a distinctive character partly because he appears as a "foreigner" in relation to all the communities he comes in contact with. He is a Jew in Ireland, who has been baptised a Protestant and a Catholic: he is therefore "an outsider even more than a Jew" (Kiberd, 82), with a confused cultural heritage that nevertheless seems to exclude him from the companionship of others. Most

importantly, his distinguishing feature is his openness to the experience of the Other: as we are told in "Ithaca," the protagonist "preferred himself to see another's face and listen to another's words" (561). He demonstrates time and again that he is able to pick up the perspective of another being, whether human or non-human, to question his own beliefs from this vantage point of view, and at least partially assimilate the conclusions resulting thereof. He is, in this regard, a "waterlover, drawer of water, watercarrier" (549), a character with a fluid identity and often democratic ideals.

Unlike many of the characters populating *Ulysses*, Bloom is a pacifist and a proponent of non-violence who holds that "it's a patent absurdity on the face of it to hate people because they live round the corner and speak another vernacular, in the next house so to speak" (525). Undoubtedly, neither a heated Irish nationalist, nor any unionist can empathise with the protagonist's point of view: for these two opposing camps, the justification for the violent struggle in Ireland is deeply rooted in hundreds of years of conflict and loss. How could Bloom convince the men in Kiernan's pub, for instance, that discipline is "the same everywhere" (270), that "all the history of the world is full of" persecution, and that the latter does little more than fuel "national hatred among nations" (271)? As soon as he suggests the futility of a hate-ridden worldview, he exposes himself to a tirade of mockery, to which he can never respond in kind. It is not that the other men possess a more accurate definition of the nation that gives them the upper hand over Bloom, but rather that the latter refuses to behave in a similarly belligerent manner. His flustered description of the nation as "the same people living in the same place" or "also living in different places" (272) is easily subjected to parody and insult, even though it actually draws attention to a concept so abstract and removed that it can hold little meaning in the mouths of those nationalists present, who use it merely as an excuse to rant about their various dissatisfactions.

As Bloom soon states, his view on the matter takes a different approach:

> — But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.
> — What? says Alf.
> — Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. (273)

Not even Bloom can escape the parodic undercurrent of *Ulysses*, however. His theory of love is immediately undermined by the narrator of "Cyclops" in the notorious "love loves to love love. (…) You love a certain person. And this person loves that other person because everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody" (273). Just earlier, the same narrator had picked on the protagonist's tendency to explain everything in minute detail, an aspect of

Bloom's thought which the reader had come to appreciate: "I declare to my antimacassar if you took up a straw from the bloody floor and if you said to Bloom: Look at, Bloom. Do you see that straw? That's a straw. Declare to my aunt he'd talk about it for an hour so he would and talk steady" (260).

We might think that the above is merely a reflection of the innate rudeness of the narrator of "Cyclops," but this is not the only occasion when Bloom's quasi-scientific approach to the world is criticised. In "Penelope," for instance, Molly herself comments on an earlier episode in "Calypso," when she had asked her husband to explain the meaning of metempsychosis: "I asked him about her and that word met something with hoses in it and he came out with some jawbreakers about the incarnation he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand" (620). In spite of what the reader may have gathered about Bloom from his own thoughts during the day, these perspectives belonging to other characters severely undermine one of the protagonist's most characteristic features, namely his formulation of theories by means of which he understands the world.

Like everything in *Ulysses*, Bloom is flawed. Yet he is assimilated to the name "Elijah" on several occasions, and in the conclusion of "Cyclops," having undergone some of the most violent interactions in the day, he is literally portrayed as a Messianic figure:

> When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: Elijah! Elijah! (282-3)

The moment is both serious and jocular, as is the notion of Bloom the redeemer. Indeed, Bloom the liminal person "disrupts the complacencies of all the settled codes with which he comes into contact" (Kiberd, 189). His otherness and especially his pacifist, kind nature makes those around him become aware of their own shortcomings and insecurities; in this and in his constant openness to the Other, the protagonist is Messianic. Against the context of the writing of *Ulysses*, a world of violence and war that had, as Levinas argued, hidden the face of the Other in order to be able to dominate it, Bloom is painstakingly attentive to the experience of everything around him, whether animal or person. His acts of gratuitous kindness, his non-violent nature, and his beliefs are all intrinsically linked to his ability to perceive from the Other's point of view. However, as history has shown time and time again, there is nothing more dangerous, more ethically precarious, than an absolute, which is why it is essential that Bloom himself is actively undermined throughout *Ulysses*. He remains overtly imperfect and his scope, though universal, is limited to the small practices of everyday life.

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JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*: READING THE SELF IN THE BODY[1]

VLAD MELNIC[2]

ABSTRACT. ***James Joyce's "Ulysses": Reading the Self in the Body***. Throughout this paper, my primary contention is that, as a book, *Ulysses* is a body of potentialities meant to help readers consubstantiate with their selves, with a special dedication for the Irish audience of the 1900s in particular. I suggest, in other words, that from a post-humanist perspective, the novel's most metempsychotic feature remains its ability to guide readers out of their self-legitimising narratives and into the seat of their consciousness, the individual body. As the reader suspends their personal existence to engage with the body of the book, the latter helps deliver them into life-actual, all the while internalising a story unravelling its own textual cessation. This perspective on *Ulysses* involves re-tracing the human body within each narrative level, and the changes it undergoes through the novel's embeddedness.

Keywords*: Ulysses, the use of bodies, zone of non-consciousness, corporeal narratology, Agamben, Damasio, Punday.*

REZUMAT. ***"Ulise" de James Joyce: Regăsirea Sinelui în Trup.*** Pe parcursul lucrării de față, teza principală este că romanul *Ulise* reprezintă o totalitate de entelehii menite să ghideze cititorul spre consubstanţialitate cu sinele, vizând, în mod special, publicul irlandez de la început de secol al XX-lea. Lucrarea evidenţiază cel mai metempsihotic aspect ale cărţii, anume abilitatea sa de a-l ghida pe cititor dincolo de povestirile auto-justificatoare ale sinelui şi spre originea conştiinţei umane, anume trupul individual. Astfel, corpul lui *Ulise* are menirea de a izbăvi cititorul întru faptul concret de a fi, chiar în timp ce acesta îşi suspendă existenţa individuală pentru actul citirii. O astfel de perspectivă asupra romanului necesită re-găsirea corpului uman în universul acţiunii propriu-zise, apoi continuând cu modul în care acesta este transformat de încadrările care se suprapun şi/sau intercalează cu cel dintâi.

Cuvinte cheie: *Ulise, uzul corpurilor, zonă de non-conştiinţă, naratologie corporală, Agamben, Damasio, Punday.*

[1] This article is derived from the author's MA thesis entitled *The Territory of the Self: Interpreting Perambulations in James Joyce's Ulysses*.

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Within the first paragraphs of *The Use of Bodies*, Giorgio Agamben accentuates how Greek thought assumed a distinction between *zoé*, "the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods)," and *bios*, the "form or way of living proper to an individual or group" (Agamben 2017, 5). Since this binary is viewed by Agamben as a dominant, widely unchallenged supposition of Western philosophy, his latest book starts precisely from the way in which the Greek life of the polis reflects an uncanny understanding of "the use of the body." This expression is first used in Aristotle's *Politics* "at the point where it is a question of defining the nature of the slave" (Agamben 2017, 1029), an interrogation which remains insufficiently explained according to the contemporary philosopher, not in the least because human life remains indivisible to *a posteriori* criteria brought about by its human existence in the first place. Starting from *The Omnibus Homo Sacer*, this paper aims to address the issue of the inappropriable body in James Joyce's *Ulysses* from a narratological perspective. As we shall see, Agamben's anti-metaphysics, nuanced philosophy of language and of intimate use-of-oneself reflect, to a great extent, current neuroscientific findings related to subjectivity developed by Antonio Damasio. In order to facilitate a better adjustment to the world of literary criticism, Daniel Punday's work as a pioneer of corporeal narratology, reading text(s) through bodies and bodies within text(s) will be employed. From this parallax of perspectives, then, we may find that Joyce had an astonishing intuition regarding the way in which identity comes to be, more than a century before Agamben's contemporary criticism of ontology and Damasio's formulations of the embodied mind.

Despite numerous scientific and theoretical arguments to the contrary, the distinction of *zoé* and *bios*, along with the cultural corporality bias that came with it, continues to persist in many cultural and scientific practices of the 21st century. Just one of many caesuras of Aristotle's work, as Agamben calls them, the self as branched between intellect and sensorial perception, most obvious in the former's *De Anima*, will certainly haunt humanity for many years to come. Instead of surmising endless caesuras between fictional categories that may or may not exist, such as the one between agent and patient, Agamben urges us to understand *use* not as use of something else, but rather as "use of self," since "to enter into a relation of use with something, I must be affected by it, constitute myself as one who makes use of it" (Agamben, 1054). The experiences that capture the self-constituting being – more specifically, the practices that super-impose epistemological categories of the subject and object kind and force them to co-exist within the same, rather than be defined by something different – render such binaries "deactivated and inoperative, and, in their place, there follows use as a new figure of human praxis"

(Agamben, 1054). Walking, a kernel structural process to *Ulysses*, is but one example of a practice that forces contradictory or opposing binaries to co-exist. Just as the world we inhabit is in a perpetual becoming, so are the identities that traverse it. This simple, yet ubiquitous fact of walking as appropriation of oneself is the fundamental device that renders Agamben's thinking, and his understanding of the body, in particular, an appropriate hermeneutical lens for *Ulysses*. As my analysis of the text will show, there is a more substantial meaning to be discovered in the characters' walking than we are led to believe by the available readings thus far.

Furthermore, Agamben's reflections on habitual use will prove equally informative for revealing the hidden layers of the subjectivities within the novel, as habit is in terms of "subjectivity seeking to make itself master of being, the place in which, with a perfect circularity, having, which derives from being, appropriates the latter to itself" (Agamben, 1084). Habit seems to be the expression of the desire to impose certain patterns or conventions onto one's existence. Habit may be a technique for subjectivity to assert both its familiarisation with oneself, as well as ownership of the process of self-becoming. A critical nuance that the scholar introduces in his analysis of habit is that "sensation and habitual praxis, as use-of-oneself, articulate a zone of non-consciousness" (1086). The latter is particularly important as it seeks to eliminate the intermediate, delayed nature that characterises human existence. Instead of reflecting upon the self in order to determine one's relation to the act of becoming, Agamben is proposing that we embrace the zone of non-consciousness brought about by a certain habit or use-of-oneself.

Both language and the body are natural and almost inborn, yet remain at a certain distance from the subject who inhabits the second and employs the first. The experience of reading a novel like *Ulysses* is a *mise en abyme* of precisely this oscillation, as my close reading will show. Agamben indicates that the paradox of not being able to completely acquire, define or express that which is most intimate to us may actually be a consequence of metaphysics itself; this aporia may be resolved if we accept his zone of non-awareness and non-consciousness as intimacy with self-becoming to the point where we become able to dwell within it. In a similar manner to subjectivity within the body, being is also at home within the inappropriable landscape, the third and most remote of the three unruly intimacies. Landscape shares the same structural difference that language exhibits in relation to the body; it is something handed down to us, external and learned, that is also shared by a community. As James Joyce's novel *shows* and Walter Benjamin's philosophy later *tells*, in narratological terms, the city has effectively become the new landscape with the age of modernity. What is more, this metaphysical chain of thought (which

actually has a propensity towards becoming more bodily and incorporated as the text goes on, a self-cancelling metaphysics) is actually verified by recent findings in the field of neuroscience.

The somatic feedback theory was first developed in 1884 by William James, the psychologist who coined the term *stream of consciousness*. The theory that also happened to be an important inspiration for the Irish author is precisely the model that the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio seeks to expand and complete. The central claims that Damasio's initial publication validates are that emotions represent an intrinsic component in the making of our minds, while both "high-level and low-level brain regions [...] cooperate in the making of reason" (Damasio 1994, xii-xiii). The body proper provides an inherent background to our thinking, supplying the latter with a *content* that is "part and parcel of the normal mind" (Damasio 1994, 226). The scientist's contribution to the initial somatic feedback theory advanced by William James is concerned with the way in which a stimulus triggers thoughts and evaluations, which are then responsible for causing a physiological, bodily response. Then follows our perception of what is going on in the body, while "thoughts about specific contents roll by" (Damasio 1994, 145), which is what we commonly refer to as feeling. Lastly, an important addition the scholar made, proven several times since its publication, is the postulation of an "as-if loop" that can by-pass the normal bodily response to a stimulus, that of thought and evaluations, jumping straight from thinking to a kind of perception (Damasio 1994, 155).

Two decades before Agamben's *The Use of Bodies*, the empirical data from neurology patients, as well as healthy brains, led Damasio to conclude that feelings and, by extension, the body, suffer from being repudiated, from being the target of immense prejudice. It is not just Western ontology that had suffered from a corporality bias, but also scientific inquiries dealing with the nature of the self, and what may represent the origin(s) of consciousness. Although we are using our bodies, we are sometimes oblivious, maybe apprehensive, and even ashamed of being defined by them, which signals a marked estrangement and unease from what is supposed to be an intimate closeness with the non-awareness that use-of-oneself implies. Currently, there is no substantial evidence that may account for disembodied reason. We are no longer struggling between *zoé* and *bios*, *nomos* and *physis*. Within the configuration of proper living and of participatory democracy, the slave had no rights except for those conferred by their master. The former had been such an intrinsic part of classical Greek antiquity that Aristotle encountered great difficulty in defining a distinct human condition from the one he experienced (and, consequently, failed to do so, according to Agamben).

Moreover, menial labour was being commanded upon slaves to the extent that their tasks were no longer perceived as labour or even a kind of praxis. Given such remoteness from the zone of non-consciousness wherein one would experience both the corporeal routine of the everyday and the possibility to contemplate the transmigration of souls or the nature of being, it is no wonder that the great thinkers of antiquity perceived the two enterprises as pertaining to two constitutionally distinct spheres of existence. It is reasonable to assume that a self who is completely severed from what was generically understood as *zoé*, a subject that does not experience Damasio's felt connection with certain habitual aspects of life, in the likes of feeding and tending to livestock, would try to find an essentialist justification that can account for the blatant social inequity surrounding them.

More importantly, a distinction is made between "the mere presence of organised images flowing in a mental stream" (Damasio 2010, 19) which make up what we commonly refer to as a mind and the state of consciousness. Yet for a mind to generate consciousness, a "supplementary process must be added on," and that is subjectivity, or, from our end, literally "the feeling that pervades the images we experience subjectively." The functional difference is not to make images of the world within ourselves, but to render those images "ours, making them belong to their rightful owners, the singular, perfectly bounded organisms in which they emerge" (Damasio 2010, 19). The self is created in the wake of the stream of consciousness, which is triggered by various stimuli as a manifestation of the self as *dynamic object*. The latter is a material body, accompanied by a conglomerate of life history, behaviours and thought processes, so it follows that there is no essential subject before interaction with the world. The self as *knower* — namely, the other vantage point from which Damasio considers the process of identity — originates in the previous, dynamic object. This structure echoes with great authority Agamben's recent, philosophical formulation that subjects reside in their use-of-oneself, rather than in metaphysical, or mystical speculations. Further proof of this causal and continuous internal feedback loop is the fact that identity is actually the result of a step-wise, layered process:

> the knower came in steps: the protoself and its primordial feelings; the action-driven core self; and finally the autobiographical self, which incorporates social and spiritual dimensions. But these are dynamic processes, not rigid things, and on any day their level fluctuates (simple, complex, somewhere in between) and can be readily adjusted as the circumstances dictate. (Damasio 2010, 18)

The present moment, the ever elusive category that always escaped thorough definition in terms of the flow of time, is what actually defines human identity to a great extent, both in Damasio's and in Agamben's accounts. The former's research led him to conclude that consciousness, albeit initially undirected by one, specific process or brain site, comes about as a result of the interaction between our feelings and the narrative devices within our brains. The emerging subjectivity conducts the performance, despite the impossibility to locate it beforehand (Damasio 2010, 27-9). If something along the lines of a disorder or illness should alter either aspect of the performance, Damasio's research on patients indicates that the resulting self is also different.

In light of these findings, Agamben's zone of non-consciousness seems to be a literal, physiological inner absence of a definite locus that we must familiarise ourselves with, as much as it is the palpable transience of the now. To this extent, Damasio's action-driven core self is an embodied, philosophical expression of the intimacy that we may find in the use-of-oneself that precedes biographical knowledge. In a sense, similarly to the manner in which we can never refer to the present moment with accuracy, since it is always in the past by the time we confine it to speech, it is also equally impossible to confine a subjectivity, as it is inexorably complemented by another inappropriable by the time language has the chance to narrow it down to certain words. From this perspective, the "discourse" on the body in *Ulysses* is nothing more than an inappropriable arrested in the allocation of an untransferrable.

Chronologically, somewhere between Damasio's first publication and Agamben's last instalment of the *Homo Sacer* compilation, there came Daniel Punday's *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology*. The latter's aim is to approach narratology, a discipline dedicated to unveiling practices of narrative representation, as well as the principles and patterns that may be involved in the latter, an area marked by "a long tradition that imagines reading as a disembodied, intellectual, and frequently spiritual experience" (vii), by attempting to trace the role of the body in the logic of this particular field of study. We should focus our attention on both the theories and the text(s) that try to circumvent or explain unrepresentable elements belonging to the body. It has become crucial that we identify those components of criticism, not just fiction, that not only attempt to do away with inappropriable corporality, but which also endeavour to portray the contents of bodily feelings, whether they belong to Damasio's inner, *old world* or the *new one*, into something else. Although Mieke Bal's 2009 edition of *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* features a short section on the physicality of characters, Monika Fludernik's *An Introduction to Narratology* does not discuss the body even briefly, despite including an argument on

feelings, thoughts and the unconscious. The more recent, *Living Handbook of Narratology* (LHN) includes an even more disappointing portrayal of corporeality, claiming that, by means of storytelling, "life transcends the animalistic and unruly body so that narration gains the power to organise 'human temporality'" (Bamberg 2013, 13). Clearly, something as scrutinised and carefully considered as the human body, both from a medical and philosophical perspective, still largely proves to be a fundamental zone of non-consciousness for investigations into narrative representation.

Determining how a novel's bodies are described according to their degree of embodiment, how they are sorted, but also their interaction with one another and the environment may yield invaluable information about the underlining corporeal narratology, as well as the cultural and aesthetic philosophies it promotes. Furthermore, whether a narrative posits overarching or unruly bodies is also of particular interest, since these two categories serve as semantic gravitational centres that exert their meaning and influence throughout the story. When an overarching narrative body creates a coherent image of corporeality in a text, the unruly one immediately comes to deconstruct or prevent its totalising direction. Punday refers to the gaps and blanks between the two forces as the personification of Ricoeur's *distension* (85-86). Quoting Peter Brooks, the author concludes that "paradoxically, bodily desire describes both the plot and what resists that plot" (Punday 2003, 90). In Agamben's terms, the drive towards unruliness may be subsumed to a narrative representation of the desire for non-conscious intimacy, whereas Damasio might see the two as the encounter between the core and the autobiographical self that ultimately allows us to also identify the elementary components of the proto identity. However, with Ricoeur's theory of emplotment and time (Malan 2017, 27-30), the conflict between the two kinds of corporeal narrative representations takes place both outside and within the subject. The site of this struggle indicates an authentic manner of acquiring knowledge about personal subjectivity, according to contemporary philosophy, as well as neuroscience. In what follows, I will employ Damasio's, Agamben's, and Punday's theoretical models in order to discern the subjective pathways employed by Joyce's work in order to forge/force the consciousness of his people.

It is no accident that the first two words of *Ulysses*, "Stately, plump" (1), are adjectives meant to describe a body. Throughout the epic, the three protagonists' builds will be framed against the landscape and non-bodies, against their thoughts, animals, as well as other persons, and each other. Stephen's and Leopold's frames are curiously disembodied throughout the novel, as opposed to Molly. This is not to say that they are not defined as corporeal characters

belonging to a possible universe, but that we have an overall scarcity of determiners to rely upon in order to construct an accurate, visual embodiment of the two men. As Stephen is climbing the stairs of the Martello tower, where he cohabits with Buck Mulligan and Haines, the reader is curiously placed outside the characters' heads, in what looks to be an extradiegetic third person narrator. Initially, there is no account of the inner thoughts of either aside from the solitary mention of "Chrysostomos" (3), which, as the novel proceeds, the reader retroactively finds out belonged to Stephen's interior monologue. This single-word intrusion is a signal that more than one possible world may be at stake when reading, and may actually constitute a metalepsis, in the sense that the narrative levels at stake are not circumscribed by uniform, tangible boundaries. Even by comparison to the next two chapters, "Nestor" and "Proteus," not to mention the remainder of the book, the act of reading is attentively calibrated and monitored by the author.

Joyce was well aware of the difficulties that his readers of the time would encounter in trying to make sense of the narrative. In this respect, the Gilbert and Linati schemata can serve as partial, temporary aids for his audience/readers to engage with the text. Nonetheless, the novel markedly aspires to make the reader a part of its action, which is why these first pages deliver a gradual shift from an extradiegetic perspective to the first level narrative, the stage wherein the narrative act takes place (Pier 2016, 2). If transgressing the boundaries of narrative levels (and, thus, voices) is still identifiable now, it will become less and less clear as the story proceeds. Doubtlessly, the elements of this transition, if not the very idea of incorporating such a process, underline a concern for the ability of the reader's body to interiorise the text, in a similar manner to the way in which characters like Molly, Leopold, or Stephen interiorise the world they belong to, rather than just glance over it. The danger of surface glancing is best expressed in a phrase that is yet to come: the "ineluctable modality of the visible" (31). What we witness here is Joyce not only being aware, but actually using elements from within his narrative to influence each singular act of reading, a *mise en cadre* using the very frame of the novel to address the world beyond it and, more specifically, the reader's corporeality (Pier 2016, 12).

Mulligan starts talking to Stephen: this [fact], alongside the tactile sensation of someone putting a hand into his pocket, progressively makes the latter come to his senses and consciousness. The narrative effectively employs sight, hearing, and touch to bring the self to life, while curiously leaving out the olfactive. The objective, third-person account and dialogue dominate the text up to this point. As his companion continues to shave in silence, Stephen regains his awareness by means of a basic, powerful human emotion – grief.

His sentience will gradually overturn the heterodiegetic narrator. In these initial pages, the reader is first confronted with what Damasio calls primordial feelings, the "most elementary part of the primordial self" (Damasio 2010, 26). His walking up the stairs to reach the parapet is an apt metaphor of the way in which one's body, the self as dynamic object, is incrementally awakened to one's mind, the self as knower. Upon the primordial self, the narrative adds the core, action-driven consciousness, which is more concerned with the here and now. This is why the first several pages are dominated by intradiegetic narrative, wherein the emphasis falls on exactly what is taking place, Buck's and Stephen's gestures, the former's shaving, and the dialogue between the two.

As Buck continues his shaving, the layer of the "autobiographical subject" as defined by Damasio is added to the narrative through the personal, lived past and projected future. This is marked by the intercalation of "Pain, that was not yet the pain of love, fretted his heart" (5). Their dialogue triggers a primordial emotion in Stephen, which both brings and is brought to mind by a strong feeling of grief. Re-enactment of his mother's death further develops his angst, which activates literal pain in his body by means of Damasio's "as-if" loop. This is also the first and one of the few instances in the chapter wherein we encounter smell. The olfactive was left out on purpose until this point. So far, we have had an account of subjectivity and consciousness firmly grounded in the present. Stephen walked himself up to the top of the tower and conversed with his cohabiting friend. Now, Stephen becomes present to the reader beyond the first level of the narrative. Using smell, the narrative introduces us to subjectivity proper through flashback. Technically speaking, smell is the only human sense that arrives at the cerebral cortex by means of a different route, a pathway that does not involve mediation by the thalamus (Damasio 2010, 189), which may account for its particular strength in terms of associative memory.

In a sense, the autobiographical persona from *A Portrait* is continued here, and is now starting to define the narrative, to take control of it. But Joyce is not without a sense of irony, as the very perception which ties one of his protagonists' mind back to a defining moment in their lives is the one they seem to lack the most. We find out that Stephen Dedalus makes a point of not washing, unlike Haines or Buck. According to their breakfast conversation, the time has arrived for Stephen's monthly ablution ritual to be performed. However, in "Ithaca," we find out that he had not attended to his personal hygiene in over a year. Under no conditions would this go unnoticed by one's interlocutors – from bacteria and fungus to a poignant odour, and visible infections,[3] almost twelve months of not bathing will render a person difficult

[3] For medically accurate information on the visible skin infections and fungi associated with not bathing: https://www.aafp.org/afp/2014/0401/p569.html.

to interact, let alone live with. This is, consequently, revealing in terms of the fact that we do not have access to the other characters' thoughts and sensation as we do to Stephen's. The curious absence of smells in these three chapters is a warranty for the foulness exuded by the protagonist, to which he is oblivious. According to the national archives (2), the hygiene among the labouring classes in the Dublin of the time was close to non-existent, which likens the hero to his peers more than is initially let on.

Nonetheless, Stephen refuses to tend to his corporeality for entirely different reasons other than not having access to the minimum requirements. He stubbornly refuses water partly because he is (1) suffering from depression, which modern medicine tells us may be associated with such behaviours, (2) afraid of water, and (3) completely obtuse to his own condition. Indeed, when Mulligan prompts him to recognise his own bodily state by looking in the mirror, he does not interiorise what he looks like, but rather chooses to reflect on how others may perceive him. "–Look at yourself, he said, you dreadful bard! Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked crack" (6). He just remarks that his hair is uncombed.

Misuse of oneself can be contagious for those whose gaze is constantly turned inwards. "Telemachus" is riddled with such hints of Stephen's inability to come to terms with his own zone of non-consciousness. The latter, along with his body as dynamic object, frequently intercalate with his thoughts, in the like manner of a subdued narrative trying to emerge from within the character himself. At this point, this is most evident during the milk lady's conversation, when he thinks to himself that "all there is of her is but her woman's unclean loins" (12). The filth on his mind is not hers, however, but, as Martha Nussbaum argues, his own disgust at himself being projected upon another, particularly a person whose existence was defined in relation to the opposite sex, a woman (Nussbaum 2013, 114). Furthermore, his assumption reveals an ascetic inner Catholicism seeking to reproach physical lust, while also reinforcing the dogma that a woman's loins are unclean since the lapse, mostly because they "not in God's likeness, the serpent's prey" (12). As an epithet, milk lady can stand both for Mother Ireland, as well as for an adulterous woman. Envisioning his country as a prostitute is a theme that seems to linger in Stephen's mind, and will surface several times in his consciousness throughout the day, most noticeably in the "Parable of the Plums" episode. Unknowingly, Stephen is reinforcing a cycle of imposed, unjust social hierarchies, as he assumes that his intellect and education separates him, in one form or another, from the milkwoman, whom he obviously dislikes for not paying her respects to him, as she does to the "medicineman." From this perspective, beyond the political dimension,

Haines makes a good point when he tells the young man that he is his own master (17), as they walk towards the bathing place. Stephen is so concerned with exterior embodiments of occupation – the tower, the Englishman living with them, language, the one he speaks and the one he doesn't – that he overlooks the rims of his own "mind-forged manacles," his own body, as it lives and walks.

"Proteus" exacerbates everything we have witnessed regarding Stephen and his interactions with the outside world, as his inner life "balloons to occupy nearly all of the text" (Hunt 2017, 1), which gives rise to the first episode of the novel written entirely in the stream-of-consciousness. In a way, "shut your eyes and see" (31) is Stephen's version of a philosophical experiment to understand the way in which his senses impact his thoughts. As we proceed through it, he moves on the strand, and it becomes obvious that the biggest obstacle to internalising the text, as it is to both our and his internalising of reality, is the unavoidable linearity of having to represent (or re-present what already transpired, to ourselves, by means of an inner narrative) experiences occurring simultaneously, alluded to by "*Nacheinander*" and "*Nebeneinander*," respectively. The underlying corporeal assumption that the narrative is working with in "Proteus" is that the young artist is constantly prevented from achieving self-actualisation. His mind is distended across time and the present to the extent that he may be fated to live out the remainder of his days in a state of perpetual tension, in the sense used by Ricoeur, trapped in the contrasts between present as expectation, as direct perception, and as memory (Malan 2017, 27-30). Stephen forgets to visit his aunt Sara and when he realises that his thoughts distracted him from a present interest, his reaction is not one of compensation to the prevailing disembodiment of his thought, but rather one of surrender: "Am I not going there? Seems not" (34). What the reader witnesses here is the way in which acquired knowledge is a far more dominant trigger for Stephen's mind than external reality. Instead of seeking to build a familiar relationship with the unappropriable (whether it is nature, others, himself, or language), the protagonist futilely tries to internalise it, an attempt which is doomed to fail by the very terms which he establishes for his quest for knowledge. His perplexity at not being able to attain it is not only understandable, but natural, given the paradox he reaches. Knowing is subject to the body's boundaries and interpretation. No wonder he recalls such a contradictory statement like "Sit down and take a walk" (32).

Starting with "Calypso," however, *Ulysses* begins to lift the veil on bodily disgust. The novel performs this unravelling not with the intention to shock or for a higher, disembodied artistic meaning, but in order to aid its readers to become critical of themselves, just as they are of the characters in a

story they read. In *Ulysses and Us*, Declan Kiberd paraphrases Joyce in saying that a man's way of walking and eating "could reveal more about him than how he goes to war" (Kiberd 2009, 77). Moreover, Bloom is never really introduced in a proper way, as the author opts for a "jump-cut" technique of narrative on the background of an assumed intimacy between the reader and character (Kiberd 2009, 78) — a closeness which is necessary in order to pierce the numerous self-legitimising veils of personal identity. We are invited to look directly at what bothers us the most and welcome it within our thoughts and daily routines, our use-of-oneself. Stephen's walking on Sandymound Strand is set precisely before Bloom's perambulations in the next two chapters as a way to illustrate how easy it is to isolate oneself and miss out on the world, even life itself, if one is not careful enough to be mindful.

Compared to the breakfast episode in the first chapter, Leopold's careful meal planning, attention to detail, and subtle awareness of the entire process of preparing and eating food constructs a banquet-like performance. His mindfulness of the here and the now, his comfort in the proximity of bodily use-of-oneself, and the overall equilibrium between the three neurological selves is a welcome change from "Proteus." Unlike Stephen, Bloom is not mortified by the Augustinian *distentio animi*, which is not to say that he does not get distracted, but rather that he does not allow himself to be completely absorbed either by the present-future or the present-past. When the dark cloud overcomes the city, his thoughts are driven away from the vision of the planter's company and various places around the Mediterranean: "a barren land, bare waste. Vulcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. (…) Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world. Desolation" (50). Yet he decides to confront and weather this inner mist, rather than allow himself to be overwhelmed by it like Stephen: "Well, I am here now. Morning mouth bad images. Got up wrong side of the bed. Must begin again those Sandow's exercises. On the hands down" (50). He gently reminds himself that such thoughts must also be connected to his body state through bad smells, sleeping badly, and an overall lack of physical activity.

All of these physiological insights were advertised in his day by the pioneering German bodybuilder Eugen Sandow, and are now confirmed by medical science. Sandow also spoke of the importance of a balanced nutritional in-take for cognition, an acknowledgement which is to be found in the mature protagonist, but not in the young one. Bloom makes his "travelling purposeful," being "outer- rather than inner-directed, and open to constantly changing stimuli from the passing street scene" (Kiberd 2009, 82), which makes him refreshingly aware of his self-becoming. Despite his knowledge of Molly's affair with Boylan (which, to be fair, was not consummated until later

in the afternoon), he chooses to act tactfully and with respect to her privacy, demonstrating an almost unparalleled reciprocity and concern for his partner. This is not at all how an average middle-class man of the age might have behaved in the face of knowledge of his spouse's infidelity.

Unlike many characters we later meet in the novel, Leopold is among the few who successfully lift the veil on the shameful, often repulsive corporality which defines the human condition, understands it, and seeks to embrace it in the most reasonable and frank way possible. After all, he is aware that Molly may easily find another partner, so he must individuate himself from his peers. His choice of respecting her privacy achieves precisely this outcome. Similarly, Leopold is not in the least appalled by his bodily functions, defecation included: "He read on, seated calm above his own rising smell" (56), contrary to what the reader of the time would have been experiencing while reading this. Taken together, Bloom's actions, personality, and walking demonstrate just how acquainted he is with corporeal existence, as well as with the dynamics of social interaction and the relationships one builds.

The intersection between Stephen and the funeral carriage Leopold shares with Martin Cunningham, Simon Dedalus, and Jack Power in "Hades" offers even more meaning to the young man's wandering, this time from the outside. Passing by Sandymount Strand, Leopold catches a glimpse of Stephen going to the newspaper headquarters, where they will also briefly intersect. At a closer glance, this intersection reveals much more about the characters than is initially let on, similarly to the technique in "Wandering Rocks." First, there is the symbolic distance between the young man and his community. Instead of mourning the loss of a family friend, he is idling around on the tide flats, meditating on change and, rather fittingly for the entire scene as we read it in "Hades," on death. Secondly, there is the distance between Stephen and his father, which the reader might have intuited from the young man's behaviour and thoughts in the "Telemachiad," but which is now made explicit through Simon's rant on Buck Mulligan. Not surprisingly, a rebellious son would be tempted to be around someone their father strongly disagreed with. Naturally, Dedalus senior is infuriated with the company that his son choses. However, instead of trying to be critical of his own shortcomings, Simon blames Buck for his son's wandering, claiming that through disciplinary attention he will correct this behaviour, a conduct which is all the more exasperating as he perceives it to cast shame on himself in front of his companions: "I'll tickle his catastrophe, believe you me" (73). Lastly, the expanse between Stephen and the carriage may also send our thoughts to the interior precipice that divides the young man's thoughts and his own self. Albeit wandering and searching, Stephen's stream of consciousness is so far removed from his being that a mature counsel, Leopold, is needed to bring him back to the here and the now.

Many academics still esteem Bloom as the decisive embodiment of alterity, but what would a gathering of mostly middle-aged, white, middle class men know about what it means to be human, yet not recognised as such by your peers? Molly is just as transgressive towards issues of religion, nationality, native tongue, and behaviour as her spouse. However, unlike the men in the novel, she is not allowed to be her own master, as Haines earlier mentioned to Stephen. This alleged battle of sexes was lost the moment Leopold could walk out the door without a latchkey, as she was left in the jingling bed for the remainder of the day. Her corporeal confinement certainly contributes to what Nabokov calls a "sustained stream of consciousness running through Molly's lurid, vulgar, and hectic mind, the mind of a rather hysterical woman, with commonplace ideas, more or less morbidly sensual" (Nabokov 1982, 362). One can but wonder what Nabokov's thoughts would have looked like after having endured the confined existence of Dublin women at the beginning of the 1900s.

Claiming that Bloom is the prototypical Other, then, means supporting the very tradition that confines Molly to her bed in this riveting tale of wandering. Who knows what a narrative rapture would have befallen us if Molly was able to take control of her self-becoming. What many readers seem to forget throughout all of the innuendoes that Bloom has to endure from insensitive Dubliners is that she is the subject of their affirmations and babbling gossip. By contrast, once more, he is the object that is indirectly pressured by the social norm to react in a socially accepted manner to the former's behaviour. Luckily, his individuation is strong enough to withstand such petty attacks, and he does not give in to their allusions. More importantly, he benefits from the right to traverse space as he wishes, which makes it possible for him to employ his corporality to shape his self-actualisation in any manner he sees fit, a feature that he ardently desires to also pass on to Stephen.

Many pages of the novel remain to be scrutinised for their significance in terms of lifting the veil on the bare individual, yet the arguments that have been put forward are enough to mandate a re-reading of the work from the perspective of a corporeal narratology sensitive to Agamben's use-of-oneself, as well as to recent findings from the field of neuroscience. From the "Telemachiad" to "Wandering Rocks," "Eumaeus," and "Penelope," Joyce's flânerie is meant to illustrate Benjamin's optical unconscious, and this is the case particularly in the last chapter, where the mind of the female protagonist is excruciatingly made to wander without her body. Albeit Benjamin reserves the latter feature for the art of photography, the way that *showing* and *telling* work throughout *Ulysses* makes it possible for the reader to experience a similar effect with regard to character bodies. The greater part of narratology

continues to struggle with accepting the body in interpretive or theory-making practices. This is at once understandable and unforgivable, since the problem of unruly corporality, the very reason why art exists in the first place, in the sense that it is made by bodies, and for bodies, ought to be more consistently addressed across the disciplines of the humanities. Despite its immense body of meta-textual analyses, *Ulysses* continues to be ardently relevant in 2018, when, as Salman Rushdie recently stated, the intersubjective world of alternative facts is on the brink of appropriating all of mankind's discourses, not to mention the ones issued by institutions or individuals holding great power (9). One way to resist against this urge is to remind ourselves that every reality comes from within a body, a zone of (more or less intimate) non-consciousness, and a subjectivity whose primary objective is to find and describe itself for its own sake, as well as for others'.

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POSTHUMAN ELEMENTS IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S *KRAPP'S LAST TAPE*

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ABSTRACT. ***Posthuman Elements in Samuel Beckett's "Krapp's Last Tape"***. The present paper aims to offer insight regarding the post-anthropocentric elements present in one of Samuel Beckett's most innovative plays, *Krapp's Last Tape*. In order to support my premise, I wrote a comprehensive theoretical outline of posthumanism, taking into account aspects such as the adaptation of the brain to new technologies and the influence they exert, the appearance and usage of prosthetics, symbiotic relationships and the interconnectedness between body, mind and environment. I then proceeded to offer my own interpretation of the target text, focusing on Beckett's recurrent tendency to represent the body as an aged, decaying and fallible organic vessel and relevant human-machine symbiosis. Humanity's centrality is deconstructed by focalising on its subservience to suffering.

Keywords: *Samuel Beckett, Krapp's Last Tape, Posthumanism, post-bodied minds, technological symbiosis, memory, corporeal decay, subjugation to mortality*

REZUMAT. *Elemente postumane în piesa "Ultima Bandă a lui Krapp" de Samuel Beckett.* Axată pe una dintre cele mai inovatoare piese din palmaresul Beckettian, lucrarea de față indică prezența elementelor post-antropocentrice în *Ultima Bandă a lui Krapp*. Pentru a demonstra validitatea acestei premise, am început prin a concepe un synopsis al teoriei postumaniste, axându-mă pe aspecte cum ar fi adaptarea creierului la noile tehnologii și influența exercitată de acestea, apariția și utilizarea elementelor prostetice, relațiile simbiotice și interconectivitatea dintre corp, minte și mediu. Interpretarea textului a luat în considerare tendința recurentă a lui Beckett de a reprezenta

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corpul uman ca un vehicul organic failibil, în descompunere, dar şi simbioza dintre om şi maşinărie. Piesa arată în repetate rânduri că omul este supus suferinţei, deconstruind astfel poziția centrală a umanității.

***Cuvinte cheie**: Samuel Beckett, "Ultima Bandă a lui Krapp", Postumanism, minți post-corporale, simbioză tehnologică, memorie, deconstrucție, mortalitate*

Nowadays an icon of the theatrical world, Beckett initially used this genre as an outlet from his laborious prose writings. Stripping bare the stage of jam-packed living room vaudevilles and turning it into a minimalistic space that invited meditation, he became a European sensation by immersing audiences in his dark, empathic and twistedly funny worlds. During his lifetime, he produced or published twenty plays, enumerated by Ruby Cohn as follows: "ten for theater, four for radio, three for television, two for mime and one for cinema" (1980, 4).

When directing, Beckett often revised his works, but never published his modifications. His plays resemble a balancing act: darkness becomes invaded by light, silence is broken up by words and mismatched couples dabble in compassion to the detriment of passion. Cohn also adds that on the rare occasions when Beckett spoke of his characters, he called them "my people" (1980, 13), which goes to show that to him they were not fictions, or objects, or symbols, but as relevant as living beings.

Often confused with a philosophical existentialist, it seems that as a playwright Beckett was more of an essentialist, always flaunting a carefully thought out economy of words and gestures which seemed to recede even more as the performance unfolded: questions were left unanswered, sentences became elliptical clauses, characters melted into a single, inward-looking mind. As signaled by Cohn, it suffices to read Beckett's earlier prose and poetry to notice that he was not always inclined towards this charged verbal scarcity, but rather perfected the style as his artistic growth took its course (1980, 13).

Beckett's work has been described as "highly vital play about a dying species" (Cohn 1980, 14). His choice of characters from among the "lowest common human denominator" (Cohn 14) and his relentless attempts at concentrating their suffering into haunting performances have brought out the shock of recognition from many a spectator. By building his plays around the fallibility of the human element, Beckett is actively deconstructing its centrality.

In order to identify the posthuman traits of *Krapp's Last Tape* it is relevant to first delve into a theoretical analysis of posthumanism and its significant

aspects. Assumptions that equate posthumanism to the downfall of humanity are as common as they are erroneous. Based on a wide-spread anxiety which stems from technological change, according to Pepperell, posthumanism postulates the end of anthropocentrism in favor of a more altruistic, interconnected outlook. Herbrechter defines posthumanism as "the cultural malaise or euphoria that arises once you start taking the idea of 'postanthropocentrism' seriously" (2013, 3). Sadly, the advent of consumerism and techno-culture coupled with the sheer difficulty of dissociating from the humanist perspective has created a displacement of theorisation (Badmington 2003,10).

In the words of Borbely and Petrar, while posthumanism is "inclusive of the human that dwells within it," it dismisses "anthropocentric attempts at regulating alterity through exclusion or normalisation" (2014, 92). This means that the human's dominant position in the grand scheme of things has been rethought and reconfigured. Even if posthumanism repeats certain aspects of humanism, it does so in order to deconstruct them; according to Derrida, deconstruction implies a certain type of repetition which exposes uncertainties ("to restate is not to reinstate," Derrida 1972, 129). Humanity becomes an intermediary state and a transient manifestation. Herbrechter and Callus deem posthumanism a challenge to "humanism's understanding of what it means to be human" (2011, 144). Our place at the top of the food chain is swapped for that of a point on a web of interconnected species and inhuman elements. Braidotti states that:

> … the normatively human is deposed from a "universalistic posture," divested of "delusions of grandeur," and the "humanistic ideal that defined perfectibility in terms of autonomy and self-determination" is deconstructed (2013, 24)

It thus becomes quite clear that posthumanism is not an attack on humanity, but rather an attack on humanity's egocentrism, chipping away at the conviction that we could continue to survive by cannibalising the world we live in. As Borbely and Petrar explain, "human subjectivity is entrenched in a chain of dependencies, but with new found dignity in connectivity" (2014, 61)

In an attempt to explain the profoundly ethical standpoint of posthumanism, Verbeek states that:

> Human-world relationships should not be seen as relations between pre-existing subjects who perceive and act upon a pre-existing world of objects, but rather as sites where both the objectivity of the world and the subjectivity of those who are experiencing it and existing in it are constituted (Verbeek 2011, 15)

This quote underlines the transformative effect that emerges from the interaction between human and world, while also taking into account that the two represent independent parts of a whole. Hayles calls this "an "I" transformed into the "we" of autonomous agents operating together to make a self" (2012a, 6).

The posthuman subject is not unified, according to Damasio (1994, 238-9), and in a state of perpetual becoming, according to Vandenberghe (2004, 24-5). The lack of unity is traced in the many elements at work in order to produce a perception of reality: mind and body coexist in a torturous codependency, while the environment exerts influence whilst being influenced in its turn. Vandenberghe's replacement of the term "being" with "becoming" refers to this influence of the external upon our cognitive capacities and the constant, steady transformation of our brain. Thus, it is made evident that the mind becomes hybridised more than the body, gaining what Clark calls "mindware upgrades" (2003, 3-4). The body's response to the environment ensures the permanent penetration of corporeal boundaries by extraneous substances; it is no surprise, then, that technologies shape neurological structures. Living and unliving things exchanging properties make the distinctions between them more difficult to register.

Damasio pinpoints that the body acts as a "grounding reference" (Damasio 1994, 235) for the self, and thus for the production of subjectivity, which resonates with the many instances in which Beckett signaled the burden of being trapped in our organic life-vessels. Moreover, Damasio goes on to define the self as a series of successive, overlapping "organism states, each neutrally represented anew, in multiple concerted maps, moment by moment and each anchoring the self that exists at one moment" (1994, 235). This sustained transformation is a tragic premise that connotes both perfectibility and the struggles of aging, best showcased in *Krapp's Last Tape*.

In addition, the body is no mere reference point, but also implicated in mediating the world "through senses and proprioception" (Borbely and Petrar, 81). The lack of unity characteristic to the human can be traced back to its distribution in non-overlapping sensory interfaces with the world as well. According to Manovich, the body is "the crucial mediator" between subjects and their environments (2003, 340). It will be interesting to explore how the power of perception of Beckett's characters which display illnesses and handicaps is either enhanced or minimised. To Damasio, reasoning also stems from emotion (1994, xvi), and the intense awareness of the ineptitude and fragility of the human form that the target texts' personae usually flaunt is bound to mutate that process.

Further contesting any pretense at exceptionalism on behalf of the human as a transcendental category, Braidotti defines the posthuman "within an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings, as a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity, a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated" (2013, 49-50). Her statement shows the urgency of admitting and owning up to our codependency to all other aspects of the world, in a sacrificial ritual of egos unfolding for the greater good of all. Haraway believes that "to be one is always to become with many" (2008, 3-4), which suggests that the posthuman comes into her/his full potential only when aware and acceptant of this prevailing linkage which governs the world. This makes posthumanism a "heteromorphic state" (Hassan 1993, 835).

Not only is the human now stripped of its centrality and dominance, but the boundaries between it and nonhuman elements also become blurred: the omnipresence of machines, automation, prosthetic enhancements, Nano technological engineering and genetic manipulation have created and consolidated a technologised environment which humans have become increasingly reliant and dependent upon (Pepperell 2003, 2). Krapp is also dependent on his tape recorder, which functions as his disembodied memory. As the old man becomes progressively harder of hearing, this technological aid is rendered obsolete.

The appearance and widespread usage of prosthetic enhancements not only reconfigured the human form as we knew it, but also blurred the line between *bios* and *techne*, making the once popular dichotomy obsolete. Human condition is surpassed through the emergence of a "post-bodied mind" (Callus & Herbrechter, 144), which need not concern itself with the frailty of our decomposing organic vessels. Although Beckett's characters are anything but cyborgs, they definitely display through their behavior how uncontainable their consciousness and suffering truly is.

Callus and Herbrechter suggest that a biotech condition's timeframe exceeds the confines of the present, leading to instances of anachronism (2001, 144). This is most obvious in Krapp's conjuring of his past selves through the desperate rewind and replay of his birthday tapes: precedent versions of himself suddenly coexist alongside his present iteration. Technology substitutes a relation of posteriority for one of anteriority and permanently mutates humans' sense of time and nature. The prefix "post" also suggests a refracted temporality that is both contemporary to humanism and exceeding it.

Deleuze defines the man-form as "constituted within the folds of finitude" (1987, 130), since any organic being contains its death a priori. A painful awareness of this permeates all of Beckett's work, in which birth becomes a death sentence and sex is stripped of any sentimental implications,

presented instead as a mere reproductive act subservient to instinct, whose grotesque unfolding perpetuates suffering.

Lyotard categorises mechanisation as de-humanising and de-subjectifying, while language is seen as self-reflexive (1999, 83-101). Furthermore, he deems the systemisation of civilisation inhuman. Contrarily, Clark underlines the inseparability of the human brain and body from their surroundings, and deems the posthuman "an inhabitant of the technosphere" who may enter certain symbiotic relationships with technological elements and unlock "extended cognition" (2003, 32). Additionally, Hayles signals the existence of a "technological unconscious" (2012b, 93), which presupposes the performance of adaptive actions and responses so deeply automatised that they are no longer registered while being performed. This rings true for many of Beckett's characters, particularly Krapp, who turns the tape recorder into an extension of himself.

Petrar and Borbely point out that new technology means new brain development, which leads to a reconsideration of the hard categories of Enlightenment thinking: oppositions such as mind/matter, natural/artificial, individual/social become recalibrated (2014, 57). Throughout Beckett's work, the most frequently occurring irreconcilable elements have been mind and matter, with an emphasis on the fallibility of the human body. Not only is human form coined to be obsolete, but its decrepitude underlines a need to uncover alternatives.

According to Clark and Verbeek, all technology produces subjectivity and moral values after which it becomes embedded into human identity (Verbeek 2011, 4). There is a perpetual contingency between selfhood and the things it interacts with; so much so, that an intricate feedback loop between selfhood and technology is formed. In *Krapp's Last Tape* the tape recorder becomes a channel through which the old man's past selves communicate. This technology, even if now out-of-date, helped shape Krapp's interpretation of the world. By extension, such a postulation applies to any user of any type of technology: it is important to take into account the reciprocal influencing that characterises instances of posthumanism.

Technology and the human share both a social and material dimension; these dimensions reciprocally constitute themselves and the human. The social technological facet refers to its ability to interact with its user or to serve as a medium through which the user can interact with other users, objects or pieces of information. Because technology can also be considered a "context dependent mediation of reality" (Borbely and Petrar 64), it can shape moral decision making. In the case of Krapp, his tragedy arises from the irreversibility of the choices his past selves have made for him.

When confronted with their ideas and reality once more, he is left in an angry, helpless stupor. In addition, technology is seen as morally charged because of its creative and destructive powers combined: while it can be used to aid people in need or to make living less complicated, it can also be abused, taking its toll on both humanity and the environment. Furthermore, Verbeek believes that (technological) objects can influence not only human perception, but also human action, through predetermined use in accordance with the structures of invitation and inhibition (10).

Non-biological stuff and structure have become incorporated into our physical and cognitive routines; the same is true for Beckett's characters, who navigate their disabilities by using what looks like home-made prosthetics or through near-symbiotic relationships with a submissive counterpart. Borbely and Petrar define symbiosis as a mechanism that enables ontological dissolution between species (2014, 103), but in the case of Beckett, this dissolution is restricted to man, in his fallible splendor. Krapp is the only one to use an actual piece of technology to retrace the source of his discontent and to punctuate his fleeing life force. This "deep human-machine symbiosis" (Clark, 32) changes the manner in which we perceive cognition: because of the "two-way flow of influence between brain, body and world" (Clark, 114), cognition is seen as residing in the hybrid architecture of biology and the objects we use.

According to Kroker, because of technological development, archiving has become less selective and "expanded to encompass the totality of life itself" (Kroker 2014, 80). This is understandable, taking into account the popularity of social media, where people become impromptu curators of their day to day lives. Widespread archiving is bound to bring about the "end of visualisation" and the beginning of "remix culture," turning people away from objective reality as it is unfolding in favor of observing other people's interpretation of it (Kroker, 94). Krapp is isolated from the rest of the world in a circle of light which seems to shut him in with the tales of his past selves acting as heartbreaking mermaids' songs. He too is absorbed by the archive he has been compiling and uses it to retrace past wrongdoings, now impossible to make right.

The post-anthropocentric worldview and its implication of a fragmented self in perpetual transformation resonate with the philosophies of certain Beckettian characters. Because of their aged and withered forms, Hamm, Vladimir, Estragon and Krapp become symbolic "post-bodied minds" who survive by relying on prosthetics, technologies or near symbiotic relationships with a counterpart alongside which they dissolute ontologies. In *Krapp's Last Tape* the recorder itself becomes a powerful on-stage presence, overpowering the actor. The detestable light in which their organic vessels are presented, coupled with Beckett's view on sexuality and reproduction, all

convey a pressing need to go beyond the anthropocene. While the plays themselves offer no method of doing so and many times relish in a claustrophobic atmosphere, they never cease to point out the frailty and vulnerability of man, whose youth is but a fleeing moment and whose adult life is a constant struggle against unrelenting illness.

A work that managed to create the illusion of perfect realism through the exactness of its scenography, *Krapp's Last Tape* showcases the isolation of an old man and his tape recorder "on a late evening in the future" (Beckett, 215). While the premise seems inherently simple, the juxtaposition between the decayed organic vessel and the younger strains of consciousness that endure through the power of the machine is extremely striking and accentuates the implied Cartesian dualism. Krapp is described as a purple-nosed, hard of hearing, near-sighted alcoholic that refuses to wear spectacles, a sign that he has already given up on himself. His name, homonymous with the word crap, is a lurid reference to life's futility.

The play's title suggests both finality and the perpetuation of suffering. As the old man tries to distract himself from his nearing death, the refuge he seeks is nowhere to be found in his past. Memory is used as a means of thrusting horror upon the present and no consolation comes from the voices narrating the mistakes that led to Krapp's current situation. As he jumps through time using his recorder, the constancy of his loneliness becomes stupefying. In addition, Krapp is also vulnerable to the revived pain of traumatic moments, such as the death of his mother and the farewell to love. The replays demonstrate that he is unable to progress beyond his personal history.

The slapstick undertones of his agitated fumbling (especially the near slip on the banana peel) further parody his decrepitude and incapability. The word "spool" triggers reversion to a childish state as Krapp seeks out box three spool five after reading its synopsis in his ledger. By making the protagonist rely on archiving devices to access his past, Beckett showcases that Krapp's own memory is defective (as he hears the word "viduity" on tape, he stops in order to look it up in the dictionary). Despite the measures he has taken to preserve the past, the tapes will become useless once the old man completely loses his hearing.

Thirty-nine-year-old Krapp's voice greatly contrasts that of his present self. Considering this moment in time to be the intellectual "crest of the wave" (Beckett, 217), he recounts his birthday celebration spent in perfect solitude "separating the grain from the husks" (Beckett, 217). This metaphor embellishes his longing for the beautiful and transcendental, which he believes will only be accessed when "all [his] dust has settled" (217). Further on, the voice yells "Cut'em out!" (217) after admitting to eating three bananas,

a shout aimed at the present Krapp, who has failed to give up the fruit even now, at seventy. References made to his neighbor, Miss McGlome, who has broken her routine of singing in the evenings, make Krapp think about how his life has lacked the joy of music since boyhood. To contradict the pessimistic statement of his past self, present Krapp attempts to sing, but stops after subsiding to coughing fits.

Both versions of the man join in tragic laughter at his 27-year-old self, which attempted to settle down with a girl named Bianca in a house on Kedar Street. On the other hand, it is only present Krapp that laughs heartily at his younger versions' attempts to drink less. His reaction amplifies the pointlessness of all his prior efforts and his attempts to reform are all ridiculous in the context of his miserable state.

The death of Krapp's mother is overshadowed by his memories of a "dark young" (Beckett, 219) nursemaid who threatened to call the police after he had stared at her intensely. As any human being, Krapp desires love but finds he is incapable of loving and seems unaware of the intricacies of human interaction. The woman's disgusted gaze causes him to feel inadequate and his description of her eyes eternalises the uncomfortable moment. Subsequently, thirty-nine-year-old Krapp notices the blind from his mother's room being lowered as he tosses a rubber ball to a dog outside. The reality of her passing, so incongruous with his moment of tranquility, causes him to think about the temporal parallelism of the situation. The sensation of the rubber ball being gently taken out of his hand by the dog becomes an unlikely equivalent to death.

Krapp's surrender to darkness at the end of the jetty offers him a mysterious vision that inspires him and fuels his determination to focus on his work:

> The vision, at last. This fancy is what I have cheifly to record this evening, againt the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that. (*hesitates*). for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely… (Beckett, 220)

Whatever he saw remains unsaid and is never explained; Krapp quickly skips forward from this passage, cursing the recorder. His unwillingness to linger upon the vision enforces the theory that his present situation is a direct consequence of it. As a failed artist with a failed existence, he has yet to come to terms with the hopeless situation he finds himself in.

Perhaps the singular instance in which Beckett does not portray romantic sentiment and physicality as sordid aberrations, Krapp's farewell to

love is the only segment of the tape that is replayed three times. Triggering the old man's bereavement of his lost self, the episode consists of his retelling of the intimate exchange he had with his lover on the Baltic Sea. Their breakup comes across as brusque without the context of the vision that might have triggered it and is punctuated with a few moments of physical closeness. It appears that while young Krapp is the initiator of their separation, he remains baffled by how readily the woman agrees to his proposal and then proceeds to seek consolation between her arms. His need to make eye contact with her, to establish a connection, suggests how terrified Krapp truly is of the isolation he is about to self-impose.

After replaying the scene a second time, the old man retreats into the darkness surrounding his desk to grab a drink. The contrast between darkness and light is relevant to the succession of selves: young Krapp basked in sunlight and enjoyed the outdoors, while thirty-nine-year-old Krapp is responsible for the nocturnal revelation that irreparably mutated the course of events. Having attempted to diminish his loneliness by using an overhead desk lamp that creates shadows, Krapp has also made it possible for himself to withdraw in the blackness to indulge in vice.

Subsequently ceasing his shuffle around the room, the old man proceeds to the recording of a new tape, this time with none of the eloquence characteristic of his past selves. Besides admitting he has nothing left to say, Krapp mentions that what we can only assume is his magnum opus has only sold seventeen copies. Recapitulating the scenes of his "farewell to love," he wonders whether staying with his sweetheart would have made him happy and tries to silence such depressing thoughts by describing his most recent sexual encounters with Fanny, an old whore. His physical relationship with her is borderline grotesque, rarely yielding any form of relief (Krapp jokes about his impotence). The refrain of "Be again, be again. (*Pause*.) All that old misery. (*Pause*.) Once wasn't enough for you. (*Pause*.) Lie down across her..." (Beckett, 223) underlines that the real human tragedy is the transience of moments of happiness.

For the final replay, Krapp begins silently moving his lips as the tape goes on, as if he is attempting to memorise the sequence. It seems that this moment so special to him that he would like to hold onto it even after his hearing fails. Once the scene is described yet again, the voice adds: "Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back" (Beckett, 223). Thirty-nine-year-old Krapp's statement is in total dissonance with his present self's feelings and convictions. Heartbreakingly, there is no

more time to fix what has been broken: having sacrificed companionship for the sake of his art, the old man is left alone with his unfortunate decision.

In conclusion, I believe that I was able to successfully demonstrate that the selected work from Beckett's dramatic opus presents certain post-anthropocentric elements, the most prevalent of which is the failure of the human body. The present thesis represents an informative theoretical progression which culminates in personal interpretation. The work chosen as a target text, *Krapp's Last Tape*, is significant to the premise: its main character is an aged man suffering from various diseases which never comes to peace with the decrepitude of his condition. In addition, Krapp's tape recorder is not merely the device he uses to archive his past failures, but also his disembodied memory and conscience.

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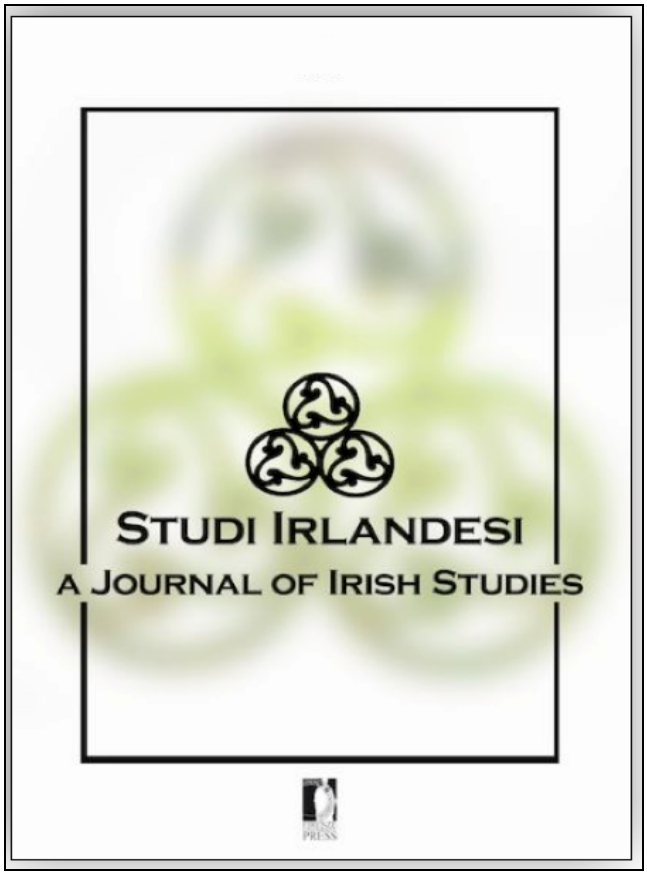
STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIII, 4, 2018, p. 219 - 220
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

BOOKS

Studi irlandesi. A Journal of irish Studies, General Editor Fiorenzo Fantaccini, Journal Manager Arianna Antonielli, Firenze University Press 2017, 421 p.



In the ever-growing tension of our current social-political climate, the 2017 edition of the University of Florence's anthology of Irish Studies stands out as a must-read. This issue's editor, Dieter Reinisch, masterfully showcases a series of informative and inspiring pieces, the main corpus of which are research papers united under the theme of Resistance in Modern Ireland, with the added coloratura of interviews, literary contributions and reviews. To dive into the complex processes that led to the formation of the Irish status quo is by no means a negligible endeavour.

The monographic section commences with an essay by Rosa Gilbert, an analysis of the rent and rates strikes of 1970s Northern Ireland as models of protest practiced against the re-initiation of interment without trial. Geographically coherent, Robert White's paper on the Provisional IRA's continued pursuit of armed struggle is a fascinating sociological study that brings forth evidence in the form of photographs and candid interviews. Divergently, Tracey Iceton chooses a more deconstructivist approach in her depiction of women in the IRA by using fragments from relevant texts in order to underline the pervasive sexism of the paramilitary institution. While acting as a shift from the northern colonial conflict, Patrick McDonagh's piece documents the history of LGBTQ activism in the Republic, which ultimately led to the decriminalisation of homosexuality. Finally, Frédéric Royall's paper focuses on the questionable impact of the Occupy movement in Ireland and the motives behind its popularity and subsequent downfall.

Shifting from sociology to literature, Seán Ó Cadha's thorough investigation of the texts of Irish Republican ballads offers valuable insight regarding their ingrained ideology and rapid circulation. Further on, one of the ideas explored is that theatre reaffirms its compatibility with subversion and resistance: José Francisco Fernández correlates Beckett's *Catastrophe* with his problematic relation to Irish history, while Molly Ferguson reveals that clown techniques are a surprisingly effective form of human rights activism. Keith Hopper and Neil Murphy offer a new perspective on Dermot Healy's *Fighting with Shadows*, availing themselves of the author's provincial Irish background in their reading. The Miscellanea section also features astute essays tackling various topics pertaining to Irish literature, such as representations of slavery in Maria Edgeworth's play *Whim for Whim*, the dysfunctionality of mother-daughter relationships in Edna O'Brien's short stories, the significance of Brian O'Nolan's humour, trauma-narration in Patrick McCabe's *Butcher Boy* and the importance of naming in Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the Sea*.

The puzzling figure of Lawrence McKeown is made accessible to the reader through an outstanding interview: a former agent of the IRA and hunger striker turned esteemed playwright and academic, he discusses his reasons for joining the paramilitary forces, life in the H-blocks and going to Queen's University as a Catholic, while also offering his opinion on the heated topic of Brexit. In his own interview, Pino Cacucci, author of *Quelli del San Patricio*, sheds light on the often overlooked connections between Ireland and Mexico, and discusses the thought process behind his novel, which is centred around a group of Irish deserters who join the Mexicans in their fight of liberation from the American colonizers.

The volume is well-organized and helps readers glide from one topic to another with sustained interest. No reader can remain indifferent to the causes so diligently discussed – the volume's scholarly function is superseded by its power to awaken feelings of solidarity and hyper-awareness of one's own civic duty. In the words of Pino Cacucci: "a heightened sensitivity may lead you to do outrageous things that may be mistaken for cruelty" (p.379). At times, it seems that the strife and suffering of countless heroic souls permeates the scientific conciseness of historical fact.

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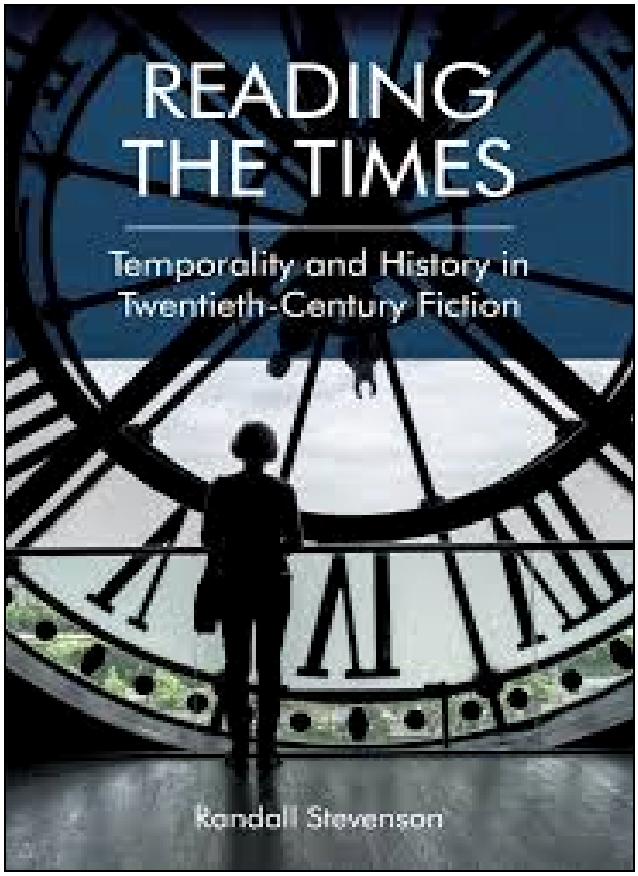
BOOKS

Randall Stevenson, *Reading The Times: Temporality and History in Twentieth-Century Fiction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018, 262 p.



In his conclusions to *Reading the Times*, Randall Stevenson observes that, in the 21st century, tensions between "time on the clock" and "time in the mind" have become almost unintelligible. Clock time, in other words, has become "coextensive with the very fabric of existence itself" (222). Yet, of course, this was not always the case. The introduction and standardisation of measured time thoroughly marked quotidian life in the 20th century, together with the literature it produced. *Reading the Times* engages precisely this context of shifting perspectives on the

clock, as well as the manner in which the latter decisively altered the course of fiction. The study brings together areas of interest previously explored by its author. Professor of Twentieth-Century Literature at the University of Edinburgh, Randall Stevenson published *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* in 1992, followed by *The Oxford English Literary History vol. 12, 1960-2000* in 2004, and *Literature and the Great War* in 2013. Throughout the latter, Stevenson pursues a concern not only with the innovations of modernist fiction in the 20th century, but particularly with the social, economic, and cultural contexts that shaped them.

The same stance is maintained in *Reading the Times*, which initially emphasises the administrative difficulties of agreeing upon and implementing a universal, more convenient, yet sometimes "unnatural" measure of time in a society in which the behaviour of people was commonly guided by personal rhythms and the everyday patterns of the sun. According to Stevenson, literature responded to the exigencies and apprehensions introduced by the clock throughout the century. The novel, furthermore, became "the best equipped to resist or reorient the relentless, measured passage of time" (19). For this reason, Joseph Conrad and his maritime career make the subject of the Stevenson's second chapter, which outlines the "chronotype" put forward by the former and later followed by most modernist writers. Indeed, Conrad's fiction, like his career, was characterised, according to Stevenson, by "tensions between responsibility and romance, calculation and glamour" (37), easily translatable into tensions between chronology, an essential discipline for mariners, and time in the mind. Yet Conrad's writing was not merely a rejection of clock time. It was, instead, an exploration of the tensions brought about by the implementation of this time, which Stevenson himself makes explicit here. The third chapter investigates yet another shift in perspective, from Conrad to D. H. Lawrence's fiction, wherein the effects of the clock time appear to be much more violent and devastating. To provide an explanation for this new attitude to time, Stevenson tackles the dehumanising aftermath of industrialisation, as well as the significance of war time in the Great War. Against such a background, the fourth chapter more generously considers the work of fiction in providing means to resists clock time, with emphasis on time in the mind and memory. The authors considered here include Bergson, Proust, Joyce, Ford Maddox Ford and Virginia Woolf, but also Albert Einstein, whose Theory of Relativity was, at the time, rather loosely interpreted as an "alternative or ameliorative means of envisaging the historical stresses of the age" (109).

In chapter five, Stevenson deals predominantly with inter-war fiction, which, he adds, shifts its perspective once again, this time, from "hours to years," not only due to the "post-Relativist relaxation" in resentment of the clock, but also due to the felt necessity to pay increasing attention to history and the two World Wars (133-4). According to Stevenson, the Wars, and especially the catastrophes of the Second World War, made it impossible for those who lived through them to look toward the future without terror or to assume a view of history as progress any longer. The sixth chapter, therefore, extensively considers the work of postmodern writers and their strategies to encompass "potentially unspeakable historical events within the form of the novel" (178-9). Finally, the seventh

chapter underlines that although the 21st century brought along the apparent naturalisation of measured time, novels continue to express an antipathy to the clock, suggesting that conflicts between "time on the clock" and "time in the mind" actually "extend in one form or another across a very long history" (235).

This is, in fact, one of the book's most impressive feats. In *Reading the Times*, Randall Stevenson does not surgically separate the 20th century and its literature in order to analyse its specific characteristics, but rather seeks to contextualise the latter by linking them to their roots in the previous century, as well as their consequences in the present. As such, he makes obvious the relevance of a certain "perennial aspect in temporal tensions" (235) not only for modernist writers, but also for postmodernity and contemporary times. Furthermore, Stevenson proceeds to a well-documented reconstruction of 20th century life, prior to and immediately following the intrusion into the quotidian of relentless clock time and its anxieties. The study, in other words, can serve as a bridge from the present to the larger historical context of the 20th century, which may be more or less obscure for the contemporary reader. Stevenson delivers new insights into modern fiction, but most importantly, he provides a means for readers to access the perspectives of both 20th century writers and their audience. In this regard, the book serves as an invaluable tool for the interpretation of any text produced in a context marked by shifting perspectives on temporality and traumatic historical events.

Reading the Times accomplishes its ambitious task meticulously. It is intended for scholars and students of twentieth-century literature, but it remains accessible to any reader with an interest in the development of modern narrative. Largely due to Stevenson's engaging style, as well as his ability to deliver in-depth analyses in an easily readable fashion, the book can be read both as an introduction into modernist and postmodernist writing and a complex interpretation of the latter.

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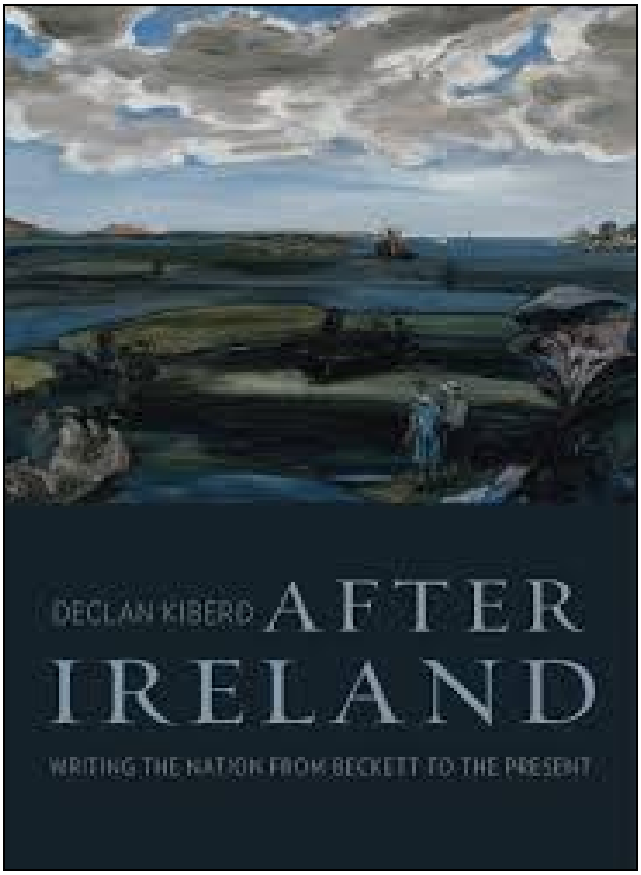
STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIII, 4, 2018, p. 225 - 227
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

BOOKS

Declan Kiberd, *After Ireland: Writing the Nation from Beckett to Present*, Harvard University Press, 2018, 540 p.



Since the publication of *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* in 1995, Declan Kiberd's distinction as a critic and scholar in the field of (Anglo-)Irish Studies has grown substantially, not in the least because of the prestigious literary awards bestowed upon his work. In fact, following the publication of the sequel *Irish Classics* in 2000, Kiberd's relevance to the field of Irish studies, as well as cultural studies as a whole, stems from his straightforward engagement with the archetype of the Irish "national project." Indeed, the kernel contention of *After Ireland* is that the "birth of the new state signalled the slow end of the national project," an enfee-

blement which became, in his own words, "conclusive in the years following the economic crash of 2008" (ix). The distinctiveness and allure of Kiberd's perspective is precisely its compatibility with other national blueprints, or the idea of nationhood itself. His research propositions aim to identify the way in which "the state proved unable to contain or embody (…) the ambitions of the nation" (ix), while also recounting the spirit of emergency that seemed to define the condition of postcolonialism.

Currently the Donald and Marilyn Keough Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, Declan Kiberd is rightly identified as *the* authority in the literature of Ireland, whether in Gaelic or English. His contributions to both cultural studies and literary theory have earned him numerous critical awards and the distinction of being addressed as one of the most important three hundred "political figures leading the cultural discourse"[1] by *The Observer* in 2011. Moreover, alongside P. J. Mathews, Kiberd received an outstanding acknowledgement from President Michael Higgins for his achievements in terms of recognising the most important discourses that have shaped 21st century Ireland and the Irish national identity.[2]

In this regard, *After Ireland* first identifies an indisputable tendency of the Irish to place their faith in a monoculture after the 1801 Act of Union. Following 1922, this "reality" (6) was represented by the nation state and, later, by the Catholic Church, thus rendering the juxtaposition between colonialisation and native structures of low diversity almost palpable. Such continuous cropping was fuelled by a culture of "control and interdiction" (7), practiced in a bottom-up manner, from a social level to education, political life and, to be sure, within the administration. Starting with Samuel Beckett's 1953 *Waiting for Godot*, Declan Kiberd registers the way in which Ireland's isolationist, subsistence economy retarded the development of new generations, while censorship prevented them from asserting their status as individuals. Certainly, growing the same cultural crop during the better part of the 20th century fostered a repression of instinctual life among the citizens of the Free State, but also an almost unbridgeable distance between their inner selves and two central aspects of their identities, their language and their landscape. The process had widespread reverberations on the Irish, who, albeit politically united, had no sense of an integrated, collective culture. This is underlined by Kiberd with the help of Sean O'Faoláin's tremendous work through *The Bell* magazine, Máire Mhac an tSaoi's poetry of emotional destitution, Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls*, Seamus Heaney's *North*, Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*, and John McGaghern's *Among Women*. The latter works are especially poignant in illustrating the paradox of an Irish Bildungsroman. Adults were commonly trapped in a state of perpetual adolescence akin to Mr. Gentleman, a pattern of lack of self-familiarity that is also present in Brian Friel's "Philadelphia," while children too often had to live in self-enclosed worlds such as that of Great Meadow, or Deane's Bogside Derry.

Thus, the major strength of Kiberd's investigation is that it identifies several vestige themes that seem to have reoccurred in Irish culture since the 1950s,

[1] See https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/may/08/top-300-british-intellectuals

[2] See https://www.president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/handbook-of-the-irish-revival-an-abundance-of-riches-and-some-lessons-for-o

some of them in continuity with much older tendencies, as the nation experienced gradual secularisation, constant emigration, the Troubles, as well as globalisation. O'Connor's biography, for instance, obviates that the methods of colonial education, which had been an important mechanism of instilling young children with an artificial opposition between intellect and emotion, continued to be applied within the Free State, though with a different purpose. Richard Power's protagonist in *The Hungry Grass* becomes an exemplary of the Irish fear of "committing oneself to the here and the now" (100), a foregrounded *distensio animi* which can only stem from a theocratic view that places emphasis on a transcendent phase existence. In addition, despite it being an important part of their identity, the Irish have used language (both Hiberno-English and Gaelic) not to express and connect, but to suppress and estrange people from themselves and one another, as Friel's Gar does in *Philadelphia*, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne's Orla in *The Dancers Dancing* or Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's lyrical subjects. For this reason, Kiberd suggests that Claire Keegan's "Foster" may be an illustration of the way in which a "traumatic experience can be best reported, if it is inferred more than fully described" (465) for those who are not familiarised with using language to tell the entire truth. Yet, as Kiberd notes, the title of his latest book "may represent an opportunity to move forward rather than the utterance of an adverse judgement" (495). Furthermore, in reading the society, the politics, the economy, and the art of Ireland from the second half of the 20th century to the present, Kiberd describes the wider problem of an absent "liberal humanist code" (491) in the wake of secularisation, a void which has since been filled by the dominant global religion of capitalism. The latter discourse, although widely adopted in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger era, imploded when the financial crisis hit the country.

Written in language accessible to a wide audience, the book effectively comprises an entertaining, intelligent and comprehensive series of observations on Irish culture, comments that are meant to familiarise readers with some of the most important Irish writings from the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Tremendously useful for both academic and non-academic readers, *After Ireland* has no claim of establishing a canon, but functions rather as a manifesto of self-questioning Irish culture. The project's overarching aim seems to signal that Irish culture is undergoing a "near-death experience" (481), and yet it remains "open to injections of life from without" (492), a new beginning maybe at hand to the extent the Irish assume their sense of becoming.

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STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIII, 4, 2018, p. 229 - 230
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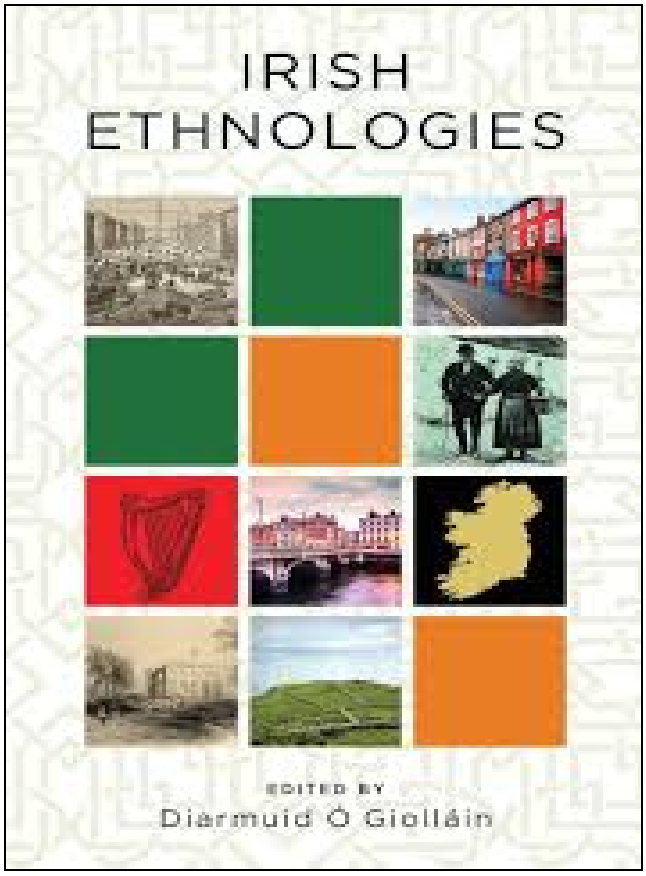
BOOKS

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Irish Ethnologies*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017, 238 p.



Irish Ethnologies was published in 2011, under the editorship of Diarmuid Ó. Giolláin, as the English counterpart to the volume *Irlande après Arensberg et O Duilearga*, which appeared first in the second issue of the *Ethnologie française*, vol. 41 (2011). The volume comprises a series of essays, pieced together seamlessly into a collection that cross-examines issues of Irish anthropology and folklore. This anthology opens new lines of inquiry into matters of nationalism, colonialism, or folklore and fosters a greater understanding of all the adjacent fields to ethnology. The volume also stands testament to Ireland's coming-of-age in anthropology and

folklore studies. The generous corpus of texts accumulated in the last few decades prove that Ireland is not only a gold mine of folkloric resources but also a fertile ground for exploring topics of contemporary interest, ranging from post-colonialism, political ideology, national identity, to environmental concerns.

Out of the original French collection, only the articles that remained relevant to current affairs found their way into the present volume. The collected essays touch on specific aspects of Irish ethnology and reconcile two main approaches to the discipline: one that goes solely by way of anthropology, and another that relies on folkloric discourse, a more recent adoption. Irish ethnology goes back as far as the eighteenth century, however, folklore studies only gained traction and official status in 1927, when the Gaelic League founded the Folklore of Ireland Society. From that moment onwards, folklore distanced itself from the peasantry and became the scaffold of a newly institutionalised national tradition.

The topics discussed in the span of the 200 pages are far-reaching and insightful, but a few articles take the spotlight, particularly those that tackle issues of ethnicity and political colour, understood through the lens of ethnocultural and ethnoreligious studies. For instance, Joseph Ruane's *Pluralism and Silence* provides an overview of the relationship between Protestant and Catholics in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The rise of secularism has dampened the religious impact, and current tensions stem from ethnicity issues, e.g., competing narratives, identities or national symbols. The author insists on the two different approaches for anticipating and diffusing potential ethnic conflicts, noticing that Northern Ireland assumes a formal attitude, relying on institutional support, whereas the Republic opts for an informal take, sporting a pluralist bent. Ruane also offers a brief historical account of the Irish conflict and points out the ingredients that created an environment ripe for friction. In the Republic, economic and political changes triggered a mindset shift, and along with it, a more lax attitude which Ruane dubs as pluralism and silence. He invites readers to consider whether this approach can work as a functional model for Northern Ireland too.

Also dealing with ethnicity issues in Northern Ireland is Dominic Bryan, whose essay traces the newly drawn boundaries of civic space in Belfast. Bryan discusses the interaction between power and identity and its role in defining public space. His ethnographic overview includes parades, murals, flags, but rather than insisting on spaces of segregation, the author emphasises shared spaces, suitable for multiethnic activities and describes the carnival, as the epitome of shared space in Belfast. He concludes that the city has become equally more shared and more divided and there no apparent solution in sight for creating a more congruent public space.

This book will peak the interest of scholars and students of anthropology, folklore studies, history, and Irish Studies. This interdisciplinary collection will also inspire general readers to take stock of the history of Ireland and its complexities, contextualised through ethnological findings.

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STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIII, 4, 2018, p. 231 - 232
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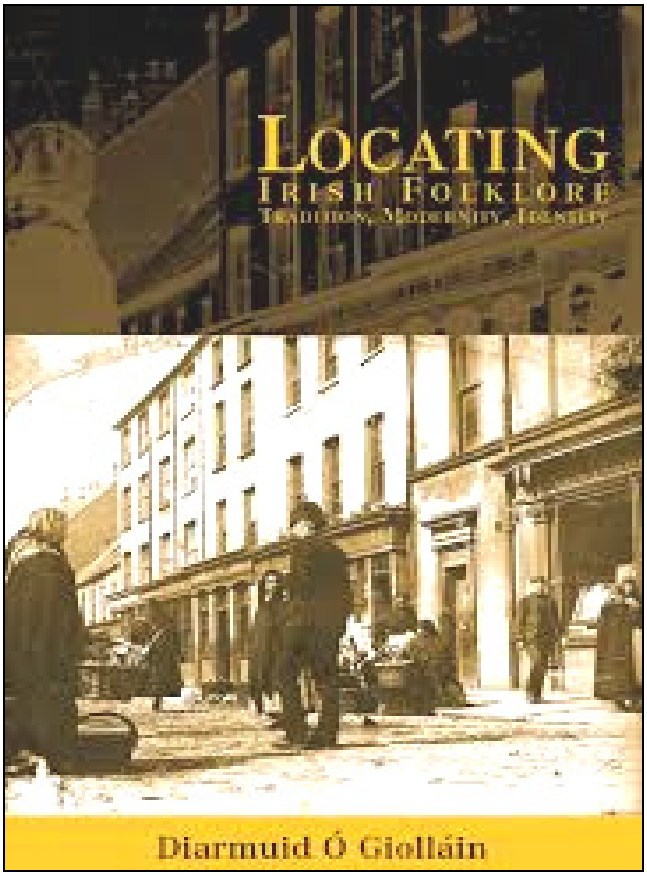
BOOKS

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: Tradition, Modernity, Identity*, Cork: Cork University Press, 2000, 256 p.



Published in 2000, as part of Cork University's critical research of folklore and ethnology, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin's much-anticipated study introduces readers to Irish folklore and a wide range of theoretical concepts associated with it. Ó Giolláin takes on the challenging task of locating folklore, a term so accessible and readily used in the public space, yet so vague when judged against scholarly standards. Acknowledging the versatility and generosity of this term, the author does not attempt any conceptual framing but sets out to contextualise Irish folklore in a comparative study that weighs its value in a broader European and global background. His com-

parative analyses challenge the traditional geo-historical approach and invite readers to consider folklore beyond the confines of a territory and to look at it as an overlap of social, political, cultural, economic and symbolic dimensions.

By and large, folklore survives in the form of stories, songs, tales and traditions that make up a repository of symbols which lends itself to cultural ideologies and nationalist agendas. The author seeks to legitimise its tradition and assert the potential of folklore as an academic discipline. Ó Giolláin argues that the vital prerequisites for any folklore related research are the constant mining and gathering of extensive raw data. His findings help us navigate the various notions of folklore, which get more intricate the deeper we dig, and urges us to entertain a cumulative definition that takes into account all of its nuances.

Ó Giolláin begins his intellectual exercise into the nature of folklore by listing salient features such as the local flavour, the adherence to a residual peasant culture, or the appeal to an imagined, communal past. The author outlines these attributes in relation to Ireland, and more specifically to an idealised, marginal location such as the Irish countryside, the Gaelic-speaking West, the Blasket or Aran Islands. From the outset, Irish folklore presented itself as a peripheral category, self-limited in space and time, but one of crucial importance in the construction of the national identity. Folklore gained traction as a reactionary culture at odds with a centralised, metropolitan culture, and for many years folklore held up a mirror for values which were not reflected in the dominant culture.

Ó Giolláin identifies folklorists as nation-builders and 'defenders of regional culture'. He also recognises folklore as the primary instrument of the local historian and a valuable resource for historical validation. However, recent studies have shown that folklore is no longer pinned just to an idealised, remote location, or to a particular moment in time. Ó Giolláin makes sure to address the reemergence of folklore into newfound territories such as mainstream culture or urban space to offer readers a thorough overview.

The text brings under scrutiny two major topics: folkloric discourse and the Gaelicization of folklore. Ó Giolláin discusses the origins and application of folkloric discourse, focusing on the historical and socio-political context. Here, the author distinguishes between folklore proper, an ideologically charged notion, and that of folklife, a quantifiable, pragmatic category. Irish folklore managed to transcend political divisions but benefited most from the rise of cultural nationalism and the establishment of the Gaelic League, an avid promoter of folklore studies for the merit of their Gaelic character alone. In the chapter "The Gaelicization of Folklore", Ó Giolláin credits the Folklore Commission with conducting one of the most meaningful cultural projects in Irish history.

Throughout the text, Diarmuid Ó Giolláin remains focused on the development of folklore as a fully fledged academic subject, which will benefit from the intersection with adjacent disciplines such as anthropology, ethnology, cultural studies, to name but a few. The author dazzles with his original thought and in-depth analysis which reveals fresh perspectives and a greater understanding of the subject. The first study of its kind, *Locating Irish Folklore* is a must-read handbook for folklorists and ethnologists, and a comprehensive introduction for anyone interested in the subject.

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STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIII, 4, 2018, p. 233 - 234
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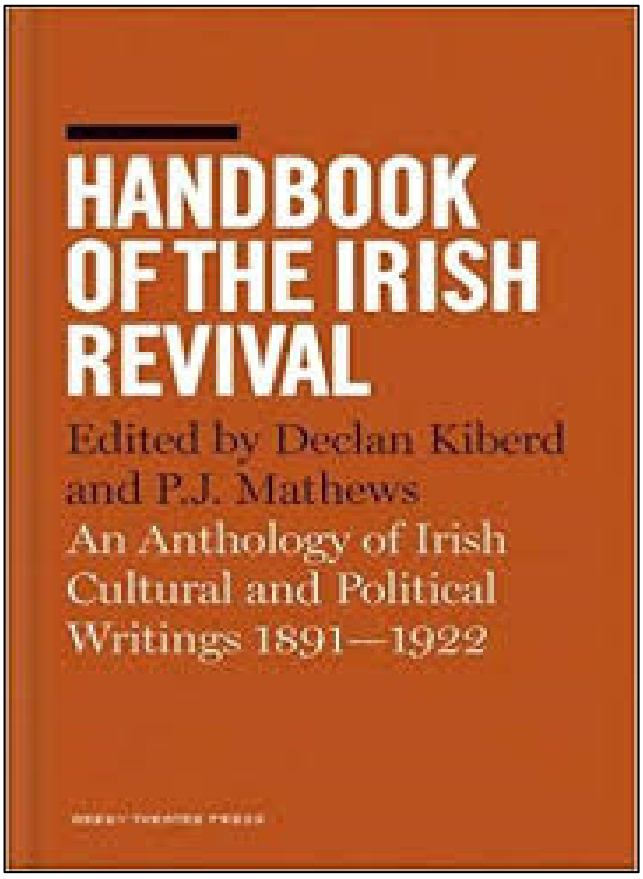
BOOKS

Declan Kiberd and P. J. Matthews (Eds.), Handbook of the Irish Revival. *An Anthology of Irish Cultural and Political Writings 1891-1922,* Dublin: Abbey Theatre Press, 2015, 505 p.



Published as an inaugural volume by Abbey Theatre Press in 2015, *Handbook of the Irish Literary Revival* offers a comprehensive anthology of seminal texts produced in one of the most prolific and meaningful periods in Ireland's history: the Irish Revival. This period spanned three decades, from the late nineteenth century to the early 1920s (1891 marking the death of Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish National Movement, and 1922 signalling the establishment of the Irish Free State), when a generation of artists and thinkers returned to Ireland's past in an effort to project a future for their nation amidst the other European countries. Sparked by questions about the availability

of these essential documents, raised during *The Theatre of Memory Symposium* held in 2014, the collection of manifestos, poems, pamphlets, newspapers articles, commentaries, letters and fictional extracts that capture the ethos of those decades is co-edited by Declan Kiberd, Professor of Modern Irish and English Literature at the University of Notre Dame, author of groundbreaking studies such as *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (1995) and, most recently, *After Ireland: Writing the Nation from Beckett to the Present* (2018), and P. J. Matthews, Associate Professor at University College Dublin, editor of *The Cambridge Companion to John Millington Synge* (2009).

The five-hundred-page *Handbook* is comprised of sixteen chapters, preceded by a short introduction meant to capture the essential arguments brought by the texts included in each section. The first group of texts, under the title "A Country in Paralysis?", explores the aftermath of the Great Famine and the tremendous depletion of Ireland's population brought about by starvation and mass emigration. J.M. Synge's "A Landlord's Garden in County Wicklow" (1907), Emily Lawless's "Famine Roads and Famine Memories" (1898) and Douglas Hyde's "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland" (1892) are all accounts which self-reflexively critique the state of inertia Ireland found itself in. While the second section entitled "A Thought Revival" delves into ancient mythology as a reservoir for re-energising modernity, the third, consisting of "Movements and Manifestos" contains a very rich and complex selection of the most prevalent Irish ideologies at the time: "Opening Statement of the Irish Literary Theatre" (1899), "Objects of the Irish National Literary Society" (1892) and "The Democratic Programme of the First Dáil Éireann" (1919), and so on.

Another chapter of particular importance is the one focused on "Language Revival", presenting opposing voices, such as J.M. Synge and Patrick Pearse, who had very different opinions on whether the Irish Language should be considered indispensable for the production of "a more vibrant industry, agriculture, and sense of community, as well as a radically innovative kind of modern literature" (p. 111). Also worth noting is the chapter devoted to "Women and Citizenship", which reminds contemporary readers of the difficult path towards securing the objective of equality for Irishwomen, who could either follow the suffragists or, as Constance Markiewicz urged them, join the egalitarian organisations of Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League. The *Handbook* brings into perspective many different other aspects of the Irish Revival. It showcases the richness of subjects tackled by artists of that period including, in the section entitled "The Natural World", the opinions of writers like Yeats, Synge and Shaw on the regenerative force of Ireland's pristine beauty.

Michael Higgins, the President of Ireland, writes the Afterword to the *Handbook*, emphasising the importance of the selected excerpts, showing that the editors' achievement consists in having "saved for us the evidence of some of the most sensitive, idealistic, often combative people of an extraordinary set of decades that ended a century of devastation and began a new century that presented both a promise and a set of conflicts whose consequences would endure into our own times" (499). As a gateway into the past and a very useful tool for researchers and the general public alike, *Handbook of the Irish Literary Revival* represents a successful publishing debut by the Abbey Theatre Press, eloquently unveiling the ideas which became the cornerstone of Ireland's modern future.

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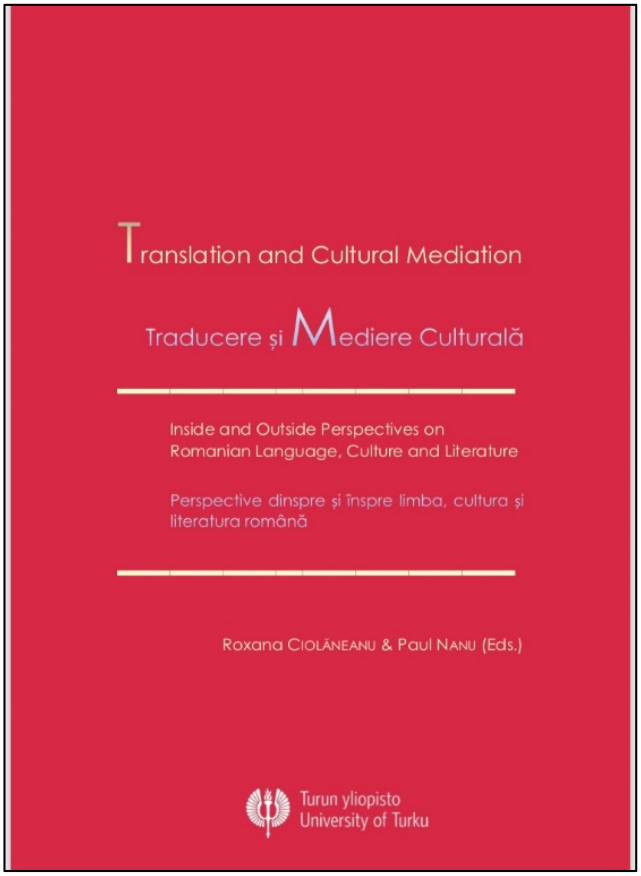
BOOKS

Translation and Cultural Mediation. Inside and Outside Perspectives on Romanian Language, Culture and Literature, Eds. Roxana Ciolăneanu & Paul Nanu, University of Turku, 2018, 271 p.



In a generous deployment of erudition emerging from different fields of Romanian traductology and philology, the collective volume edited by Roxana Ciolăneanu and Paul Nanu invites readers from the Romanian- and English-speaking worlds to explore the complex theorization of a paradigmatic change in which translation becomes "an agent of change, [a way in which] cultures meet and engage into a dynamic process of knowledge exchange and mutual influence." (Introduction, p. 7), rather than a matter of decoding and recoding meaning from one language to another. The Intro-

duction itself (/ Cuvânt-înainte) is a bilingual plea to approach this fascinating interplay of identity and difference.

Bogdan Ghiu's lead-in article, devoted to "Translation as Meta-Theory", illustrates the ambition to produce "singularity" as well as "the replica of a singularity" via the double incarnation of an innovative vision of the "potential of translation theory and practices": along with the Romanian text, an English version, equally inspiring – signed by Sanda Watt – is provided. The author advocates an epistemological revolution in which the main part is reserved to translation, seen as "the true self-consciousness of contemporary world", meant to achieve "universal, unanimous, generalized peripheralisation: the world as a "global periphery", in Bertrand Westphal's felicitous phrase (p. 16). Thus, in order to resonate with other cultural agents in a relevantly empathetic key, one can (and ideally should) contemplate the model offered by French, a strategic language which, "*just as translation*, […] lies *in between"* the position of a formerly hegemonic idiom and that of a rare one, by circulating and integrating literary values from exotic civilizations (p. 25). In the light of this enriching epitome of translation and according to the typically Eastern vision of inter-periphreal communication, the "edge" of the linguistic spectrum has the opportunity to turn into "a margin" (of freedom, of *movement*)", while the world is being re-deconstructed in a democratically spiritual manner.

Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu's study opens the series devoted to intersemiotic translation by analyzing the transformation of political measures into demographical data. The focus is set upon the conversion of a particular text – the Decree 770/1966, by which Romanian women were exhorted to give birth to four children by the age of 45 – into gender roles imposed on the Romanian society of the communist era. The propaganda strived to restructure feminine agency in an equalitarian guise which was paradoxically expected to lead to the promotion and responsibilization of fecund female citizens as *mothers of the nation* (p. 56). After the revolution of December '89, the language of juridical norms is reshaped in a way that lead to the translation of the decree's abrogation into a drastic increase of abortions, rather than into a mature usage of family-planning policies. The article reveals an interesting instance of center-margin communication and of "(re)production" of semiotic (and seminal!) material throughout modern Romanian history.

Ramona Tănase's concept of "synergies" encompasses the contextual relevance of six novels, *Morometții* and *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* by Marin Preda, *Dangerous Liaisons* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos and *Legături bolnăvicioase* by Cecilia Stefanescu, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie and *The Forest* by José Maria Ferreira de Castro, by disclosing the "filters" projected by their movie adaptations. The author rightfully remarks that such a "translation" from text to film implies "transforming [the book] into an object of marketing". However, the author's ambitions go beyond these intersemiotic renditions – which sometimes involve significant diachronical displacement – hoping to reach "the motivation behind each esthetical choice" of the pertinent cultural agents (p. 76).

An interesting counterpart to the poetics of adaptation is offered by Claudia Vlad's approach to the cultural transposition of Pieter Bruegel's painting into modern poetry. In spite of its apparent clarity and even facility, William Carlos Williams' *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* reveals "multiple layering of translation, in which the verbal sign can be interpreted through a system of non-linguistic

signs and vice versa" (p. 80). This case of "transmutation" concerns not only the visual composition, but also the underlying irony of the protagonist's invisibility, possibly hinting at the Flemish proverb "No plough stops for the dying man" (p. 87). Translating Williams's own intersemiotic translation requires a thorough acquaintance with the painting's implications as well as a creative interpretation of the poem's literary substance as such.

After the stimulating experiments of Intersemiotics, the section "Cultural and Literary Translation" addresses the more canonical practices of text-to-text adaptation and appropriation.

In a postmodern world thriving on ambiguities, Lorena Clara Mihăeș approaches the difficulties raised by the translation of Kazuo Ishiguro's Nobel-prize-winning novels. The main challenge here lies in the linguistic and narrative treatment of the literary cooperation set by the unreliable narrators and undermined by the use of an unsaturated vocabulary. The Romanian versions of *Never Let Me Go* and *A Pale View of Hills* sometimes fail to render this deliberate unreliability by missing the novelist's clues (especially hedges) or by underestimating and even dispelling esthetic ambiguity.

Without being "lost in translation", Carmen Andrei focuses in her study on the main traductological issues posed by Paul Emond's novel *As Far As Eyes Can See* (2011), where register equivalents are missing in Romanian. In a literary universe verging on the untranslatable, the reader is incited to participate in a ludic activity disturbing the expectations provoked by set phrases, in order to build on syntagmatic developments meant to estrange one from stereotypical thinking. The translator's sharing of her interlingual solutions and her disclosure of the limits of intercultural reception – especially regarding the relative equivalence of French and Romanian argots used in modern joy houses' milieus – configure a precious piece of evidence serving the collective endeavor to explore "Translation and Cultural Mediation".

Ștefan Gencărău and Ema Ileana Adam devote particular attention to the peritextual labels of *Baltagul [The Hatchet]*, one of the most widely translated works of the Romanian novelist Mihail Sadoveanu. Although the abstract establishes a corpus restricted to the French versions of Al. Duiliu Zamfirescu and Profira Sadoveanu as well as its English foil by Eugenia Farca, the Romanian masterpiece is generously incorporated in the larger European context. Such collections as "UNESCO's lists", with their financial policy in the 60's, are deemed more relevant than a purely contrastive study. The title's puzzle ("Baltagul") is elucidated through a careful lexical, biographical, cultural and traductological contextualization which provides a just picture of the different ways in which languages parcel out reality. Rather than an interlingual critique of the elements of hybridity provided by the said corpus, the article offers a useful panorama of the novel's reception across Europe.

Oana Ursache embraces an even larger degree of generality in presenting the translator's role as a fundamental cultural producer, from the *Memorandum on Translation* (back in 1949) to Google's revolution in the field of machine translation (in 2017). The study is encyclopedic in its scope and ethical in its underpinning motivations: from the evocation of an emblematic saint striving to become the Bible's translator into Latin – saint Jerome – to the assessment of the dehumanized tool provided by machine trans-

lation software, the deontology of vulgarization is luxuriantly scrutinized in this panoramic, erudite and entertaining article whose latitude is that of an academic course on the history of translations.

In a similarly meta-theoretical stance of defense of the venerable humanism professed by core traductology, Ovidiu Ivancu envisages translation as a complex process requiring the ability to grasp the mindset (*forma mentis*) and the social paradigm of a source culture, in order to restore it into the target intellectual environment. The ideal translator is a human agent who can actualize a way of thinking that is either lost because of diachronic estrangement, or inaccessible because of contemporary civilizational distancing. This upgrading is compared to the deft placing of a new mirror in front of an inner landscape captured by an old one, with one inexorable requirement to meet: that of keeping the optical parameters similarly tuned so that the "fecund spasm of the spirit" (p. 195) be enacted afresh in the new context. However, no perfect fidelity can be expected, as approaching a text differs fundamentally from observing the sky (by seizing images of the past in spite of the time gap): the transposition of contemplation into a particular vision is a matter of present-day bias. In his refreshing interpretation of the cliché "traduttore, traditore", the author salutes the persistence of the same mindset across Europe, and epitomizes it with Caragiale's extensive use of the verb "a traduce" (to translate) meaning "a trăda" (to betray). In an attempt to deepen the lucidity of cultural agents dealing with the epistemology and ethics of textuality, the philosophic dimension of this study encompasses the time-sensitive dimension of intracultural and inter-cultural translation.

The closing angle of the kaleidoscopic *Inside and Outside Perspectives on Romanian Language, Culture and Literature* is devoted to the linguistic sphere of traductology, without neglecting its cultural background, which remains the main focus of this collection of transnational, overarching, interculturally relevant papers.

In a detailed analysis of the paradigmatic challenge of transposing language-specific lexical units into Romanian, Silvia Mihăilescu presents a series of relevant strategies such as periphrasis, amplification, transposition and modulation, which can prove useful in rendering the complex semantics and morphosyntax of the Bulgarian prefixed verbs used to represent aspectual values. Far from adopting a merely normative outlook, the study examines a corpus formed by the novellas of the Bulgarian writer Iordan Radicikov in Mihail Magiari's translation, whose merits and weaknesses are constructively analyzed.

Adopting an anthropological methodology inspired by Stephen C. Levinson's comparative outlook on intercultural pragmatics, Roxana Ciolăneanu explores a corpus of spoken interlingual and intersemiotic translations of the English prepositions *in* and *on* in Romanian and Portuguese contexts. As "most of the studies on prepositions developed their argumentation having English as a focal point, thus ignoring the fact that space may be differently expressed in other languages" (p. 218), the author designs and runs two tests for bilingual (and possibly trilingual) students: a "decoding" form in which subjects are asked to read the sentences in English and provide the proper equivalent in their target language (either Romanian or Portuguese), and a second "encoding" questionnaire in which respondents are invited to react to a set of images by describing the spatial relation between them and by using the preposition they consider appropriate. The results are properly systematized and analyzed, the common point

between the three languages being the presence of a distinct perspective on space which proves to be anthropomorphically and egocentrically determined. Thus, the significant deviations from the "ideal meanings" assigned to prepositions – those of "support and containment (*on*, *pe*, *em*)", and "containment (*in*, *în*, *em*)" – make automatic translation unmanageable in the absence of a properly contextualized lexicon, which is under construction.

The section closes with Cristina Alice Toma's contribution on the history of Romanian terminology in the fields of mathematic and geographic didactics. Embracing a textual corpus ranging from 19th century to present-day textbooks and methodological tools, she demonstrates to what extent professional terminology impacts accurate translation of specialized languages in a world where the desideratum of a "scientific Esperanto" has not been accomplished. A context-sensitive approach rooted in the history of the target language – Romanian, with its own "realia"– must be privileged in the scrutiny of the varied French, Greek, German and English domain and subdomain categories, whose "denotative mobility" and relative stability are explored in their intricate dynamics.

Each of the articles in this generous volume illustrates the cosmopolite erudition, the universalist scope and culture-specific insight of Romanian scholars into traductology, terminology, language pedagogy and, last but not least, into the very field of translation expertise and bio-bibliography. The *Inside and Outside Perspectives on Romanian Language, Culture and Literature* advocate the creation of a world in which the translator is acknowledged as a hero in his / her own right, so that the "translation paradigm" can become "a thinking pattern" relevant in itself, translation being celebrated, in the year of Romania's centenary, as a successful process of century-old cultural mediation.

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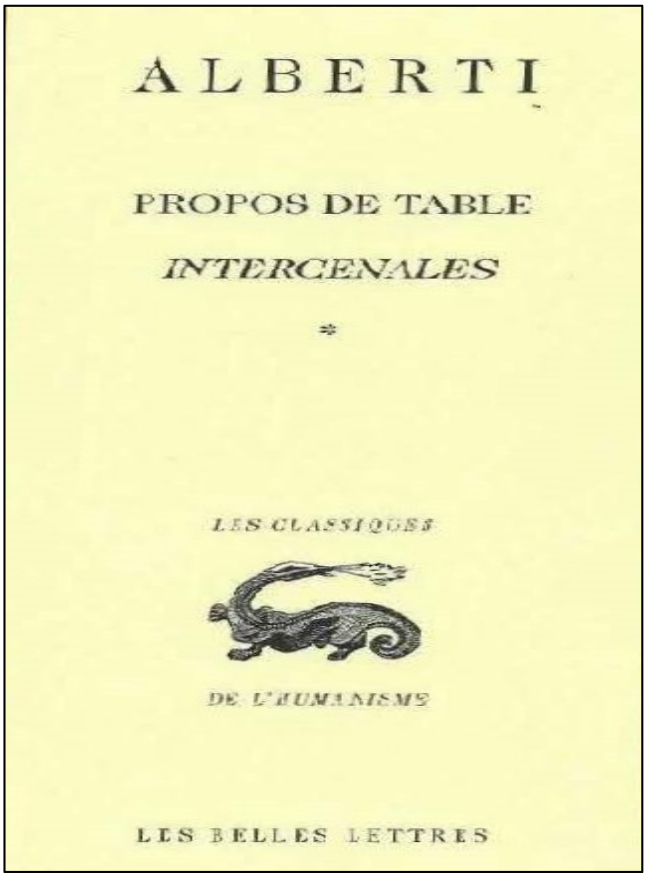
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)

BOOKS

Leon Battista ALBERTI, *Propos de table-Intercenales*. Édition critique par Roberto Cardini, Traduction de Claude Laurens, Introduction et commentaire de Roberto Cardini traduits par Frank La Brasca. Vol. I e II. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2018, 530 p. + 520 p.



Les deux volumes de 1050 pages, qui s'inscrivent dans la collection « Les classiques de l'Humanisme » des Belles Lettres, consistent en une nouvelle édition des *Intercenales*, traduite en français, textes en vis-à-vis, pour le premier volume. Une riche introduction (p. IX-XCI) rend hommage, dans sa première partie intitulée « Alberti écrivain et humaniste », à Eugenio Garin, qui a fait

découvrir un « autre » Alberti, « nouveau et beaucoup plus moderne », avant de poser la question de sa contribution à la littérature, en langue vulgaire et en latin, de se demander comment il se situe dans l'histoire de l'Humanisme et quelle méthode employer pour mieux cerner ses écrits. Roberto Cardini insiste en particulier sur la spécificité de l'humour de notre auteur, vu comme connaissance philosophique, élitiste et non populaire, et souligne l'avènement d'un « autre humanisme ». La deuxième partie, « Les *Intercenales* de Leon Battista Alberti. Histoire rédactionnelle et hypothèse éditoriale » fait le point de la critique en considérant les nombreux manuscrits conservés dans les bibliothèques et en examinant les différentes éditions antérieures. Ce « complexe parcours rédactionnel » trouve sa place dans l'apparat de cette nouvelle édition bilingue.

La Note sur le texte (p. XCII-XCIV) met en exergue les critères scientifiques adoptés, fondés sur une « collation complète des témoins ».

Les Abréviations des ouvrages critiques et celles des œuvres d'Alberti (p. XCV-CXXII) facilitent la lecture et sont particulièrement bienvenues.

Pour ce qui est du corps de l'ouvrage, le premier volume consiste en la traduction des *Intercenales* en langue française. Elle se fonde sur la première édition italienne de 2010, revue pour l'occasion. Chaque texte a été divisé en paragraphes pour la première fois. L'intérêt incontestable de ce travail est la mise en vis-à-vis du texte français et du texte latin et donc l'accessibilité des *Propos de table* pour un large public francophone.

Le second volume consiste en un commentaire approfondi, fruit de recherches de première main. Il envisage les conjectures proposées mais aussi réfutées, s'attache aux faits de langue, mais aussi à l'intra-textualité comme à l'architecture de l'œuvre et de chacun des livres. À noter encore que l'apparat critique est précédé de l'apparat rédactionnel.

La démarche de Roberto Cardini est celle d'un chercheur confirmé : claire, progressive et efficace. Il fait le point sur la fortune des publications des œuvres de l'humaniste italien et met en évidence les lacunes qu'il comble avec succès, les erreurs qu'il amende avec bonheur.

Il s'agit donc d'une démarche scientifique de très haut niveau, qui marque d'une pierre blanche les études sur l'humaniste florentin. Ajoutons à cela que le grand mérite de ces volumes est de porter à la connaissance du lecteur francophone une œuvre encore trop peu étudiée et de rendre surtout justice à la réputation de l'humaniste.

En conclusion, cette nouvelle publication de Roberto Cardini apporte d'inestimables informations sur l'écriture et sur la fortune de l'écrivain italien, dont elle souligne en particulier l'originalité. Son caractère hautement scientifique, la mise en lumière de textes peu accessibles confèrent à ce livre une valeur incontestable et en font une référence indispensable pour les chercheurs comme ils marquent un grand pas pour la redécouverte du patrimoine littéraire italien et européen.

Le prix Georges Perrot 2018 décerné à Roberto Cardini pour cette édition critique, en deux volumes, des *Propos de table-Intercenales* de Leon Battista Alberti, par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres couronne d'ailleurs ce monumental travail de recherche.

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