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Irish settlers in Buenos Aires, *circa* 1885, disguised with *gaucho* apparel.  
A mate and other elements are prominently displayed  
(*Daguerreotype, Archivo Histórico del Museo de Luján*)

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## How the Irish became *Gauchos Ingleses* Diasporic Models in Irish-Argentine Literature

By Edmundo Murray

### Abstract

Declan Kiberd argues that "postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws: rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance." Paradoxically, the Irish who emigrated to Argentina, a former Spanish colony, may be regarded (as they regarded themselves) as colonised in the country they left, and as colonisers of their new home. Their case is one of the better counterexamples to the typical pattern of identities in most of the English-speaking destinations of the Irish Diaspora. Using fictional works as primary documents, in this dissertation I search the identities represented in John Brabazon's *Memoirs*, Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back*, and William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*. Brabazon memoirs were translated into Spanish, annotated and published in 1981 by Irish-Argentine genealogist Eduardo Coghlan. Kathleen Nevin's novel include the fictionalised biography of her mother, who emigrated to Buenos Aires in the 1870s. In *Tales of the Pampas*, William Bulfin amalgamates the ambiguous acculturation of the Irish settlers with that of the "gaucho" (those cowboys of the South American pampas who almost literally lived in the saddle), as well as with the symbols of *Gauchesca* narrative. Evolving from colonised to colonisers during their initial settlement, the Irish in Argentina swiftly became *ingleses*. In the following decades, in order to join the local bourgeoisie they were required to be *gauchos*, and to show signs of their effective integration to the native culture, as seen by the Argentine elites. This explains why most of the successful Irish settlers gradually separated from the Anglo-Argentine mainstream culture and shaped their own community. A negotiation of identities among *Irishness*, *Britishness*, and *Argentineness* was always in place. I argue that these identities are not only unmoored in the emigrants' minds but also manoeuvred by community leaders, politicians and priests. After reviewing the major milestones of the nineteenth-century Irish emigration to Argentina, the dissertation analyses selected passages from the three texts, offers a version of how the settlers became Irish-Argentines, and elucidates the processes which created the new Irish-Argentine hybrid.

### Introduction

During the nineteenth century, 40-45,000 persons born in Ireland emigrated to Argentina. Most of them settled in the lush and boundless land between the City of Buenos Aires and Southern Santa Fe, and they worked primarily as shepherds and sheep-farmers. They were members of medium tenant families from the Irish midlands and Co. Wexford, though Dublin, Cork, and Clare were also well represented. They travelled from their homelands to Liverpool and from there to the River Plate as passengers on sailing ships up to the mid-nineteenth century, and on steamers thereafter. They were young and willing to work hard.

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

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

According to Eric Wolf (1982), 'the world of human kind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality. Concepts like "nation," "society," and "culture" name bits and threaten to turn names into things.' The objective of this essay is to analyse Irish-Argentine literature in order to identify the leading cultural models developed by the Irish in Argentina, and to relate them to other Irish, British, and Argentine literatures, within the *totality of interconnected processes* which linked the emigrants to other communities in the global geography of the Irish Diaspora.

'Postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws: rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance' (Kiberd 1996: 6). Paradoxically, the Irish who emigrated to Argentina, a former Spanish colony, may be regarded (as they have been regarded themselves) as colonised in the country they left, and as colonisers of their new home. *Colonised* and *coloniser* change over time through the contacts with other cultures and through social mutation. Hence, there are conflicting values in Irish-Argentine literature, which make it complex to apply traditional critical models and require the development of a *diasporic* pattern of oppression, compensation, and contribution discourses (cf. O'Sullivan 1992).

For these reasons, a complete study of Irish-Argentine literature should cover literary and journalistic works of the Irish immigrants and their descendants during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both in English and Spanish. Nevertheless, in order to limit this *mémoire* to the requirements of the English Department, only three primary texts will be included: John Brabazon's *Memoirs*, Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back*, and William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*. These texts were selected taking into account the major emigration periods and geographic distribution criteria, as well as gender and genre considerations.

In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie argues that the effect of mass migrations has been the creation of 'radically new types of human beings.' This does not mean that human nature changes with migrations. Confronted with the decision to emigrate, a hazardous journey, new cultures, languages, and environments to which it is vital to adapt, the e/immigrant develops new abilities and capacities that, in diverse degrees, change his or her view of the world, and generate a completely different set of human values. My aim is to analyse Irish-Argentine literary works in order to draft a description of the *new types of human beings* created as a result of the Irish emigration to the River Plate.

Within the context of the Irish Diaspora, the acculturation of the Irish into the Argentine environment was atypical. While keeping elements of their original culture for generations (e.g., the English language with their regional Westmeath, Longford, or Wexford brogues), the Irish and their families adapted to the new context and later united with other immigrant communities in a particular form of *tango-nostalgia* of the Old Country. Homesickness is a basic element of Irish-Argentine culture, which will be later passed on to and developed by immigrants from other origins.

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

The methodology of this study was to select cultural values (religion, land, family-gender, and ethnicity) and to consider them in the analysis of the above-mentioned texts. This method provided information about the major variations of Irish-Argentine culture through time and throughout diverse segments of the community. An alternative method of analysing emigrant letters was disregarded as obtaining these documents is extremely difficult. However, in the future, a corpus of emigrant letters, voyage accounts, memoirs, and other private documents could be gathered in order to obtain a primary source of information about the cultural values of the Irish emigrants.

To understand the basic historical facts of the Irish emigration to Argentina, the first chapter briefly describes an historical background, including the origins of the emigration, sending areas, geographic and demographic patterns, emigrant profiles, transatlantic movements, and the establishment and development of the Irish-Argentine community.

A general overview of Irish-Argentine literature is included in the second chapter along with chronological grounds of emigrant narratives, like early fiction, Nationalist writing, the acculturation and linguistic development, as well as voices, genres, and generic considerations. Among the historical contexts we will cite the *Young Ireland* movement and the 1848 Rebellion, the Famine, Catholic Nationalism, and the Irish Renaissance. In the Argentine literary context, the influence of *Southamericana* and *Gauchesca* literatures will be considered.

The third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of three primary texts: John Brabazon's *Memoirs*, Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back*, and William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas* with focus on the changing identity of the emigrants.

The last chapter deals with the process of becoming Irish-Argentine, i.e., the cultural values and their literary representation: religion, landownership, family, gender, and, particularly, ethnicity.

Research for this study started in late 2001 with the assembly of sources and contextual information. Building a personal web site about the Irish in Argentina (<http://mypage.bluewin.ch/emurray>) proved a vital vehicle to network among people with similar research interests. In addition to several documents received from universities, research centres, libraries, and individuals in Ireland, Argentina, US, Canada, and Australia, a series of manuscripts, photographs, and oral information were obtained locally through meetings and personal visits during field trips to Ireland (August 2002) and to Argentina (January 2003).

I consider this essay as an introduction to Irish-Argentine culture. Further research should be performed in order to complete the entire picture of Irish-Argentine culture through its diverse expressions. This introduction is intended to provide methodology and direction for further studies.

### Nineteenth-Century Irish Emigration to Argentina

*The Argentine Republic has extended to the Irish immigrant the warm hand of friendship. She has treated him as a son from the day of his arrival, dispensing to him with equal justice the wise laws that govern us. [...] We are not of the number of those who appear to delight in criticising harshly the institutions of the country. There is nothing perfect in this world, but after a while Buenos Aires can lay claim to as much perfection as any other part of the globe. [...] In no part of the world is the Irishman more respected and esteemed than in the province of Buenos Aires; and in no part of the world, in the same space of time, have Irish settlers made such large fortunes.*

*The Southern Cross*, 16 January 1875

*Buenos Aires is a most cosmopolitan city into which the Revolution of '48 has brought the scum of European scoundrelism. I most solemnly conjure my poorer countrymen, as they value their happiness hereafter, never to set foot on the Argentine Republic however tempted to do so they may be by offers of a passage or an assurance of comfortable homes.*

T. W. Croke, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, in an 1889 letter to Dublin's *The Freeman's Journal* (Geraghty, Michael, *Argentina: Land of Broken Promises*, 2001)

### **Nineteenth-Century Irish Emigration to Argentina**

The Irish settlement in the River Plate was the only significant emigration from Ireland to a non-English speaking country<sup>1</sup>. During the nineteenth century, particularly between 1852 and 1889, encouraged by their leaders and families, and favoured by their condition as British subjects, nearly 40,000 Irish immigrants developed a community that was unique within the Irish Diaspora. The Catholic Church and the local anglophile bourgeoisie were the key factors for the successful configuration of the community, which developed its own cultural vehicles, including education, press and literature. Slowly but surely, the Irish in Argentina grew closer to the local society, and in the twentieth century they were completely united to the larger Argentine society.

### **The Origin of the Irish Emigration to the River Plate**

The first Irish in Argentina were from Galway. 'They were part of the crew on Magellan's voyage to discover a route to the Pacific through the straits which still bear his name, in 1520' (McKenna 1994: 70). During the following two hundred years, other Irishmen, mainly sailors and soldiers, were members of different Spanish or Spanish-funded expeditions and settlements.

During the eighteenth century, a number of officials of the Spanish Crown in Argentina were born in Ireland. For instance, in 1777 a medical doctor, Michael O'Gorman, left Spain for Buenos Aires. In 1780 he founded the school of medicine in Buenos Aires and remained Professor of medicine until his death in 1819. Closer to the Argentine independence in 1810, 'there were some Irish soldiers in the British invasions of 1806 and 1807, which left behind several hundred deserters' (Graham-Yool 1999: 139). Another Irishman, General John Thomond O'Brien, 'made the first effort to organize Irish residents in Buenos Aires for the support of their own charities' (Graham-Yool 1999: 139). He was made General by José de San Martín, the *liberator* of Argentina and Chile, 'who appointed him his personal aide-de-camp. [...] He took a particular interest in Irish affairs and toured Ireland in 1827 seeking to interest people in emigrating to Argentina though he did not meet with great immediate success' (Kirby 1992: 97).

It was not until the 1840s that the Irish began emigrating to Argentina in an organised manner and in significant numbers. We will now see how the emigration to Argentina evolved from isolated events to an organised migratory process.

### **The Formation of the Irish Community in Argentina**

Patrick McKenna argues that 'nineteenth-century emigration, from Ireland to Argentina, [...] was the result of a calculated strategy which was devised in Argentina by a number of groups, all of whom contained Irish members. All of the groups involved in encouraging Irish immigration had the common aim of promoting the economic welfare of the Buenos Aires region. A few had, in addition, the romantic notion of recreating the perfect Gaelic society there' (McKenna 1994: 88).

The first goal, to promote Buenos Aires' economic interest, concerned Argentine officers as well as British (English, Irish, and Scottish) merchants in the city of Buenos Aires, who were committed to improve the infrastructure of the *River Plate Provinces*, i.e., Buenos Aires and Uruguay. Among them, Thomas Armstrong, Patrick Cullen, Patricio Lynch, John Dillon, and the Sheridan brothers were fundamental to establish the migration process. These merchants held close commercial and financial ties with Liverpool, and for them, 'Irish emigrants provided a close-by and lucrative outward cargo from Liverpool. Furthermore, when the Irish arrived in Buenos Aires they immediately became consumers and producers of the very goods traded by the merchants. The merchants, of all political and religious hues, therefore, had every incentive to encourage Irish emigration to the River Plate' (McKenna 1994: 93). It also concerned their

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of French-speaking Canada (Quebec), where the Irish established an important community. However, Canada was still a British colony and therefore immigration from Ireland generally followed the same patterns as in other areas of the Empire.

associates and principals in Liverpool and London, who actively pursued investment opportunities around the world.

The second goal mentioned by McKenna, *recreating a Gaelic society in Argentina*, could be less a reality of the first half of the nineteenth century than a vision derived from contemporary ideologies. McKenna adds that the Irish elite in Argentina 'believed, given the proper leadership in Argentina [that] new emigrants would build a true Gaelic society which would become a shining example to the world and proof of the superiority of the Irish culture and values' (McKenna 1994: 90). However, with the exception of a few letters from Buenos Aires to the Archbishop of Dublin 'with the object of influencing him to put the Irish [Catholic] church behind emigration to Argentina rather than to the United States' (McKenna 1994: 97), there is no conclusive proof for these statements. The actual reasons for the Irish emigration to Argentina were others.

I believe that one of the major motivations for the Irish emigration to Argentina was primarily ethnic. As mentioned before, the local bourgeoisie – composed by *criollo* landowners (Spanish-Amerindian) and European merchants – was notoriously Anglophile, bearing strong ties with the commercial, financial, and cultural centres in England. They admired the British imperial structure and organisation, they imitated English fashion and customs, and they wished the *English way* could be adopted in Argentina. This regard had its roots in a deep fear of the Indians and their cultures, who were looked down upon as inferior, barbarous, and a major deterrent to the development of the country. Therefore, they favoured the establishment of every kind of *English* (i.e., English-speaking) merchant, labourer, or servant in the country to replace the natives. This attitude will be developed in the chapter *Becoming Irish-Argentine*.

### **Sending Areas, Emigrant Profiles, and Migration Periods**

During fifty years and until the end of 1880s, almost seventy percent of the Irish emigrants bound to Argentina were from a region in the midlands, roughly centred in the southern border between Co. Westmeath and Co. Longford, and northern Co. Offaly (at that time, King's County)<sup>2</sup>. Another fifteen percent were from the coastline and some cities of Co. Wexford. The remaining fifteen percent were from Dublin, Cork, Clare and almost every other Irish county.

Generally speaking, the emigrants were young sons and daughters of medium-size tenants, particularly sheep-farmers in the above-mentioned areas. With the exception of an isolated emigration from Ireland organised by the Argentine Government in 1889, which appealed to low class urban labourers and servants from Dublin and Limerick, the typical emigrants were from the middle classes of mid-nineteenth century rural Ireland, socially positioned between Anglo-Irish landowners or their administrators, and smaller *cottiers* and labourers. They were predominantly Roman Catholic, but some of them were middle-class Church of Ireland from families that were *planted* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Northern and Central Ireland.

In the case of the male population, the motivation to emigrate was parallel to the motivations to enrol in the British army, or to apply for a scholarship in the Catholic seminary. According to the inheritance laws in force at that time, tenant land would be inherited only by the eldest son. Therefore, second or younger sons of tenants would be obliged to seek other ways of maintenance. Young women, in their turn, would be attracted to emigrate by the prospects of a good situation as nannies or maids with 'respectable' (i.e., wealthy) families, or by the idea of getting married with a suitable candidate in the country of destination.

In the first period of the Irish emigration to Argentina, 1829-1852, during the rule of Governor Rosas, the Argentine Republic consisted chiefly of Buenos Aires (city and province) and Uruguay, collectively called *River Plate*, and an heterogeneous array of independent hinterland provinces. The motivation of the Irish to emigrate to this area was supported by several factors, including the relative religious freedom, the prestige of the British in the River Plate, and particularly, the possibility of owning land, which was

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<sup>2</sup> 'The banks of the river [Salado] in the neighbourhood of Chascamus (*sic*) are very densely peopled by British subjects, chiefly Irish, all employed on sheep-farms, and for the most part either the sole or joint owners of the flocks: it is somewhat singular that nearly all the Irish are from the county of Westmeath' (McCann 1853: 70).

facilitated by the previous factors and by the fact that the most fertile lands were still a stronghold of the Amerindians<sup>3</sup>.

In the second period, 1852-1889, ranging from the fall of Rosas to the *Dresden Affair*<sup>4</sup>, the difficulty of owning land gradually increased with the advancement of the Argentine Army fortress line against the Indians to the West. In the late 1880s it was very difficult for a typical Irish newcomer to buy land in the best regions of the pampas. However, from the mid 1870s the British railways and meat-packing companies were convenient employers of the newly arrived Irish labourers, who went there in search of secured positions.

In the third period, 1889-1914, marked by the negative effect of the *Dresden Affair*, until the beginning of the World War I, the Irish had to struggle in the same conditions as other immigrant communities, especially Italian and Spanish, and they did not find major advantages to stay in Argentina. As a result, in this third period there was a negative migration balance from Ireland to Argentina, including re-emigrations to the US, Australia, and Ireland.

McKenna affirms that 'around 40,000 to 45,000 Irish emigrated to Argentina during the nineteenth century. [...] 51% of the Irish emigrants arrived in Argentina between 1850 and 1869' (McKenna 1994: 182, 187-188). Additionally, he estimates that only 2.6% of the emigrants arrived during the first half of the twentieth century.

However, a number of the emigrants who settled during the first two periods obtained good jobs and some of them managed to acquire their own means of production, which in most cases were sheep and land<sup>5</sup>. These emigrants founded the Irish-Argentine community, which for about one hundred years kept its own customs and culture.

### **The Irish-Argentines**

By the mid 1850s, the Irish-Argentines represented a relatively significant segment of the country, and their group 'was by then highly efficient and organized for the mutual benefit of the whole community which maximized in every possible way their ability to out-perform all other immigrant groups in the acquisition and the development of the land resources' (McKenna 1994: 345).

Leadership was held by Catholic priests, particularly Fr Anthony Fahy, who lived in the country from 1844 to his death in 1871, and Protestant Anglo-Irish merchants like Thomas Armstrong (1797-1875). This coalition allowed an organised selection, reception and further employment of Irish newcomers in Buenos Aires, as well as the development, economic growth, and capitalisation of successful families, like Duggan, Gaynor, Maguire, Ham, Murphy, Cavanagh, and others.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Unenclosed land here is worth from about thirty to forty shillings per English acre, for the fee simple; which is the usual value for all land at this distance from the city; that is, five leagues. The price of land in the wilds of Australia is, I believe, twenty shillings per acre, while here, in a delightful country, not half the distance from England, and within fifteen miles of a city containing sixty thousand inhabitants, land may be obtained at forty shillings per acre' (MacCann 1853: 8).

<sup>4</sup> On 16 February 1889, the *City of Dresden* arrived in Buenos Aires with 1,772 Irish labourers and servants on board. They were enticed by an emigration scheme designed by the Argentine Government and indirectly approved by the British authorities. Government agents, who were recruited among key members of the Irish-Argentine community, granted free passage tickets and promised free housing and land in Argentina. Emigrants were deceived and none of the commitments made in Ireland were honoured when they arrived in the country. The evil results of this migration, including hunger deaths and a series of deceptions, provoked very bad publicity of Argentina as destination for Irish emigration. "The "Dresden Affair", as it was called, became infamous and was denounced in Parliament, press and pulpit. Argentina, and its "land of promise," became the land of broken promises' (Geraghty 1999).

<sup>5</sup> According to Sabato & Korol, the preferred form of insertion of the newly arrived Irish immigrants in the Argentine rural world was through the halves system. 'Whether after working for a period of time as wage labourer, or directly when arriving in the River Plate, the Irish worker heading to the camp frequently related to landowners in the form of sharecropping. This was the form preferred by the Irish to start their sheep breeding business. Actually, it was made up of a contract between a capitalist-worker (who brought his workforce and a share of the necessary assets to undertake the business), and a capitalist-landowner (who brought his land and the remaining share of assets required to undertake the business). At the end of the contract term, the worker received a half-share of the results and the landowner the other half' (Sabato & Korol 1981: 84, my translation).

The community was remarkably endogenous, with a relatively high rate of marriages among Argentine-born children and grand-children of the Irish immigrants. To support the social interchange among distant Irish settlements, the Irish chaplains organised missions (including mass and celebrations) in the camp, and sometimes built chapels and established lending libraries at convenient distances.

The introduction of *The Southern Cross* newspaper in 1875 is the first undertaking to uphold the identity of the Irish within the larger British community. The *Cross* was founded by Fr Fahy's successor, Fr Patrick Joseph Dillon, who went from Ireland to Argentina with the express intention of building a distinct identity for the Irish (versus the English), and to bring them closer to the Argentine bourgeoisie. This intent was successful within the larger portion of Irish-Argentines, whose religious ideals were politically manipulated.

A social map of the Irish-Argentines in the last decade of the nineteenth century would allow the following classification. Firstly, the *Standard group* (after *The Standard* newspaper of the Mulhall brothers), with Duggan, Maguire, Gaynor, and other wealthy families as its members, politically pro-British and *shoneen*, immigrants in 1820-1860, members of the upper classes living in the city of Buenos Aires. Secondly, the *Cross group*, Catholic-Nationalistic, small landowners and railway administrators, immigrants in 1861-1888, middle-class, founders of Gaelic Athletic Association and Hurling Club, living in Mercedes, Suipacha, San Antonio de Areco, and Rosario. And third, the *Labourers group*, immigrants 1889-1920, living in Venado Tuerto and Arroyo Seco, cattle hands and low-rank railway workers, and the survivors of the *City of Dresden*.

By the close of the nineteenth century, the upper segments of the Irish-Argentines (the *Standard Group*) integrated with the landed elite of the country, and in the first decades of the twentieth century other Irish-Argentines began opening their community to Argentines and well-off immigrants from other origins.

In the nineteenth century,

Argentina offered the best opportunity for an Irish person with little or no resources of their own to become prosperous land owners. Those who were able to overcome the difficulties they encountered, which were very similar to those encountered in all pioneering communities in the New World, the rewards more than justified their efforts. Their community spirit rather than the Protestant model of individual effort was largely responsible for their success. That fact alone makes this community unique among the Irish in the New World which everywhere else was ruled by Britain and following the Protestant model of development. The fact that they were so successful shows that an alternative model of settlement to the British one was available' (McKenna 1994: 356).

We will see in the next chapter how Irish-Argentine literature was the expression of that successful community, which showed at the same time a rich array of literary nuances and of cultural values.

### **Conclusions to this Chapter**

During the nineteenth century, nearly 40,000 Irish persons emigrated to Argentina. The origins of this migration may be found in the links between the upper classes of the Spanish River Plate colony, and British merchants from Liverpool and London.

Some early Irish presence in Argentina can be traced back to the British Campaigns 1806 and 1807, with the semi-forced settlement of soldiers from the Irish Midlands as sheep-farmers in the pampas close to Buenos Aires. Immediately after the declaration of independence in 1810, the British merchants intensified their trade in the River Plate, and sought the settlement of Irish labourers as consumers and producers of their traded goods.

However, the most important reason would have been the fact that the local elite was fond of everything English, and for this reason the Irish settlers (English at that time) were warmly welcomed in their new country to replace the local labour force, the *gaucho*.

A vast majority of the Irish emigrants bound to Argentina were from the Irish Midlands (counties Westmeath, Longford, and Offaly), and from Co. Wexford. Chain migration schemes were established by sheep-farming families and supported by the Catholic Church. Irish priests were sent as missionaries to attend the growing Irish community. Most of the emigrants were the younger children of mid-size tenants,

and the major motivation to emigrate was the possibility of owning land. After 1880, there were several posts available to Irish labourers in the railway companies and the meat-packing plants. The emigration had a peak in 1889 with a major undertaking by the Argentine Government, which failed due to the lack of commitment of the organisers. In the 1920s there was a new peak, however with a different profile: middle-class professionals and technicians, most of them Church of Ireland religion, who were not accepted by the new Catholic Nationalistic rule in Ireland.

By the 1850s, the Irish-Argentine community was organised under the leadership of the Catholic Irish Chaplains. They shaped an endogenous community, indifferent to external communication, and more connected with Ireland than with Argentina. This community had its own cultural vehicles, such as newspapers, libraries, and clubs, which helped to achieve a high degree of cohesion among its members. It also had its own social stratification, including the *Standard Group*, wealthy families, politically pro-British, the *Cross Group*, Catholic-Nationalistic, small landowners and railway administrators, and the *Labourers*, later immigrants, cattle hands and low-rank railway employees.

The Irish-Argentine community ultimately evolved in a unique social mix of cultural values, and gradually began to intermix with the larger local society after the World War I.

### Irish-Argentine Literature

*With a view to counterbalancing to some extent what is beginning to be considered the somewhat excessive influx of Italians of the poorer classes, the [Argentine] Commissary-General of Immigration, Señor Navarro, has been sent to Europe, 30,000 dollars having been voted for his expenses, and a credit of 1,000,000 dollars opened to him for the purpose of attracting emigrants belonging to the northern races of Europe.*

G. Jenner to the Marquis of Salisbury, 13 October 1888,  
Parliamentary Papers, 1889, XXXII.

*I often wonder is it ignorance of the real social and political system in England or some influence less excusable that is answerable for such men as Lopez, Mitre, Nuñez, Alberti and others like them holding England and her Government up to the world as models to be studied and imitated.*

Murray, Thomas, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, 1919

### Irish-Argentine Literature

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

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

But does such a literature exist? Certainly, as the editor of *The Buenos Aires Herald* notes, there is *an Anglo-Argentine literature. Not very strong, not very well known (and in some cases does not deserve to be), but there are some individuals who fit the classification of "British-Argentine" or, better still "Southamericana", who are excellent and who have made their mark on the literature of a continent* (Graham-Yooll, 1999: 205).

The same author maintains that 'in Argentina, a country of immigrants, there is a sense of place, but millions of identities that lack definition' (Graham-Yooll, 1999: 205). This openness of definitions is what,

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

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

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

Nevertheless, later in the 1880s, the Land League movement in Ireland was generally approved in Argentina. 'The great issue of the decade was land, a debate initiated ten years earlier by Gladstone's first Land Act of 1870' (Kiberd 1996: 23). The Land League had a positive impression in Buenos Aires probably because the sheep-farmers were more sensitive to the landownership debate, than to the more ambitious (and dangerous for a bourgeoisie) subject of total independence from England.<sup>6</sup>

Other movements in Ireland had repercussions in Argentina, but received disparate reactions from the Irish-Argentines. Charles Stewart Parnell, a Protestant landlord from Co. Wicklow who founded the Land League to give tenants the property rights from landlords who did not live on their land, produced diverse reactions. By the end of the 1880s, 'just when Home Rule seemed a real possibility, he [Parnell] was broken by his love for Kitty O'Shea, [...] was abandoned by Gladstone [...] and denounced as a public sinner unfit for leadership by the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. His party split amid terrible rancour and he died in his beloved's arms at Brighton in 1891' (Kiberd 1996: 25). Thomas Murray, a historian of the Irish in Argentina, wrote in 1919 that 'another fund about which there was some question was that on hand at the time of the historic "Parnell Split." This money was, of course, subscribed for Irish political purposes, and, as amongst our countrymen everywhere else in the world, the Split divided our ranks here, some standing by Parnell and some facing the other way, so for some time an agreement could not be come to as to which division of the old Party this money should be paid to' (Murray 1919: 465).

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

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<sup>6</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, in addition to their new properties in Argentina, a good number of the Irish settlers and their families still had tenant rights in Wexford and the Midlands.

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

We can divide Irish-Argentine literature into four categories, a) The Immigrant Experience, b) Irish-Argentine Fiction; c) Community Historians; d) Journalism.

### The Immigrant Experience



Irish sheep-farmers in Capilla del Señor: John Murray and his foreman Thomas Mooney, circa 1895.

The few documents left by the emigrants who left Ireland for Argentina are witness to their migration experiences before, during, and after emigrating. These documents are chiefly memoirs, letters, and business records. They were written for private audiences, and no publishing so far was conceived by the authors. Therefore, they provide key insights about their ideology and discourse. On the other hand, since in most the public is limited to one person or one family, they do not reflect the values of larger portions of their community.

The *corpus* of letters and memoirs is not as significant as in other Irish Diaspora destinations, like North America and Australia. However, there are key documents that give some indication of the authors' beliefs. In addition to those of Brabazon, Bulfin and Nevin, a few manuscripts were identified and found during the research for this dissertation, including Tom Garrahan's memoirs of 1863-1924, John James Murphy letters from Buenos Aires to his brother in Co. Wexford of 1864-1866, and Edward Robbins's memoirs of 1801-1859. I hope that with the

advance of studies on the Irish in Argentina, more private documents will be made available to researchers and universities.

In the following chapter, I will refer in detail to the works of Brabazon, Bulfin, and Nevin. However, before that it is necessary to state that their works have a distinct need to affirm their authors' identity. While Brabazon and Nevin expose without problems their differences with and superiority towards the natives, Bulfin's attitude is to approach the gaucho and to take his distance from the English.

### Irish-Argentine Fiction

Early in 1907, *The Southern Cross* announced a literary competition, and included the following rules:

1°) Competitors must write in English or Irish and be born in Argentina. [...] 5°) Competitors must select from among the following subjects: (a) Past, Present and Future of the Irish in Argentine Community, (b) Father Fahy and his work, (c) Admiral Brown, (d) Robert Emmet, (e) Woman Suffrage, (f) The Coming Pilgrimage to Luján (*The Southern Cross*, 25 January 1907, quoted in Delaney 1999: 8).

The scope of subjects offered to the public is strictly limited to those approved by the Church. The role of the Roman Catholic church in the discourse of *The Southern Cross* is apparent: the work of Father Fahy (Irish chaplain in Argentina 1844-1871), and a pilgrimage to Luján basilica are two of the possible five subjects. The ethnic focus is present in two of the other three. Women's role in public activity is perhaps the most modern subject of the time. However, besides the topics chosen, the language is still an important value for the community. According to the first rule, English or Irish are the permitted languages of the competition. Irish (or Gaelic), is a new addition in the identity formula of the Irish. Nevertheless, out of a database I built from information included in Coghlan 1987, only three occurrences out of 4,348 are reported as native Irish speakers (probably from Co. Clare).

Spanish is not included as one of the competition's languages, though competitors must be born in Argentina. This is an indication of the importance the English language had for the Irish-Argentines at the turn of the century. Being a colonised community in the British Isles, the Irish adopted the language of the coloniser and fully profited from that linguistic position when they arrived to Argentina. Forty or fifty

years later, the English language was still encouraged and protected in their major newspapers and in schools. Instead of being 'the only serious obstacle [because] Spanish is the official language in Argentina and most of the population is of Italian and Spanish ancestry' (Delaney 1999: 1), English was in fact an advantage for the Irish arriving in Argentina. Because of their language, the Irish in Argentina were conceived as *ingleses* by the native, Anglophile society, and therefore granted a higher social status than other local and immigrant groups.

The peculiar combination of Spanish given names with typically Irish family names (I am no exception to this rule) is another meaningful example of the evolution of the Irish-Argentine community and their acculturation in the larger society. It is well known among Irish-Argentine families that the first generation born in Argentina (in about the second half of the nineteenth century), although bearing Spanish translations of their Christian names<sup>7</sup> were always called by their English names or nicknames (e.g., Tom instead of Tomás, Paddy instead of Patricio, Willy instead of Guillermo, etc.). This is also apparent in Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*, where all characters with an Irish surname have English first names: Tim Shannahan, Patrick Delaney, Mike Lowrie, Joseph Hagan, etc. However, the second Argentine-born generation (generally born between the turn of the century and the 1940s) began using their Christian names in Spanish, as long as their relations with the larger society increased.

Language and names were important for the Irish in Argentina, particularly to maintain their identity when they began intermarrying with members of the local bourgeoisie and of other immigrant communities. However, the most important factor in maintaining the cohesion of the Irish-Argentine community was their shared values and beliefs, which will be analysed in further chapters. Some authors, like Eduardo Coghlan, Guillermo MacLoughlin, and Juan José Delaney, indirectly claim that the fact of bearing an Irish surname would be enough reason to classify diverse writers under the same cultural position. For instance, Benito Lynch is included by certain authors within their lists of Irish-Argentine writers, though his Irish ancestry is arguable<sup>8</sup>. Delaney remarks that Lynch's *El inglés de los gauchos* is 'a powerful story of love and the difficulty of communication, of solitude and tragedy. It also reflects the writer's love for the country, its gauchos and typical way of life' (Delaney 1999: 12).

Other authors included by Delaney in his article about the literature of the Irish in Argentina are Maria Elena Walsh, 'a very young and gifted poetess [who] in *Grandmother Agnes* published a collection of family letters related to the life of Irish and British immigrants in Buenos Aires, during the [eighteen] eighties' (Delaney 1999: 15); Rodolfo Walsh (unrelated to Maria Elena Walsh), a fertile and innovative journalist, playwright and short-story writer who became a *desaparecido* during the 1976-83 military regime; Enrique Anderson Imbert, author of short-stories; Bernardo Carey, playwright; Eduardo Carroll, poet and novelist; Alfredo Casey, poet and playwright; Eduardo Cormick, novelist; Teresa Dean Reddy, short-story writer and journalist; Guillermo Furlong, historian; Patricio Gannon, journalist and literary critic; Luis Francisco Houlin, poet; Esteban Moore, poet; Luis Alberto Murray, poet, tango lyrics writer, and essayist; Pacho O'Donnell, playwright and novelist; Ana O'Neill, novelist. We should not forget Delaney himself, who as a fiction writer published short stories in *Tréboles del Sur* (1994) and the novel *Moirá Sullivan* (1999).

Besides their Irish family names, what do these authors have in common? Do they hold a shared set of beliefs and values? What are the recurring representations of these values in their texts? I argue that a collection of authors with Irish names is not a significant basis on which to create a 'corpus of what may be described as Irish-Argentine Literature' (Delaney 1999: 17).

The common geographic origin of the emigrants (or their Irish names) should not be used to extrapolate cultural conclusions. Firstly, because they were not a culturally homogeneous group. Secondly, because their acculturation to the Argentine larger society was dissimilar and took place at different times and in

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<sup>7</sup> The Rules of the Argentine Civil Records do not allow free Christening of new born. Particularly, these rules avoid translations of Spanish names to other languages. The spirit of these rules might have been originated during the times of the great European and Middle-Eastern emigration to Argentina 1880-1920, when Government officials had great concern in terms of assimilating the immigrants, and especially their Argentine-born children, to the local culture.

<sup>8</sup> Five Argentine-born generations separate Benito Lynch from his Galway ancestor Patrick Lynch (Coghlan 1987: 625).

varying social milieus. And third, in particular, because significant numbers among them did not identify with labels like *Irish*, and wished instead to be associated with the English. The intent to classify disparate authors with Irish family names seems to be inspired by a somewhat nationalist ideology, which could be linked to the Catholic Nationalism of the early twentieth century, and with the Irish Renaissance.

Additionally, it is not the mere quantity of authors that makes a literature. While scholars try to demonstrate the existence of Irish-Argentine literature by enumerating a long list of authors with Irish names in Argentina, it is preferable to identify a set of shared values which are frequently represented throughout their works. According to John Blair, 'the best way to measure the presence of an intangible such as an Anglocentric mindset is by zeroing in on circumstances under which it performs cultural work, that is, palpably affects the ideas and actions of substantial numbers of human individuals' (Blair 2001: 9). The most frequently represented values we may find in Irish-Argentine literary works are: gender, religion, land, home and ethnicity.

### Community Historians

In the old tradition of Milesian historians, and within the Celtic-centred framework of Catholic Nationalism, a prestigious place among Irish-Argentines is given to those who recall their events throughout the time. Thomas Murray, who published *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* in 1919, is an extreme example of the quest for Irishness of his time, including pleonastic references to Gaelic origins, culture, language, and customs, as well as a continual opprobrium of the *shoneen*<sup>9</sup> segment of Irish-Argentines, i.e., the *Standard Group*. Murray, whose biography is under research,<sup>10</sup> called on his readers to write on 'anything worth while, bearing on the Irish in Argentina [and] you have done something – you have laid your stone on the *cairn* of the race' (Murray 1919: 480).

Almost seventy years later, Eduardo Coghlan published his monumental genealogy of the Irish in Argentina, including more than 4,000 Irish emigrants to Argentina and their descendants. This work was inspired by the same spirit of signifying the Irish emigrants as successful individuals belonging to a superior ethnic origin, better than other groups of native and immigrant Argentines.

The only scholarly works about the history of the Irish in Argentina are those of Hilda Sabato and Juan Carlos Korol (1981), and Patrick McKenna (1994).

### Journalism

The *Standard* was founded by Edward Thomas Mulhall in 1861, 'not as the emblem of a party or the watchword of rivalry, but as the bond of fellowship between the various members of our Anglo-Celtic race [...]. We have all come from the British Isles and English, Irish, Scotch, and American acknowledge one mother tongue. [...] Monopoly is unjust and bigotry hateful. To crush one and prevent the other is our object' (first issue of the *Standard*, quoted by Marshall 1996: 15). The *Standard* was the first English-language daily published in South America, though the weekly *The British Packet* had been published since 1810.

Although in fact Irish, 'the Mulhall brothers [Edward T. and Michael George] usually referred to themselves as English, championing the interests of the British community, views that were reflected in the paper, and the brothers were often criticised for this stance' (Marshall 1996: 15). This position of some members of the Irish community as advocates of a larger Anglo-Argentine group was characteristic of the Irish landed bourgeoisie in Argentina, at least during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The *Standard* was the common reference among the immigrants and their relatives and

<sup>9</sup> Shoneen: used to indicate a person's inclination towards English rather than Irish standards and attitudes in cultural life, sport, etc. Poet John Keegan (1816-1849) introduced the term to modern vocabulary in his 1837 'Tales of the Rockites' (OED). Thomas Murray's use of *shoneen* and *shoneism* in the 'Story of the Irish in Argentina' denotes the pro-British attitude of some Irish people, and connotes a derogatory view of the upper-classes.

<sup>10</sup> Probably, Thomas Murray was born in the 1870s in Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath, emigrated to the United States with his family, then spent some time working in Argentina before 1913, and returned to the US. After publishing the *Story of the Irish in Argentina* in 1919 with J. P. Kenedy & Sons, he went back to Buenos Aires in 1924 to promote his book. However, his work did not receive a warm welcome by the Irish community.

friends in Ireland, North America, and Australia. It ceased publication in 1959 as a result of financial difficulties.

*The Southern Cross* (TSC) has been published since 1875 and it 'reflects the Irish-Argentine community's special concerns including Argentine immigration policy, pastoral expansion and livestock breeding and pro-Republican activities at the time of the Irish struggle for independence' (Marshall 1996: 13). Today, the paper appears monthly, it is written mainly in Spanish, and its content is predominantly Catholic-oriented. In spite of the many efforts made to maintain its traditional influence among Irish small land-owners and railway employees and their descendants (i.e., better presentation, news about Celtic renewal, matched web site), TSC's circulation is falling due to the economic problems common to all Argentine publications, as well as to a certain stagnation in editorial content and marketing efforts. TSC's mission was clearly stated in 1874 by its founder, the Irish chaplain Patrick Joseph Dillon: 'to supply the want of an Irish and Catholic organ in the country' (Marshall 1996: 13). In the current web site version of TSC, this mission is stubbornly maintained: 'Since 1875, expressing our Argentine essence, from the ancestral Ireland.' Of course, religion is a primary value among a majority of Irish-Argentines, yet TSC is in fact a semi-official organ of the Irish Catholic institutions, so its religious representations are not the spontaneous expressions of its readers.

Among contemporary journalistic sources, *Irlandeses* web site ([www.irlandeses.com.ar](http://www.irlandeses.com.ar)) is the most important link between the individuals and the Irish-Argentine community. Their 'Libro de Visitas' is a lively forum for contemporary Irish-Argentines, and it is probably the best place to understand their current interests and concerns. Beside its somewhat stereotyped sections about Irish music, literature and recipes, this web site is unique in the Internet. Using Spanish as its dominant language, it includes selected transcriptions of Eduardo Coghlan's master work as hypertext-linked family entries (Coghlan 1987). Additional data or entirely new families may be added by users to the original entries, as well as documents, photographs or family yarns. The genealogical service prompts communication among members and with the webmaster (a mysterious leprechaun well acquainted with the life of the Irish-Argentine community). For example, messages left after the 2002 Christmas troubles, which led to a change of government in Argentina, reflect Irish-Argentines' frustration and desire to emigrate (frequently to Ireland) through postings such as: 'Would you tell me if someone helps with the [Irish] citizenship paperwork? Thank you.' (Tue, 19 Feb 2002 19:02:23), or 'I'd like to know if we can have the double citizenship, and what are the requirements' (Wed, 13 Feb 2002 15:39:53). Some of the messages appeal to the readers' Catholic faith, in the hope that God will save the country from the evil consequences of the economic and social situation: 'Dear Leprechaun, Let's work on the citizenship for the third generation, as did the Italians and the Spaniards. Our children and grandchildren will thank us. I am shocked by the situation, but I wish to say that everything will go better. For us and our children, grandchildren and other family members, and for every Argentine citizen. God bless you' (Sun, 30 Dec 2001 11:29:11). 'I am proud of the blood in my veins [...]. Every day, God blesses me with the presence of other Irish descendants in my family and among friends, oh what a glorious blessing!!!!' (Thu, 8 Nov 2001 17:06:00 – messages in Spanish, my translation). Religious feelings are sometimes present in these messages, as well as in the responses. But it is evident, when the opportunity arises for more spontaneous communication among Irish-Argentines (particularly one outside of the official institutions), that in their every day life there are other interests more important than religion.

### **Conclusions to this Chapter**

Irish-Argentine literature is the bilingual representation of a changing set of cultural values, which evolved from those held by the early emigrants to the attitudes and beliefs of their descendants already acculturated to the country. These values include, among others, gender, religion, land, home, and ethnicity.

Within the English-speaking *Southamericana*, Irish-Argentine cultural history contributes with a certain minor literature that takes elements from ideological circumstances in Ireland and from the local changing culture in Argentina.

Among texts in the Immigrant Experience early phase of Irish-Argentine literature, memoirs, letters, and business records are important to evaluate the attitudes of the first settlers. Among them, the belief in their superiority to the natives it is very frequent.

In Irish-Argentine fiction, English is still the language used by writers. The language of their colonisers in Ireland was an advantage for the Irish in Argentina. Argentines conceived the Irish as *ingleses*, and granted them a higher social status than other local and immigrant groups. Fictional works include an array of authors and works, with different degrees of adaptation to the local culture.

Community historians are important for the Irish in Argentina, as they are in Ireland. They provide a sense of time and opportunity to the contributions of the emigrants, which helps to find their lost identities.

Finally, journalism was fundamental for the shaping of the Irish-Argentine community. First from the *Standard*, and later from the *Southern Cross* and other journals, journalists strongly influenced the beliefs of the Irish settlers and their families. The tensions in Ireland between pro-British and Nationalistic factions materialised in the pages of those newspapers, and tried to convince their audiences of their conflicting ideologies. Irish-Argentine journalism originated a good number of fictional books and articles.

## Analysis of Texts

*There was not a house in view but had sheltered someone who had emigrated to the Argentine Republic, and I knew it. I had only to sit on the wall and begin to talk about Buenos Aires and the Irish of Argentina to gather an audience.*

Bulfin, William, *Rambles in Eirinn*, 1907

It is in the literary and fictional works that we can best appreciate the actual values of the Irish-Argentines. We will therefore read Brabazon, Nevin and Bulfin in chronological order, trying to understand their feelings towards religion and ethnicity.

### The Early Emigrant Experience

John Brabazon (1828-1914) from Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, arrived in Buenos Aires in December 1845, in the brig 'Filomena' (Coghlan 1987: 53). He settled in Chascomús, south of the city of Buenos Aires, and lived several adventures and misfortunes which he represented in his memoirs *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Ayres from the year 1845*.

The manuscript in English was given by descendants of the author to Eduardo Coghlan<sup>11</sup>, who translated and published it in 1981, adding several notes to the text. The original in English remains unpublished<sup>12</sup>. In 1851, John Brabazon married Honor MacDonnell in Buenos Aires, who died in 1859. The widower, who at that time had four small children, re-married Mary Wallace, who died in 1897. In the 1890s, Brabazon was appointed justice of the peace in Necochea, Buenos Aires province, and died in 1914 in the city of Buenos Aires.

These memoirs are among the first documents containing an account of the Irish struggles to improve their lives in Argentina. Juan José Delaney conceives Brabazon's memoirs as 'a *Bildungsroman* in the sense that the "hero" searches for wealth and, at a deeper level, identity' (Delaney 1999: 5). Delaney also

<sup>11</sup> Eduardo Aquilio Coghlan (1912 – 1997), lawyer and family historian, published several books and articles about the Irish in Argentina. In particular, his *Los Irlandeses en Argentina* is an invaluable source for any research concerning the local community. In his introduction to Brabazon's memoirs, Coghlan remarks that the manuscript ends in 1864, with the words 'to be continued' (Brabazon 1981: 12).

<sup>12</sup> Among the source materials used by Patrick McKenna for his thesis, 'a further important primary source is a photocopy of an original hand written manuscript obtained from the Irish embassy in Argentina during the first field trip to Argentina in 1990. This journal was written by John Brabazon, about his early life as an immigrant in Argentina during the period 1842/52. While this manuscript was written in chronological sequence it appears to have been written later than 1852 though no date is given' (McKenna 1994: 22).

appraises their 'true literary value'. If we understand that the literary value depend on the purpose of the work (e. gr. artistic versus informative), it is arguable that a text written in a private environment with no intention to be published and comprising descriptions of experienced reality with no fictional purpose has *true literary value*.

However, it is fair to recognise that 'in spite of spelling and construction mistakes and the translator's free version, Brabazon, an Irish Protestant (a fact that Coghlan seems to ignore) gives a powerful account of his subject' (Delaney 1999: 5). It is not possible to assess the translation without having seen the original English text. Nevertheless, it is probable that the *free version* mentioned by Delaney was a product of Coghlan's own construction of the Irish-Argentine community in the Irish Catholic-Nationalistic tradition.

In his introduction, Coghlan highlights the value of Brabazon's memoirs compared to others of travellers to Argentina, who 'did not know the Spanish language and therefore circumscribed their account to isolated events or to their encounter with upper class individuals' (Coghlan 1981: 10)<sup>13</sup>.

After a short staying in the city of Buenos Aires, Brabazon outlines his horse-riding journey to *El Arazá*, Chascomús, an estancia belonging to Martínez de Hoz. In this place, Brabazon built a *puesto* and tendered his first sheep flock. He then travelled to other regions in southern Buenos Aires province. For twenty years, Brabazon worked as sheep-farmer, ditch-digger, builder, carpenter, wholesaler, stock farmer, and merchant, among other jobs. Each of these occupations is described in detail by the author. He also provides particulars of the life in Buenos Aires city, the meat-curing plants, the customs and clothing of country people and the soldiers during Rosas rule<sup>14</sup>. Personal encounters with military forces and events of his private life are also outlined, including his wedding and the poignant murder of his wife and step-sisters, an Indian ride or *malón*, hunting rides with the Indians, country celebrations, and other interesting day-to-day activities of the first Irish settlers.

Coghlan recognises that Brabazon's adaptation to the Argentine environment was faster than that of other Irish emigrants, who took at least a generation to be 'totally Argentine' (Coghlan 1981: 12). He assumes that the more difficult integration of 'the first Irish-Argentine generation was due to the fact that they where segregated from the milieu because of their language and their relations with other Irish-Argentines' (Coghlan 1981: 12).

In truth, the Irish-Argentines segregated themselves from the larger society, in particular from the rural and labouring classes with Amerindian and African ancestry. The English language of the Irish-Argentines, which was and (in many cases still is) proudly preserved for generations, was not an impediment; it was an aid to their adaptation to the class of the Anglophile landed bourgeoisie. As a consequence of their self-imposed segregation, for three generations the Irish-Argentines were a remarkably endogenous community, showing high rates of marriages and economic relations within the ethnic group. It was not until the period between the Irish Easter Rising in 1916 and the end of the World War II in 1945 that they begun gradually opening their families to other groups.

Brabazon's lively descriptions are important not only from an historical point of view, but particularly as they outline the cultural values of the first Irish settlers. Narrated in the first person, his memoirs have a Victorian present very much in mind, with candid self-descriptions:

That night one of my young fellows invited me to a theatre, but brought me to a different place, to a house of bad fame, where I was surrounded by young ladys; as my friend disapired (sic) and left me alone without knowing the language, I began to get a little scared; and I gave them all the cash I posest not knowing what it was worth, as brother Tom<sup>15</sup> changed the little money I brought out (Coghlan 1981: 102).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> My translation.

<sup>14</sup> 1826-1852

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Brabazon, John's brother, who re-emigrated to the US in the 1850s.

<sup>16</sup> With the exception of this paragraph (transcribed directly from one of the two pages of the manuscript in English included by Coghlan in his book, pp. 102-103), all other quotes from Brabazon's memoirs are my translations.

Brabazon considers himself an inglés. For instance, his chronological account includes descriptions of Buenos Aires, with its 'commercial activity, dominated by English and North American [merchants]' (Coghlan 1981: 22). When he is imprisoned with twenty other persons for not having their identity documents, 'James Sheridan from estancia Los Galpones Grandes sent us the safe-conducts from Mr. Hood, the British Consul' (Coghlan 1981: 42).

His relations with the gauchos are sometimes tough, as when he is challenged by native drunkards who want 'to tease esos ingleses', and his brother Tom responds by threatening them with a knife, and says: 'look here, you may tease ingleses now if you wish' (Coghlan 1981: 58). Brabazon understands that the political situation in the 1850's 'was improving in Buenos Aires thanks to Rosas, who was not so bad. The people were more civilised [thanks to] the old European nations, which [...] had their representatives [and spread] their manners' (Coghlan 1981: 69). The narrator firmly shares with the English their beliefs regarding European superiority: 'new fashions came from France and from England. The first fashionable smithy was opened by Mr. George Temperley, and the first modern carriage was brought from England by the British Minister Mr. Southerner' (Coghlan 1981: 91-92).

The English-speaking community was large, and provided all the necessary resources for its members. Among the Irish, there was specialisation in certain kinds of work. They also had diverse reputations: 'almost all shepherds were Irish, and some of them [...] were respectable citizens, but there were others who were wicked like devils, like there never was in Ballymore or in Drumraney parish, or like those in the Mullingar prison' (Coghlan 1981: 113).

The English language is so widely accepted in the country that Brabazon could have a verbal confrontation 'with Gorostiaga [a criollo shopkeeper very influential in Chascomús] in English, a language which Gorostiaga spoke perfectly' (Coghlan 1981: 135). Brabazon too wants to open a shop in Chascomús, but Mr. Thawaites discourages him, saying that the English 'are too honourable and they are not made for this type of business, which requires persons capable of cheating with the weight of sold or purchased products' (Coghlan 1981: 138). During the shearing season, 'all [of us] were English, because the criollos were enrolled in the army' (Coghlan 1981: 148). And when shepherds fight, they do it 'a la inglesa, viz. boxing' (Coghlan 1981: 149).

As a Protestant Anglo-Irish, we would expect Brabazon to prefer English to Irish company. This expectation might be even stronger when we consider that he had an uncle in Ireland who was killed for being a 'Protestant dog.' He was 'a good old man, who frequently would give his own money to a poor tenant to be able to pay the rent. But during a Sunday Mass, a priest said something about him, and a few days later he and his servant John Leen were attacked on the way to the town fair' (Coghlan 1981: 111). However, almost all his acquaintances were from Ireland, and in 1859 he converted to the Catholic faith in order to marry his first wife Honor MacDonnell, who eight years later was slaughtered together with her sister by criminal gauchos. Nonetheless, he considered himself an inglés: 'he would give me a dozen bottles of stout beer to drink among all of us. We were fifteen, all English.'

Community links are important for the narrator, including the mutual help among neighbours:

The 25th of that month, we began shearing my flock; then we continued with Patrick Maxwell's sheep, then with Patrick Gardiner's, and when we finished we began with Thomas Heduvan's. When we finished those flocks, we went to see Peter "The Fidler" and then we sheared Nicholas Gardiner's flock. Shearing, we worked all together. There were also some neighbours, who were very kind. All of us were English, since the criollos were enrolled in the Army' (Coghlan 1981: 148).

Brabazon held the common attitudes of the native bourgeoisie against the gauchos. Gauchos, he wrote 'were not good workers, and they only worked as butchers, slaughtermen, and hide skimmers in the abattoirs' (Coghlan 1981: 20). They 'had disgusting manners, as when their wives deloused them and they ate the bigger lice' (Coghlan 1981: 21). 'Few were willing to work, particularly among criollos. They did not till their land, and they preferred to give a horse away so the receiver of the gift would work their land' (Coghlan 1981: 109). They 'slept long siestas instead of working' (Coghlan 1981: 132). In fact, gauchos were considered the dark canaille which it was considered urgent to replace with whiter European workers, like the gauchos ingleses.

Though rhetorical tropes are not frequently used in this genre, Brabazon often uses irony, as when he asks money of a friend who refuses, and the author 'thanked his generosity' (Coghlan 1981: 42).

Brabazon's discourse harmonises with the general values of the Irish who emigrated to Argentina during the first half of the nineteenth century, individualistic, self-sufficient, and self-satisfied with their hard-working habits. 'I gave the flock to my brother-in-law, and I began look around for a different situation, because I wanted to learn every trade, as brick-layer, carpenter, or ditch-digger' (Coghlan 1981: 34).

Finally, Brabazon's attitudes towards others change according to his own assumptions about ethnic diversity. Whilst he seems to get along smoothly with Northern Europeans in general and with British subjects in particular, he has a contemptuous disposition when confronted to Spaniards and criollos, and he may even be arrogant and lofty with the gaucho. However, his behaviour is not bigoted. He does not seem to be afraid of the natives, and he understands that their negative features may be the result of a strenuous life in a tough environment.

### A Feminine Perspective

Our next hero is a young woman from Co. Longford, who emigrates to the River Plate and, during her life in Argentina, gradually overcomes her homesickness for Ireland by procuring family and security in Buenos Aires. *You'll Never Go Back* may be described as the semi-fictionalised memoirs of a female emigrant to nineteenth-century Argentina.

Catherine Smyth, the author's mother, was born in Ballymahon, a traditional area in southern Co. Longford of nineteenth-century emigration to Argentina. Smyth emigrated in the 1880's, and once in the River Plate, she worked first in Buenos Aires and then in a few sheep-farms. She married Tom Nevin, born in 1853 in Co. Galway, and died in 1928, four years after her husband. They had three children, among them Kathleen, who wrote *You'll Never Go Back* probably during the first years of the twentieth century, and Maria Winifred, who finished the novel and published it in 1946 in Boston (Coghlan 1987: 739). The author's parents were close friends in Buenos Aires of William Bulfin and his wife Annie O'Rourke from Co. Westmeath<sup>17</sup>. The book was reprinted in 1999 by the Longford Westmeath Argentina Society.

The novel begins with the recollections of Granny Kate in her old age, who in the preface asks herself 'what my life might have been like if I had stayed at home and never heard of such a place as South America. How did it all come about? Was it laid out for me before I was born? [...] I used to go on telling myself the story, whatever it happened to be. That, indeed, is just what I am doing now' (Nevin 1946: 7). And she goes on with the memoirs, from her childhood in Ireland up to her marriage with a fellow Irishman and their settlement in Buenos Aires. The novel is full of reflections upon the different culture with which she is confronted in Argentina, and the effect this contrast has on her feelings towards home.

From the beginning of the novel, class boundaries are continuously portrayed. Comparing with her cousin Bessie, whose father 'got into difficulties in the forage business and left Bessie without a penny,' Kate Connolly and her family 'had a farm and were comfortably off.' The children received a good education. The girls went to the convent 'until we put our hair up, and my brother Pat was sent to a good school in Mullingar.' Immediately after this she adds that a neighbour, Col. Featherstone, 'was supposed to have said that Michael Connolly (my father) had bred his children above their station in life. The Colonel had a very poor opinion of anyone's station who was outside the nobility and the army.' However, the narrator challenges the Colonel, considering 'the Connollys quite as good as the Featherstones, in their own way' (Nevin 1947: 9). This opening related to class is key to the book, and the subject of social rank will remain important through the whole narrative.

The first time Kate hears about South America is when she meets Maria Brady during a tea in Nancy Dwyer's home. 'She gave us an astonishing account of Buenos Aires, a place we had never heard of and never expected to see (and God forgives Maria, when we did see it, wasn't at all what she led us to expect)' (Nevin 1947: 10). The narrator has a tendency to reprove others, like Maria Brady in this case, or her

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<sup>17</sup> In *You'll Never Go Back*, there is a clear reference to William Bulfin under the whimsical character Mr. Felix Considine, the journalist of *The Weekly Star*.

sister-in-law some lines above: 'Mary, my sister-in-law, was a decent-living woman, and that is all the good that can be said of her' (Nevin 1947: 9).

After the encounter with Maria Brady, Kate and her friends begin to think of emigrating to Argentina. She conceives the emigration not as an economic solution to her *station in life*, which was good, but as the answer to a premature feeling of loneliness: 'it began to appear that none of us were wanted at home, so I said I wouldn't be left behind on any account, and would go to South America, too' (Nevin 1947: 10).<sup>18</sup>



The Royal Canal was used by the Irish emigrants bound to Argentina to reach Dublin until the 1850s.

Then Father Molloy suggests that Kate's father 'write to the Bradys in Buenos Aires and make arrangements. Let them, if they must go, have introductions to respectable people' (Nevin 1947: 11). This is an example of established chain migration schemes that were very effective in the second part of the nineteenth century. Settlers in Argentina wrote to their family, friends, and neighbours in Ireland to convince them to emigrate, frequently to help them in rural business. Potential emigrants also wrote to acquaintances in Argentina to ask for help at the time of arrival. Catholic priests were key in the managing of this network of introductions.

Kate, her cousin Bessie, and friend Nancy Dwyer leave Granard, Co. Longford, via Athlone, Dublin, and Liverpool, from where they sail to Buenos Aires.<sup>19</sup> Relations among passengers and with the crew are natural and spontaneous, except for the girls' apprehension towards men. During the journey, the girls were

under the Captain's protection. [...] He was a nice friendly gentleman with a beard. He protected Nancy the whole way out, telling her not to trust the officers, and putting her on her guard against some of the

gentlemen who were married and who wanted to have a bit of fun because their wives were not on board. Now and then he protected me, and warned me against some dreadful men in Buenos Aires whom he called "the natives." He said they would be apt to fall in love with my fair hair and my Irish eyes, but I must on no account pay heed to them, because they were tough customers and low curs. All the gentlemen on board said the same thing. The captain didn't protect Bessie very much, perhaps because she was seven years older than I, or perhaps because she discouraged him. There was something about my cousin that discouraged a great many men. I heard the doctor tell the first officer one day that she was a handsome woman by God, but frigid (Nevin 1947: 12).

There is a distinction between the representation of the Captain and that of other men on board, which may indicate a transfer of the narrator's filial values. The positive depiction of the Captain, *a nice friendly gentleman with a beard*, seems to be related with his paternal attitude and image, as a father who provides protection. Additionally, in the narrator's mind, feminine values would be limited to *women's handsomeness* and, perhaps, chastity as a balance to her fear of the sexual menace posed by *the dreadful men in Buenos Aires*.

At the time of Kate's emigration in the 1880s, the Nationalist movement was already gaining popular acceptance in Ireland and in Argentina, mainly because of the Roman Catholic hierarchy's support.

<sup>18</sup> In spite of Kate's reasons to emigrate given by the narrator, in the back cover of the 1999 edition, the publisher mentions that 'so many Irish during the nineteenth century [...] left poverty stricken Ireland to seek a new life on the lush, rich, fertile, Argentine pampas.' This poverty is part of the oppression discourse, which frequently emphasises the British rule as the principal cause of emigration, though it is not the narrator's perspective.

<sup>19</sup> A fictional mark, since from Granard emigrants bound to Argentina would travel instead to Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, and then take the train to Dublin.

However, for the great majority of the Irish emigrants to Argentina *Britishness* was still a key cultural value, and as we will see in other passages of this novel, they felt much closer to the English than to the Argentines.

In reference to this, three identities are continuously portrayed throughout the novel. Shortly before alighting, Kate and her friends hear from a fellow passenger, Mr. Chilcote, who had already lived in Argentina for a number of years, that 'there was no hope for the country because it was not a British Colony. Then Mr. Jenkins told [Nancy] she had better marry an Englishman, and she said she would not dream of such a thing until we got Home Rule' (Nevin 1947: 14)<sup>20</sup>. On the one hand, *Chilcote's* remark signify the unanimous views of many Argentines and English persons regarding Britishness. On the other hand, Nancy's final remark is significant because it implies her awareness of an Irish identity (*we*), and a detachment from British identity symbolised in the prospect of Home Rule. However, as she would consider marrying an Englishman under certain conditions, her perspective of the division between English and Irish is not ethnical but rather political. Remarkably, there is no reference in this narrative to marriages between Irish and Argentine persons, a fact which would have been judged by the Irish settlers as highly threatening to their British ethos.

Kate's first sight of *natives*<sup>21</sup> in Buenos Aires is rather shocking to her, and she has ready conclusions about their decency. Physical differences with the narrator's ideal of a body (colour of skin and hair) seem to be the most intolerable factor to Kate. The men working in the port and the *mole*<sup>22</sup> 'were wild-looking shaggy men in coloured shirts, and, indeed, one could have believed anything of them' (Nevin 1947: 14). When the carman held out his arms, she remarked that 'very hairy they were, too [...]. I thought of all the dreadful hints I had heard about the natives, but I thought also that if he was impertinent I could hit him, so I let him pull me up' (Nevin 1947: 14). Later, one of the *wild men* on the pier fetched the luggage and Nancy thought he was stealing it and gave him a tug and ripped his shirt from the shoulder. He showed 'a great deal of brown back' (Nevin 1947: 14). At this time, Miss Honoria, the boarding-house keeper, says to Nancy: 'Oh, my dear... never, never do that again! ... Extremely violent and passionate... You must on no account touch any of them' (Nevin 1947: 16). In the following chapter, Kate and Bessie have a first encounter with a *nigger*.<sup>23</sup> Bessie 'only held her handkerchief to her nose and said: "Wasn't it disgusting?"' (Nevin 1947: 18). Once at home Miss Honoria continued to warn the girls against the *native*, who 'is not to be trusted. My first and last word to you must ever be: Beware of the native! [...]. The less you have to do with them, the better. My house, it gratifies me to say, is occupied exclusively by our own people' (Nevin 1947: 22).

Kate's belief in the superiority of her culture leads her to racist views and prejudiced remarks. However, we should avoid falling in the trap of judging nineteenth century values with a twenty-first century perspective. Further than the obvious bigotry, in all these representations of the Argentines there is a fearful mind, afraid of discovering similarities with an ethnicity considered different a priori. It is fear because *they* (Argentines) are different to *us* (British), but there is the possibility of finding a correspondence. Strangers are not defined by their own characteristics, but by the relative distance to the narrator's perspective. This

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<sup>20</sup> Home Rule was a movement for the reestablishment of an Irish parliament responsible for internal affairs. An association, founded in 1870 by Isaac Butt, 'sought to repeal the Act of Union (1800) between Britain and Ireland. Several Home Rule Bills were rejected by the House of Lords until 1912, when the first one was introduced but its operation was postponed when war broke in Europe in 1914. The Easter Rising of 1916 and the sweeping majority of the Sinn Fein in the 1918 general election were followed by unrest and guerrilla warfare. The Fourth Home Rule Bill was introduced in the Parliament in 1920, and finally the Irish independence was claimed by Dáil Éireann in 1919' (Oxford Dictionary of World History, Oxford U. Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> In the context of this novel and of the Irish emigration to Argentina, a *native* is an individual born in Argentina, Uruguay, or even Paraguay, whose ancestors were primarily from Spanish and sometimes from *criollo* stock, i.e., Spanish mixed with Amerindians. Frequently, the Irish-Argentines used this term with a derogatory implication. Additionally, the offspring born in Argentina of Irish parents were termed *country-born*.

<sup>22</sup> Phonetic for Spanish *muelle*, dock.

<sup>23</sup> Slaves were traded in Argentina and Uruguay until the independence from Spain in 1810, creating a relatively important African-Argentine nucleus in the city of Buenos Aires. The majority of this group was slaughtered as cannon-fodder in the War of the Triple Alliance 1864-1870 against Paraguay. The anachronism (the novel occurs after 1870) may be related to the narrator's strong views against darker skin colours, even to the limit of seeing niggers when they were already exterminated from the Argentine society.

is common to Brabazon, and we will see later that it is also common to Bulfin, but the three authors have ideological nuances in their appreciation of the Argentines.

The same belief of superiority is apparent in her views of social life. Before Kate's first encounter with an Irish chaplain in Buenos Aires, Father Slattery, Eliza describes him as 'a priest that rides about the camp christening and marrying and burying the Irish, so that they needn't be depending on the native clergy' (Nevin 1947: 32)<sup>24</sup>.

It was accepted within the Irish-Argentine community (it still is in some recalcitrant cases), that priests were key agents of its social unity so they had to be Irish or at least Irish-Argentine. Moreover, as Fr Fahy's biographer Mgr. James Ussher argues, 'the spiritual well-being of the Irish settlers demanded priests of their own race. There were, of course, Spanish speaking clergy in the city and sparsely populated country parishes; but our people do not learn Spanish easily, and the religious ways of the Latin races do not appeal to them' (Ussher 1951: 39). However difficult it was for the Irish settlers to learn Spanish for religious purposes, and taking into account that in the nineteenth century Roman Catholic public sacraments were administered in Latin, it appears that the second factor mentioned by Ussher, i.e., *the religious ways of the Latin races*, was more important than the linguistic issue. McKenna adds that the Irish-Argentine leadership's goal was to build 'a separate and very distinct Irish community in the country [...]. It must be said that the Irish immigrants were more than willing to remain an isolated English-speaking community' (McKenna 1994: 119). This tendency of the Irish in Argentina to use their religion to isolate themselves can be viewed as a result of their belief in their superiority to the natives.

Religious views in *You'll Never Go Back* are expressed for instance in comments on the way an Irish lass should behave in a foreign milieu. Almost all her social connections are from Ireland. Social gatherings in the estancias during the sheep-shearing time, as explains David Barnwell, are in the style of the *meitheal*, the traditional Irish communal work-party, and are fairly closed to the natives for linguistic reasons (Barnwell 1989).

This was the occasion for Irish chaplains to visit their flock, and Kate remembers that 'they expect everyone of their nation... they receive everyone. It is a Mission... You will confess yourself and take the communion and hear Mass' (Nevin 1947: 185). And she tells the story of a young lad, Ignatius Murtagh, who did not want to confess. He tries to hide from Father Slattery, but he is found by his father and obliged to 'go in to yer duty now, ye limb of the mischief, or I'll skin the hide off yer back.' The boy finally receives the confession and Kate watches out of the corner of her eye how

*the youngster knelt stiff and upright, listening. Presently he pushed back his hair from his forehead and began to speak out loud, not to whisper – I moved off farther, a bit ashamed of myself, and paid more attention to Mrs. Higgins' directions; but I couldn't resist taking a peep at the corner again, and when I did Father Slattery had raised his hand to give absolution, and there was a smile on his grim visage, Ignatius Murtagh leaned against the priest's knees, looking up into his face, his fear forgotten [...]. As we walked towards the house there was Ignatius Murtagh sitting in the dust with his back against the rough trunk of a paraíso [tree] and a faraway look in his eyes. Years after he was to hear my own confession many a time, for he became a Passionist himself, and often it was on the tip of my tongue to tell him I almost heard his first confession. But I never forgot the sight of the child sitting in the dust – perhaps it was then that the call came to him* (Nevin 1947: 189).

Within the narrator's setting of a mission in the countryside, Kate conceives in her mind a religious calling for Ignatius Murtagh. For the Irish-Argentines depicted in *You'll Never Go Back*, religion is frequently an

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<sup>24</sup> The active role played by a group of Roman Catholic priests during the second half of the nineteenth century gained solid prestige for them among Irish-Argentines, and helped to signify the Irish chaplains as symbols of the Irishness of the Irish-Argentines. There were appointed Irish chaplains from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Fr Burke until 1828, Fr Patrick Moran 1829-1830, and Fr Patrick O'Gorman 1831-1847. However, it was Father Anthony Fahy (1805-1871), still cherished by Irish-Argentines, who was the undisputed leader of the community. Fr Fahy landed in 1844 in the River Plate, and developed a tireless activity among fellow Irish countrymen and women. With the support and financial aid of Thomas Armstrong, a Protestant merchant from the Irish midlands who had a solid position in Buenos Aires, Fr Fahy achieved in 27 years his goal of isolating the Irish and their families from the larger society, and giving them better economic and social opportunities than in Ireland. A later Kate's acquaintance, Mr. Kerrigan, tells her (perhaps too historically), that 'Father Fahy [...] got us a loan' (Nevin 1947: 148). Fr Fahy also gained a well-deserved prestige of match-maker among young Irish couples.

external value, which allows a series of advantageous relations in and out of the community. However, there is also an inner belief in God's call to their diverse destinies in life.

In emigrant literature, homesickness is a recurring motif. In *You'll Never Go Back*, all the way from the title to its end, this concept is also the basis for the narrative. The concept of home is conspicuously represented in this novel, with the peculiar characteristic that in Kate's psychological world, this value changes its content from a planned resolution of going back home to the reworking of her role in the larger society.

Kate's initial determination to go back home is represented in her dialogue with Fr Slattery:

- *And what would you be doing with money, supposing you made any, Miss?*

- *I'd go home, Father!*

- *You would not! [...]. No one that comes out to this country to make a living ever goes back, d' you hear? So let that nonsense out of your head now, and settle down as soon as you get the chance with any decent fellow that'll have you* (Nevin 1947: 34).

For an Irish young woman, the alternative to going home, *settling down*, is equivalent in Fr Slattery's view to getting married. At this time, Kate does not agree with Fr Slattery, but closer to the end of the book, her union with John is a key factor in her decision to stay in Argentina.

In chapter four, Kate finds herself alienated among the people in a carnival party in Buenos Aires:

*I was sitting there with my glass in my hand, people all round me, almost touching me, when suddenly I knew myself to be far away and alone, quite alone. I cannot explain it at all. A minute before I had been laughing. I was still warm from a lively dance. No one had been neglectful or unkind. Yet I was suddenly frightened, like a child that has lost its father's hand in a crowd. The people around me were strangers, shouting and laughing at each other. The people outside the window bars, going up and down the streets of this mad town, were singing and yelling in a language I did not know. Who knew Kate Connolly in this dreadful place? If she were to creep out quietly now into the darkness, who would miss her? If she were sad or ailing, who would care?* (Nevin 1947: 49).

Language represents Kate's feelings. The deictic values of some terms of these passages, which are of common use in nineteenth-century Irish-Argentine literature and private correspondence, are interesting for analysing the Home concept. For instance, to come *out* [to Argentina] or *this country*, represents a cultural space somewhere on the periphery, or directly outside of, the narrator's central life, which is in Ireland. In the same way, *to go back* or *back home* are clear pointers of the emotional origins of the narrator.

Kate is not alone in her feeling of homesickness. Every emigrant knows the feeling, and knows the medicine too. During the party, her future wooer John Barry advises that 'the first months are the longest [...], it's all right when you get used to it' (Nevin 1947: 50). And every Irish immigrant seems to accept their fate of staying in Argentina instead of going back to Ireland<sup>25</sup>. When Kate is living with her first employer in the *camp*<sup>26</sup>, Mrs. Brophy reacts bitterly to her idea of going back home:

*"When ya what?" she asked, with such a sneer in her voice that I said quite sharply, "Well, we'll be going home some time!" "Indeed, and ye'll not. Ye can let that out of yer heads. Who'd want ye?" [...] "I know dang well ye'd not be out here if there was e'er a man anxious to keep y' at home," she said. "And I know dang well ye'll not go back to whatever ye kem away from. If ye have an ounce of sense between ye, ye'll do what I done – marry a good man [...] that'll leave ye in a good way when he goes – that is, if y'ever get the chance"* (Nevin 1947: 57).

Whether in Ireland or in Argentina, in the narrator's mind, a woman's fate is connected to her luck, or *chance*, to find a suitable companion to provide for her physical and emotional needs. In fact, the ultimate

<sup>25</sup> This is a positive value among members of the Irish-Argentine community, who compare it to other European immigrants, which supposedly went to Argentina to *facere l'America*, i.e., to make money and to go back to their countries with assets but without having contributed to the Argentine development as a country. In spite of this, it is estimated that only one out of two immigrants settled in the country. 'The out-movement of immigrants shows that once economic conditions turned against the Irish, they were willing to relocate to other destinations where they perceived a better economic climate to exist' (McKenna 1994: 207).

<sup>26</sup> Irish immigrants in Argentina used *camp* to say either 'countryside' or 'rural holding.' This is a borrowed word from the Spanish 'campo,' and it is widely recorded by many Irish-Argentine writers and newspapers (for instance, Ussher, James M., Father Fahy, 1951; The Hiberno Argentine Review, 1907; The Southern Cross 25-01-1935, P.J.R.'s *Jim Kelly's Rancho. A Christmas Camp Story*. Cf. Delaney, Juan José, 2000 'The Language and Literature of the Irish in Argentina').

reason for emigrating has nothing to do with the 'oppression discourse' (economic, political, or social factors), but it is simply that *there was [not] e'er a man anxious to keep y' at home*. Therefore, the narrator's perspective conceives the opposition *out here-home*, which is a direct result of the possibility or not to *marry a good man*, i.e., to achieve her model of obtaining protection and security from men.

Not only people in Argentina are convinced that Kate will never go back home. News from home in a letter sent by her sister-in-law and announcing that she had a baby include the same assumption: 'a fine little fellow, thanks be to God. I am sure you will be glad to know you have a nephew even if you never see him' (Nevin 1947: 92).

There is a time in her immigrant's life when Kate considers settling in the new country. Security brought by marriage and land possession are compared against the risk of going back to a place that now is viewed as uncertain, and that could exclude her from the paternal home. During a conversation with the Irish cook at Zamora's house, Annie Malone suggests

*whatever yeh do, don't go back to the people that's rearing children. There's no room in the nest for the bird that left it. The young clutch and their mother 'ud peck the eyes out of its head. That's Nature. [...] I can only tell yeh what I done meself, and what I'm doing, and that's work. There's others that marries men wid a bit of land [...]. Then Julia kem out, and met John Brophy that was looking round for a woman to go to the camp wid him, and they done well wid the sheep, and he left her rich. Well, well, that's the way wid some. I never met the man I could have meself, and I'll end me days a cook amongst the natives, and isn't it all one in the end?* (Nevin 1947: 116).

When Kate and John become engaged, they discuss the possibility of going back home:

- "Are we to live here always now, John, or can we go Home later on?"
- "Would you like to go Home, Kate?"
- "If we could, some day."
- "Well, we must then, some day," he answered. And we left it at that, and I was content.

But nothing else is planned or prepared for an eventual return to Ireland, since the actual purpose of this conversation is just to make Kate *content*. As for it was for Yeats living in London, Kate's Ireland 'would be an "imaginary homeland", the sort of place endlessly invented and reinvented by exiles who fear that, if they do not give it a local habitation in words, it may entirely disappear' (Kiberd 1996: 99).

In her prayers, Kate begins to think seriously of staying in the country instead of going back home. She finally changes her mind with respect to the initial *dreadful place* of the beginning: 'I always liked the country, and except for being a little homesick now and then, I have never regretted coming. But that evening it came over me that I loved it' (Nevin 1947: 200). For the first time, she loves the country and decides to stay, though her home is in Ireland. 'I can't complain of my experience among the natives, whatever anyone else may say. So I stayed' (Nevin 1947: 211).

Kate homesickness gradually vanishes with the possibility of getting married to John in Argentina, and with the fading of the prospect of paternal security at home. A letter from Ireland announces that her father has died.

*The green woods, the winding path, the running water, the old farmhouse by the river – I might see all these again; but the tall figure slightly stooped wouldn't be there. [...] I knew that one part of my life was over. Another part had begun. It was as if a book had been closed because I knew all that was in it; there would be no need to open it again [...]. I was not only accepting life with John Barry, I was accepting this country for better or for worse. What need to think of saving and going home, now that Father was gone? The old house, the river, the fields, the trees, they would always be there for others – for me they would be a beautiful memory, since those that made them real and gave them a meaning were gone'* (Nevin 1947: 224).

The topographic imagery of home, *woods, path, river*, etc., vanishes with her father's death, which marks the disappearance of protection and security. But it also fades out in connection with the *life with John Barry*, that is the counterbalance to her need for sustenance. Kate finally accepts her destiny of staying in Argentina when she realises that her father has died, and that the paternal role of protection and nurturing is transferred to her fiancé John (and to his promise of material stability). Security is therefore a key base to her feminine sentiment towards home, and the value is modified only when the security found at home is replaced by equivalent security in the new country.

### Short Stories in the Irish Pampas

Kate's values are partially shared by William Bulfin in *Tales of the Pampas*. However, these values will be subtly modified, and conveniently manipulated, by Bulfin's eloquent narrative.

In almost every important social gathering mentioned in *You'll Never Go Back*, there is an omnipresent character 'in the cutaway coat, white waistcoat, grey striped trousers, gloves, spats, and dazzling patent leather boots, [he] was Felix Considine', the well-connected journalist of the *Weekly Star*. Sean Ghall (a pseudonym of Bulfin's friend P. J. Kelly) infers that this character is William Bulfin, and that the journal is actually *The Southern Cross* of Buenos Aires, founded in 1875 and directed by Bulfin from 1892 to 1902. As Bulfin was a friend of Kathleen Nevin's parents in Argentina, his profile would be accurately narrated through Kate's perspective.

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

In 1889, Bulfin moved to the city of Buenos Aires with his young wife, Anne O'Rourke, 'who had been employed as a governess at the Dowling estancia'<sup>27</sup>. He then worked with a furniture importer, taught English, and at the same time contributed articles to the Irish weekly newspaper *The Southern Cross*, then owned by Michael Dineen from Cork. He signed his first article "*Cui bono?*", meaning "To whose benefit?" The typesetter, for whatever reason, changed the name to "*Che Buono*". The name, with the distinctly Argentine prefix of *che*, denoting affection and comradeship with the person so addressed and the Italian *buono*, meaning "able", "fit", "good", delighted him and he used it all his life, always referring to himself as "*Che Buono*", rarely as "William Bulfin" (Wilkinson 1997).

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

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

The *Tales of the Pampas* is a collection of eight short stories about the Irish sheep farmers, mostly single, 'living in isolation in the pampas, of ne'er-do-wells a little too addicted to drink and not enough to work, of matrimonial "matches" going hopelessly awry, of horseraces, gambling and near-fatal stabbings, of tragedy and death. Here too were stories of gauchos and descriptions of the pampas written with an insight and a sensitivity that few *gringos* have equalled' (Wilkinson 1997).

Wilkinson suggests that Bulfin intended these stories to be read 'not only by scholars, but by anyone and everyone who enjoys a good yarn.' However, we will see later that Bulfin was thinking of *anyone and everyone*, provided that his audience was primarily Irish, Catholic-Nationalistic, with strong attitudes against the English and looking down at what he considered inferior races. In addition to this, Wilkinson argues that 'the Irish men and women in Bulfin's tales of the pampas are between two cultures, having left

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<sup>27</sup> Bulfin's biographical data are taken mainly from Susan Wilkinson's introduction to *The Tales of the Pampas*, 1997. At the end of the introduction, Wilkinson mentions that she is 'indebted to information given to me by the Bulfin family in Ireland, especially Anna McBride White and Jeanne Winder.'

one while not yet accepting – even resisting – the other.' The Irish-Argentine characters in these stories have not yet given their Irish culture away. Even if the narrator makes them work more sympathetically with Argentine natives, the characters feel uniquely different, and somewhat superior to *criollos*.

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

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

Compared to Wilkinson's somewhat naive view of Bulfin's intentions, Laura Izarra argues that 'Bulfin is more an observer than an agent in the process of "becoming" a "foreign native": he is a foreigner completely adapted to the indigenous culture yet still in some respects feeling like a foreigner. Instead of creating diasporic cultural forms with a "new nationalist" concern towards the adopted land, his narratives show how encounters of cultures encode practices of accommodation and resistance to host countries' (Izarra 2002: 6). Bulfin's narrative 'reaffirm the triumph of the Irish over the indigenous: exiles are "Irish in thought, in sympathy, and in character" in a different society' (Izarra 2002: 6).

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

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

In *Rambles in Eirinn*, an account of the author's bicycle journey through Ireland, Bulfin argues against 'the mania of emigration in the labouring class of Ireland' (Bulfin 1907: 276). When visiting the valley of the Inny river, one of the sending areas for the Irish in Argentina, he reckons that 'the mills of MacGann, of Fagan, of Murtagh and others – all busy centres of industry forty years ago – are tenantless' (Bulfin 1907: 291). To Bulfin, emigration is evil because it empties a cultural space called Ireland of her sons and daughters, who are the only possibility for a revival of the Gael Nation. 'Ballinahoun is quiet enough now – too quiet, perhaps. Its turbulent spirit has been quieted in the tenements of New York and in the factories of Connecticut. Emigration has drained the young people in their hundreds from the fields and homes' (Bulfin 1907: 406). Izarra remarks that

*not all the diasporas translate a homing instinct with a wish to return to reform the 'country of origin.'* Certainly Bulfin lived in South America for seventeen years and was committed to the long-term Irish community in Argentina; yet he continued to condemn emigration from Ireland. Eventually he succeeded in going back to his homeland, settled his family there and spent some more years in the triangular Irish emigration route across the

*Atlantic, staying more time in Argentina rather than in the United States and bringing alive many voices of the crossing in his subsequent narratives. He returned to Argentina many times as friend and stranger. He tended to see his country from Argentina as a romantic place for home coming. Back in Ireland, he saw his motherland through the eyes of a nationalist determined to reform his country and change the course of Irish history* (Izarra 2002: 9).

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

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

A similar structure is used in *A Bad Character*, in which the leading narrator depicts the place, the characters Sailor John and Mike Horan, and their dialogues. Afterwards there is a transition: 'and as to the rest of the story, let it be told by Mike's words as we had it from his lips one day when a few of us were helping him to cure scab in his flock' (Bulfin 1997: 23). The omniscient third-person narrator appears only once as the first person (*we*), with the purpose of giving the floor to the second narrator. Mike Horan is a naïve first-person narrator, with a restricted point of view of his story. In this case, the initial narrator does not interrupt at the end.

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

Throughout the stories, characters are a collection of diverse cultural backgrounds and origins, with disparate educational levels and professions. Among them we may find Irish rogues, Spanish noblemen, Scottish book-keepers, Galician shop-keepers, estancia hands of gaucho origins, and of course, Irish sheepfarmers. The narrator presents *bad* and *good* characters (according to his perspective), and in this appreciation there is no distinction of nationality or culture, except for the Irish.

In fact, all Irish characters are *good*, and even if they are *bad*, they are likeable folks. They can be 'very unpopular,' 'dishonest,' or even a 'liar' like Sailor John in *A Bad Character* (after whom the story is titled). The Sailor is 'the biggest rogue in South America. He'd steal the milk out of St. Patrick's tay if he got the chance' (Bulfin 1997: 33). Still, he is comic, he makes us laugh, and in dealing with him the narrator never switches from irony to sarcasm or objective criticism.

Another Irish character, Paddy Delaney, who is named by the narrator the *hero* of *The Enchanted Toad* is 'not on very good terms with anybody,' a 'lazy pig,' a 'polecat,' 'a pugnacious, reckless free lance, who had a born gift for getting into trouble and for getting other people to dislike him' (Bulfin 1997: 38). However serious are the sins committed by Sailor John and Paddy Delaney, for instance, malicious behaviour,

deception, pillage, robbery, vagrancy, laziness, waste, and intemperance, both characters are freed at the end of the respective stories, and the only sentence they get is social isolation (a status to which they actually look forward).

In fact, characters portrayed as *bad* by the narrators never have Irish names, and they are treated in a completely different way from the Irish. For instance Barragan, a character in *The Defeat of Barragan*, is the typical *gaucho malo*, with whom the narrator cannot be sympathetic. Castro tells the narrator that Barragan, a corrupted town major in the countryside, has abused of his authority to send 'my father in prison three years ago on a false charge. He struck a brother of mine last year. He insulted my *comadre's* daughter at the shearing. He stole my best horse, or had it stolen, and counter marked it – my lovely *tordillo negro!*' (Bulfin 1997: 97). There is a fight and Barragan 'never got well enough to ride a [horse] race or draw a knife again' (Bulfin 1997: 99).

There is moral discrimination by place of origin. According to Benedict Kiely, Bulfin's construction of the pampas 'was a curious world of foundations laid by imperial Spain, and Ireland, and England, and everywhere, and meeting with the descendants of men who had roamed those plains before Cortez. Out on the pampas his preference was for the company of either the gauchos or the Irish, [...] both his own fellow-countrymen and the hard-riding Spanish-Indian cowboys' (Kiely 1948).

Discrimination is extended to certain people from Spain. Francisco, the shop-keeper in *A Bad Character*, is a 'crooked ould Gallego.'<sup>28</sup> His hypocritical attitude is symbolised in his grinning to everybody, regardless of what he thinks about his clients. And at the end, it is the *Gallego* who frees the Sailor: 'I suppose the Gallego let him [the Sailor] go' (Bulfin 1997: 33).

However, there is another Spanish character who is *good*, a young nobleman who escaped from scandal in his motherland and was sent to the pampas to change his life. In *El High-Life* there are positive attributes reserved for 'the hero of this tale [...], Arturo' (Bulfin 1997: 52), who according to Benedict Kiely would have been a representation of Bulfin's elder brother. El High 'was so fond of running contrary to public opinion, so fully possessed by the spirit of contradiction, that he was always looking for points upon which to differ from you' (Bulfin 1997: 53). However, the narrator has a positive and sympathetic view of El High perhaps because of his noble origins. Nevertheless, he dies in a storm. *El High-Life* is the only tragic story on this book, and its resolution depicts the only loser, who is from Spain.

The other anti-hero is Don Jose, the cook in *The Fall of Don Jose*. He is not associated with a specific country of origin, but he is 'a sweet villain, a very distinguished hypocrite' (Bulfin 1997: 120). In this case, there is a clear opposition between city and country, and the cook is from the city, from an urban culture. He 'shrugged his shoulders in disdain if you spoke to him about a horse. He took no interest whatever in camp work. The Spanish he spoke was not camp Spanish; it had the twang of the town. He could neither ride like a Christian nor skin a sheep. All he was good for was cooking, when he felt in the humour, and dressing himself in clean socks and things regardless of expense' (Bulfin 1997: 117).

Don Jose is not respected because of his urban manners, as when he looks down upon the gauchos. Kiely quotes a 1902 passage, in which Bulfin reports that he 'went to a certain railway station one afternoon to send a telegram to Buenos Aires, and while I was there the train came in. I do not know whether it was the engine, or a look at the passengers, or the roar and rattle of the wheels, or all of these things together, that set the wheels of memory revolving. The city life of student days came back, the city began to call. As I galloped home it struck me that the camp was not meant for me, after all' (Kiely 1948). However affectionate his regard for the camp, Bulfin's views of the pampas and their inhabitants are those of an outsider, i.e., someone with an urban look who respects the countryside and its wilderness, but who recognises that he belongs to the city. This attitude may be connected with Argentine guiding fictions of the time among the landed bourgeoisie, in particular those which viewed local reality from an urban perspective.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> During the nineteenth-century shop-keepers in rural areas of Buenos Aires were frequently immigrants from Catalonia. However, in Argentina all Spaniards were, and still are, labelled *Gallego* (often with a derogatory implication).

<sup>29</sup> cf. among others, Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Civilización y Barbarie* (1845).

The personalities of characters and their relations in the *Tales of the Pampas* may be schematised by grouping the stories in the following way: a) a pair of Irishmen, with contrasting moral marks (*A Bad Character*, *The Enchanted Toad*, and *The Course of True Love*); b) Irish and Gaucho working together with equivalent status (*Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse*, *The Defeat of Barragan*, and *Campeando*); c) everybody against the (*good or bad*) hero (*El High-Life* and *The Fall of Don Jose*).

As contextual information, we should complete this analysis of the characters by adding that there might be a connection between the *bad* characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* with certain people encountered by Bulfin in his *Rambles in Eirinn*. These people are bizarre, immoral, and cruel. He meets with them in Abbeyshrule, along the Inny's banks. They are tinkers, 'puzzling people, [...] nomads, vagabonds, heirs of generations of wandering and disrepute.' And he asks himself: 'are they some remnant of the Firbolgs or degenerated Tuatha de Danann?' (Bulfin 1907: 294, 299). And then there is the Jewish pedlar of Murtagh's Ruins, who 'smiled an oily, cross-eyed, subtle smile of self-apology,' and 'with the abject vileness of the renegade who is false to his blood, he tried to heap obloquy upon the Jews and upon the Jewish race, the stamp of which was indelibly set upon his every feature' (Bulfin 1907: 307). Tinkers and Jews in *Rambles in Eirinn*, like some of the Spanish and gaucho characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* are invariably evil. Yet, the Irish are never represented in this way.

A long quote included by Thomas Murray in his account of the Irish in Argentina (probably published by *The Southern Cross*), is typical of Bulfin's representations of Ireland as homeland:

*There! your day's work is done. Shake up the hay under your horse's head, give him a drink and go home to your hut; load that pipe of yours, sit down on the doorstep with your shoulder against the wall, and read up your curling wreaths of smoke and incense to the stars. If memory comes back upon you now, may it be pleasant! May it tell you of distant scenes where the cool breezes are whispering to the leaves of mighty elm or ash; where the woodbine peeps through the ivy around the gnarled hawthorn trunks; where the wild rose bedecks the hedges; where the larch spreads out its feathery branches, like a festoon of giant fern across the burnished glory of the sunset<sup>30</sup>; where the moss-grown old abbey ruin looks so solemn in the waning twilight; where the glad voices answer each other as the young folks scamper over the meadows; where the brook murmurs its eternal story to the overhanging willows and hedges, and where the gleam that steals through the hazels on the hillside and blinks at you across the valley comes from the fire, around which are seated those whose loving thoughts are going out to you in your exile.*

*Baa! It is only the bleat of the hungriest sheep in the corral, but it brings you back to your surroundings. [...] Heigho! It is terrible. But go to bed you sun-tanned exile; go to bed you unfortunate shepherd!* (Murray 1919: 194).

For Bulfin, the notion of *home* is ideologically related to exile rather than to emigration. Irish settlers in Argentina are represented as those who were forced by English rule to leave their homeland, instead of people in search of better economic and social positions abroad. Yet, it is obvious that this manipulated view of emigration has problems. Many of the readers of Bulfin stories at the time, when they were published in *The Irish-Argentine* and *The Southern Cross*, would have reacted negatively to their own image as exiles, so the final reading would be ambiguous.

Advancing some concepts of the final chapters, we should spell out two different types of emigration. In exile (*hegiran* model), the emigrant will consider the new country only as a temporary space and will make every effort to return home. In emigration (*diasporic* model), the emigrant will be open to adapting to the new country as his or her new home. In each case, memories of home will be construed in a different way. Of course this is not a bipolar scheme, but it helps to understand different migration models regarding the psychological relationship of the migrant with his or her homeland. This tension between the exile and his homeland is represented in the dialogue between Castro and the narrator of *Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse*, when they wander from place to place looking for fifty-five cows that are missing:

*Because of the querencia, my friend. You know what it is? The querencia is home – the home of the horse and the cow – just as one's native land is home – just the same. I think our cows have gone towards home. They were reared*

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<sup>30</sup> None of these trees are native species in Argentina, but they are abundant in the Irish Midlands.

*on the San Lorenzo and, very likely, they grew homesick here. You do not believe it? Well, you will know the country better one day, and then you will see how soft-hearted cattle and horses are about home – how the querencia attracts them. It is a thing most strange, no doubt, but you will have observed that this camp life of ours is full of strange things, eh?* (Bulfin 1997: 72).

The implicit message is that a homesick feeling is not enough for the narrator's ethos. Like the animals of the pampas, in addition to the feeling it is necessary to go back physically to the querencia, home. In the narrator's view of the world, this is the natural way of things. Instead of lamenting the loss of our origins (diaspora), Bulfin prompts us to think of returning. Exile (hegira) is temporal and its aim is to go back home. This discourse perfectly matches the author's ideology regarding the problem of Irish emigration.

The characters of *The Course of True Love* 'all are Irish in thought, in sympathy, and in character.

*Exile has, of course, modified some of their idiosyncrasies and accentuated others. The wilderness [...] has taken the corners and angles off their Celtic mysticism. Spanish phrases and idioms have inflected the English which they habitually use; but the brogue of Leinster and Munster has remained intact. Spanish and Creole customs have, in a greater or less degree, insensibly woven themselves into their life; but they are unwilling to admit this, and their struggle to preserve the traditions of the motherland is constant and earnest. [...] Old geniality is there, and [...] the inextinguishable humour of their race abides with them undimmed'* (Bulfin 1997: 136).

Returning home, whether physically or psychologically, is the reason why the Irish characters in the *Tales of the Pampas* make efforts to continue being *all Irish in thought*.

Bulfin uses the gaucho as a symbol of *Argentinness*. For the first time in our series of analysed texts, the gaucho has a positive reading. This is a key innovation regarding Brabazon or Nevin, for whom the gaucho is the feared other. Previous descriptions of the native in general and of the gaucho in particular were frequently derogatory, and recorded the feeling of superiority of the Irish immigrants in Argentina during the 1830-1870 period.

The *Gauchesca* literature, initiated by Bartolomé Hidalgo in Uruguay and other poets in both sides of the River Plate, was made widely known by José Hernandez's successful *Martín Fierro*. This text strongly contributed to replacing the wretched image of the gaucho with a symbol of courage, national values, and race (which will be later transferred by the same author to representations of gaucho submission to the landed bourgeoisie).

In Bulfin's logic, both the gauchos and the Irish shared similar circumstances. The spaces colonised by the English and the Spanish belonged to the Irish and the gauchos respectively. Courage was needed to recover those spaces from the colonisers. And it was precisely this courage that Bulfin chose to represent through characters, like the narrator of *El High-Life*, who says that 'when a horse falls, a good rider should, in gaucho parlance, come off standing' (Bulfin 1999: 62). The main character of *Castro Telleth of Tavalonghi's Horse*, is described in glowing terms:

*A gaucho from head to heel and in every part of his body. He was still under thirty years of age, but had already made a name for himself in his own way. A good-looking fellow despite his swarthy skin, white toothed, slim, somewhat bow-legged while on the ground, but a living and superb picture when on horseback – such was Castro, the capataz or foreman of the cattle herding, my companion and immediate superior. What more about him? A good deal, but let his character grow upon you as it did on me. Mount, if you like, and come with us'* (Bulfin 1999: 71).

This is indeed a strong contrast with the narrators' viewpoints in Nevin and Brabazon, both in reference to natives and to the British. The shift – in accordance with Ireland's nationalistic movements of the turn of the century – is towards admiration of the gauchos and dislike of the English. However, there are still present ethnic differences, like Castro's *swarthy skin*. Skin colour is still an important marker, as when the narrator in *Campeando* observes that 'a man surrounded by dogs and brown-skinned children' is distinctly a gaucho.

Furthermore, Castro describes Tavalonghi as a 'hide-buyer in Lujan ten years ago and he made a fortune out of your countrymen, the sheep-farmers' (Bulfin 1999: 74). For the narrator, Irish-Argentines are not

gauchos. They are respected, they are valued, but they are *ingleses*. A possible reason for this is suggested in *The Defeat of Barragan*: gauchos' 'attitude belonged to no school of fence but their own'<sup>31</sup>. They had no rules to hinder them, no seconds to obey' (Bulfin 1999: 99), meanwhile there is a positive regard for British civilisation, even if it means subjection to the English.

Kiberd observes that 'like Americans of the same period (1890s), the Irish were not so much born as *made*, gathered around a few simple symbols, a flag, an anthem, a handful of evocative phrases' (Kiberd 1996: 101). With the co-operation of the *gauchesca* imagery, the Irishness of the Irish settlers in Argentina is raised by Bulfin to its highest levels.

*Irlandeses* and gauchos are already able to work together and share basic things in life. In *Campeando*, the Irish/Gaicho pair discovers the whereabouts of stolen cows because 'the brotherhood of gauchodom had asserted itself' (Bulfin 1999: 109). However, a fellow countryman warns the narrator that

*you're gettin' too much of the country into you, me boy – racin', and bettin', and helpin' the natives to cut each other to pieces, and galvantin' round the seven parishes, suckin' mate an' colloquerin' with the gauchos – that's all right while it lasts. But you'll get a bad name for your self, take my words for it* (Bulfin 1999: 110) .

A *good name* is important within the Irish-Argentine community. It is connected with potential improvements in social and economic position. Nevertheless, the narrator is not convinced by the isolationist discourse of his fellow countryman. The story concludes: 'he failed to convinced me' (Bulfin 1999: 110).

This attitude is a challenge to the accepted values of the Irish in Argentina, who considered segregation of their community from the larger society as the best strategy to maintain their customs and traditions. Bulfin accepts and supports the native as his companion in the struggle of the colonised (Irish or Argentines) against the coloniser (British or Spanish).

### **Conclusions to this Chapter**

The identity of the Irish in Argentina, together with their earnest beliefs, changed dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century, when they arrived massively in the River Plate, to the present times. The negotiation of cultural values, both in Ireland and in Argentina had a strong influence on these changes.

Within the conceptual framework of *Southamericana*, Irish-Argentine literature emerged as a representation of the bilingual culture of the Irish immigrants and their descendants. In this culture, which includes Irish-Argentine journalism, a unique set of cultural values is represented. On the one hand, in most cases religion was not an inner force but an external resource for social networking. Its formal vehicle, the Irish Roman Catholic church, was a powerful institution which provided social coherence and recognition among settlers, as well as connections which helped immigrants to find a job, or even to meet a potential husband or wife. On the other hand, attitudes of ethnic cultural superiority were apparent among Irish-Argentines, who by the 1870s were the largest constituent of the 'British middle class, comfortable, insular and looked up to by the Criollo population, which Britons looked down on' (Graham-Yool 1999: 229).

John Brabazon's *The Customs and Habits of the Country of Buenos Aires* is full of examples of this attitude amongst the Irish. His language is plain and, for his foreign perspective, he gives to his narrative an external perspective. His attitude towards emigration is eminently pragmatic, and there is no ideological discourse about homeland. His values are chiefly positive towards the English, and negative towards the natives.

Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back* is different from Brabazon's memoirs in that it portrays the semi-fictionalised memories of a typical Co. Longford young woman, who emigrated to Argentina in the 1880s. It also has a closer view of the natives, though still considering the Irish different and superior to them. The concept of home, or homesickness, is present throughout the whole text, in the form of changing attitudes towards the idea of returning to Ireland or staying in Argentina. However, these attitudes are strongly affected by a feminine perspective, which is depicted as a need for psychological and

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<sup>31</sup> Normally referred to by other authors as *hedge schools*. Under certain circumstances, early nineteenth-century Catholic teaching in Ireland was strictly banned, therefore teachers had to conceal themselves and their pupils behind countryside hedges. 'John spoke about the classes he attended. Very often in a ditch with a hedge to hide them, those who were caught were shot' (Murphy 1909).

material protection. Protection is perceptibly transferred from the main character's father in Ireland to her fiancé in Argentina.

William Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*, one of the best fictional texts of Irish-Argentine literature, is influenced by Irish Nationalism of the turn of the century. Depicting Irish sheep-farmers and labourers in Argentina, as well as native gauchos and other characters, Bulfin achieves his goal of uniting the Irish and the gauchos, both colonised people, against their colonisers. Bulfin uses several narrative strategies, which result in a natural coalition between gauchos and Irish. However, ethnical differences remain and subtle indications of the assumed superiority of the Irish are provided by the author.

### Becoming Irish-Argentine

*Je suis prisonnier d'une alternative: tantôt voyageur ancien, confronté à un prodigieux spectacle dont tout ou presque lui échappait – pire encore inspirait raillerie et dégoût; tantôt voyageur moderne, courant après les vestiges d'une réalité disparue; [...] Dans quelques centaines d'années, en ce même lieu, un autre voyageur, aussi désespéré que moi, pleurera la disparition de ce que j'aurais pu voir et qui m'a échappé. Victime d'une double infirmité, tout ce que j'aperçois me blesse, et je me reproche sans relâche de ne pas regarder assez.*

Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (1991)

In the preceding chapters I offered a brief account of the Irish emigration to Argentina, noted the milestones of Irish-Argentine literature, and analysed three of their works which had an impact on, or represent, the future character of the Irish-Argentine community. In this chapter, a theory of Irish-Argentine myths will be developed in order to explain their role in the formation of cultural identity. I have structured this theory within the framework of the pre- and post-colonial evolution of social representations in Ireland and in Argentina, which have strongly influenced the identity of the Irish-Argentines. This chapter will proceed from a brief discussion about ethnicity and identity, to the critical readings of Declan Kiberd and Nicholas Shumway about Ireland and Argentina respectively, to an analysis of Irish-Argentine cultural values and their representation, and finally to the process of inventing Irish Argentina as a *devenir*-Irish Argentine.

Both Kiberd and Shumway propose that Ireland and Argentina are not real entities, but constructed ideas. Others have referred to this discussion of geographical and psychological spaces in similar way. For instance, in 1948 Mexican Edmundo O'Gorman re-interpreted the traditional historiography of the discovery of America as an European fabrication, and therefore originated a fertile set of perspectives for the research in the field of Amerindian studies. His *Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of its History* is still a classic reference for numerous studies which consider the perspective of native inhabitants of America before, during, and after the European conquest of the continent<sup>32</sup>.

Similarly, an author who may be cited in relation with Kiberd's work concerning the invention of Ireland is Oxford historian Roy F. Foster, who in *The Irish Story* spelled out the traditional story-telling abilities of the Irish, and the construction of their identity in literary and film works, and political discourses (for instance, Standish James O'Grady's *History of Ireland*, Leland Lyon's *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland*, Yeats's *The Book of Homeless*. More recently, Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*, and Gerry Adams *Before the Dawn*, among others).

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<sup>32</sup> Examples of this way of thinking in Switzerland are the existence of the following research centres: *Société Suisse des Américanistes*, and the *Group d'études des Amériques* in the University of Geneva.

All these authors (O'Gorman, Foster, Kiberd and Shumway) share a common evolutionary socialist ground, that is to say, the revisionist methodology of elucidating the links between the actions and the ultimate beliefs or values which inspire and justify them. The concept of *myth fondateur*, originally developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, is present in all four works.

Kiberd suggests that the English colonisers and the Irish emigrants around the world would be the final answer to the question: *Who invented Ireland?*. He argues that 'the exile is the nursery of nationality.' It is easier to define their identity for those who are far from home than to those who remained. 'The Irish exiles of the nineteenth century [...] knew, much better than those who remained at home, that "the native is, like colonial and creole, a white-on-black negative" and that "the nativeness of natives is always unmoored"' (Kiberd 1996: 2, quoting Benedict Anderson's *Exodus*), because *nativeness* constantly refers to diverse origins. A majority of the Irish who remained at home after the massive exodus which followed the famines of the 1840s, were geographic Irish, i.e., they did not have the self-awareness of being Irish and, except for their parochial view of identity<sup>33</sup>, they generally considered themselves English. Within the cultural geography of the Irish Diaspora, they were Irish for the English (or English-speakers) and they were English for others.

When Kiberd refers to post-famine 'hundreds of thousands of Irish men and women [who were left by the exodus] in the major cities of Britain, North America, and Australia,' he may overlook, for instance, the relatively smaller Irish emigration to other places like South Africa or South America. The same author also adds that Oscar Wilde 'believed that it would be, in great part, through contact with the art of other countries that a modern Irish culture might be reshaped. The implication was that only when large numbers of Irish people spoke and wrote in English (and, maybe, French and German) would a fully-fledged national culture emerge' (Kiberd 1996: 2). Evidently, Spanish and Afrikaans were not in Kiberd's mind when he was thinking about the potential effects of the mass emigration in the formation of an Irish identity.

In addition, Kiberd speaks of *exodus*, of *exile*, and of *exiles*, suggesting with this language (like Bulfin) that most of the emigrants were forced to leave their homeland by the evil effects of the famine, and that they were refugees in their destination countries. Considering his perspective, it is understandable that 'exiles [...] provided a major impetus for the Irish Renaissance which followed' and that the values behind the emergence of the Irish Renaissance were intimately connected with the fact that 'for all these persons [the exiles], nationalism evoked an idea of homecoming, or return from exile or captivity' (Kiberd 1996: 3).

There are two aspects neglected in Kiberd's view. On the one hand, though the discussion of the entire Irish Diaspora is not within the scope of this dissertation, it is necessary to round out Kiberd's chronological range of the Irish emigration. There is ample evidence in specialised literature that the Irish *exodus* did not begin with the 1840s famine. Rather, at least since the seventeenth-century onwards, when Gaelic Ireland came face to face with the reality of English conquest, there was a constant (albeit fluctuating and heterogeneous) flow of people leaving Ireland towards England, the European continent, the mushrooming British colonies in America, Asia, Africa, and other regions which followed under the reach of the *Anglosphere*, and even to far sites like the tsarist court in Moscow. The emigration was complex and manifold, including (among others) military, religious, commercial, educational, and professional patterns. Indeed, the economic recklessness provoked by the famine originated an extraordinary peak on mass exodus, which impacted also the lower labouring classes. Nevertheless, to study the imagining of home amongst the Irish abroad, it is important to avoid focusing exclusively on this 1840s emigration.

On the other hand, Kiberd's restricted focus on the emigrants *left by the exodus in the major cities of Britain, North America, and Australia* excludes the ideas about homeland of those emigrants originating in relatively higher social classes, who wished to improve their positions in potentially prosperous occupations in

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<sup>33</sup> There is evidence of fights and divisions within the Irish-Argentine community, originated in their place of origin. Brabazon accounts for these differences when he tells about the Ballymore group against those from Ballymahon. Graham-Yooll includes in his historical account that Salto's native priest in the 1860s had to organise separate Mass services for Wexford and Westmeath people. These divisions suggest that the idea of being Irish was not uniformly shared by all Irish settlers.

foreign countries, like the youngest children of midsize tenants who settled in rural areas of the Argentine pampas to work as partners in the sheep-breeding business.

These ideas of the emigrants belong to a psychological sphere of values. Whereas those values are shared by significant segments of the emigrant community, we may establish a diversity of thinking patterns with respect to the emigrants' homeland. I would like to refer to these inner emigration models, i.e., *hegiran* and *diasporic*, since they will assist in the analysis of their representations. As mentioned before, it is possible to establish an analogy between exile and emigration with Hegira and Diaspora, and this parallel would help to explain different ways of thinking of the emigrant towards his or her place of origin. In the Hegira, Muhammad and his followers were banned and finally expelled from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. In the Diaspora, the Hebrew people scattered among the gentiles and settled in several geographic areas, beginning with Assyrian and Babylonian expulsions from Israel in 721 and 597 BC, and following with voluntary emigration. Without discussing in detail the historic events in these migrations, we may use their etymological differences to classify two different viewpoints: in the *hegiran migration*, the exile conceives the new country as a temporary space, and will make every effort, whether physically or psychologically, to return home. In the *diasporic migration*, whether going back home is possible or not, the emigrant is willing to adapt to the new cultural space as his or her new home. In each case, memories of home will be construed in a different way. Of course this is not a bipolar scheme, and most of the emigrant experiences will demonstrate a continuum by which *home* is gradually transferred from the old to the new country (the most remarkable example of this process is Kathleen Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back*). But the analogy helps to understand different migration models and the diversity of psychological relationships of the emigrant with his or her homeland. Regarding *Inventing Ireland*, I argue that Kiberd was only thinking on an *hegiran* model of Irish emigration, neglecting therefore the *diasporic* perspective of a significant part of the Irish abroad, among them, the Irish in Argentina.

In *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, Patrick O'Sullivan introduces the major discourses of the Irish Diaspora: 'some studies of Irish migration are "oppression history" in its purest form.' He adds that we should be aware of 'the limitations of that way of understanding the past – in particular that it conspires with the oppressor to let the oppressor shape our agenda.' Then O'Sullivan suggests that in 'compensation history' the studies focus on the 'achievements of the Irish outside and inside Ireland in a glorified past,' and that this 'provides compensation – or perhaps, I could better say, evidence. Evidence that "failure", lack of achievement, or success, within Ireland, had not to do with some intrinsic inability within the group or the individual – as oppressors assert.' Finally, as a result of a *continuum* by which 'an oppressed people produce compensation history as one way of countering oppression [...], part of that compensation history will be contribution history,' i.e., how the Irish settlers in a territory contributed to the development and interest of that specific place. 'That historiographic pattern (oppression, compensation and contribution) is, of course, particularly strong in studies of a migrant people, by a migrant people. They are often faced with prejudice and discrimination in their new communities, and need to prove that they can contribute, and have contributed, to the development of their new lands' (O'Sullivan 1992: xix).

Since the only recurrent complaint of the early Irish settlers in Argentina (1830-1860) against their English *oppressors* was the landlords' lack of attention to the demands of their tenants, the historiography and the literature of the Irish in Argentina lack the fundamental phase of *oppression history*.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, there is no major need for a *compensation history*, and therefore there should not be any *contribution history*. However, as a result of the analysis of Brabazon, Nevin, and Bulfin texts, we could classify their works as compensation discourse, because they frequently have the intention to narrate success stories of the Irish

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<sup>34</sup> *Murphy to Murphy*, 20 June 1865: 'I am thinking the longer people stays in that country [Ireland] the worse for themselves, as things is getting still worse every day, and I am quite satisfied that there is no change of laws or nothing else likely to be made that can be of any benefit to the tenant farmer, as there will be always some gap left open by which the Landlords will be able to keep the tenants nose to the grinding stone' (Private Letters from John James Murphy in Argentina to his brother Martin in Kilrane, Co. Wexford).

emigrants outside of Ireland. In addition to this, within the context of almost all later Irish-Argentine literature and history, we may conclude that it belongs clearly to the domain of contribution discourse<sup>35</sup>.

I conclude that in the case of Irish-Argentine cultural values, the *continuum* mentioned by O'Sullivan works the other way around: departing from a strong contribution ideology, authors needed to create success stories and then to invent an oppression history. They would justify in this way their Irish identity as distinct from the native culture. The *invention* of history is a process intimately related with the construction of popular narratives, by which the resulting fictions guide the attitudes of significant portions of the society.

The example of the Irish in Argentina is peculiar. They were colonised at home, and they were colonisers in Argentina. They were Irish at home, and they were English in Argentina. Kiberd distinguishes between Imperialism, 'the seizure of land from its owners,' and Colonialism, 'the planting of settlers in the land thus seized.' Britain did not need to seize Argentine land since the Argentine governing elite was vassal to her imperialist rule, and Argentine represented a primary strategic investment for British capital until World War I. Therefore, the *planting* of Irish settlers in Argentina was a natural process, sought by the Argentine bourgeoisie and supported by the British in Ireland.

Kiberd also mentions that 'postcolonial writing does not begin only when the occupier withdraws: rather it is initiated at that very moment when a native writer formulates a text committed to cultural resistance' (Kiberd 1996: 6). How should we consider Irish-Argentine texts like those by Brabazon, Nevin, and Bulfin? Did these writers have a colonised or a coloniser perspective? Once in Argentina, the Irish did not write from a native point of view. Rather, they behaved as English colonisers in a remote location of the Anglosphere, and they wrote with an English view of the natives. Therefore, Irish-Argentine literature can only be considered *postcolonial* with respect to the English, yet this distinction is not apparent until the mid-1870s. At that time, Nationalist movements in Ireland began impacting in Irish-Argentine community life (for instance, the introduction of Catholic *The Southern Cross* in 1875 with the purpose to compete with pro-British *The Standard*).

Amongst the analysed texts of the Irish-Argentines, Brabazon does not make any distinction between the Irish and the English. Furthermore, his view is that all English-speakers are English, and that *we* means English whereas *they* represents the natives of Argentina. In the second text, Nevin's *You'll Never Go Back*, there is nonetheless a reference to the *Home Rule League* struggle, and the perspective is even more parochial than in Brabazon's memoirs. When confronted with Argentine gauchos and natives, the narrator adopts a rectilinear English position, and *Irishness* is referred to as a geographic origin only, not a cultural perspective. In these two texts, whether Irish or English, the narrator is always coloniser and the Argentines are always colonised. However, there is an apparent change in Bulfin's *Tales of the Pampas*. Its characters are either Irish or Argentine, but never English, and the narrators speak from a position against the English. The coloniser viewpoint has been displaced to the English, and now both Irish and Argentines share a common ground of colonised against the English and the native bourgeoisie. Complex class issues are interwoven with these changes.

'Ireland would be' continues Kiberd, 'a sort of absence in English texts, a utopian "no place" into which the deepest fears and fondest ideals might be read' (Kiberd 1996: 12). The same *absence* is transferred to Argentina by the first Irish settlers, a sort of *no place* in which there are no English customs and values. 'The situation in Buenos Aires was improving. [...] The old European nations, except Spain, sent their diplomats, consuls, and ministers, who brought their customs' (Coghlan 1987: 91), and 'the camp people who only used colt boots<sup>36</sup> began using better boots, and new fashions came from France and England' (Coghlan 1987: 92). 'The *Revista del Plata* reported in 1861 that, "thanks to contact with [other] nationalities, the gaucho now does not wear the bota de potro [colt boot], and like the foreigner, enjoys eating

<sup>35</sup> For instance, Eduardo Coghlan's title of his genealogical catalogue is 'El Aporte de los Irlandeses a la Formación de la Nación Argentina' (1982), in clear reference to the contribution of the Irish immigrants to their receiving country.

<sup>36</sup> *Bota de potro* riding boots made with the thin skin of colt legs, considered by the English as typical of the lower classes.

bread” (Slatta 1983: 166). Colt boots would be a symbol of a *no place* in the field of clothing, which was necessary to fill with European customs.

In the same way the poet C  itinn in seventeenth-century Ireland believed that the intent of English policy in Ireland was 'to create a “Sacs   nua darb anim Eire” (a new England called Ireland)' (Kiberd 1996: 15), the Irish settlers in Argentina followed the native governing elite in their purpose to impose *civilisation* to *barbarism*, i.e., create a new England called Argentina.

As a boy in Sligo, Yeats had often thought 'how terrible it would be to go away and live where nobody would know his story or the story of his family.' Yet the enforced emigration to London took place some time later. “Here you are somebody”, said a Sligo aunt to the nine-year-old deportee (Yeats), “there you will be nobody at all” (quoted by Kiberd 1996: 102). But the circumstances were different for the Irish emigrants who arrived in Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this distant country, they would not only maintain but also increase their own identity. Many Irish labourers and small tenants who were nobody in Ireland suddenly began being somebody to the Argentines by expressing their Britishness to them.

Bulfin reacts against this Anglophile and Anglo-centred discourse that was popular amongst Irish settlers in Argentina and the native governing elites. For instance, in *Rambles of Eirinn*, when visiting the places where poets Oliver Goldsmith and Leo Casey lived in the Irish Midlands, he recalls that he 'met several people along the roads who looked upon Goldsmith as a finer type of Irishman than “Leo”' (Bulfin 1907: 314). However, he argues that

*Casey loved Ireland better than Goldsmith did, and wrote about Irish things. That is why I say he is higher, as an Irish poet, than Goldsmith. Of course, he was not a great genius like Goldsmith, but he was an Irish singer, and Goldsmith was not. Goldsmith wrote for the people in England, mostly about English things, and Casey wrote for the people in Ireland, mostly about Irish things. True, Goldsmith's great poem is about an eviction campaign, and it is some of the most beautiful poetry that ever was written, but there is nothing in it to specially mark it as Irish. And, although there are many people who would tell you that Casey's poetry is not Irish either, because it is not written in the Irish language, still it is far more Irish than Goldsmith's – for “Leo” sang of Shaun O'Farrell and the Inny, and Derry, and Tang, and about Donal Kenny, and fifty other subjects that are Irish through and through, and that no one could mistake it for anything else, while “The Deserted Village” might be English or Scotch or Welsh' (Bulfin 1907: 316).*

In his turn, Kiberd agrees with Bulfin in that 'Oliver Goldsmith in *The Deserted Village* could, in a somewhat ironic manner, bring the consequences of rural clearances to the attention of his more sensitive metropolitan [English] readers' (Kiberd 1996: 16). There is some circumstantial evidence that Goldsmith's poem, published in 1770, was a favourite amongst Irish sheep-farmers in Argentina, particularly those from southern Longford and Westmeath<sup>37</sup>. A teacher and Republican patriot, John Keegan Leo Casey was born in the same area 76 years later, but was noted as a poet only in association with later Nationalism.

'Cultural colonies are much more susceptible to the literature of the parent country than are the inhabitants of that country itself' (Kiberd 1996: 115). The Irish who emigrated to Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century were taught (at diverse levels) in English and Anglo-Irish literature. The toponymy of some of their holdings in Buenos Aires reflects their readings, like John Murray's *Auburn* estancia in Lincoln department, Buenos Aires. Furthermore, when considering Argentina as a cultural (and, during the largest part of the nineteenth century, economic) colony of the British Empire, we may verify that the Argentines were highly receptive and very sympathetic to English literature, culture, and values in general. In this environment, the Irish in Argentina produced a culture that would have been originally British in form and content, but was gradually de-anglicised by the turn of the century to reflect ideological changes in their Irish identity.

The Argentine governing bourgeoisie was the chief factor on bringing Irish, *ingleses*, settlers to Argentina. Alberdi, one of the key thinkers and creators of Argentine guiding fictions wrote that

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<sup>37</sup> Verses of the poem are quoted freely in emigrant letters.

*Every European arriving in our country brings to us more civilisation in his customs [...] than lots of books of philosophy. Qualities that are not seen and touched are not correctly understood. A good worker is the best catechism. If we wish to plant [in America] English freedom, French culture, the working habits of the peoples of Europe and of the United States, we need to bring living bits of them and settle here* (in: Shumway 1993: 166)<sup>38</sup>.

Alberdi adds that 'the English language, the language of freedom, industry and order, should replace Latin' in the education of Argentine students. 'How we can receive the example and civilising action of Anglo-Saxon race without speaking their language?' (Shumway 1993: 167).

This admiration for European culture in general, and for the British in particular, is a result of an unresolved fear of the native culture. Not only the British visitors and representatives had a negative vision of the gaucho, but the local educated elites were also fearful of the gaucho's way of living and eager to promote immigration from England as the best solution to make Argentina a British cultural colony. Traveller William MacCann in the late 1840s observed that 'on the southern frontier in Tandil and Azul, Irish ditchdiggers commanded high wages because "few of their class come so far south, and the natives will never take a spade in their hands"' (in: Slatta 1983: 166). Slatta adds that '[Irish] immigrants and gauchos seldom competed directly for employment because the former did foot work and the latter mounted labor' (Slatta 1983: 167).

The negative myths about gauchos are key to understand the warm welcome that the Irish received in Argentina. Domingo Sarmiento was one of the most important authors who created guiding fictions for the consumption of the Argentine (and immigrant Irish) audiences. Journalist, educator, historian, political philosopher and practitioner (President of the Republic 1868-1874), Sarmiento 'molded the thoughts and policies of the nation's Europeanizing elite. [...] His most extreme and revealing commentary on the gaucho came in instructions to General Mitre in 1861: "Do not try to save the blood of gauchos. It is a contribution that the country needs. Blood is the only thing they have in common with human beings"' (Slatta 1983: 181).

Referring to Sarmiento's *Facundo*, Nicholas Shumway remarks the irony of 'a text so innovative as literary discourse [that] denigrates native Argentina and supports an imitative submission to foreign cultural models' (Shumway 1991: 180). The pattern followed by the Argentine governing elites since the 1860s, and particularly during the prosperity period of 1880-1915, was to secure the regime of

*an educated and Europeanizing elite based in Buenos Aires. The purpose was to build an European-modelled society in Argentina, [...] to promote an economy of laissez faire, primarily restricted to the affluent segment that owned the means of production, to create spectacular material progress promoted by foreign investment, to incur in external debt and the consequent loss of national sovereignty, and to show continuous contempt towards the urban and rural poorest classes, which resulted in the intention of "improving" the ethnic melting pot through the introduction of immigrants from Northern Europe* (Shumway 1991: 181).

Shumway describes the *guiding fictions* created in nineteenth-century Europe, which 'encouraged the French to feel like French, the English to feel English, and the German to be German. [At that time] the idea of nationality was essential in Europe. With the end of the *Illuminati* and the arrival of Romanticism, the ideas of universal brotherhood were replaced by an emergence of nationalistic attitudes, with which individual countries asserted their particular ethnic, linguistic, and mythic marks' (Shumway 1991: 19).

In South America, before the individual independence processes of each country commenced, there were no national identity myths that linked their inhabitants with a shared ideology. In Argentina, the name of the country itself is a 'a paradox: the country was named after the silver mineral, which was not available, meanwhile the element that was abundant (a potentially spectacular agricultural production) was neglected during almost three centuries' (Shumway 1991: 25).

The *gauchesca* literature, from its founder Bartolomé Hidalgo (1788-1822) to his best disciple José Hernández (1834-1886), provided a literary and symbolic mythology that was appropriate as Argentine

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<sup>38</sup> My translation.

guiding fictions from the last decades of the nineteenth century to date. 'Seldom appreciated in life, the gaucho became the embodiment of Argentine character as the nation's thinkers and leaders reconstructed the past to suit twentieth-century political needs' (Slatta 1983: 180).

By joining *gauchesca*, Irish-Argentine literature contributed to create the myth of the gaucho as a symbol of Argentinness. At the same time, it evolved from the sphere of Britishness to a newly created Irishness. This creation of Irish-Argentine *guiding fictions* can be perceived as an invention of Irish Argentina, a cultural *no space* that was necessary to fill with convenient imagery in order to avoid losing control over the growing Irish-Argentine community. The Irish priests of the Roman Catholic church were primarily responsible for this invention of Irish Argentina.

Kiberd quotes Deleuze and Guattari to define a minor literature, 'a literature written in a major language by a minority group in revolt against its oppressors:

*... A major or established (i.e., imperial) literature follows a vector that goes from content to expression. Since content is presented in a given form of content, one must find, or discover, or see the form of expression that goes with it. If something conceptualizes, it will express itself. But a minor, or revolutionary literature begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterwards'* (in: Kiberd 1996: 117).

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari in *Milles Plateaux* developed a theory of becoming, which I consider relevant to the study of the changing mind of Irish immigrants in Argentina. For the Irish settlers in Argentina, it was not enough to be Irish. During their settlement and acculturation to the larger society, they had to become Irish, *devenir-Irish*, i.e., undergo and command a process by which they departed from a status and arrived at a different one. This *devenir* not only changed the Irish, but also the English and the Argentines in connection with them.

It would be misleading to consider Irish-Argentine literature without its relations to the literary, cultural, and social frameworks in Ireland and in Argentina. At the same time, those frameworks operate within the more general cultural patterns in place in Europe and in the Americas, which have a great degree of *contagion* themselves.

Defenders of purity tend to manipulate reality by isolating cultural representations, but this method risks omitting essential realities. For instance, the generalised discourse of the Irish famine recalls that 'in the years of famine during the 1840s almost a million people died from starvation and associated disease' (Kiberd 1996: 21). Yet, it should be necessary for example to add that in 1933 about ten million Ukrainians died of hunger and related diseases, and that during 2004 an estimated forty million people will die of hunger world wide. Beyond the statistics, in the same way that Irish famine narrative has to be put in relation to other famines, Irish-Argentine literature has to be considered as one of the points of the ever-changing cultural reality.

Becoming Irish-Argentine involved for the emigrants undergoing several cultural, social, and economic transformations, which of course have not ended. In their *devenir-Irish* Argentines, they began negotiating values associated with Britishness, they acquired higher levels of Argentinness, and they ultimately experienced (and are still experiencing) a process of becoming Irish.

Nowadays, it is estimated that four to five hundred thousand Argentines claim Irish ancestry, and the way they do it is significant for the study of Irish-Argentine culture.<sup>39</sup> The activity of Irish-Argentine social institutions, family history groups, heritage centres, schools and researchers both in Ireland and in Argentina will be beneficial to their members and other communities only if they manage to avoid the ideological manipulation of some of their institutions, like certain sectors of the Roman Catholic church. The elucidation of cultural values and representations will pre-empt this manipulation, and will also stimulate the study of neglected aspects of Irish-Argentine culture.

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<sup>39</sup> A petition to the Irish government is being signed by hundreds of Irish-Argentines to support their requests for Irish citizenship. The language of this petition is important because it reflects the current beliefs of the Irish-Argentine community.

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## Patrick [Padraig] McManus (1864-1929), republican activist and journalist

By Edmundo Murray

**McManus, Patrick** [Padraig] (1864-1929), republican activist and journalist, was born in Mountcharles, Co. Donegal, the son of Patrick McManus *sen.* and Mary Molloy. His brother Seamus McManus was the author of the *Story of the Irish Race* (1938).

Patrick McManus went to school in Glencoagh, and at fourteen was awarded the first class certificate by the Board of Education. McManus emigrated to North America and spent eight years in the United States navy. Patrick McManus then settled in Argentina, where he attended college at Mar del Plata. After two years, he was appointed to teach mathematics and English literature. McManus was hired as tutor to the Leloir nephews of Buenos Aires provincial governor, who after some years made him administrator of an estancia in Pergamino.

Patrick McManus travelled several times to Ireland. In 1897 he also visited France, and wrote articles for "L'Irlande libre": *Toujours le menes (sic)* (October 1898), *A quoi tient la supériorité Anglo-Saxonne* (New Year 1898). He also directed the 100th anniversary of United Irishmen in Mountcharles. Seven years after the founding of the Gaelic League in Dublin, the first branch was established in Buenos Aires by Patrick McManus, John Curry, and others. In 1907 Patrick McManus married to Elsa, *née* O'Rourke, a sister of William Bulfin's wife Ann. They had three sons, Niall, Conor and Cormac.

On 17 March 1912 McManus launched *Fianna*, which was "vehemently anti-British, referring to the 'Empire of the Devil' and issuing warnings of British plans to seize the south of Patagonia. The paper never missed an opportunity to attack Britain's occupation of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands. [...] The paper was illustrated with pictures of Ireland such as 'British authority destroying an Irish peasant's home with battering ram' (5 January 1912)" (Marshall 1996: 9). *Fianna* "brought years of grumblings and discontent of the people" (Murray 1919: 421), a discontent mainly about the money collected among Irish Argentines and used to build a church for Italian priests, and the sale of the property of the Catholic Orphanage. Patrick McManus signed his articles with various pen names, among them "Padraig MacManus", "Cormac Mac Art", "Conor Mac Neasa", etc. He wrote poems like *Hugh of Donegal*, *Evening at Sea*, and *In Fair Donegal*. The magazine *Fianna* became well-known in Gaelic circles. Patrick Pearse's *An Claidreamh Solus* said that *Fianna* would put others to shame for its content and its 120 pages printed on glossy paper.

Previously to the launching of this paper, the Irish community in Argentina split into two factions, one of them being led by Patrick McManus, Fr. Edmund Flannery and Carlos Brady. They seemed "to have been composed of the Irish Republican League and the Irish Catholic Association. [...] Dublin, it seemed, was of little importance to the factions amongst the Buenos Aires Irish" (Kennedy 2000: 59). In 1922 Fr. Edmund Flannery and Carlos Brady addressed a letter to Michael Collins and George Gavan Duffy in Dublin. They represented McManus group, and they wrote on Irish Republican League notepaper. The letter "was little more than a thinly disguised attempt by the McManus faction to gain the upper hand in Irish Argentinean domestic politics by appealing to the Dublin government. McManus was credited with maintaining Irish principles in Argentina and resisting the Anglicisation of the Irish colony" (Ginnell to Gavan Duffy 3 April 1922).

McManus travelled to Europe, most likely to Ireland, in 1912, 1914 and 1927. In that first trip he bought Rossylogan, two miles west of Donegal Town, and later Wood Lodge in Salthill, near Mountcharles. The McManus brothers were noted for their generosity to many people in the area and the church at home and in Argentina. In 1928 Patrick McManus' three sons were at college in Paris and their parents came there to spend the Christmas holidays with them. An influenza epidemic was raging at the time, and Patrick McManus and his wife Elsa died within a week, in January 1929.

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