

Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

V O L U M E 5 - N U M B E R 1

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Irish President Mary McAleese
during her visit to Mexico, 2-7 April 1999
(*Presidencia de la República de México*)

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Ireland and Mexico

By Séamus Ó Fógartaigh

The first Irishman to set foot on Mexican soil may well have been St. Brendan the Navigator, who, according to legend, crossed the Atlantic Ocean in his 'currach' (traditional Irish rowing boat) in search of new converts to the Christian faith. An ancient manuscript found in Medieval European monasteries allegedly described his voyage to strange Western Lands, and is known as the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*. Some historians claim that Christopher Columbus found inspiration for his seafaring adventure in the pages of the *Navigatio* of St. Brendan the Abbot.

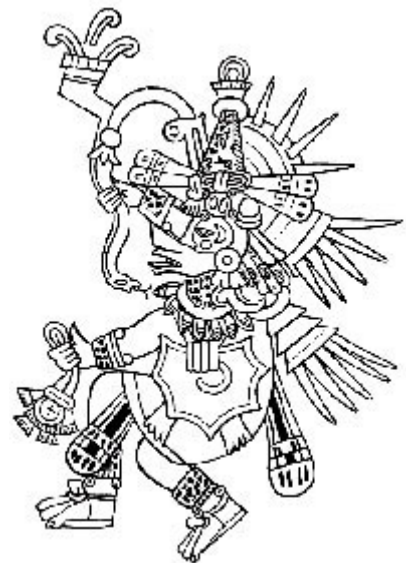
Whether the ancient Mexican Toltec god Quetzalcóatl (plumed serpent) was in fact a deified Irish monk is a matter for speculation, but the rumour seems to persist on both sides of the Atlantic. According to the Toltec legend, a white-skinned, bearded man from across the sea visited the shores of their land some 1500 years ago and taught the native people a new religion based on fraternal charity and resignation to God's will. The legend also claims that he taught them new methods of agriculture and the use of metals, as well as the art of developing a calendar to predict the changing seasons. To substantiate this theory, some commentators indicate a striking similarity between an astronomic-archaeological centre in Mexico and the passage-tomb at Newgrange, County Meath in Ireland. If an Irishman did teach the Mexicans about the art of astronomy, he certainly did a very good job: when the Spaniards arrived, they found the Mexican (Aztec) calendar to be more accurate than its European (Julian) counterpart.

Irish-Hispanic historical links can also be traced, according to historians, to the Ibero-Celts (Milesians) who, in ancient times, set sail from the Iberian Peninsula in search of the fabled island of Inis Fáil, where they established themselves as the dominant group, and contributed to the development of the Irish linguistic and cultural heritage. The Spanish province of Galicia still cherishes its ancient Ibero-Celtic cultural identity, and many Galicians regard the Irish as their distant cousins.

Reverse migration from Ireland to the Iberian Peninsula began on a significant scale following the defeat of the Irish-Spanish alliance at the Battle of Kinsale (1602), when the O'Neills and O'Donnells, as well as other dispossessed Irish chieftains, were given sanctuary by King Philip III of Spain. As a result, Irish regiments were organised in the Spanish forces, and Irish colleges were established in Spain to educate priests and other professionals who would minister to the Irish Catholic diaspora in Spain and throughout Spain's American colonies. Some were sent to the Spanish colony of New Spain (present-day Central America) as soldiers, administrators, explorers and missionaries, and the Hibernian Regiment (*Regimiento de Hibernia*) was stationed in present-day Mexico in the late 1700s.

The Capitán Colorado

Hugh O'Connor (*Hugo Oconór*) was born in 1734 in Dublin, Ireland, and emigrated to Spain as a young man, where he joined the military and became an officer in the Regiment of Aragón. He saw military service in Cuba, a Spanish colony, and was later transferred to New Spain. He was appointed military governor of Northern Mexico by the Spanish Viceroy and was assigned the task of reorganising and improving Spain's military outposts (*presidios*) as a bulwark against the Apache and Comanche people from the north. O'Connor earned a reputation for skill and bravery as a military commander, and the local *criollos* - the Mexican-born children of Spanish parents - referred to him affectionately as *El Capitán Colorado* (the ruddy-complexioned captain). He established new and more efficient *presidios* all the way from Texas to California, which guaranteed a period of relative peace and prosperity throughout the region for the settlers. O'Connor is still remembered in Arizona as the founder of the original *pueblo* which today is known as the City of Tucson.



Quetzalcóatl



Bronze statue of Hugo Oconór at the Manning House, Tucson, Arizona

Following his arduous tour of duty in the northern desert regions, and due to failing health, Don Hugo Oconór was transferred to the Yucatán Peninsula where he served as governor until his death in 1797, at the young age of 45 years.

Irish names underwent a linguistic transformation in the Spanish-speaking countries: O'Connor became Oconór; O'Brien, Obregón; O'Kelly, Oquelí; O'Donohue, O'Donojú; and Murphy was transformed into Morfi and Morfin. Just as Gaelic names became anglicised in Ireland under English influence, they became hispanicised under Spanish influence. One of the most important explorers and historians of the late 1700s was Juan Agustín Morfi, who emigrated from Galicia in Spain to Mexico, where he became a Franciscan friar in 1761. He travelled extensively throughout Northern Mexico and described life as it was lived by the indigenous people in their *pueblos*. He also traced maps of some of the uncharted regions, and provided detailed accounts of the flora and fauna that he observed in his travels. His written account of his discoveries as an explorer and cartographer are to be found in his book, *Viaje de Indios y diario del Nuevo México* (Mexico City: Bibliófilo Mexicanos, 1935). (Indian Journey and Diary of New Mexico), which is still an excellent source of information for those who are interested in the history of the regions now known as Texas and New Mexico - formerly the northern provinces of New Spain. Morfi also had a distinguished career as a theologian and lecturer, and occupied a leadership role in the affairs of the

Franciscan Order in Mexico until his death in Mexico City in 1783.

The O'Reillys of Yucatán

Justo Sierra O'Reilly (1814-1861) was of Irish-Hispanic lineage and became a noted lawyer, politician, historian and novelist, who left his mark on the history of the Yucatán Peninsula of Southern Mexico during the early 1800s. He was legal advisor to the state's General Assembly that rejected President Antonio López de Santa Anna's centrist policies and declared Yucatán to be an independent state. Santa Anna sent a military expedition to the region in 1843 and the Assembly was obliged to sign an agreement with the central government. When the US-Mexican war broke out in 1846, Yucatán declared its neutrality, and US forces occupied the Yucatán island of del Carmen.

O'Reilly was sent as a special envoy to Washington in 1847 to negotiate the US evacuation of the island of del Carmen and to offer the peninsula to the United States in exchange for military assistance to quell the Mayan uprising in the state. His diplomatic mission was not successful, and following the evacuation of US occupation forces from Mexico in 1848, the Mexican government subdued the Mayans in Yucatán and restored some semblance of order to that turbulent region. O'Reilly became a federal congressman in 1851, and the following year was appointed Minister for Development of his home state. Justo Sierra O'Reilly is best remembered in Mexico for his extraordinary contribution to jurisprudence, journalism and literature, rather than for his polemical activities in the political arena.

O'Reilly's son, Justo Sierra Méndez (1848-1912) also became a famous jurist, poet, author and educator, who was instrumental to Mexican history during the late 1800s and the early 1900s. He is known simply as Justo Sierra, whose celebrated aphorism 'the people are hungry and thirsty for justice' inspired an ideological movement which found expression in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. He is remembered and revered in Mexico for his extraordinary achievements in the field of education and for his heroic efforts as Minister of Education and Fine Arts to make higher education available to all, at a time when education was mostly provided by Catholic Church institutions, and was the prerogative of a wealthy minority. He insisted that it was the obligation of the state to provide an educational system that would be non-sectarian and subsidised by the government. Justo Sierra was a strong advocate for democracy and freedom of expression at a time when Mexico was ruled by an authoritarian dictatorship. He is remembered particularly as the intellectual architect of the National University (UNAM) which now has an enrolment of some 250,000 students, and which in 1948, to commemorate the centenary of his birth, bestowed upon him the prestigious title of *Maestro de América*.



Justo Sierra (1848-1912)

Following the success of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Justo Sierra was appointed ambassador plenipotentiary to Spain, where he died after a short illness in 1912. In 1998, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of his birth, the National Congress decreed that his name be inscribed in gold letters in the Federal Chamber of Deputies.

Another well-known member of the O'Reilly clan in Mexico was the intrepid leader of the San Patricio Companies who fought against the North American invading forces during the so-called Mexican War (1846-1848). He is known to US historians as John Riley, an Irish-born deserter from the US Army; but in Mexico he is remembered as *El Capitán Juan O'Reilly* of the San Patricios, who distinguished himself for his skill and bravery as an artilleryman in many bloody encounters with the US invaders. His military exploits have become well known in recent years due to various books and documentaries, as well as the Hollywood movie *One Man's Hero*, which provoked much controversy on both sides of the US-Mexican border.



Joint issuance of stamps by Correos de México and An Post (12 September 1997)

Missionaries, Soldiers and Artists

Eugene MacNamara is referred to by historians as an 'Apostolic Missionary' in Mexico who conceived a grandiose plan to settle ten thousand Irish immigrants in northern California in the early 1840s, when that region was still under Mexican jurisdiction. Apparently, he had travelled extensively throughout northern Mexico and the Mexican government was supportive of his colonisation project in the hope that an Irish Catholic settlement would serve as a defence against the encroaching North Americans who were casting covetous eyes on the rich gold deposits in that area. The project had to be put on hold due to the outbreak of hostilities between the US and Mexico in 1846, and came to an abrupt end when all of Mexico's northern territories were ceded to the United States under the terms of the Treaty of Hidalgo in 1848.

MacNamara was mentioned in US Army records as an Irish Catholic priest who was responsible for the desertion of Irish soldiers who joined the San Patricio Companies to fight against the invading US forces. Some US officers called for his arrest and execution, but he managed to evade his would-be captors and apparently lived to pursue his apostolic activities in a more favourable environment.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians at Jalisco, Mexico

'I believe I occupy a unique position, representing a state where every Irishman in the state is a Hibernian. We have but 18 Irish Catholics in the state of Jalisco. Each one is a member of Division No.1, of which I am president. I have learned through that organization the secret of how to keep members in good standing in the organization. When his dues are due I pay the dues. When he dies I pay his funeral expenses (laughter and applause). Although we have but very few members-but 18 here, they are loyal, genuine Irish boys, every one of them, who are glad to meet their Irish brothers from the States when they visit us, and will be glad to meet them at the next convention, and I hope Mexico will send 10 representatives instead of one.' This was communicated by Edward Blewitt at the 1902 national convention. See John T. Ridge, *Erin's Sons in America - The Ancient Order of Hibernians* (Brooklyn, NY: AOH Publications, 1986), p. 137.

Another controversial cleric of that same period was Miguel Muldoon, who came to Mexico from Spain in the company of the Spanish Viceroy General Juan O'Donojú in 1821, and volunteered to work as a missionary in the region that was soon destined to become the US state of Texas. He earned a reputation as a friend and collaborator of the Anglo-Protestant immigrants to Texas, who were not eligible for land grants under Mexican law. Muldoon, it seems, supplied them with Catholic baptismal and marriage certificates, and apparently his 'converts' made some kind of profession of faith in the Catholic church and thereby became eligible to receive Mexican land grants. This unusual ecclesiastical procedure gave rise to the cynical expression 'Muldoon Catholics' in the Lone Star state. Apparently, Muldoon was born in Ireland and emigrated to Spain where he was ordained a priest at the Irish Seminary in Seville. He received a land grant from the Mexican government near Saltillo in 1831, which he later disposed of, but his name survives in the small rural district of Muldoon, Texas to the present day. Some historians claim that he was expelled from Mexico as a *persona non grata* due to his collaboration with the leaders of

the Texan rebellion against the Mexican government in 1836. An historical monument in Texas hails him as 'the Forgotten Man of Texas Independence'.

General Juan O'Donojú (*O'Donobue*) was one of the most outstanding soldiers in the Spanish Army, and had served as aide-de-camp to the Spanish king. He was appointed Viceroy to New Spain (Mexico) in 1821, and was given the task of putting an end to the War of Independence which had commenced in 1810. However, when O'Donojú arrived in Mexico he realised that he had been given an impossible task, and decided that Spain should reach a negotiated settlement with the Mexican rebels and allow New Spain to become the independent United States of

Mexico. He signed the Córdoba Treaty with the Mexican General Agustín Iturbide in 1821, and thereby brought to an end Mexico's eleven-year struggle for national independence.

O'Donojú died in Mexico that same year and was buried with great pomp and ceremony in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City. Juan O'Donojú Street in Mexico City perpetuates his memory as a friend and collaborator of Mexican independence. At the entrance to the Independence Monument in Mexico City is the statue of another Irishman who is regarded as the precursor of Mexican independence and known to history as Guillén Lombardo (*William Lamport*) from County Wexford. He was condemned by the Holy Inquisition to be burned at the stake for his heretical ideologies in 1659 (*Irish Roots* 54: 'Zorro').

The Irish have also left their mark on the visual arts in modern Mexico, where Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982) and Pablo O'Higgins (1904-1983) have earned reputations as renaissance muralists in the distinguished company of Diego Rivera and Clemente Orozco. Edmundo O'Gorman (1906-1995) was one of Mexico's most outstanding historians and literary personalities of the last century.

Don Rómulo O'Farrill, Jr. is one of Mexico's prominent entrepreneurs and diplomats, and served as Ireland's Honorary Consul in Mexico for over three decades, until the appointment of a resident Irish Ambassador in 1999. The O'Farrills trace their Irish roots back to County Longford by way of Spain, and the surname is associated with publishing and other commercial enterprises throughout Mexico.

The Irish Society of Mexico was organised in 1978, and has served as a link between Mexicans of Irish lineage and their ancestral homeland. This humble scribe was elected its first president, and the organising committee included Irish expatriates Terry Burgess, Liam McAlister, Stephanie Counihan, Deirdre O'Neill, Catherine Corry, Matt McMahon, Allison O'Doherty and Séamus Ó Fógartaigh.

The special affinity between the Irish and Mexican cultures may be traceable to St. Brendan and his disciples who may have left an indelible Celtic imprint on Mexican culture and spirituality some 1500 years ago.



Juan O'Donojú (1762-1821)
(J.V. Thomas)

Séamus Ó Fógartaigh

This article is a revised version of 'Hiberno-Mexican Historical Links' in *Irish Roots Magazine*, N° 58 (2006 Second Quarter).

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Irish Mexican, Latino Irlandés Fountains of Literary Invention

By David Vela *

Irish authors in the twentieth century have had an invaluable, though less recognised, influence on Latin American authors. Their works have helped to change the language used to describe culture, history, politics and writing itself. Jonathan Swift and William Butler Yeats were writers who changed the idioms of prose, poetry, and the essay. There were those who blended the genres, Samuel Beckett, Brian O'Nuallain (Flann O'Brien), and the master James Joyce, have had a profound and a lasting influence on Latin American writers in the twentieth century. Those Latin American authors most affected by reading Irish authors in English, Jorge Luis Borges, Pablo Neruda, and Carlos Fuentes, are the catalysts for what is known as the 'Boom' in Latin American letters this past century. [1]



Carlos Fuentes (b. 1928)
(Gustavo Benítez 2002)

Jorge Luis Borges of Argentina, Pablo Neruda of Chile, and Carlos Fuentes of Mexico read Joyce early in their intellectual and authorial development, and it is those two who should be credited with the great explosion of change in the Spanish language in twentieth-century Latin American and Spanish language writing. The influence James Joyce has had on these two authors is far too weakly noted, overshadowed by scholarship on American authors Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, William Faulkner, and John Dos Passos's influences. This is not to say that the American or the British authors are insignificant; rather, it is remarkable how much the Irish have been neglected, if not completely overlooked. [2]

Latin American novelists and poets who brought to the Spanish language a modernist sensibility, [3] had been reading Irish authors since the turn of the century, and at least one of them was reading Joyce in English before the rest of the English-speaking world could, because of the obscenity charge against his book: Jorge Luis Borges, in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, received from France the original text of *Ulysses*, and by 1925 had written his now famous essay 'El Ulises de Joyce'. [4] Borges also translated the last page of Molly Bloom's soliloquy into Spanish. [5]

Neruda's chief debt to Irish author James Joyce lies in the construction of an epic poem that changed both poetry and prose sensibilities in Latin America. All of the 'Boom' authors read Neruda, and one is hard-pressed to think of a 'Boom' author who did not have some significant encounter with him. Neruda's early encounter with Joyce's poetry in *Ulysses* was while he was in

Yangon (Rangoon), Burma. According to Professor Roberto González Echevarría, Neruda 'communicated mostly in English while in the Orient,' and while writing his 'first major book of poems, *Residencia en la tierra*.' [6] González Echevarría, a poet himself, writes: "The poems, akin in their torrent of images to the surrealist poetry being written in Europe, show that Neruda had been reading Proust, Joyce, and other European "novelties", including perhaps the surrealists, while in the Orient.' [7]

Mexican writers Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes were both heavily influenced by English language poets, [8] most notably Modernists, but it is Joyce's influence that took on a special significance for the novel and for the epic in Mexico and the rest of Latin America in the 1950s. Paz's epic poem *Sunstone* [9] and Fuentes's *Where the Air is Clear* [10] derive from what T.S. Eliot called in his essay '*Ulysses*, Order and Myth' [11] the 'mythical method'. Much of what they were writing in Spanish at this juncture in Hispanic American *belles lettres* derives, as Eliot writes in his encomium, from 'a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape' (175). The Latin American authors were not so much escaping *Ulysses* as they were adopting and adapting it to their own epic stories, with the epic poem first (Neruda), then with the novel (Fuentes) as genres through which to tell their stories of nation formation, and of individuality as distinct cultures. That is their gracious and graceful indebtedness to Joyce.

Borges is significant because he wrote no novels. Instead, his influence derives from his tight and terse short stories, essays, and poetry. (He also blended and confused genres delightfully, just as Irish authors have done since they first took up pens. Hugh Kenner puts it best: 'For nearly three centuries Ireland has mocked the book.' [12] Think of the scribes in early Ireland, and of Swift, Sterne, Joyce and Beckett. Even William Butler Yeats elides and fudges genres from the sonnets to plays blazing the trail for Samuel Beckett and Jorge Luis Borges to do this later in prose.) [13]

After Jorge Luis Borges paved the way towards Joyce (and Swift and Sterne), Latin American authors began to write the novel along various models, changing the Spanish language, and developing innovative styles. Reading these protean authors, particularly Joyce, would change the way Spanish would be written and read.

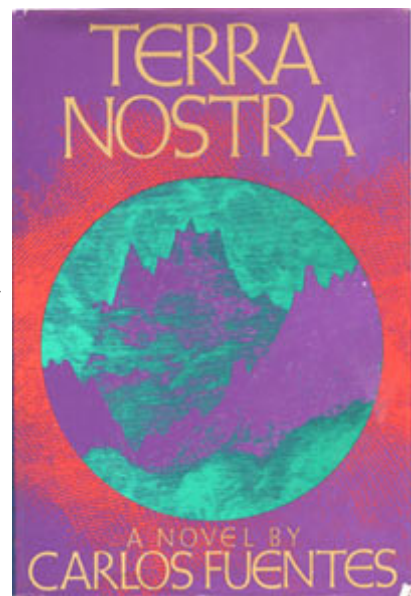
James Joyce, in bringing the novel back to its epic status, in challenging and in changing language, left a permanent mark on modern Latin American writers. There is no doubt that each author of the generation known as 'el Boom,' Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, Chilean José Donoso, Argentine Julio Cortázar, Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, and Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, voraciously read Joyce's works, and those writers still living, continue to draw from James Joyce's novels and short stories as guides to inventing and innovating in their own language, for their own works. [14] The five Latin American authors responsible for over nearly one hundred novels collectively have improved the Spanish language, and, one may soundly argue, the novel itself. These authors have read Joyce in order to see how they can change language and still be faithful to developing the 'uncreated consciences' of their 'races'. [15]

The person who had the greatest influence on the Boom writers in Spanish, Jorge Luis Borges, read Joyce extensively, mimicked him, and would be writing in the wake of his works for the rest of his literary career. Pablo Neruda was not far behind, and Carlos Fuentes followed, reading Borges in Spanish and Joyce in English: Borges and Joyce were models of innovation, of playfulness, and of genius. Neruda's model was one of linguistic elasticity.

Carlos Fuentes's novels of epic lengths and depths *Terra Nostra*, [16] *Where the Air is Clear*, *Change of Skin* and *Christopher Unborn* [17] bear the indelible imprint of Joyce's larger and longer works of the city, and of stream-of-consciousness technique. Fuentes takes Joyce's methods and model of altering language, his use of the interior monologue, simultaneity, language as the protagonist and stream of consciousness. Fuentes, after Joyce, rewrites history, politics and literature through the medium of the novel - an incredible feat that his fellow Boom writers also took part in.

Ulysses and *Finnegan's Wake* are works that Fuentes has read over and over, helping to formulate the theory - and to put that theory into practice - that Cervantes's novel (*Don Quixote*) is the open novel of multivocal reading, and Joyce's novels are the open, multivocal novels of language and of writing. For Fuentes, Cervantes and Joyce wrote the Alpha and Omega of the novel. [18]

Fuentes's novel *The Death of Artemio Cruz* in language, style and in structure borrows from Joyce's innovations in prose, and the Vicoesque, circular sense of history, and deriving from this, from Joyce's study of Vico. [19] Joyce's shorter works, the fiction he wrote with astonishing grace and technical precision, *Dubliners*, exerted an influence on Carlos Fuentes's novel *Distant Relations*, and his short stories from the text *Burnt Water*. A number of critics have noted that Fuentes's short stories are his achievement, not the novels, yet Joyce's influence on both is apparent in Fuentes's attempts to capture the essence of Mexico City in shorter works. Like Joyce, Fuentes experiments with language, time and voice, and with the employ of differing points of view in one text. [20]



James Joyce's use of language, his playfulness with English, has been mimicked by Carlos Fuentes in Spanish. From his first novel *Where the Air is Clear* to his last epic novel *The Years with Laura Díaz*, Fuentes uses *calembours* and portmanteau words, (*palabras compuestas*) engaging the reader - as he does throughout *Christopher Unborn* - in word association games, embedding historical events in sentences pages long, capturing and describing continuous thought, while also working in vivid descriptions, ideas that congeal into a plot, and interior monologues that play out entire personal histories (see especially *The Death of Artemio Cruz*).

What Joyce biographer Richard Ellmann describes of Joyce in his monumental biography is apt to Fuentes: 'Joyce was as local and as scrupulous in vision as Dante but he put aside Dante's heaven and hell, sin and punishment, preferring like Balzac to keep his comedy human, and he relished secular, disorderly lives which Dante would have punished or ignored' (4, *James Joyce*). [21] Argentine author Julio Cortázar, another author who is very heavily influenced by Joyce, so much so that he was criticised as being afflicted with 'Ulyssomania', wrote that Fuentes's first novel was a 'comedia humana', magical and metaphysical, achieving with language what *Ulysses* achieved. However, Cortázar ascribes to the Irish writer 'más fines literarios'. Fuentes's book, for Latin America, in contrast, is a beginning. Cortázar continues: 'Joyce puts the accent on technique with the intention of rupturing traditional models or moulds of writing the novel.' [22]



Life-size bronze of James Joyce in Zurich's Fluntern Friedhof (Milton Hebal, 1966)

Fuentes's novels run a range from the comical to the tragic, but they are notable for the choice of depicting commonplace and middle-class Mexico. In many instances, the figures he depicts are images raised in artistic relief against the foundation myths of Mexican culture. Fuentes also criticises Mexico, its economic and social disparities, its reliance on the United States for so many essential things, its failure to acknowledge positive influences that other cultures have brought to education, law, language - even cuisine. [23]



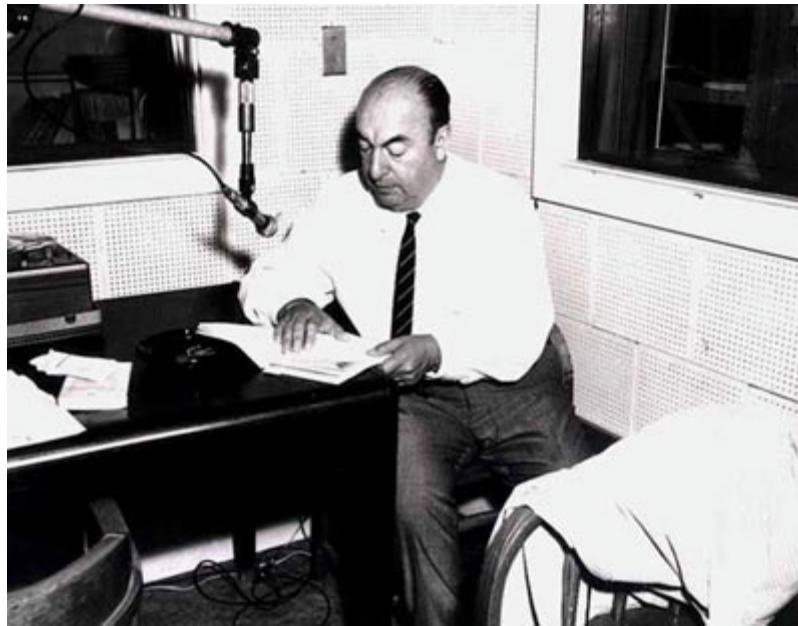
Argentine Two Pesos coin in memoriam of Jorge Luis Borges

Both Joyce and Fuentes offer an artistic portrayal, imagined visions of Dublin and of Mexico City. While Fuentes's works also illustrate an opinion pointedly critical of the upper classes and their yearning for North American values, Joyce's works examine the emerging identity of Irish people in the modern world. If Joyce's works can be compared to the modernist style of painting, Cubism, which Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque so creatively and vigorously pioneered in drawing, painting, and in sculpture, then Fuentes's early works are aptly compared to the new style of painting of the Mexican student of Picasso's cubist works, muralist Diego Rivera. Pablo Neruda, James Joyce, and Carlos Fuentes share this blurring of artistic visions and artistic merging of styles,

genres and fora for expressing the inexpressible. [24]

Fuentes's first novel, *La Región Más Transparente* (*Where the Air is Clear*) confirms the impressions Joyce's works had already made on the young Fuentes, and on Fuentes's use and manipulation of language. It is as if Fuentes has declared 'I can do anything with the Spanish language.' In his novels, Fuentes uses poetic chiasmic structures, anaphora, and long prose-poem descriptions to introduce chapters. Fuentes, borrowing from Joyce's Hiberno-English marks the greatest literary borrowing that changed the novel and literature in Spanish; notably, this borrowing occurs between two (self-imposed) exiles.

Another of Fuentes's massive and comprehensive works, *Terra Nostra* is placed by critic Gerald Martin among the seminal *Ulyssean* works. If Fuentes's first novel, *Where the Air is Clear*, speaks with Joycean language, then *Terra Nostra* continues to grapple, after *The Death of Artemio Cruz* and *A Change of Skin*, with the linguistic challenges Fuentes faced in creating a Ulyssean novel. Martin states that the novel *Terra Nostra* was a 'monumental attempt to review the whole psychological and political history of Spain and Spanish America [and that] its relative failure ... marks the impossibility after the late 1960s to write Ulyssean novels based on coherent historical cycles, epiphanic insights and optimistic conclusions.' [25] So, as with all protean authors, Fuentes changed the shape of the Latin American novel and wrote *Cristóbal Nonato* (1987), a *Finnegan's Wake*-influenced novel that, along with Mario Vargas Llosa's *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977) and Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers* (1967) (Cuban, another bilingual who read Joyce in English), celebrate laughter in the Latin American novel.



Pablo Neruda recording poems at the U.S. Library of Congress, 20 June 1966
(Library of Congress, Hispanic and Portuguese Collections)

For Fuentes, Borges, and Neruda the English language, like French for T.S. Eliot and for Beckett, was a beacon, a way to change Spanish. Joyce's two monumental novels, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, provide the poetic prose model that the writers from the Americas would use for their own literary projects. Even writers who did not know English as well as the bilinguals, and writers who did not know English at all, chose *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* - and fewer, but still some, *Finnegans Wake* - as examples to mimic and from which to borrow, and to learn how to modernise the Spanish language. [26]

In their poetry, essays, short stories, and novels, throughout the twentieth century in Spanish, and sometimes in English, Latin American authors have found in Joyce's works complements, guides and literary signals to their own inventions. The Boom writers and those poets who were beacons in changing the language looked to James Joyce when carrying out their own projects, sometimes in silence, many in exile and most with cunning. [27]

When asked if there is a shared attitude Latin American authors have toward the Spanish language, Fuentes's reply is instructive about Joyce's influence in their forming a critical attitude toward that language: 'We [the Boom writers] had the sensation that we had to invent the language, that we had to fight with the canons of the language, that it is false to believe that an established Spanish language exists ... Joyce had the same attitude toward English.' [28]

David Vela

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Notes

[1] Gerald Martin in his work *Journeys Through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1989), writes that 'it is arguable that [Fuentes] is the vertebral figure within the entire "boom" of the Latin American novel' (260).

[2] Part of the problem being that Irish authors were for so long subsumed under the rubric of British authors.

[3] Modernism and modernist are tricky terms to begin with, but Modernismo in Spanish literature, particularly poetry, is associated with Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867-1916) who ushers in formal, French Parnassian and Symbolist rhythms and images in Spanish language poetry. Modernism in the European sense as defined by Ricardo Quinones, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane pertains to the Boom writers and even Jorge Luis Borges' earlier poetry, and certainly his short stories. See Quinones's *Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985), and *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature: 1890-1930* (London: Penguin, 1976, 1991); and

finally Gerald Martin's work *Journeys Through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1989), where he deftly handles the term in relation to Latin American poetry and prose).

[4] See the text 'Joyce's Influence on Borges: Fiction, *Ficciones*' (unpublished, David Vela).

[5] It is interesting that Samuel Beckett translated with Alfred Perón the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* section from *Finnegans Wake* in 1931. Borges and Beckett share literary influences, including Joyce, and as with Fuentes, are polyglots who could write in more than one language. (See Pascale Casanova's pellucid work *Beckett l'abstracteur: Anatomie d'une révolution littéraire*, (Paris: Editions Seuil, 1997), p. 58.)

[6] 'Introduction. Neruda's *Canto General*, The Poetics of Betrayal.' *Canto General*. Trans. Jack Schmitt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Professor González Echevarría's work has been immensely helpful to me over the years. While I did not study with him at Yale (I was there from 1986-1990), his work helped immensely in my own studies of Latin American authors, which was independent, for I was an English major, and aided by him and by people such as Master Robin Winks of Berkeley College - an Irish philosopher's inspired colleague and friend of the Americas, Bishop George Berkeley.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] T.S. Eliot is audible in both authors diverse works. Paz refined ideas in Spanish and related to French symbolist and surreal poets, influencing Spanish language poetry in the process. Chilean poet Pablo Neruda also read the American poet and borrowed a great deal during the 1930s from Eliot's poetry. Paz is the Mexican heir to Eliot in Spanish, for he was the quintessential philosopher, poet and essayist in Mexico for many years. Carlos Fuentes, novelist, sometimes playwright, short story writer, journalist and political commentator, would 'give all of his books for one line of Eliot, Yeats or Pound' (204, 'La Comedia Mexicana de Carlos Fuentes'. *La Historia Cuenta Mexico*, D.F.: Tusquets Editores, 1998. pp. 187-219). Why go to another language for influence? In T.S. Eliot's essay 'Yeats' he states: 'A very young man, who is himself stirred to write, is not primarily critical or even widely appreciative. He is looking for masters who will elicit his consciousness of what he wants to say himself, of the kind of poetry that is in him to write. ... The kind of poetry that I needed, to teach me the use of my own voice, did not exist in English at all; it was only to be found in French' (248, 'Yeats' *The Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. and introduced by Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975). The same holds true for Borges, Fuentes, and for Neruda: the kind of poetry and prose they needed to teach them their own voices was not in Spanish, but in English - and the writers who share the greater degree of influence on them are Irish. Samuel Beckett is the writer who embodies this borrowing most explicitly by *writing in French itself*.

[9] *Piedra de sol*. Mexico: Tezontle, 1957.

[10] *La región más transparente del aire*. Mexico: Letras Mexicanas, 1958.

[11] First published in *The Dial*, 1923. Taken from *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* ed. and introduction by Frank Kermode. New York: (HBJ) Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1975. 175-178.

[12] *Flaubert, Joyce and Becket: The Stoic Comedians* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), p. 48. Kenner, who is the finest Beckett scholar, composed these essays originally as lectures. Illuminating, humorous and dead-on, they bear reading if one is interested in literature in general, and Joyce, Beckett and Flaubert, specifically.

[13] The elided and slightly imperfect sonnet, 'Leda and the Swan' is just one example. I have compared the imagery of this poem with Neruda's 'El cóndor.' For plays, see Yeats *Purgatory* as an example.

[14] The term 'el Boom' was coined by Emir Rodríguez Monegal, Uruguayan, and professor of literature at Yale during the 1970s and early 1980s. Rodríguez Monegal noted that an extraordinary number of highly original works in prose were being produced in the 1960s and 1970s by a handful of Latin American novelists and short story writers, all literary descendants of Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), the Argentine short story writer, essayist and poet. The principal Boom writers are Carlos Fuentes (b.1928), Gabriel García Márquez (b.1928), Mario Vargas Llosa (b.1936), Julio Cortázar (1914-1984), José Donoso (1924-1996), and Alejo Carpentier (1904-1979). Notably they hail from Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Chile and Cuba.

[15] Two of the five, Julio Cortázar and José Donoso, are dead.



[16] *Terra Nostra*, originally published in 1975, (Mexico: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, S.A. Grupo Editorial Planeta,) translated by Margaret Sayers Peden and published in 1976 (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux) with a sterling afterword by Fuentes's dear *amigo* Milan Kundera, undeniably borrows from Joyce's genius in a Latin guise. Fuentes adopts a medieval voice, demanding from his reader an intense scrutiny and attention span, for sentences sometimes run for pages. Though Fuentes in this novel takes a more historical approach - a sort of linear approach - his ultimate structure is eternal return, elliptical time, Vico and Joyce. He later utilises the Mexican indigenous sense of time in his novels, overlaying the European Spanish and French cultural influences on Mexico with his earlier ideas about time and humanity in works such as *Aura* and short stories such as '*Chac Mool*' and the surreal or magical realist 'Por boca de los dioses'. One of Fuentes's more intensely syncretic stories, illustrates, as James Joyce does, the supremacy of elliptical time over a falsely 'modern' linear time: 'Tlactocatzine, del Jardín de Flandes' from the collection *Burnt Water - Agua quemada* is noteworthy.

[17] *Cristóbal Nonato* Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico, D.F., 1987. *Where the Air is Clear*, published originally as *La Región Más Transparente*, Mexico: Letras Mexicanas, 1958; trans. Sam Hileman, New York, Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1960; *Cambio de Piel*. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, S.A., 1967; trans. Sam Hileman. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968.

[18] Seer Carlos Fuentes's short piece on narrative and the novel *Cervantes, o la crítica le la lectura*, Mexico City, Joaquín Mortiz, 1976.

[19] See also Fuentes's historical study of Spain and the Americas *The Buried Mirror (El Espejo Enterrado)* New York, Houghton 1992 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992). Fuentes writes of his interest in both Vico and Joyce, and as Joyce did, read Giambattista Vico's work in Italian. See also *Cervantes, o la crítica de la lectura*.

[20] Mario Vargas Llosa is the master of this, and Fuentes has praised the younger author for his technical brilliance.

[21] Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. 1959 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), revised edition.

[22] Page 527 of the fiftieth anniversary edition of *La región más transparente* (Mexico City: Alfaguara, 1998). The letters at the end of the text between Fuentes and Cortázar are illuminating. My translation.

[23] Fuentes acknowledges explicitly and implicitly in his literature and essays the *positive* influences of Spain and France. Here I am acknowledging the rich and literary influences of Ireland. The connections between Spain, Ireland and France are complex, but resulted in many brilliant things, including literary and cultural creations.

[24] See Roberto González Echevarría's 'The Politics of Betrayal'. 1991. (Introduction to *Canto General*, Trans. Jack Schmidt, Berkeley, UC Press, 1993).

[25] Gerald Martin, one of the first to recognise James Joyce's monumental influence on Latin American authors. From his book *Journeys Through the Labyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London, Verso, 1989), p. 260.

[26] Mario Vargas Llosa fits into this category. See his review in the fine work *La Verdad de las Mentiras*, (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2002) - *The Truth of the Lies* - in which he reviews twentieth century authors, and where Vargas Llosa surprisingly chooses to review *Dubliners* over Joyce's other works. I have neglected a few of the Caribbean writers, namely the Cubans, but only for lack of space. Notably, the Brazilian authors are especially attuned to calembours and Joyce's work, but for the sake of space and economy here I cannot address so delightful a group of authors. I shall address Ireland and Cuba in a subsequent text. Guillermo Cabrera Infante (novelist), Heberto Padilla (poet) and the essayist, critic and novelist Alejo Carpentier bear noting. See p. 432, Emanuel Carballo: *19 Protagonistas de la literatura Mexicana del siglo XX*, Mexico: Empresas Editoriales, S.A., 1965. (*Nineteen Protagonists of Twentieth-Century Mexican literature*). Vargas Llosa sits on the board that oversees the 'purity' of the Spanish language; in fact more Latin American than Spanish authors do. E. Anderson Imbert's two volumes, *Historia de la Literatura Hispanoamericana* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954; reprinted 1970, and 1974 as Volumes I and II, respectively) grant hints of the Irish influences on a number of Latin American authors.

[27] Neruda was exiled during the 1950s to the Island of Capri; Fuentes and Mario Vargas Llosa live in London (self-exile, like James Joyce and Samuel Beckett), and Julio Cortázar lived most of his life in Paris. He, like Samuel Beckett, is buried in the Cimetière Montparnasse.

[28] *Carlos Fuentes: Territorios del Tiempo: Antología de entrevistas*. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), p. 79. My translation.

Contemporary Irish Mexican Gatherings and Forays in California: The Irish Mexican Association (IMA), 1994-2007

By Patrick Goggins



IMA parade unit members during a re-enactment of the San Patricio Battalion

Sparked by the iris in the eye, a brown-eyed Mexican American woman named Patricia invited a green-eyed Irish American man named Patrick for a festive outing on her birthday, which happened to be 17 March, St. Patrick's Day. The ancestral music and familial conversation proved to be so appealing that Patty García and Pat Goggins decided to summon others to join them on Cinco de Mayo for even more Irish-Mexican bonding. All soon concluded that Irish and Mexican people have many historical and contemporary connections. Both spring from ancient spiritual peoples including Celts and Aztecs. Both adopted rural village life. Both share the distinction of being the immediate neighbours of the world's first industrial powers, Britain and the United States. While for the most part, the Industrial Revolution passed Ireland and Mexico by, the two countries nonetheless provided major colonial and immigrant labour for their powerful neighbours. The immigrant experience intensified historic Irish and Mexican group values of religion, family, ceremony, music, literature and civic activism.

In California there exists a particular empathy between Irish and Mexicans on the issue of immigration. The Irish were the immigrants of yesteryear, coming to the East Coast United States with its reputed anti-Catholic Protestant establishment. However, those Irish Catholics who came west to California, which was part of Spain, and later Mexico, were largely welcomed by an establishment which favoured Catholics. Mexicans are the immigrants of today, facing a sometimes hostile environment in California. The Irish show gratitude and strong support to their Mexican/Latin friends.

Early on, the Irish Mexican Association (IMA) determined to enlighten the public about the relevance of this history and relationship in a unique manner by being innovative, entertaining, educational and provocative. IMA entered San Francisco's St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo parades with vivid historical re-enactors portraying the San Patricio Battalion. Our inspiration for this choice was Chris Mathews of Santa Cruz. Chris was the first to bring the

then unheralded and controversial story of the San Patricios to a wider English speaking audience with his profound play, "A Flag to Fly", first produced in 1986 in Santa Cruz, California, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "Flag" probes the diverse and confounding motivations of the US Army soldiers who not only deserted whilst invading Mexico, but also joined the opposing forces. It was when discussing the drama of the San Patricios and reflecting on the setting that we realised that two defining events in the history of Ireland and Mexico occurred at the same time: The potato famine in Ireland, 1846-1850, which, together with emigration, eventually halved the population of Ireland, and the Mexican American War, 1846-1848, which almost halved the territory of the state of Mexico.

IMA recruited the well-drilled Mexican Americans of the Hispanic American Military Preservation Society with their authentic red and blue uniforms and muskets. Novice Irish re-enactors, including - ironically - several Irish American Immigration Attorneys, were drafted into the uniformed ranks. The IMA parade unit also included two antique cars carrying four honoured guests from the Irish and Mexican communities: 1) Chris Mathews, playwright, 2) Marco González, Comandante, Hispanic American Military Preservation Society, 3) Charles Richards, *pro bono* lawyer, California Irish Forum for Peace in Northern Ireland, 4) John Ortega, first lobbyist for the Mexican American Political Association in the California state capital, Sacramento. IMA was awarded either first or second Place in Marching and Classic Cars in the St. Patrick's Day Parades of 1995, 1996 and 1997. The IMA San Patricio Parade Unit was equally successful in the Cinco de Mayo Parades of 1995, 1996 and 1997. In 1997 the spectacular Ballet Folklórico Alma de México of South San Francisco graced the IMA San Patricio Unit of the Cinco de Mayo Parade.

The Hispanic American Military Preservation Society, having gained fame with their San Patricios Re-enactments, 'deserted' IMA for greater glory with the filming in Mexico of a Metro Goldwyn Mayer movie, *One Man's Hero*, a Hollywood version of the San Patricio tale, and other films, including movies about Zorro and The Alamo. Without an army it was time for IMA to move from parades to other venues.

IMA co-sponsored several showings of the powerful film documentary, *The San Patricios*, produced and directed by Mark Day of Vista, California. Mark boldly revealed the hidden history of the San Patricios to a broader international audience.



Cinco de Mayo parade

(The IMA St. Patrick's Day Parade Unit features in the documentary). The first IMA showing was enthusiastically received by the traditional Irish Literary and Historical Society. The second showing at the public interest New College of San Francisco was wildly applauded by the activist audience, who subsequently settled down during a panel discussion with Robert Ryal Miller, author of *Shamrock and Sword*, *The Saint Patrick's Battalion in the US-Mexican War* and Professor Don Jordan, historian. The third showing at the Pickleweed Community Center in suburban San Rafael, North of San Francisco, received a very mixed response. The Latino section of the audience cheered. Some of the Anglo audience booed the film, and hissed and booed when the Mexican Consul General, César Lajud, and Mexican Vice Consul, José Aguilar Salazar were introduced. (The authors of the California Legislative State Proposition 187, which was intended to withdraw educational and health services to undocumented immigrants, were the leaders of the booing). This was not a captive audience.

IMA participated in an Immigrant Rights Anti-Prop. 187 demonstration, marching down San Francisco's Market Street. (Prop. 187 was approved by California voters, but was ultimately declared unconstitutional by the courts). IMA members also participated in a 'Hunger Strike for Immigrant Rights' at the San Francisco Federal Building to generate opposition to anti-immigrant bills in the United States Congress.

IMA sponsored two events regarding the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which concluded the war known in the US as the Mexican American War, and known in Mexico as the War of Intervention.

The first Treaty event was an academic exercise with a panel including Armando Rendon, author, and Enrique Ramírez, attorney, hosted by instructor David Vela at the Dominican University, San Rafael. The author of Prop. 187, Rick Oltman, attended and video-taped the event, with permission, after promising a copy of his tape to the organisers. Mr. Oltman never delivered the tape. His underlying fear may be that California's growing Mexican immigrant population may some day be persuaded that the Mexican American War was unjust, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was unfair and the proper course of action would be for Mexico to reclaim California.



Commemoration of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1998)

The second Treaty event was a lively affair at the Garment Workers' Union Hall in San Francisco, with two musical groups, 'Black Indians' (a Chicano group) and 'Orla and the Gas Men' (an Irish group), Aztec dancers, and speakers including San Francisco Supervisor, José Medina and La Raza Immigrant Rights Leader, Renée Saucedo. Following the event, throngs of young Latinos and Latinas were taking pictures with Mexican and Irish flags, but when a US-American flag was brought forward they ran from it. Eight years later, in 2005, Latino leaders energetically asserted belief in the promise of the US-American flag and encouraged flying it at immigrant rights demonstrations across the US. The identity quest evolves.

IMA sponsored a reading by Armando Rendon, author of *Chicano Manifesto* at City Library, Mill Valley, California. Perhaps Armando's most salient point was that many Spanish and Mexican land grants were not honoured after the Mexican American War. He was challenged by

progressives about why grants of land that the Spanish and Mexicans took from the Native Americans should be honoured.

IMA sponsored several 'Pachanga Craics' - 'Mexican Irish Social Mixers' in San Francisco. Warm and interesting Mixers were held at:

- House of Shields, Old San Francisco Financial District Restaurant
- Andora Inn Cola Cabana Restaurant, Jewel of the Mission District, Mexican Restaurant. This restaurant was originally McCarthy's Irish Bar.
- Dylan's Welsh Pub, Mission District.
- Kate O'Brien's, Irish Pub and Restaurant, Financial District.
- Napper Tandy's, Irish Pub and Restaurant, Mission District.

IMA supported the 31 October 1998 Actors Theatre of San Francisco brilliant production of Chris Mathew's *A Flag to Fly* directed by Bruce Mackey.



Cinco de Mayo parade

Educational Trips and Celebrations

IMA undertook several educational trips including:

June 1996 - Two-day Immigrant Rights Border Tour, in San Diego and Tijuana, led by Mark Day. IMA received presentations by US Government Border Patrol Officer Scott Marvin on 'Operation Gatekeeper', had meetings with California Assemblywoman, Denise Moreno Ducheny, Committee on Californian/Mexican Affairs and Dr. Jorge Bustamente, El Colegio de la Frontera, had briefings with human rights attorneys Roberto Martínez and Claudia Smith, and attended the annual commemoration festivities at Tijuana Cemetery for 'Juan Soldado, Unofficial Patron Saint of Undocumented Immigrants', with regional 'bandas' from all over Mexico. Some border residents credit 'Johnny the Soldier' with miraculous intervention in their lives.

July 1996 - Visit to original Spanish land grant of IMA member, Plácido Salazar, in Pueblo, New Mexico.

November 1996 - Visit to lecture and exhibit 'Distant Relations: Irish, Mexican and Chicano Art,' organised by Trish Ziff, curator, Santa Monica, California.

September 1997 - 150th anniversary of the end of the Mexican American War and remembrance ceremony at Plaza San Jacinto, San Angel, Mexico City, presided over by Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, with Irish Ambassador Sean O'Huiginn, honouring the San Patricios who were executed in 1847 by the US military. Sixteen Irish Mexican Association members from California symbolised the sixteen San Patricios hung in Plaza San Jacinto.

30 November to 5 December 1998 - Several IMA members participated in the delegation group of the San Francisco Business Development and Friendship Mission to Mexico City and Acapulco with Mayor Willie Brown.

July 2000 - Visit to Ireland by Irish Mexican Association Co-ordinator Patrick Goggins and his wife, Ute Goggins. Breakfast meeting with Mexican Ambassador to Ireland, Daniel Dultzin, at his residence in Dublin on Mexican Election Day, 4 July 2000, and Fourth of July luncheon party at the residence of the US Ambassador to Ireland, Michael Sullivan, accompanied by Ambassador Dultzin and Irish author Tim Pat Coogan.

May 2005 – Several IMA members participated in the Irish Forum tour of Ireland, north and south, with emphasis on the northern conflict. IMA group visits included a Refugee Centre in Dublin and the San Patricio Monument, Clifden, Connemara, County Galway, home of Captain John Reilly, leader of the San Patricios.





Visit to John Reilly San Patricio monument, Clifden, County Galway (2005)

IMA sponsored altars at the Día de los Muertos annual celebrations in San Rafael. IMA Altar themes, on separate years, have honoured:

- Low riders, with cars and bicycles
- Victims of wars
- Spirits of the animals
- TexMex families
- Immigrants
- San Patricios
- Irish and Latin Writers

2000 – 2006 IMA has co-sponsored the annual Cinco de Mayo Irish Mexican celebration. Proceeds benefit Centro Latino Services for the Elderly, which serves over 30,000 meals a year in the San Francisco Mission District. Latino and Irish

members of the San Francisco Fire, Police and Sheriff Departments are honoured. Superb entertainment is provided by Irish and Mexican musical and dancing troupes, including young children. Centro Latino President Chuck Ayala and Executive Director, Gloria Bonilla preside. Many public officials participate, including San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey, San Francisco Treasurer José Cisneros, Irish Consul General Emer Deane, Mexican Consul General Alfonso de María and Mexican Vice Consul, Bernardo Méndez.

IMA members represent the organisation at various community events. For example, David Vela, in his capacity as Irish Mexican Association Secretario and as Vice President of the Irish Literary and Historical Society, made a special Cinco de Mayo presentation at Johnny Foley's Irish House on 5 May 2000, to outgoing Irish Consul General, Kevin Conmy. The occasion was a farewell party, with a reading by his wife, Siobhán Campbell, of her work *The Cold That Burns*, and *Una Celebración con Escritores Irlandeses* (A Celebration with Irish Writers), including Thomas Flanagan, author of *Year of the French*.

Irish Mexican Association participants also undertake outreach activities. David Vela is a fine ideal. As a teacher of literature, he went beyond the classroom, hosted an IMA event, met the Irish Literary and Historical Society in the process, delivered to the Society his signature lecture on the 'Influence of James Joyce on Latin American Writers,' became President of the Society, went to France, taught there, returned to San Francisco and delivered to the Society his lecture on Samuel Beckett and French.

While the Irish Mexican Association of San Francisco has received invitations from across the US and elsewhere to become an umbrella institution for Irish Mexican organisations, IMA remains an informal network of volunteers. IMA activities, frequently spontaneous, in support and promotion of inter-cultural activities, are appreciated by many.

Those who contact the Irish Mexican Association often ask if it is an association of individuals who have both Irish and Mexican blood, or if it is an organisation of Irish people coming together with Mexican people. The answer, of course, is both of the above and something in between. Sussing out the orientation of each questioner is intriguing, because somewhere within the question and the answer is an unknown factor, which the caller cares about beyond articulation. That is what he or she seeks. A feeling more than an idea. It is extraordinary sometimes to see the look in their eyes when they come to IMA and find it.

Patrick Goggins
Co-ordinator, Irish Mexican Association

Mexico and Neocolonialism An Irish perspective

By Tony Phillips [1]

This article explores colony and conquest with examples from the post-colonial realities of modern-day Mexico and Ireland, examining Mexico City over the last seven centuries from its foundation to its growth into the powerhouse at the centre of the planet's seventh largest economy, and covering its legendary foundation by Aztec nomads, to Spanish slaughter, revolutionary Mexican attacks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and invasion and annexation by the United States. Bloody colonial battles are contrasted with global corporate buy-outs in the context of the 1994 Peso crisis responsible for the collapse of various Latin American currencies and economies - the 'Tequila effect' - and corrupt Mexican President Salinas' resultant Irish exile. Finally post-colonial power is contrasted with neo-colonial hegemony exploring international relations from various perspectives: the currency markets, religion and property rights.



Tenochtitlán, Mexico City

Four hours south of where I write this article, by toll road, is the Mexican capital. Formerly called Tenochtitlán, the remains of this city are now buried beneath the flagstones of the polluted metropolis that is Mexico City. Visitors can still marvel at Aztec architecture in tours that pass underneath the modern Zócalo (Plaza de la Constitución), the central square of Mexico City. Surfacing, they can expect to encounter another one of the many demonstrations against the legitimacy of the declared winning candidate of the 2006 Mexican presidential elections, Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa. Calderón, the candidate for Mexico's neoliberal PAN party, won a statistically impossible [2] victory over Mexico City's former mayor, the PRD party candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Obrador's response was to set up a parallel government. One wonders what would have happened if presidential candidate Albert Arnold Gore, Jr. had taken a similar approach in the United States elections of 2000.

The Mexican citizens refer to their great capital as the 'Distrito Federal' (or DF for short). The DF is now the world's second largest city, by population, after Tokyo, Japan, with 20 million official inhabitants.

Until 1521, DF was the capital of the Méxica tribe (whom we often refer to as the Aztecs). They chose to build Tenochtitlán, the umbilical centre for their extensive empire, on an island in a defensible lake (now covered with

landfill). Legend has it that the site was chosen when the Méxica discovered an eagle eating a snake on a cactus. This legend is now depicted on the modern Mexican flag.

Hernán Cortés, the illegitimate son of impoverished Spanish soldier Martín Cortés, conquered Tenochtitlán from Emperor Moctezuma II (Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin) and razed it to the ground. Hernán Cortés was then just thirty-four years of age; he had migrated to Cuba from Extremadura, Spain, just twelve years before his invasion of the North American mainland. DF was also conquered by nationalist insurgents in the 1800s and the 1900s, and then by the USA in 1848.

This article explores its current 'ownership'.

Annexation

As one drives further north from Central Mexico, the highland plains slowly descend into the drier and wider deserts of Chihuahua and Durango, eventually reaching the current building project that is President Bush's immigrant wall. The current Mexican-US border is conspicuous for its huge dollar-denominated border retail outlets, with their lines of cars with Mexican plates, and the polluted NAFTA-focused *maquiladoras* (Mexican export-factories), on the southern side.

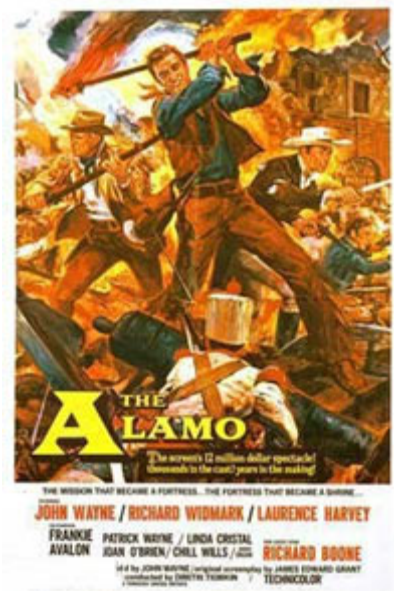
The US southwestern states of California, Nevada, New Mexico, parts of Wyoming and Colorado, Arizona and Texas were part of New Spain and later (for about thirty years) of the Mexican Republic, after Mexico finally won its independence from the Spanish. Four hundred million acres (corresponding to these ceded southwestern states), were eventually bought from Mexico for three payments, totalling just over 40 million dollars. The deal was not well received in Mexico but was forced through by the US armies after their defeat of the Mexicans in the 1846-1848 war.

The Alamo, Two Histories

US history presents us with folkloric references to Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, famous for their hats and knives respectively. These two were overrun and killed by their own Mexican army at The Alamo. The mythical tale, immortalised by John Wayne in the last century, and by the US newspapers in the nineteenth century, was the birthplace of one of the first political catch phrases: 'Remember the Alamo!', something every US schoolchild learns to this day, even if they don't know why.

Widely publicised at the time, The Alamo raised sufficient outrage north of the border to enable President Polk to declare war on his southern neighbour, Mexico. Polk's Mexican land grab, a kind of manifest destiny looking south, proved to be quite a bargain. However Mexican 'agreement' to the terms offered required that the US army also invade Tenochtitlán in 1848.

In order to understand this process, it is necessary to take a revisionist look at the historical context of 'The Alamo'. The Texan insurgency of the 1830s was an internal Mexican matter. Texan rebels were fighting for unrestricted slavery rights contravening the Federal Mexican government who had declared a slavery ban in September 1829. The threat of freed slaves outraged the Texan cotton farmers, so political pressure was brought to bear in DF. One month later, the Mexican laws were changed to allow slavery, but only in Texas. This exception carried some restrictions (no new slaves). It was not to suffice. Restrictions on Texan slaves threatened the cotton industry with increased labour costs and higher taxation and led to Texan plans for self-determination. This finally led to a failed rebellion and to The Alamo. After the Texan insurgency was put down, Polk declared his war on Mexico, an economic disaster from a Mexican perspective, resulting in the annexation of about half of Mexico's territory (the four hundred million acres mentioned above).



The Alamo, 1960, directed by and starring John Wayne

Another Immigrant War, the San Patricios [3]

Less well known than the Alamo story is the story of the European-born immigrants who fought and died in the Mexican-American war and in particular, the significant minority who took part on both sides.

One Mexican army brigade was called the Saint Patrick's Battalion (or 'San Patricios'). It was made up of men who began the war in the US army but defected en masse to the other side, thereby defending Mexico from the US invasion.

The San Patricios brigade was made up of recent US immigrants, mainly professing the Catholic religion. The majority were Irishmen, recruited from high Texan unemployment by US army recruiters headed south to fight Polk's war.

The protection of immigrant rights was a non-issue in those days predating Homeland Security. Then, as now, rules were particularly lax in wartime, which meant that many army men were horribly mistreated to keep them in line. This led to a slew of army defections to 'volunteer and embrace Mexico's cause'. Among reasons cited for this traitorous behaviour, was the conduct of their mainly British Protestant officers, and the particularly vicious antics of the Texas Rangers when capturing Mexican towns; desecration of Catholic Church property, rape and slaughter.

These opportunist Mexican soldiers of fortune were commanded by John Riley of Clifden, County Galway. The Battalion of St. Patrick, 800-strong, fought a commendable retreat from US invading forces as the Americans pushed south to the capital, DF. One reason cited was the brigade's determination not to be captured alive. It is even said that the Patrick's battalion threatened to shoot their Mexican colleagues if they capitulated to the US forces.

The mainly Irish-born, English-speaking battalion was given a great deal of autonomy as to how they fought their former employers; unfortunately for them they found themselves on the losing side. As it turned out the Patricios were prudent in avoiding capture - the US Army had been instructed to make an example of the Irish Catholic defectors. They meted out face branding with hot irons (the letter 'D' for Deserter) and most survivors were summarily hanged. In DF, the US army made a point of hanging most of the remaining Patricios in the same Zócalo.

The valiant Patricios are commemorated annually in Mexico. Recently Irish dignitaries were invited by former Mexican President Vicente Fox to share in the 1847-1997 celebrations in the Zócalo, DF.

The myth of National Independence

It may at first glance seem like an incongruous list of populations but modern-day DF and its suburbs were host to the Olmecs, the Aztecs, the Spanish, the 'Mexican' and for a short time even the US conquerors. One might suggest that the Spanish conquerors should be treated as a special case as they ruled 'New Spain' as a European colony, the other regimes being self-governing, though I would argue otherwise.

What exactly is the logic of a modern-day self-governing republic? To what extent is it possible for a modern nation to control its own destiny, especially in the context of the massive influence of global transnational corporations and in the context of regional trade communities such as the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? These questions are especially pertinent in the case of Mexico, whose northern neighbour is the largest economic and military power on the planet.

When colonial powers cede control to new nations, contacts rarely come to an abrupt end. Ireland maintained laws that protected British property rights after 1921. These were written in the English language as part of predominantly English laws. Ireland also maintained an economy entirely dependent on Sterling for many decades. The Mexican revolution was not dissimilar, although the second Zapatista revolution did alter some property rights to the benefit of local Mexicans over foreign landowners, largely as a result of the first Zapatista rebellion.

Central Mexico seems like an appropriate place to explore the legacies of colonial power and to delve into their neocolonial counterparts.

Dust of Colony

DF has some really impressive colonial architecture but the colonial architectural style is found in many *Altiplano* Spanish cities. Particularly beautiful are Zacatecas, Guanajato, Puebla, Querétaro and, perhaps the most famous of them all, San Miguel de Allende.





San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato
(Ruiz, December 2004)

San Miguel de Allende is a city frozen in time by an architectural heritage law enacted in the nineteen twenties. Her districts are called 'Colonias' and much of the architecture is from the more splendid periods of Spanish colonial opulence. San Miguel is currently undergoing another type of invasion. This began as a small artistic hippy community. Now in San Miguel, a thriving real estate industry offers 300-year-old palatial mansions to a global market. Affluent visitors are tantalised by monthly bus tours conducted in English, taking curious tourists to some of the prettier mansions in the city, many of which are for sale. Most of the buyers are retired people from the US. In recent decades there have been many Canadian visitors also, but fluctuating exchange rates affect participation. Geographical factors such as proximity and the availability of flights play a significant role in determining who occupies these beautiful properties, though the buying power

of a nation's currency is also a major factor. There are more British property owners in San Miguel than Guatemalans.

An Anglo-Irish Colonial Viewpoint

As an Irish citizen of British descent I have always been somewhat conflicted about the notion of 'colony'. In the beautiful and hospitable environs of San Miguel de Allende it is difficult to recognise a traditional colony. One could argue that traditional colonies were largely eradicated in the early 1900s with the self-destruction of the Western empires in the wake of the First World War. In the absence of a foreign army of occupation, can a colony really exist? If so, how would we recognise it? What exactly is neo-colonialism?

Hegemony Defined

Colonisation involved much more than property rights. Any successful colonial power understands that a precursor to property ownership is ownership of the mind. Every expansionist military is accompanied by an expansionist religion, Spain had its Catholic Jesuits, Dominicans and others, and the US has evangelical Protestant sects. It is important to maintain control of property when governments change. What use is a paper land title, or paper currency for that matter, if it is no longer negotiable? Religion, language, and cultural assimilation played a huge role, some might argue greater than the military role, in maintaining the colony of 'New Spain' for three hundred years.

Founding Mexico

Modern Mexico is a sovereign nation state born in the traditional manner of various anti-colonial rebellions, and constitutionally governed by the Mexicans as a Federal state. Or so it seems. As a nation state, the founders of modern Mexico learned the value of property the hard way and took some measures to protect their land from becoming the property of external powers. Non-Mexican citizens are not allowed to buy property in Mexico but they can buy and sell a ninety-nine year lease and, recently, former Mexican President Fox of the neoliberal PAN party made it easier for foreign citizens to apply for Mexican citizenship.

There are many parallels to this form of protectionism. Take London for example. The Duke of Westminster owns some of the most lucrative land leases in the City of London; in fact it is more precise to say the Duke of Westminster owns the City of London. You cannot buy land in parts of central London because those lands are not for sale. Why sell when you can lease? By this means, the Duke of Westminster has income in perpetuity, and the land will always belong to the Crown. The title passes down through the British Royal family to the next Duke.

Trust in Money

On the back of a US dollar note, one reads 'In God We Trust'. Since currencies broke with the gold standard under US president Nixon, their values float. The 'Gods' of international finance determine the relative value of the pieces of paper we carry in our wallets. Whether I get 10.9 or 11.2 Mexican pesos to the US dollar, or 13 or 14 to the euro, is a decision made at the currency markets of New York, London and Zurich, and to a lesser extent in DF.

Currency markets base their complex decisions on economic precepts as dogmatic and obscure as those of any religion. Certain indicators instantly affect currency markets. They include regularly published statistics such as unemployment figures and stock market indices and government policy changes such as the privatisation or

nationalisation of industries, or changes in taxation policies. But how do traders react to the statistics? Which bible do they use?

In these final phases of pure market economics or 'neoliberalism', that bible is the brainchild of the Washington Consensus. Few religions are run on a consensus basis (the Washington 'Consensus' is a consensus of one), or are run on a consensus in name only. However this non-consensual trade is written into every unilateral trade agreement the US offers and is also enshrined in NAFTA.

Traders are continuously making split-second decisions in a global currency market, networked by computers in 24-hour trading and these markets have daily transactions in trillions of US dollars. The traders trade for profit. A delayed or bad decision can cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and so a mutually agreed rule system is essential.

As an example, the reaction at the global currency markets to the publication of a Mexican economic indicator such as the national unemployment rate is instructive. If unemployment goes up by two per cent in the third quarter, how will the global currency markets react? The theory predicts that this will eventually lead to cheaper Mexican labour. It could be argued that this has both a positive and a negative affect on the Mexican economy; positive because higher unemployment means cheaper labour, which means higher profits for the private sector and reduced public sector costs (depending on the power of unions in both sectors). It is negative because higher unemployment means a higher cost to the government in social security, lowered government tax income, and possible weakening of domestic demand. But how should the currency markets interpret this statistic? Who governs union power, minimum wages and so on?

What is the knock-on effect on US documented and undocumented immigrants from Mexico? Repatriated earnings are the second largest income source for the Mexican economy. In the same way Irish banks transfer many euros to the Baltic states from guest workers, Mexicans in the US (both documented and undocumented), save money to send dollars home.

All of this interplay may require that the Mexican Central Bank buy or sell international currencies in an attempt to react to these changes and maintain their currency's relative value (relative to the USD or a basket of international currencies). The net result of such currency stabilising transactions is often the transfer of hundreds of millions of US dollars from Mexican Federal Reserves to the profits of offshore derivative funds (the institutions trading in Mexican Pesos).

Colonial power is much less subtle than its cousin, economic hegemony. [4]

Cultural precepts such as architecture, religion and language take centuries to inculcate into the minds of the local population, a process essential to colonial expansion. If you want to move more quickly toward domination of a foreign economic resource, only two significant exercises of power create change in a short period of time; military might and economic leverage. In the absence of a military invasion of Mexico, only economic leverage can result in significant transfer of ownership of Mexican resources in a short period of time.

Enter, centre stage: Economic Hegemony.

A Concrete Example

Currency relationships can be explored using a practical example. In my pocket I carry Mexican pesos drawn from a US account from a Banamex ATM in San Miguel's town square. In Spanish times, I would be carrying silver or golden coinage made from metals mined nearby, but owned by the Spanish Crown. Now I use my Mexican paper currency to purchase my necessities at a daily adjusted rate.

In an attempt to protect their national assets, the founders of the Mexican state wrote rules into the constitution designed to protect the nascent state. But constitutions are pliant things, especially in Mexico, with more than 400 current amendments. Among those national assets explicitly protected from foreign exploitation and ownership are national resources such as oil, gas, and banks. There are many powerful Mexican national controls to protect Pemex, the national oil company. [5]

Banks are charged with the care of the people's money and have been rescued in the past by public funds, which means they are particularly important for economic dependence. In an effort to rescue its economy from a crisis so deep that it affected the whole region with a malaise known as the 'Tequila Effect', changes in Mexican laws on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and restrictions on foreign ownership of Mexican banks were relaxed to encourage foreign investment. The results were swift. All ten Mexican banks were rapidly bought up by Western Banks, mainly based in the US and Spain. Radical yes, unusual no! At that same time a wave of banking consolidation swept the Western World. In many countries (including the US), takeovers were restricted by national banking laws protecting local banks from foreign ownership.



A Pemex petrol station in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco
(Coolcaesar, October 2005)

Twelve years ago I lived in San Francisco, California. I had opened a bank account in the local branch of the San Francisco Federal Bank; within five years I had a CitiBank account. San Francisco Federal was bought by First Nationwide, then First Nationwide was acquired by California Federal Bank, which was snapped up to become CitiBank (West). I now draw Pesos from this account at Banamex (sixty-five per cent owned by CitiBank).

Technically I am a CitiBank West customer using a foreign Banamex teller machine, both entities being part of the largest private bank on the planet (CitiCorp, the owner of CitiBank). Robert Rubin is a recent CEO of CitiCorp. Once Secretary of the US Treasury, Rubin is also a former head of the US National Economic Council. Before that he worked at Goldman Sachs, then the largest investment bank in the world. He is also credited in his biography with acting to stem Mexico's financial crisis and 'opening trade policy to further globalization'.

If Mr. Rubin is not an architect of this 'Washington Consensus', then who is?

Certain weakened US Federal regulations persist, for the moment, to keep US CitiBank subsidiaries separate in name at least. The rules, designed to restrict the size of any one bank in the federal United States of America, are a legacy of the horrors of the 1930s depression in which CitiBank was indicted. But CitiBank was also implicated in the loss of confidence that precipitated the US stock market crash of 2000. CitiCorp regularly pays massive fines globally for illegal trading practices. US rules may protect ownership of US banks, they do not, however, restrict foreign acquisitions where these transactions are permitted by local governments.

Cultural barriers exist which prevent renaming Banamex to CitiBank, but the logo colour scheme, the computing systems and the retirement product sales are all CitiBank's, and CitiBank's currency trading operations are still based in New York. The change in Mexican laws to enable bank takeovers was a direct effect of external financial pressures which were brought to bear on Mexico by its debtor countries in the 1990s.

The value of the Mexican peso was devalued by about 30 per cent in the Mexican financial crisis of 1994. The results were disastrous and led to the flight into exile of ex-President Salinas (to the protection of the Irish Republic).

The Mexican peso crisis led to a cycle of Latin American financial crises, a phenomenon known as the Tequila Effect. To encourage foreign direct investment governments in crisis are often pressured into weakening national laws protecting national ownership of strategic resources, such as bank ownership. The results suggest a strong link between adjustment of such rules and the reality of modern neo-colonialism.

Tony Phillips

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Notes

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[2] For more information please refer to recent articles on the 2006 Mexican Presidential elections, for example those published at <http://bbc.co.uk/>.

[3] For more information on the San Patricios, please refer to articles on this theme included in *The San Patricio Battalion: A Bibliography*.

[4] Hegemony results in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values, and practices to the submersion and partial exclusion of others. It influences the perspective of mainstream history, as it is left to the victors to write history.

[5] Not unsurprisingly, the survival of these national controls was a huge issue in the recent Mexican presidential election.

Reviving the Saint Patrick's Battalion

By Dan Leahy



Batallón San Patricio *Comandantes* marching in the Elissa Grissen parade
(Hidalgo del Parral, April 2002)

In Autumn 1990, I attended a strategy session in St. Paul, Minneapolis on how to defeat the proposed free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico, known as NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. There I met a man named Tom Laney who worked at a Ford production plant in St. Paul and was building relations between his UAW local union and the Ford workers at the Cuautitlán plant outside Mexico City, who were organising a union.

Tom told me story. He said there were a group of Irish soldiers who switched sides and fought with the Mexican army against the US forces in 1847. I said that I didn't believe him. He said that there was a large plaque honouring their solidarity at the Plaza de San Jacinto on the outskirts of Mexico City. I still didn't believe him. He said that he had a photograph of the plaque and I told him to send it on to me.

I returned home to Olympia, Washington and to my work at the Evergreen State College as a faculty member and as the Director of the Washington State's only Labor Education and Research Center.

A few days later, Tom's photograph arrived. At the top of the plaque was the symbol of the battalion, a Mexican eagle over a Celtic cross. Under the battalion symbol, the plaque read: 'In memory of the Irish Soldiers of the Heroic Battalion of St. Patrick martyrs who gave their lives in the cause of Mexico during the unjust North American invasion in 1847.' There were 71 names chiselled in stone.

I read those names and Mexico became a different place for me. I had never been to Mexico. I had no desire to be yet another *gringo* tourist. Now, however, I felt like I had a real connection, a legitimacy, a reason to go, a place in history. After all, there were no Leahys on that plaque, and they must have been there. I needed to do some research.

Researching the Battalion

I asked my staff and students at the Labor Education Center to research the battalion. They found books, dissertations, essays, novels, and stories. There was history, but like a lot of interesting history it was buried and out of print.

There were a lot of arguments about why the Irish soldiers had switched sides. They were Catholics. The Mexicans were Catholic. The US Army was Protestant. They didn't much care for slavery. Mexico had outlawed it, but the US wanted to expand it by taking Mexican land. Some said it was the brutal conditions in the US army; some said they were drunk; others said it was the señoritas. All those reasons sounded good to me. This war had the highest desertion rate in US history for good reason.

In August 1991, I flew to Zacatecas, Mexico, for the third round of the NAFTA negotiations. It was my first trip to Mexico and much to my surprise, I found a town full of cowboys and farmers who looked a lot like my Irish uncles in Eastern Washington, except, of course, that the Zacatecans spoke Spanish. I also met organisers from an independent labour federation called the FAT which had organised the alternative 'people's forum' that I was attending.

The Labor Center Mission

When I returned from Zacatecas, I organised a Labor Education Center mission to develop relations with the FAT. We arrived in Mexico City in mid-March 1992, a few days before St. Patrick's Day. There were five of us from the Labor Center, myself, Ellen Shortt, Mary Rose Livingston, Kathleen Byrd and Helen Lee. Tom and Barb Laney soon joined us from St. Paul. We were hosted by a cadre of union organisers and Ford workers from the Cuauitlán plant.



The revived Batallón at San Patricio/Melaque, 1995

We visited the Museum of Anti-Interventions in Churubusco. The Convento de Churubusco was the site of the last battle of the battalion in the war of 1847. Outside the walls of the Convento were markers honouring the battalion. After we toured the museum with its history of foreign invasions, we were walking around outside and discovered a side street, right in front of the

museum. It was a street named after 'Capitán John O'Reilly, Cmdte, Batallón de San Patricio.' History was coming alive.

Our hosts took us up to Plaza San Jacinto on St. Patrick's Day, and Mexican historians recounted to us the battalion's history as we sat in their barracks, now a furniture store. Afterwards, we sat in the square, as our friends played Mexican ballads. Somehow our hosts found a bottle of Jameson whiskey and we drank it until the police arrived. They were Irish, though, so we returned to our hotel rather than the police station.

Reviving the Battalion

When we got back home to Olympia, we started to see the Irish everywhere in Mexican history. Not only were there the battalion members in 1847, but sixty years later there were revolutionary heroes like Dorete O'Arango, Emilián O'Zapata, Alvaro O'Brien and the longest lasting of them all, Genoveso de la O! We also heard that the descendants of the battalion had been meeting with the great Lázaro Cárdenas just before he nationalised Mexico's oil on 18 March 1938.

We also noticed that many of the organisers in Canada and the United States who were making alliances with the Mexicans to oppose the NAFTA were Irish. All of a sudden, we realised that the battalion was still alive building links between the two peoples. When our most famous baseball star, Edgar Martínez, opened negotiations with the Seattle Mariners management, he reportedly started off by demanding the renegotiation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the treaty that ended the US invasion of Mexico in 1847.

Setting up the Organisation

Being organisers, we decided to form an organisation, the Heroico Batallón de San Patricio, dedicated to celebrating and expanding links between the Irish and the Mexicans. We set up a non-profit corporation and opened a bank account. We created stationery with the battalion symbol and a list of *comandantes* down the left-hand side. We took 'Solidaridad por la Libertad de un Pueblo' as our slogan. We printed and laminated official wallet-sized credentials making us all 'comandantes,' stamped 'Priority.' We ordered T-shirts with the battalion symbol made by Cmdte. Ricardo in Minneapolis, and developed a book list of required reading.



Then, of course, we made up rules. Comandantes had to have at least four names. Each comandante took on a '*cargo*' - an area of responsibility - a way of shifting resources from north to south. Comandantes could only show their credentials when necessary and they needed to attend their daily mass.

Discovering San Patricio/Melaque

For the academic year 1994-1995, I took a sabbatical from the Evergreen State College and along with my wife, Bethany Weidner, and our two sons, JD Ross and Chad the Rad Kid Queso, left for Zacatecas, Mexico in August 1994.

Zacatecas is located in North Central Mexico, a beautiful old silver-mining town. However, the ocean, a necessity for those of us who grew up on Puget Sound, was far away. I checked out the *Lonely Planet Guide* to Mexico for the nearest town on the Pacific Ocean and it was a place called San Patricio-Melaque in the state of Jalisco, a twelve-hour bus trip.

What was more interesting, however, was that the guidebook said that this town had a ten-day celebration leading up to St Patrick's day, and that the two towns had originated from two Irish *haciendas*. There was no doubt in our mind that those Irish *haciendas* had been founded by veterans of the original battalion.

We immediately switched the site of our gatherings from the Sacred Plaque in Mexico City to San Patricio, Jalisco and sent out communiqués to all comandantes (*arriba y abajo*) to converge on San Patricio ten days before St. Patrick's day, 17 March 1995. Thus began the now historic relationship between the Heroico Batallón de San Patricio and the people of San Patricio/Melaque.

Our First St. Patrick's Day in San Patricio/Melaque

There were about fifteen of us there for St. Patrick's Day 1995. Friends and family came from Washington State. Two Canadians from British Columbia joined us, along with three Icelandic Vikings, Floki, Breki and Steina, from Reykjavik. Two of these Vikings, Breki and Steina, would become famous in battalion annals for tracking down one of the silver medallions minted in 1960 in honour of the Battalion.

We had lots of fun celebrating our first Saint Patrick's Day in San Patricio/Melaque and we established a pattern of activity that lasted for the next seven years.



The swearing-in ceremony

Our Rituals

We found a wonderful hotel, the Puesta del Sol, run by Nacho and Maya Gutiérrez, that became our headquarters. We attended the evening fireworks display in front of the Church on the Plaza de Armas and dodged the 'torojito' like everyone else. We marched in the Saint Patrick's Day parade proudly wearing our battalion T-shirts and carrying Mexican and Irish flags. We attended mass on St. Patrick's Day where Father Antonio welcomed us.

We also held a communal dinner on the beach at the Terraza Cortez restaurant where we read the names of those who were hung by the US Army and said: 'Muero por la Patria.'

We drank bottles of Jameson thanks to the sponsorship of Irish Distilleries and their public relations man, Paul Scanlon. (Here, however, we came up with a new rule. Begin drinking Jameson's during the day and don't consume it all during the Saint Patrick Day's dinner.)

Our Swearing In

We also came up with a ceremony as a part of our communal dinner to initiate new Comandantes into the Battalion. Each recruit would have to tell us their four names and their 'cargo.' Then, Mary Rose or Marcos Frijolero

would hold a hat over their head (sometimes a Malcolm X hat, other times a *sombrero*), announce their name, and all would salute the new Comandante with 'arriba, abajo, al centro, a dentro' while downing 'your best shot to be Irish,' compliments of Irish Distilleries.

Joint Projects

As participation in our annual event grew, we began taking our responsibilities to the San Patricio/Melaque community more seriously. For a couple of years, everyone brought similar things on the plane. One year it was baseball equipment. The next year it was school supplies. We also formed a Mexican civil association, helped fund a health clinic, a mission church and held a book-signing event for Patrick Hogan's *The Irish Soldiers of Mexico*.

The battalion even got in the business of marrying people and organised an elaborate ceremony for the marriage of Cmdte. Lawrence Alford and Cmdta Teresa Terran. Lawrence was a Vietnam veteran living in San Patricio, and doubling as St. Patrick himself in the St. Patrick Day's parade. Teresa Terrán was one of the first people we met in San Patricio/Melaque and remains a loyal member of the battalion to this day.

Also, by 1999, the battalion was listed as one of the community sponsors of the parade itself.

A New Kiosko

There was an earthquake in October 1995 that cracked many of the buildings in San Patricio/Melaque and destroyed the town's Kiosko in the centre of the town square. It was this tragedy that brought us into closer and sustained contact with the community.

We met Dr. María del Carmen González and members of her organisation, Grupo Femenino, at our battalion gathering in 1996. She had detailed plans to rebuild the Kiosko on the town plaza and we pledged to help. Over the next two years, she raised \$16,000 and the battalion contributed a modest \$2,000. The new Kiosko was completed and opened in March 1998 and much to our surprise, there was a beautiful bronze plaque honouring the battalion's contribution. History had in fact come alive. We were very proud to be recognised by the community.

An English Language Contest

Our work with María del Carmen led to other projects. Her brother Flavio taught at the local school, and we proposed a trip for students who could tell the history of the battalion in English. The school set up a contest and battalion members Tini and Tom from Colorado who ran a biking excursion company, offered



San Patricio town officials at the formal opening of the kiosk, March 1998.

a free trip to Ireland for the winners. As it turned out, Ireland was a bit too far for the students, so the battalion brought the two winners, Ramón and Perla, to Washington State for two weeks of touring and celebrations. Several years later, thanks to help from battalion members H. Dale and K. Fortin, Ramón graduated in architecture from the University of Guadalajara and is now a practising architect.

The 150th Anniversary (1847-1997): A Letter from the President

We made a great effort to highlight the 150th anniversary of the battalion, as did the Mexican government, which produced a postage stamp in our honour. We mailed postcards to all the educational unions in Mexico inviting them to San Patricio and brought about fifty people to our headquarters at the Puesta del Sol.

However, our greatest accomplishment was when battalion members in Ireland convinced Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, to send a letter to the people of San Patricio/Melaque.

She wrote, 'The San Patricio Battalion fought with distinction on the side of Mexico and many members of the battalion paid the ultimate price for their bravery. Their participation established a bond of friendship and warmth between the peoples of Mexico and Ireland that lives on to this day'. She concluded her letter by writing, 'I would like to send my warm good wishes to all those who will gather to reflect on the contribution of this Irish battalion in San Patricio-Melaque, for a most enjoyable and fruitful celebration.'



New preparatoria school in San Patricio/Melaque

A New High School

From our work with Flavio González, we met another teacher, Adalberto Vigil, who had a bigger project in mind. He wanted to build a new high school, a Preparatoria, for the kids in San Patricio/Melaque. For several years, there was a community debate about the location of the new high school and the battalion did its best to stay clear of the controversy. By 1999, the site was chosen and the battalion was there for the placing of the first stone, but financing still had to be arranged before construction could begin.

The Battalion and Evergreen Students

By Spring 2000, I felt that the Battalion had established itself well enough to organise a joint project with students from my college. I organised a Spring class called 'The Mexican Nation-State'. Evergreen students studied Mexican Independence and the Mexican Revolution while travelling for the month of April on the route of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata from Chihuahua to Morelos. We concluded our trip by participating in the May Day Parade in Mexico City that, among other things, honours the struggle of the American worker for the eight-hour working day in the late 1880s.

After one month of travel, high-school teachers Adalberto and Rosa organised a one-month home stay in San Patricio/Melaque. My students lived for the month of May in the homes of the parents who wanted to build a new high school. In exchange my students each made a donation to the school construction fund.

The joint project worked so well this first year that we agreed to do this class and home stay again in Spring 2002.

In Spring 2002, I was bringing more students to Mexico for a month's study of the Mexican Revolution and to San Patricio for another month's home stay.

As was my custom, I first delivered the \$4000 in home stay funds to the San Patricio High School Construction Fund and then flew to Chihuahua to meet my students and begin our travels. I was supposed to return to San Patricio with my students by early May to participate in the opening of the new High School. The battalion was by now the largest private donor to new High School.

We never made it. In fact, we were expelled from Mexico on 2 May 2002.

The Battalion and the People of Atenco

As we travelled in Mexico that April, I asked each of my students to develop a research project that they would present to the people of San Patricio/Melaque in their community centre at the end of May.

Two of my students were studying the *ejido* system of communal land ownership in Mexico. While we were travelling, they became interested in the conflict between the Mexican federal government and the people from an *ejido* called Atenco. The people of this *ejido* were resisting a federal domain decree condemning their land for a new 11,000-acre, six -runway airport on the outskirts of Mexico City.

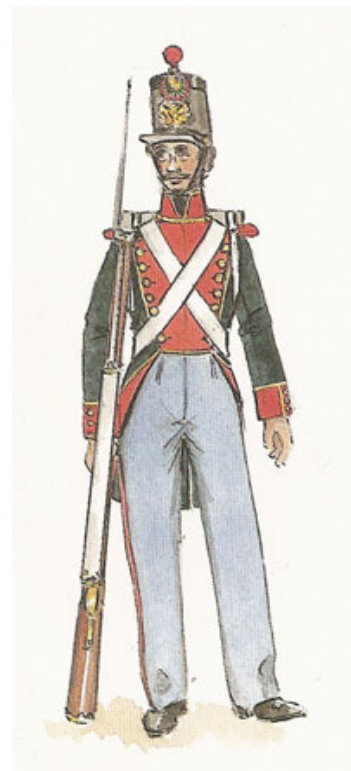
Just before arriving in Mexico City to participate in the May Day Parade, we had spent four days travelling the route of Emilio Zapata in the state of Morelos and studying his movement's main contribution to the Mexican Constitution of 1917, mainly the communally owned land system.

Once in Mexico City, the two students went to visit Atenco and came back with an invitation to march with the people of Atenco in the May Day Parade. We agreed and joined them on the broad boulevard of Reforma and entered the narrow street of Madero from which the parade participants pour into Mexico City's huge square, the Zócalo.

As was our practice when we marched, all my students wore their battalion T-shirts with the symbol of the Mexican eagle and the Celtic cross on the front and 'San Patricio, Home of the Battalion' on the back.

A month earlier, when we had marched in Hidalgo de Parral, Chihuahua, to honour the local heroine Elissa Grissen for leading the expulsion of General Pershing's army, we had proudly marched just behind the Mexican army band. When we entered the community auditorium, we were greeted as descendants of the original battalion and applauded for our commitment to Mexico.

When we entered the Zócalo with the people of Atenco on May Day, we received a different welcome. The private television company, Televisa, tried and convicted us on national television for interfering in the internal politics of



Officer of the San Patricio Battalion
(Glenn Thompson, *Irish Stamps*, 1997)

Mexico. A few of my students were carrying machetes which had been given to them by the farmers and this made sensational photographs in the international press.

The next day, 2 May, as we travelled toward San Patricio/Melaque to attend the opening of the new High School and begin our home stay, we were taken off the bus by federal police outside Guadalajara and four hours later put on an Aeroméxico flight to Los Angeles.

Our official expulsion papers said that we had engaged in activities not sanctioned by our tourist visas. The 'activities' were not specified. Nevertheless, when we got home, we were asked by college authorities and the Mexican consulate to apologise for 'interfering in the internal politics of Mexico', something we had not been formally charged with. We refused.

In a written statement to both the college and Mexican authorities, we apologised for whatever violation of Mexican law we might have committed, but said that while we did not go to Mexico to march with the people of Atenco, we were proud to have done so.

Two months later in August 2002, the Mexican federal government cancelled their plans for an airport on the Atenco land.

The Battalion Continues

Like the original battalion, the revived battalion ran into some problems with a Mexican administration. However, the Mexican tradition of hospitality and the battalion's commitment to honouring and building links between the Irish and the Mexicans will overcome these problems.

The newly built Kiosko remains central to the social life of San Patricio/Melaque. The new High School has opened and students are graduating. Some of the battalion members who were expelled have organised a sustained book drive to provide Spanish language literature to the new High School library. All books are stamped with the battalion symbol. Battalion members continue their participation in the Saint Patrick's Day celebrations and are working on new projects with the town. Our attachment to the people of Atenco remains. 'Land and Liberty' is as Irish as it is Mexican.

Dan Leahy

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The Saint Patrick Battalion

A song by David Rovics ("Living in these Times", 2001)



My name is John Riley
I'll have your ear only a while
I left my dear home in Ireland
It was death, starvation or exile
And when I got to America
It was my duty to go
Enter the Army and slog across Texas
To join in the war against Mexico

It was there in the pueblos and hillsides
That I saw the mistake I had made
Part of a conquering army
With the morals of a bayonet blade
So in the midst of these poor, dying Catholics
Screaming children, the burning stench of it all
Myself and two hundred Irishmen
Decided to rise to the call

(Chorus)

*From Dublin City to San Diego
We witnessed freedom denied
So we formed the Saint Patrick Battalion
And we fought on the Mexican side*

We marched 'neath the green flag of Saint Patrick
Emblazoned with "Erin Go Bragh"
Bright with the harp and the shamrock
And "Libertad para Mexicana"
Just fifty years after Wolf Tone
Five thousand miles away
The Yanks called us a Legion of Strangers
And they can talk as they may

(Chorus)

We fought them in Matamoros
While their volunteers were raping the nuns
In Monterrey and Cerro Gordo
We fought on as Ireland 's sons
We were the red-headed fighters for freedom
Amidst these brown-skinned women and men
Side by side we fought against tyranny
And I daresay we'd do it again

(Chorus)

We fought them in five major battles
Churubusco was the last
Overwhelmed by the cannons from Boston
We fell after each mortar blast
Most of us died on that hillside
In the service of the Mexican state
So far from our occupied homeland
We were heroes and victims of fate

(Chorus)

Acknowledgement

The editors are thankful to David Rovics for his permission to publish the lyrics and live recording of his song. Other works by David Rovics are available in his website (<http://www.davidrovics.com/>).

Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

John Dynamite The Adventures of a Filibuster

By José Antonio Quintana García [1]
Translated by Annette Leahy



*The pirate ship Alabama
(Harper's Weekly, 1 November 1862)*

The seagulls hovered at sea level to catch the slippery fish. They executed elegant pirouettes and then, with their prey firmly grasped in their beaks, they rose upwards until the raw flesh was devoured. This scene was repeated over and over again. Once their appetites were satisfied, they went to rest on the masts of the numerous ships anchored at George Steer's shipyard.

Near the East River, in the house of the Irishman O'Brien, a new baby was born. It was 20 April 1837. The rough hands of the immigrant, a native of County Longford, Ireland, lifted the newborn into the air. Smiling, the mother watched her husband, one-time farmer turned machinist through necessity.

The boy crawled on the deck of the ships. There he took his first steps and he felt, from the very beginning, that his life would be tied to the sea. Near to his home were the shipyards of Steer, Webb, Brown, Collier, Mackey, Joyce and Roosevelt. The ships' boilers were constructed at Morgan and Novelty's foundry, located on the periphery of the shipyards.

School held little attraction for the young O'Brien. His teachers failed to motivate him, because his thoughts were always on the ships. Classes would barely be over when he went to the shipyards to work until nightfall without earning a cent. This passion brimmed over when his brother Peter, who owned a rowboat, took him to Greenpoint. The teenager learned quickly. He quickly mastered sailing on the small single-sailed boat. He managed to navigate through the difficult channel that separates the Long Island Sound and the East River. At thirteen years of age, his muscles began to develop beneath his sailor's shirt. He had a firm, dreamer's gaze, a broad nose, thick hair, protruding chin. His face appeared wild. His tough personality was already showing through. The sea was his best school and ships the best method of teaching.

It was in no way surprising that he should leave school and, without his father's permission, offer his services as a cook to Luke Russel, captain of the fishing boat *Albion*. In his memoirs, John wrote:

I couldn't even boil a pot of water without burning it, but I could catch a cod where nobody else could. Luke was happier with this ability than with the discovery he made about my inability to cook and I remained at his side all that winter until Peter found me and made me return home. [2]

His worried parents noted John's enduring sadness. Taciturn, he would spend long hours watching the movement of the ships. His heart was heavy. He wanted to return to his nautical wanderings and they had to let him have his way. He was stubborn, like a good Irishman, and he would not have his arm twisted. His destiny was to hold adventures, and long and dangerous voyages, and nobody, absolutely nobody could stop him from fulfilling it. Besides, no better career awaited a poor immigrants' son.

John's apprenticeship continued for a few more years; he alternated his studies to obtain the title of captain at Thom School, Cherry Street, with practical experience on the ship *Jane*. But the Civil War broke out and O'Brien introduced himself to the lawyer Edward N Dickinson of Far Rockway with the hope of joining his ship's crew. He was turned down on account of his young years.

The boy persisted and in the summer of 1862, on board the *Illinois*, he took part in a difficult voyage. On returning to New York he received his qualification.

Filibuster

The schooner *Deer* was to transport a cargo of goods to Matamoros, Mexico. John was employed as an officer. On the journey, they were hounded by bad weather and took refuge on the island of Nassau to repair the ship. There the captain lost his job due to ineptitude; one of the ship's owners appointed John to the vacant position and confided in him. Before continuing on the voyage he admitted that they were smuggling arms for the Confederates. The contraband was destined for Brownsville, Texas. From Matamoros the cargo would be transported via the Río Grande. O'Brien did not raise any objections about the new adventure. However, the North-American consul on the island found out about the *Deer's* plans and ordered the holds to be checked on the following day. Nevertheless the smugglers escaped, as they raised anchor very early in the morning. At the mouth of the port, a Federal cruiser passed beside them. They sailed faster, because they knew that if they were captured, the gallows awaited them.



The *Deer* 'was more than just a light ship: it flew. We kept a careful watch on prow and stern, both day and night', tells O'Brien, 'but we noticed nothing that looked like the enemy, the possibility of a chase across the Gulf was exciting; then I became infected with the seed of filibuster fever (...).' John was happy with the outcome of the journey. He had been paid a large sum of money and the *Deer's* owner, after selling the schooner and dispatching the cargo, gave him a further one hundred dollars for the trip to New York. He made the return trip aboard the schooner *Pride of the Waves*.

Under Marco Aurelio's Command

It was in 1887 that the *City of Mexico*, the crew of which was led by O'Brien, passed into the hands of Marco Aurelio Soto, former president of Honduras. Friends of the former head of state plotted for him to recoup this position. They organised an expedition that failed when the *City of Mexico* was captured in Jamaican waters by the British authorities.

Marco Aurelio's followers persevered with their plans and hired O'Brien at the head of the Norwegian steamship *Fram*. The Irishman sailed to Turks Island, to the north of Santo Domingo. There a contingent of expeditionaries was waiting, ready to invade Honduras. O'Brien fulfilled his duties with the men who had hired him and returned to New York. [3]

Captain Dynamite

John wandered aimlessly around the dock of Iron Babel, looking for some risky adventure that would release him from the routine of his life. This opportunity presented itself in the first days of summer 1888, when an affluent Cuban arrived in the city in need of a brave captain to transport sixty tonnes of dynamite to Panama.

The rumour in the taverns was that the dynamite would be used for a planned insurrection in Cuba. The Cuban already had a schooner, *The Rambler*, which he had purchased from Commodore Thomas, and which was the largest ship in the New York shipyard. Yet the days passed without him finding the daring captain who would take this dangerous cargo to the port of Colón. As soon as they found out what it was they would be transporting in the hold they refused.

'Don't waste your time, my friend, go see the Irishman O'Brien. He's the man you're looking for', he was told when he was already contemplating returning to the Isthmus empty-handed.



Gulf of Mexico at the border of Texas and Louisiana
(Morton Robert A. *Coastal Classification Atlas*)

On first impressions, he thought that they had been joking with him. The Irishman did not look like much. He was short and thin. He thought that this man could never be the protagonist of the extraordinary feats he had been told about. Nevertheless, he had no other candidate.

O'Brien accepted immediately, attracted more by the adventure than by the large sum he was offered. The dynamite was packed in cylindrical containers one inch in diameter and a foot long, protected by sawdust and placed in fifty-pound boxes.

While the schooner waited under the watchful eye of the Statue of Liberty, O'Brien lied in order to hire a crew. He told the sailors that they were going to Panama to collect the ship's owner, who owned a coal business. He also

told them that from there they would embark on a long voyage and that was why they were carrying plentiful provisions in the hold.

These were the first days of summer. In the Gulf of Mexico the waves gently beat against the schooner. The sky was clear. The evening fell early and the sailors who were not on watch soon gave in to slumber only to be awoken in the midst of thunder, lightning and heavy rain.

The gusts of wind threatened to carry off the sails with them. O'Brien ordered them to be lowered immediately. *The Rambler* galloped about like a rider on a wild horse. Some sailors prayed, while the captain only thought about the risk of an electrical charge falling on the boxes of dynamite - and boom.

At midnight the storm still had not diminished in intensity. The brusque movements of the boat could have caused an explosion. O'Brien slipped down to the hold to make sure that the boxes were in their places. His fears were not unfounded. Using some pieces of wood and canvas straps he managed to return them to order. The boat continued creaking as if, at a second's notice, it would shatter into pieces. It was a long night.

Finally the sun laid the last traces of the storm to rest. At full speed, the schooner sailed to Jamaica, where they took on ice. Then they continued on to Boca del Toro. There they handed over the vessel and each man went his separate way.

O'Brien waited for the boat that would take him to New York. Every day he walked along the narrow streets of the old port where there was little to admire. To make matters worse, cholera invaded the captain's body. As soon as he could get out of bed he left for the United States. There his colleagues in Hell Gate, in between jokes and deep gulps of whiskey, baptised him John Dynamite. That is how he became known during the war of 1895, during which he served Cuba's cause for independence against the Spanish. In this struggle he left a trail of heroic exploits in his wake, carving legends of bravery.

On his steamship *Bermudas* and on other vessels he transported valuable war supplies and rebel troops to the island. Among the illustrious passengers he carried was Calixto García, Lieutenant-General of the Liberation Army of Cuba. His adventures at sea, thwarting Spanish cannons, and throwing Spanish and Yankee spies off the scent in the United States, could be the plot of a novel. But that is another story and one that will be told in the next issue of this publication.



José Antonio Quintana García

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Notes

[1] José Antonio Quintana García (Ciego de Ávila, 1970), B.A. Education 1996. A Cuban professor of history, editor and journalist, Quintana García is editor-in-chief at the weekly *Invasor*. He is the author of *Alas de Cóndor* (2001), *Crónica de una matanza impune* (2001), *Más allá del soldado, anécdotas del Cbe* (2004) and other books and articles.

[2] A copy of John's memoirs is housed in the Sala Cubana of Cuba's José Martí National Library. The translator's name does not appear.

[3] Herminio Portell Vilá, 'John O'Brien Dinamita, el Capitán Dinamita' in *Vidas de la unidad americana, 25 biografías de americanos ilustres*, Editorial Minerva, Havana (1944), 358.

St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires An Expression of Urban Folk Tradition

By María Inés Palleiro, Patricio Parente and Flora Delfino Kraft *

Translated by Annette Leahy

Theoretical considerations

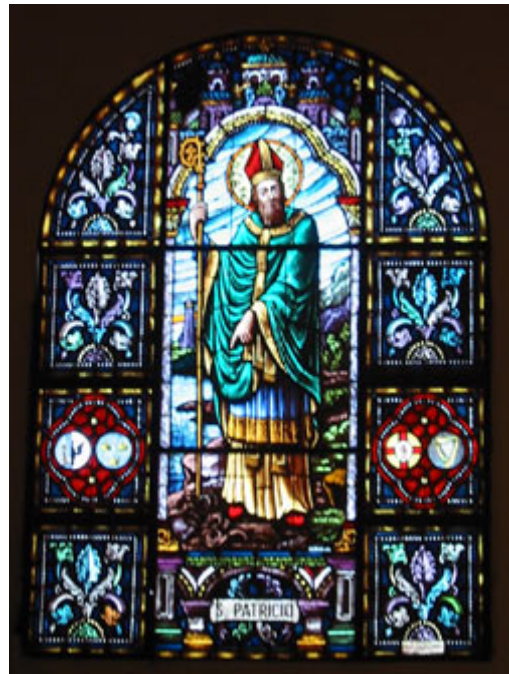
In order to study the processes of traditionalisation and inversion of traditions in the urban sphere, we take as our focal point the specific case of St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires in 2005 and its redefinition in 2006. We contextualise this event within the processes of the appropriation of public space connected to consumerism, which allow us to demonstrate the socio-cultural transformations which are currently taking place in Buenos Aires (Martín 2005), examined within the disciplinary field of folk-tradition.

We use the concept of *'performance'* as defined by Richard Bauman (1975, 1986) in the sense of a form of aesthetically marked communication, carried out in a concrete socio-historical context and before an audience that assesses its communicative effectiveness. We consider the aforementioned celebration an event of folk-tradition performance, with certain aesthetic characteristics which will be analysed in this paper. We can characterise the traditional folk message as the spontaneous expression of a group's differential identity (Bauman 1974), constructed as such by means of a contrasting comparison with other groups in a determined social context. [1] We emphasise the processual dimension of traditions (Fine 1989, Handler y Linnekin 1984), signifying a dynamic performance of the past undertaken in the present and, in this sense, we pay special attention to the 'invention' of tradition (Hobsbawn 1983), linked to the poetic reconstruction of historical subject matter (White 1988). Such a reconstruction, according to our hypothesis, relates to the act of redefining significance and symbols such as the emblematic figure of St. Patrick, in new contexts of expression.

With these theoretical bases, we compiled an archive of material relating to the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, understanding archive in the etymological sense of *arkhé* or principle of organising the past and memory (Derrida, 1997). In putting together this archive, we adopted a genetic hypertextual focus (Palleiro 2004a 2004b) which proposes a means of ordering materials capable of reflecting its own process, leaving the marks of the dynamic of construction or genesis and its itineraries of circulation visible, similar to those of a virtual hypertext, which reflect the flexible connective structure of the processes of memory construction (Assmn 1997).

Starting with this archive, we proposed an analytical route through the main points of the history and legend in the medieval tradition, the immigrant communities of the American continent and the plural convergence of identities and memories in St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires, as shown in the different areas of celebration: from religious services to street parties and Celtic festivals; the processes of the carnivalesque inversion and reversion of the canonical celebration in the street celebration; the marketing of the celebration in advertising discourse, and the comments on the event in the virtual fora of the internet. All these aspects, which we will briefly summarise in what follows, were approached in a more detailed manner in our research, which has been published.

A new contribution which we would like to outline in this paper, as a means of proposal for a diachronic study of the event in relation to the redefinition of Ireland's patron saint's day in the Argentine context, is to point out some



Stained-glass window in St. Patrick's chapel at Santa Lucía, district of San Pedro, province of Buenos Aires
(Edmundo Murray, January 2003)

of the transformations that have taken place in 2006, which correspond to the position adopted by Argentina's Irish community regarding the events of 2005.

St. Patrick: history and legend in medieval tradition

Regarding the historical existence of the saint, we can situate his birth in the year 389 into the heart of a family of Welsh origin, and his life as a slave from the age of sixteen in Ireland until his escape to Italy by ship six years later. There he was ordained a priest, later returning to Ireland to evangelise on the island. His preaching and work as a priest continued up to his death on 17 March 464. Woodeene Koenig-Bricker (1996), author of *365 Saints: Your daily guide to the wisdom and wonder of their lives*, presents the emblematic figure of St. Patrick as 'someone whose life contains as much fiction as fact'. In the same way the religious literature faces us with the problem of the crossovers between fiction and reality, as emphasised in the historiography of Hayden White (1988) in his thoughts on the 'poetics of history', and by Roland Barthes (1970) in literary theory in his studies on 'the illusion of reality'. This theme was one of the focal points of Palleiro's doctoral thesis (1993), dedicated to the study of the methods of fictionalisation of historical context in traditional narrative discourse.

The character of the saint who, in his role as paradigmatic figure, legitimises the popular celebration in its articulation between history, fiction and legend, is one of the main aspects of our research. This problem leads us to consider his links to exemplary literature, tackled by Susan Suleiman (1977), among others, in her paper 'History as example, and example as history'. For his part, the medievalist Welter (1927), in his work on exemplary literature in the Middle Ages, defines the *exemplo* as an 'account' or 'story', 'fable' or 'parable', 'anecdote' or account used to support a doctrinal, religious or moral statement. He thus emphasises the dependence of the *exemplo*, as a type of discourse, in relation to doctrinal teachings, which can also be seen in our archive in the sermons of the liturgical celebrations of St. Patrick in Buenos Aires, where the story of the saint's life is used as a pretext for preaching a doctrine. We therefore include, as part of our archive, different versions of the saint's life taken from hagiographic writings, whose most distinctive feature is the intertextual framework between a written register and oral tradition. Such texts interweave fictional elements characteristic of legendary discourse – whose defining feature is a fictional elaboration of belief (Dégh y Vászonyi 1976)- with a canonical discourse which legitimises the figure of the saint as a paradigmatic model, composed of an emblematic concentration of 'Christian virtue'. In the celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires, this line of argument from exemplary literature will be taken up again in the sermons of the liturgical celebrations.



St. Patrick's church at San Antonio de Areco, province of Buenos Aires (Edmundo Murray, January 2003)

The celebration of St. Patrick in the European context and its re-traditionalisation in America

Taking the concept of the 'invention' of traditions as a starting point (Hobsbawn 1983), concerning the processes of redefining elements of the traditional culture of certain groups in different contexts, we wish to emphasise the journey of St. Patrick's Day celebrations from Europe to the American continent and its links to migratory movements. Due to spatial constraints, we will only mention the celebrations in Québec and Mexico City, by way of comparison with the celebrations in Ireland.

St. Patrick's Day grew more important outside Ireland when Irish immigrants, as a minority group, faced the problem of differentiating themselves from other European ethnic groups with whom they shared a number of customs. In this way the celebrations acquired a value as a symbol of differential identity (Bauman 1974).

This is what happened in the Québec area where the English-speaking Irish found themselves in a unique linguistic context among the predominant French-speaking population and, as speaking English naturally distanced them from the majority, they did not feel the need to use the Gaelic language as an ethnic signifier (Schmitz 1991). Within its particular religious context, their Catholicism placed them in a subordinate position in relation to the dominant Protestantism of the English and Scottish. Nevertheless, the rapid recognition of the civil rights of the Francophone French population which followed the British conquest, the presence of Irish people in different social strata and their marriage to French people, were all factors that prevented the formation of a ghetto situation in Québec. Thus, with the

passing of time, it was more and more difficult to proclaim a 'purist' ancestry among the numerous Irish, which allows us establish a certain parallel with the Irish community in Buenos Aires. Nowadays, the assimilation of the Irish has acquired a greater dynamism and St. Patrick's Day has been incorporated into the 'tradition' of urban celebrations in the city of Québec, where anyone can be 'Irish for a day'.

For its part, the celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Mexico City appears on the internet's virtual network as an 'Irish party' with a global dimension, in contrast to the deep-rooted local folk celebrations such as the Day of the Dead. The name of Ireland's patron saint is used by an Irish battalion, the St. Patrick's Battalion, as an emblem of the courage and heroism of a group of Irishmen, considered martyrs, who gave their lives for the Mexican cause during the North American invasion of 1847. In Argentina also, the saint was associated with Irishmen who took up arms and defended the nation, such as William Brown. In sum, the dynamic between local and global and the union of the patron saint of Ireland with emblems of nationality can also be seen in the celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires in 2006, which is this article's main point of interest, from the point of view of the analysis of the diachronic changes in regard to the celebrations in previous years, and tackling the specificities of this historical context.

The liturgical celebration of the patron saint of Ireland in Argentina

In the context of Buenos Aires, the liturgical celebration of St. Patrick's Day is seen by its participants as a festival for the Catholic community and particularly the Irish Catholic community. This event is organised around a sequence of religious practices, and has a special place within the canonical calendar, where the saints are remembered systematically each year on the day of their death in accordance with a *canon* legitimised by the ecclesiastical institution (Le Goff 1996). This context of a religious service shares characteristics with other commemorations; among which we find the performance of a past fact in the here and now which simultaneously generates a re-elaboration of its meaning in the present. In this communicative performance, the participants consider the celebrant a symbol of the ecclesiastical institution in the role of the authorised *performer* and legitimate narrator of a story, whose clothing and intonation, and the very ornamentation of the temple favour the reception of a message which attempts to achieve the audience's support in terms of belief (Birge-Vitz 1987). This allows for a narrative composed like a sermon which, on the one hand, is similar to mythic discourse in so far as it suspends temporality (Eliade 1968) and represents the patron saint as a divine mediator (Baños Vallejo 1989), and on the other hand, emphasises the historical dimension of the saint's life as an effective tool for the celebrant to achieve an 'effect of reality' in the canonical narration. In this way, the mythical and historical anchoring of the saint's life-story acquires the paradigmatic value of an exemplary life at the service of religious doctrinal teaching which expresses the ethical precepts of the group of participants (Welter *op. cit.*).

Another of the characteristics of this event is shown in the liturgical performance in St. Patrick's church in Belgrano, where we noted the entrance of the celebrants accompanied by the Papal, Irish and Argentine flags, demonstrating the convergence of religious symbolism with emblems of ethnicity. This convergence was reflected in the allusions made by the celebrant Fr. Eugenio Lynch, in the following terms: '...thinking about the patron saint of Ireland... about when he was a child... about shamrocks... the Holy Trinity... symbols which marked my childhood... symbols of St. Patrick, of Ireland and Argentina... St. Patrick... a young man who was a slave... who left his life to be a missionary... Sometimes we lose the value... of symbols, of flags... and we are caught up in the symbols of commerce...' Also in the celebration, the figure of St. Patrick was linked to ethnic emblems as collective processes of identity construction, as set forth by the celebrant of the Church of Santa Cruz in the question: 'Did Ireland save the culture of a large part of Europe? An important question...'

Finally, in the liturgical sermon as well as in the interviews with the different participants in the parish hall that took place at a later date, the existence of the street parties identified with media and commercial interests was mentioned. One of the participants observed that: 'We do not like the street parties very much... because the religious significance is lost', while another young woman asserted 'The street parties... as long as the idea of celebrating the saint is maintained, that's fine, but getting drunk, no...'

The surveys carried out in the rural context of San Antonio de Areco (Province of Buenos Aires) demonstrate the same contrast between the Festival of San Antonio de Areco, closely linked to the liturgical celebrations and the Irish traditions, with the excesses attributed to the 'street' celebrations in the city of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, however, the traditional Irish contribution is emphatically linked to the local *criollista* tradition, as exemplified in the relationship established by the parish priest and Irish descendants between St. Patrick and figures like William Brown, the *gauchista* author Ricardo Güiraldes and, in the present day, the historian and journalist Pacho O'Donnell, as models of ethnic identity.

In short, these social actors, both urban and rural, refer to the figure of St. Patrick as a marker of a differential identity which concentrates religious, national and ethnic symbols in the context of a form of celebration situated in



The faithful approach a statue of St. Patrick during a Roman Catholic celebration (EPIF Photo Archive, 20 March 2005).

reduced spheres. We will now consider these festive forms and their comparison to Celtic festivals and street celebrations.

St. Patrick and the Celtic festivals

The ‘Celtic Festival of St. Patrick’ which was held on 18 March 2005 in the *Auditorio* theatre in Belgrano demonstrates the celebration of St. Patrick as a show destined for a wider audience. In this sense, the performance took the form of a Celtic music and dance show, which included Galician as well as Irish repertoires courtesy of the groups *Celtic Argentina*, *O’Connor Celtic Band*, *Na Fianna* and *El bolsón de Frodo*.

Without pausing to analyse these events, which we will leave for a future paper, it is worth mentioning how the category Celtic has opened up to include Galician as well as Irish, and the mention of the paradigmatic figure of St. Patrick in the festival’s leaflets and programmes, which note his biographical information, emphasise his role as saint, priest, missionary and Ireland’s evangelist (‘...he travelled to Ireland to carry Christ’s word’), emphasise the legendary aspects of his character (‘legend has it that... he banished the snakes from Ireland, which fled to the sea and drowned’) and the symbols associated with his figure, such as the shamrock and the Celtic cross. Such symbols gave rise to the widespread marketing of icons such as shamrocks, leprechauns, Celtic crosses, stickers of the saint, hats, T-shirts with the shamrock icon, all of which formed part of a ‘Celtic-Expo’ which happened at the same time as the festival, in which the selling of beer and typical Irish and Galician food were also a feature. It is worth highlighting in this respect that *Isenbeck* was sponsoring the event, and advertised its beer in the festival’s programme.



Ceolraidh choir at the Celtic Festival
(Auditorio de Belgrano, 11 September 2004)

In interviews carried out with two groups of young people between 20 and 22 years old and a couple aged 52 and 57 attending the festival, they claimed to be ‘followers of the Celtic vibe’. They declared that their attendance at the festival was due to their love of music and dance and the possibility of buying crafts. When asked if they had known about the figure of St. Patrick before, they responded negatively and referred back to the information received at the festival, at which his biography was read aloud by a voice ‘off-stage’. A group of young girls said that they thought it was good that the Irish community celebrated their festival and, also, that their was an element of cultural exchange; but that, to be on equal terms, ‘we Argentines should preserve and spread our traditions.’ A young musician offered a very interesting opinion: he said that he did not like the festival taking root in Argentina, because of the way in which it simplified and trivialised

Celtic culture, reducing it to ‘the little leprechauns and the little shamrock’ and used the music as an example, defining it as ‘a mix of arrangements from various musical styles, because original Irish music would not be very attractive to modern listeners’. The older couple felt that the celebration of St. Patrick’s Day in Argentina was simply a trend that would soon pass, as they all do.

In summary, in these festivals the figure of St. Patrick was a pretext in order to enjoy a music and dance show of diverse origins concentrated around the ‘Celtic’ signifier, and for merchandising characterised by this same heterogeneity, which even included the sale of traditional Argentine crafts, together with crafts advertised as ‘Irish’ and, in a much smaller number, Galician, accompanied by the sale of food and beer from the sponsorship company, with a consumption level that did not reach the excesses that marked the street celebrations.

In 2006, ‘The Great Celtic Festival of St. Patrick’ held in the *Auditorio* theatre in Belgrano, the repertoire of which comprised ‘Celtic’ music and dance performed by Argentine groups like *Celtic Argentina*, *Na Fianna*, *Shiga Draoi* and others, restricted the sale of beer during the intervals to purely ‘home-brewed’, more expensive than industrial brands like *Quilmes* or *Isenbeck*, and resulting in the reduced consumption of this alcoholic beverage by the attending public. This is a clear example of the re-appropriation of the ‘rhetoric of control’ of the previous year’s media debate which we will examine in what follows.

The street celebrations: a diverse crowd

On 17 March 2005, some streets in the Retiro area of the city of Buenos Aires were the stage for a crowded celebration organised by the group of bars and breweries and the Government of Buenos Aires, which set the scene for a *performance* with its own meaning (Parente 2006). In the past four or five years these celebrations have redefined their exclusivity in order to attract tens of thousands of people, the majority of whom have no connection to the migrant group, and who consume large quantities of beer. Using first-hand observation as a means of surveying, we noticed that the party in Retiro mainly attracted the active participation of young people, the majority from a middle-class social group, particularly office staff who work in downtown Buenos Aires and who join in the celebration after finishing work.



San Martín street in Buenos Aires, 17 March 2005

In principle, this public celebration of the Irish saint can be considered as a kind of carnival similar to the public holidays of the Middle Ages with their burlesque and grotesque demonstrations far removed from the serious tone of religious services and official parish celebrations (Bajtín 1987). In the street parties we encounter a transformation from the ideal to the material and physical plane demonstrated by the behaviour of the attendees: excess, close physical contact, the euphoric behaviour of the participants channelled through shouting and jumping, and an uninhibited vocabulary full of elements associated with the satisfaction of bodily desires such as sex and drinking alcohol. In parallel, we could note the total freedom of alcohol consumption on the streets, the lack of official regulation with regards to the ban on cars in the streets, and the appropriation by individuals, as *performers*, of public space according to their specific needs and desires. A police officer who was on duty that night went so far as to affirm in a confidential tone that ‘anything goes here’.

The particular nuances of the celebrations in Buenos Aires are linked to the form that the contemporary attendance took, and its consequent redefinition of St. Patrick’s Day, which distinguish it as much from medieval public expressions as from the contexts of liturgical celebration. If the medieval public carnivals are considered as a spectacle felt and lived as something universal, by everyone and for everyone (Bakhtin *op. cit.*), the feeling of Irish belonging, shared and exalted in the celebration, disappeared in the street carnival, and the satisfaction of the crowd, and the expression of a specific social group to which the invitation was aimed, all of which seemed only to indicate a feeling of fleeting belonging born of their very attendance at the event, where the star attraction was beer. [2]

Furthermore, one of the distinctive features of the celebrations on the streets of Buenos Aires was the radical heterogeneity of the artistic displays. Such heterogeneity was evidenced by the diversity of the mini-musical shows (*murgas*, rock music, Scottish bagpipes) related to different ethnic and social backgrounds, which may be seen as indicators of the lack of a ‘clear’ and ‘unique’ shared social identity. The distinction from liturgical celebrations, and in this case from Celtic festivals, is more obvious if we consider the scarcity of icons representative of Ireland, such as shamrocks and leprechauns, together with the relative absence of the marketing of identifying symbols of the community. In this sense, the street celebrations of St. Patrick’s Day show a multicultural and pluriethnic convergence which cohabits in Buenos Aires in a plural mosaic of identities.

In reference to the street celebrations of 2006, we find the same numerous attendance, but with a greater active police presence and barriers that officially marked the public celebration area. In this way, the intervention of local state bodies in the public festivities can be registered, in part, into the framework of policies of multiculturalism and citizenship (Canale 2006). In parallel, this state cultural policy is linked to the plea for regulation, demanded as much by the Irish community – in its claim of a distancing and usurpation of traditions – as by the residents of the area, of the ‘incidents’ which took place in 2005 and which were recontextualised by the media that year in the debate on ‘lack of safety’, as we will examine in more depth below.

St. Patrick’s Day 2006 and the rhetoric of safety

The celebrations of 2006 showed signs of the impact of an intertextual network of debates about the absence of security, [3] initiated by media campaigns sparked off by, among others,



A crowd celebrating St. Patrick's Day at Reconquista street, downtown Buenos Aires
(*Infobae.com, 18 March 2006*)

the case of the kidnap and murder of Axel Blumberg and the tragedy of the young people who died in the Buenos Aires nightclub Cromañón. The latter event, which led to the political trial and subsequent dismissal from office of the governor of Buenos Aires, Dr Aníbal Ibarra, set the scene for a debate about the city government’s safety mechanisms, which could be seen in the discursive construction of the news surrounding the St. Patrick’s Day celebrations. Thus the Buenos Aires morning edition of *Clarín* newspaper reported on the celebrations under the headline ‘St. Patrick’s Day: without incidents, but several closures’, focusing attention on the control mechanisms put into operation for the celebrations. In this way the news report stressed that ‘This time, aiming to avoid incidents, the sale of alcohol on the street was banned...’ and ‘by order of the public prosecutors... 1,100 cans [of beer]... were seized... charges were filed against 40 people ...’ The Security Department of the Government of Buenos Aires informed the press that it had closed ... shops... selling alcohol... and 5 bars... for ... violating the Buenos Aires law... which regulates safety in nightclubs’. The construction of a semantic field surrounding regulation and punishment for any infringement associated with the excessive consumption of alcohol which gives rise to out-of-control behaviour is evident here. The enumerative style, in which the accumulation of details relating to punishments dominate along with the mention of the security authorities, articulates this semantic field drawn around regulation, constructed from the antithesis regarding the excesses of 2005, implied in the temporal sintagma ‘This time’. The use of the typographic tool of bold lettering is also orientated towards highlighting this rhetorical effect, and also intensified by the attention given to the discourse of the image. The article includes a photograph depicting a police officer in a medium shot profile, accompanied by others, whose function, stressed in the paratext which accompanies the photograph (‘A number of police officers patrolled the streets in the traditional celebration’), is to ensure the safety of the street celebrations. All these elements contribute to the discursive construction of this ‘rhetoric of control’ which marked the celebrations of 2006.



St Patrick's Day in Luján, 1912
(The *Southern Cross*, 22 March 1912)

The St. Patrick's Day celebrations according to *The Southern Cross* newspaper

In March 2006, the local newspaper *The Southern Cross*, the Irish community's means of media circulation in Argentina, summed up in the motto 'expressing our Argentine plenitude, from our Irish ancestry' published an editorial in an exhortative tone, entitled 'May St. Patrick's Day return to being an Irish festival', signed by F. O'Killian, a contributor to the newspaper. In a clearly endo-groupal positioning, tied to the 'genuine' tradition of 'the Irish blood which flows through all the descendants of far-distant Erin', the article exhorts, using the inclusive 'we' which establishes a differentiation regarding the exo-group of non-Irish, to 'clean up our image', rectifying the lack of control of the street celebrations and alcohol consumption, associating its dangers with the tragic events of Cromañón. In this way the article's author demands 'safety and regulation'

from the authorities of the Government of Buenos Aires, and closes the article by establishing a distinction between an 'authentic Irish gathering in Adrogué' which corresponds to 'the style of origin, in a safe and respectful atmosphere', and 'the other' which 'cannot continue like this'. Using the rhetorical tool of antithesis, the author requests 'responses and proposals' in order to achieve a transformation in the way it is celebrated. The context of this editorial corresponds to a front page article on 'St. Patrick's Day. The thousand ways to celebrate it', from Dublin to Boston and New York, to Munich and Tokyo, to Luján, Mercedes, Lincoln and Capilla del Señor (Province of Buenos Aires), and from the 'Solemn Mass' of the 'Patron Saint' to the 'street shows and beer' which 'are shown by the media'. This context, which also includes an agenda of celebrations subscribed to by the Federation of Irish-Argentine Societies, connects the canonical religious celebration of the 'Mass celebrated in honour of St. Patrick' to emblems of nationality like the 'tributes' to 'General Don José de San Martín' and to 'Admiral Don Guillermo Brown' and with the 'social gathering' of the Irish community in St. Brendan's College. All of these elements demonstrate the metaphorical concentration of ethnic and religious meanings around the emblematic figure of St. Patrick, united in a dynamic between endo-group and exo-group, linked to a distinction between 'genuine' and 'spurious tradition' to use Handler and Linnekin's (1984) terms. Such aspects serve as a framework for a debate on the safety and control discourse, associated with the excesses of the street celebrations, inserted into an intertextual web which gives rise to a kind of 'rhetoric demanding social regulation' into which the discourses surrounding the Cromañón catastrophe can also be placed. Our hypothesis maintains that this rhetoric produced some modifications in the forms of celebration in 2006, in relation to those we documented in 2005.

Advertising discourse on St. Patrick's Day

The impact of graphic advertising in the St. Patrick's Day street celebrations, which unite five thousand participants, is becoming more and more notorious for the dimensions it has attained in the last four years. For this reason in this section we will try to explore the dynamic which supports the celebration on the streets on the day of Ireland's patron saint. As this feast day is considered a commercial event, we will take into account the strategies of group identification used as means of persuasion which, in advertising narrative discourse, are associated with the Irish community. Broadening the concept of a commercial event, the advertising takes elements susceptible to being recognised by the wider public. These elements put forward as identifying are based on the supposed representations to which the potential audience it is directed towards relates, in this case, Irish identity. Furthermore, we understand that advertising 'campaigns' as concentrated, intensive actions, designed to achieve an objective, which not only refers to the sale of a product but, also to achieving the desired effect in a section of the population, namely the sale of a behaviour, through the use of discursive strategies (Kaplún 1997). We also highlight that a particular feature of these discourses is the homogenisation of diversity, for example, the term 'Celtic' as a signifier in the advertisements is used in different contexts with distinct meanings. The purpose of this strategy is manipulation starting with the convergence of plurality in synthetic expressions which are repeated, stripping the message of nuance and complexity so that it may be effectively appropriated by the public.



Beer advertising at a public house in Buenos Aires, 17 March 2005

In recent times, a diverse range of beer brands have been launched onto the market, like *Warsteiner*, one of the beers that achieved greatest coverage on the streets of downtown Buenos Aires in the week leading up to 2005's celebrations. This company, together with the *Guinness* brand, sponsored the beer party in what were considered the 'sweet times' of the 'dollar-peso one to one'. [4]

In the campaign that they used, *Warsteiner's* graphics stand out as the bottle of beer is taken as a religious symbol. In an iconic subversion with liturgical associations through which the product is worshipped, the religious element is subverted by worshipping alcohol. Furthermore, these graphics were displayed on the streets, especially in the 'La City' area of Buenos Aires, attempting to attract the prospective attendees (or clients) who get together to celebrate the day by drinking beer on the streets and in the pubs. Thus these advertising narratives, drawing on an important iconic foundation, based on the burlesque reversion of the saint's day, contain, in their semiotic game, another implicit narrative which is considered so popular that it can form part of 'what is not said': the saint 'is' the emblem of a community commonly associated with alcohol; and this saint 'is' beer's paradigm. This element implied by the advertisement gives rise to a game of narrative ellipsis, which sets up an intertextual breach between the canonical stories relating to the Irish community's patron saint and the narrative of alcohol, and in particular, beer. It is precisely this 'unsaid' narrative which completes and, at the same time, makes the iconic reversion possible. In summary, it is worth pointing out that the elements chosen in the advertising messages assigned to be recognised by the public are concerned with operations of the construction of Irish identity favoured by the local media. In this way an association would be produced among the public, beginning with identifying the community with beer as it is considered the element which identifies 'Irishness'.

Ireland's patron saint in the virtual nation of the internet: Identity debates and resistance

We shall now examine the idea that St. Patrick's Day appears as a key element for the debate about the redefinition of traditions in the urban context, within the virtual community that is the internet. For this reason we consider relevant the reflection of social identities starting from the recent massive updates and circulation of this celebration commented on in some webfora. We particularly refer to the high levels of attendance of this celebration in recent years; St. Patrick's Day is seen by those attending as an element of the group identification of the Irish community, which does not invalidate the attendance of people outside that community, consuming large quantities of beer, as we noted in reference to the street parties. Attendance extends to young people, whether employees or not in the downtown area, who have access to virtual communication on the internet. We highlight that the commentaries which arise in some web fora refer, [5] on the one hand, to the need to define a contrastive identity in comparison with the immigrant festivities, and on the other, to the devaluing of those who adopt customs promoted in advertising and the media. [6] In this manner, in different messages they try to establish and mark the boundaries of the

'traditional' performance of each group in the face of the complex need to institute a differential and contrastive identity highlighting the effects of recent media promotions on social conduct.

Indeed, in some virtual commentaries, through different critical references, the implied relationship of the overestimation of 'foreign' practices which entails the devaluation of the festivities of the local public, is mentioned. At the same time as, while still recognising the plurality of the communities who settled in the country, and the inter-ethnic relationships of their descendants, the search for a singular identity which distinguishes itself from other cultural units and expresses itself in social rituals continues. Moreover, the existence of a presumption regarding traditions is inferred from the commentaries on the web, given that they are seen as a set of successive and identical phenomena which should be celebrated for their perpetuation and continuity, and whose beginning dates back to an 'original' instance with mythical resonance. Thus, the ruptures, discontinuities and redefinitions of the elements of the past given in the present, as key aspects of the 'traditional' performances, are not taken into account. [7] In this way, 'importing festivities', as is debated on internet fora, corresponds to a re-traditionalisation, where the meanings assigned to the feast day have been selected from the past by advertising agencies, and adopted by the participants. Also, the axiological qualification which alludes to 'being mediocre' in this communicative context is significant. This can be understood as a means of devaluation in the face of the over-valuation of what is Saxon, which is related to an economic and cultural subordination exteriorised as much in the approval of 'foreign' customs linked to the English code, as in the participation in 'traditions' imposed by advertising and the media. [8] Finally we wish to highlight the singular absence of references to the festivities in Buenos Aires on the 'official' web-page designated for the celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Ireland, despite the fact that this celebration has been held on a grand scale for at least the last four years. [9] Therefore we can infer that the Buenos Aires celebration is still not 'visible' for the Irish community, which is paradoxical as, in Buenos Aires, people believe they are recreating the 'legitimately' Irish feast day.

The possible effects of a discursive transference

In reflection, we underline the possible divergence in some registers presented in 2006 in relation to the previous year. In effect, we have noted a discursive distancing as much in the media circulation and in the comments on some webfora, as in the sphere of the Celtic festival previously examined. In 2006 we observed that in the days leading up to St. Patrick's Day, there was little mention of this celebration in the media, and also a reduction in the advertising references to beer aimed at associating Irish identity with that product, targeted at the overwhelming majority of non-Irish people attending. Moreover, we have noted the repeated mention in publications after the event of the effectiveness of institutional regulations on those attending the celebration, through the closure of some businesses and a greater police presence. [10]

The divergence we refer to particularly takes into account the information on the front page of the capital's newspapers in 2005, [11] in which the image of bottles and rubbish after the party was notable: this news story is later expanded upon inside the publications. Yet one year later, the celebration is only referred to inside the newspaper *Clarín*. Although the high levels of attendance of the festival in the downtown area were highlighted, it was also repeatedly pointed out that 'this is the first time that the sale of alcohol in the streets was not permitted'. Similarly, the mention of a greater institutional presence at the event was disseminated in the online version of *Clarín* on the day before the party. Here it was indicated that the public area would be cordoned off to clearly outline the contrast that Parente pointed out regarding the rapid changing of boundaries in the event a year previously. Also, in some webfora the communications only make reference to getting together to 'celebrate St. Patrick's' without debating the participation of people outside the migrant community in the celebrations. We think it possible that these differences may, in part, be linked to some of the comments made by members of that community about this issue. The majority expressed their disapproval of the copious consumption of alcohol in the streets caused by this celebration, as this facilitated a unidirectional association of the saint with beer. In this way, the identification significance that the saint has for this endo-group, linked to his sainthood, is excluded.

We therefore suggest, as possible lines of inquiry for further research, on the one hand, the effective intervention which some members of this group may have in certain social institutions. This incidence may be aimed at mitigating the image perceived as negative, noting the unfavourable light in which their migrant community has been represented to the rest of society. Similarly, it reflects the role of the institutional mechanisms triggered by the demands of the residents of the area, as a consequence of the disturbances caused the previous year. It is therefore possible that protests by certain social groups offer a better opportunity for an effective and evident state presence.



St. Patrick's Day Parade, Dublin
(Embassy of Ireland in Buenos Aires)

In conclusion

We have presented here a non-exhaustive account of the convergence and dispersal of the figure of St. Patrick and his value as an emblem of group identification. We began with his function as *exemplum*, as spiritual edification, present in the different versions which refer to his life and legend. We continued by pointing out the redefinition of Irish traditions in the Canadian and Mexican context, as a migrant group expresses its contrasting and different identities in its social interactions, emphasising folk-tradition *performance* in parades and street parties. We also considered the importance of the religious element as an aspect of group cohesion within the Irish community, and the symbolic function of identification which the liturgical celebration of St. Patrick in rural and

urban contexts produces, and which enables the construction of an exo-group based on excesses and the excessive consumption of alcohol. In this sense, we noted the reversion of the emblem of the saint for that of beer, from advertising ('the young saint of parties and beer', 'the sinner saint', 'the Irish saint') to the party on the streets of downtown Buenos Aires, in which beer was linked to the plural convergence of identities and memories. Finally we examined the debate surrounding the validity of this festival in the city, which appeared on internet fora, in relation to the problem of identity construction.

In view of what has been put forward here, it can be considered that the celebration of St. Patrick's Day constitutes the emblem of cultural identification of a specific migrant group which is shown in the celebration, understood as a *performance*. As with all emblems of identity, this celebration presents elements of rupture and continuity, which favour the adhesion of other participants from outside the Irish community, who transitorily appropriate this differential identity, in the invention of tradition and redefinition of St. Patrick's Day in the city of Buenos Aires.

Ultimately, we noted the effect of a media discourse related to the problem of safety, which gives rise to the appearance of a 'rhetoric of control', and produced modifications in the way it is celebrated, especially those related to the street parties and with the consumption of alcohol associated with the emblematic figure of the saint. Such transformations, in the light of the processes of redefinition of practices and discourses we documented in dealing with the celebrations in 2005 and 2006, demonstrate the impact of context and its fluid relationship as much with the processes of physical appropriation of public space as with the symbolic appropriation of ethnic and religious emblems of identity construction.

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Notes

[1] See Fishman (2004) for an analysis of the concepts of performance and (re)traditionalisation within the framework of new perspectives on Folklore.

[2] As has been comprehensively argued by Artal (2004), it could be asked to what extent these practices are transgressive and question social hierarchies, or whether in fact they justify the *status quo*.

De esta forma, cabe preguntarse hasta qué punto estas prácticas son transgresoras y cuestionadoras de las jerarquías sociales o más bien legitimadoras del *statu quo*, como muy bien discute Artal (2004).

[3] See Delfino Kraft & Tella (2005) for a study of the discursive construction of insecurity in advertising discourse from an anthropological perspective.

[4] Although it is not the objective of this article, we refer to the social impact of economic policies established in the 1990s. One of the significant characteristics was the parity between the Argentine Peso and the US Dollar, formulaically designated as the 'one to one' (*uno a uno*), typical of Buenos Aires folklore.

[5] For reasons of spatial constraints, in this article we limit ourselves to highlighting some statements from the web forum <http://www.pcmasmas.com.ar>, which was consulted in 2005.

[6] One of the user statements demonstrates the complexity of the debate around identity and the legitimacy to participate in various celebrations: 'What bothers me is that, instead of continuing the traditions of our ancestors: [that is,] if you are a Catholic from a Catholic immigrant family, celebrate Christmas or the Virgin's Day, if are a descendant of Mapuche people, celebrate the Nguillantún, and so on. So why do some people celebrate St. Patrick's Day or Hallowe'en??? Because they are common, that's why. Because they ape people on TV, people in the First World, particularly Yankees, right? (Lo que me molesta es que, en vez de continuar con las tradiciones de nuestros antecesores: si sos católico de familia inmigrante católica festejá Navidad o el día de al Virgen, si sos descendiente de mapuches festejá el Nguillantún, etc. Pero porqué algunos festejan San Patricio o Hallowe'en??? Porque son de cuarta, por eso. Porque imitan a los de la tele, a los del primer mundo, en particular a los yanquies, Ta?)

[7] In experiencing tradition, the origin of cultural practices is irrelevant. Its authenticity is always defined within the context in which it takes place. According to Handler and Linnekin (1984), what is meant by 'tradition' is not its historical meaning or its essence, but rather it corresponds to a symbolic and arbitrary designation of the meaning assigned from the present.

[8] In this way, the cognitive representation of English as a universal language may be understood as a consequence of the current political hegemonic position of the United States (Nobía 2004).

[9] See: www.stpatricksday.ie/cms/stpatricksday_celebrations.html. On this website, the various parts of the world where festivals also take place are mentioned. such as Russia, Belgium, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, the Caribbean, London, etc., but not a single country in Africa, the Middle East or South America is mentioned.

[10] In an article in the newspaper *Clarín* entitled: 'San Patricio: sin incidentes pero con varias clausuras' (19 March 2006), it is emphasised that the ban on selling alcohol on the street was intended to prevent incidents. Therefore, 'by order of the municipal attorneys [...] a truck with over a thousand cans, and three other vans carrying alcoholic beverages, were confiscated.' The article also informs that five pubs for selling alcohol outside of their premises, for exceeding their capacity, or for allowing public dances without permission.

[11] This refers to the *Clarín* newspaper of Saturday, 19 March 2005; a year later, the information about this celebration was included on page 64 of *Clarín*, in the section 'La Ciudad' (18 March 2006).

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Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

The Musical Migration of Rodrigo y Gabriela

Interview by Claire Healy

Dos aventureros, amantes de la música, buscaron fortuna en el extranjero y encontraron elogios y aplausos (Rolling Stone México, November 2004) [1]



Rodrigo y Gabriela in concert
(Enda Casey, www.rodgab.com)

The stage is in complete darkness and the audience is hushed in anticipation, as two young guitar-players take their seats. A few seconds later, the entire venue reverberates with the frantic strumming of guitars and the synchronised tapping of the two performers' feet. The tunes are literally hammered out on the instruments, the exquisite music punctuated by the performers' humorous personal interjections between songs. After a succession of encores, Rodrigo and Gabriela take their final bows on the stage at Vicar Street, Dublin, and retire to the temporary sanctuary of the dressing rooms and an enormous bowl of fruit. The audience in the Irish capital is once again in awe of the talent, energy and mastery of the Mexican couple, who have returned to play a few gigs in the city where it all began.

Despite their growing popularity and tours in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and most recently back in Mexico, Gabriela and Rodrigo continue to find themselves returning to Ireland.

Gabriela Quintero and Rodrigo Sánchez first met at the Casa de Cultura in Mexico City. Mexico City, constructed on the ruins of the Aztec cities of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco, is the capital of Mexico, and with a metropolitan population of almost twenty million people, is one of the largest cities in the world. After each playing in various heavy metal bands based in the sprawling metropolis, Rodrigo and Gabriela began to perform together in a band called Tierra Ácida (Acid Earth). During the day, Gabriela worked as a music teacher, while Rodrigo performed music for television programmes. Yet gradually they began to think of leaving la Ciudad de México and traversing the Atlantic to Europe, in search of adventure.

The pair arrived in Dublin, Ireland in 1999, to a city and a country in the initial stages of an economic boom period. This was reflected in a thriving live music scene in the city's pubs and clubs. As Rodrigo explains, 'we didn't want to come to London or Paris or Spain. We come from a very big city, so we wanted something smaller.' (Rodrigo y Gabriela DVD). In 2003, the duo released their first album, *Re-Foc*, and a year later an album recorded live in Manchester and Dublin hit the shops. Their music is an innovative hybrid of the metal music that they carry in 'la médula de los huesos [the marrow of their bones]' (Sergio Burstein, Lavibra.com), jazz and classical acoustic guitar - but any verbal description could not do justice to their originality. As Gabriela points out: 'I hate to think what kind of music I play or I want to play. All that to me, is s**t. To be honest. You play what you can express.' (Rodrigo y Gabriela DVD).

In 2006, with their eponymous album, Rodrigo y Gabriela beat both the Arctic Monkeys and Johnny Cash to number one in the music charts of their adopted country. (Sue Steward, www.rodgab.com/history, 2006). I spoke with Gabriela Quintero in November 2006, and she candidly told her story:

[Claire Healy] Could you tell the story of your move from Mexico City to Dublin City? What had you heard about Ireland before you arrived here?

[Gabriela Quintero] I had heard very little about Ireland. The original idea was to come to Europe, but to live somewhere different - not in Spain. But we didn't know much about Ireland. We got advice from a Mexican friend who had lived all over Europe ten years before that, and who really loved Ireland and said that it was very friendly. I didn't know anything else, but I should have asked my mum, she is very knowledgeable, and she always loved Irish writers. When she came to visit Ireland, she said I should have asked her about it first!

Had you known of any connections between Ireland and Mexico?

Yes, I had heard of the San Patricio Battalion. In a place called San Ángel there is a plaque with the names of all the Irish soldiers, but nobody in Mexico knows this, they don't teach it in school. It was a cool thing to happen, though they all ended up having horrible deaths. The world is very small, you know, the more you travel, the more you know. I think we only have borders in our minds, but in reality they are not really there.

What influenced your decision to come here?

We just wanted to come to Europe, to travel the world, we were not looking for a job. We come from a middle-class background in Mexico, so when we quit the metal band, we just went to the beach. Then we found a really good way to make a living by playing music at hotels. We were sorted and we got paid properly, but we wanted something else. So we decided to travel to Europe, but the package trips they sell in Mexico are always to England, France, and other places. We didn't want to see the Eiffel Tower, we wanted to do something outrageous, like maybe live in Poland, but we ended up in Ireland! It was definitely the right decision in the end.



Gabriela Quintero
(Enda Casey, www.rodgab.com)

Did you know anyone living in Ireland before you arrived?

Not really, we didn't know anyone personally. The day before our trip we met a girl who knew a friend of a friend of a friend - a Mexican guy living in Dublin. She gave us his telephone number, he was a student studying in Dublin, we didn't really know him at all. We ran out of money in Ireland after the first week, so we had to go out and busk, but we rang that guy and he was really cool, he let us sleep in his house for three days. He didn't really have to do that, he was a good soldier!

What were your first impressions of the country, and did they change after you had remained here for a while? What differences do you see between Ireland in 1999 and today?

There are a lot of differences between Ireland in 1999 and today, even though when we came here in 1999, a lot of people were already telling us that Ireland used to be different, that everything was terrible now. Now I have kind of become one of those people who say 'it's terrible, Ireland has changed so much'!

It was our first time in Europe so there was a big culture shock and my English was terrible, I had none whatsoever. Rodrigo spoke a little bit of English, but the first day was a nightmare. Even just trying to say the most normal things was a problem, but people were very nice to us. We didn't understand anything. After just one week we had to go and play in the street. My first impression of Dublin was that it was really windy, and really cold, and I thought 'what on Earth are we going to do?' We busked on a Saturday morning at 11am on Grafton Street [the main shopping street in Dublin]. It was absolutely packed. That changed everything; many people approached us and were very friendly. We basically just said yes to any invitation.

Our first gig was a religious party in Bray [County Wicklow]. We had said that we would do anything, but on the journey there we wondered if it was some kind of sect, and we didn't know what they were going to do to us! It ended up being a little boy's First Communion, and we spent the evening drinking with the guests! The following day we played at a folk night in the Norseman pub in Templebar [Dublin's cultural quarter]. We were paid ten pounds each and were the headline act, though everybody thought we were Brazilian!

I don't think people are less friendly in Ireland if you come from a Latin American country. Latin Americans can be very proud, but it all depends on how you approach the encounter. Really, nobody cares in Europe or America if you are Latin American or not. Mexicans often complain about foreigners, and think that foreigners are being cold just because they don't tell Mexicans that they're great! People can have problems if they arrive here with a bad attitude. Wherever you are from and wherever you go, you find good people - and *eejits* [Hiberno-English word for 'idiots']!

And what do Mexicans think of Ireland?

It depends where in Mexico you are. A lot of people in Mexico don't have a clue where Ireland is. A lot of people say [US-] Americans are ignorant, but Mexicans can be ignorant too. An Irish friend of ours visited Mexico and he always had a great time because people saw him as someone different. They thought he was a *gringo*, but he told them he wasn't. Mexico is very friendly, but there are *eejits* there too!

Did you find it easy to settle in as a Mexican/Latin American?

I think in Ireland people don't really have an idea of Mexico, generally they only know what they have seen in American films or in shows like 'Speedy Gonzales' [Warner Brothers cartoon character of a Mexican mouse]! I don't get offended because I didn't know anything about Ireland before I came here. A lot of Mexicans do get offended, and complain about it when they come back from Europe. For me it's just a little annoying, but some Mexicans think that it's racism. I think people are just trying to be funny. The middle classes and upper classes in Mexico can be so pretentious. They study in American-style universities and dress like Americans, yet they say they are proud of Mexican culture. Then they come here and get called 'Speedy Gonzales'!!

Did moving abroad make you more aware of your identity as a Latin American?

People here don't really know, they think we're Spanish, they call us the Spanish couple, whatever, I don't really care. Throughout Latin American history people have been conquered, and now we are bombarded with American culture. I don't really focus on Hispanic roots.

In Mexico they don't teach you that the Aztecs were an amazing and advanced civilisation. In school they use racist words for indigenous people, it is really cruel. A few well-educated people know about the Aztecs, and some good teachers teach the truth. The Mexican President [Vicente Fox] didn't want people to mention the Aztecs, which was very bad. When Mexican people go abroad and live in other countries, they get confused, they think 'I'm not indigenous, I don't know what I am - but I know I'm not Speedy Gonzales!'

You start to think about your identity and where you're from when you are abroad. Some crazy people say 'we're Aztecs,' but they're not. In Europe, people have been fighting so long for their territories, so identity in every country is strong. Over there people are only proud to be Mexican when they're drunk! Some of the local people, the working classes, they know they're Mexican and they don't worry about it. Their skin is usually darker and, though they may not know anything about the Aztecs, they don't get confused. The upper classes are usually more European-looking. Mexico is really a very racist country. At the beginning when I went back to Mexico from Ireland I thought this was terrible, but now I accept things the way they are and that you're never going to change things. Mexico is a welcoming country to foreigners but Mexicans can be racist towards one another.

The image on television over there is just Barbies all over the place, and particularly in soap operas. Young actresses and newsreaders look European, that's the cool image for young people. People grow up with terrible complexes. A typical Mexican girl with dark skin who is really beautiful would still think she was really ugly.

You played with Irish folk musicians - to what extent did living in Ireland influence your music?

We played with Robbie Harris, and other Irish folk musicians. To be honest, harmonically they did not have much influence, but I was quite impressed with Irish music. I saw it live, and enjoyed seeing young talented people playing in contemporary ways. My right hand, my percussion hand, is influenced by Irish folk - my hand was impressed with the *bodbrán* [traditional Celtic frame drum]! It sounds so fantastic and I tried to play it. Robbie and I went together to buy a *bodbrán* and he tried to teach me how to play with the stick, but I gave up and just played with my hand. That's actually the original Irish way so I play it in the pure form!



(Tina Korhonen, www.rodgab.com)



Rodrigo Sánchez
(Enda Casey, www.rodgab.com)

You are repeatedly referred to in the Irish media as playing with ‘Latin flair’/ ‘Latin style’ - do you consider your music to be ‘typical Latin American music’?

No, I don’t think we play ‘Latin music.’ We are influenced by it, because some of the music is fantastic. Though we are much more influenced by heavy metal. Before I got into that, music was everything to me as a child. My mum always played salsa. I never really liked salsa, I thought it all sounded the same, and was really monotonous, but eventually I thought it was cool. We came here to compose a different type of music, but Latin elements started to come up. We never studied Latin music, so we don’t even really know what ‘Latin’ is. Really you can call our music whatever you want, except flamenco!

A few years ago we played a song called ‘Libertango’ based on the music of Astor

Piazzola [influential Argentine tango composer]. I love Piazzola, it’s not pure tango. I think in Argentina they hate him because he mixed tango with jazz, but I love his music! So we did a version of his song, but also with Irish influences. I have loved tango music since I was a little girl. My mum had a great collection of albums, loads of tango and instrumental music. I still love that, and the dance itself. I also like bossa nova and jazz, but not so much Mexican music. You hear that a lot at parties when you’re drunk! When I’m back in Mexico I watch Mariachi [traditional Mexican bands] on TV and some of the bands are really good, but it’s like in Ireland where a lot of people hate Irish music. When some Irish people hear Irish music, they don’t stop and say that’s cool, they just hate it. I have come across a lot of people like that.

Why exactly did you choose to record a song with the Hungarian Roma violinist, Roby Lakatos?

He is amazing, we saw him on TV and thought this guy is amazing. The record company for the album wanted us to jam with different people, but we wanted someone that we really admired. The only one that responded to us was Roby Lakatos, so he came to Bath and recorded the song in just two hours. We were playing like crazy - he wanted to play on the whole album and to be on the cover, but we said no. He is amazing but crazy!

You recently appeared on Mexican television - how did the Mexican public respond to your music and your story?

We got loads of messages saying ‘guys, you played really well,’ but the majority of people just said ‘wow - you are going to be on TV in America.’ They are more impressed by our story than by the music, like the fact that we were on Jay Leno [US-American chat show]! I didn’t really want to go to Mexico at all, we’ve been touring and recording constantly for the past two years, we have no life. So going to Mexico to work didn’t sound that inviting. But we tried it out, we did a whole day of publicity on the TV and on radio programmes, from 7am in the morning to 9pm at night! So we’re just gonna wait and see what the response is. Maybe we’ll go back there to work, maybe just on holiday. We know some people were impressed, but on the streets they were much more impressed with our travels.



Rodrigo y Gabriela
(Enda Casey, www.rodgab.com)

Do you want to eventually return to Mexico, or settle in Ireland or elsewhere?

I already have a house in a village in Mexico, in Ixtapa [beach resort in the state of Guerrero, 200km north of Acapulco], and that’s where I’ll definitely spend the European winter. I really like Europe and I’d miss Ireland if I was away too long. For the moment, because the album was released in America, it’s convenient, because we can easily go back from there to the village in Mexico. But who knows, our record label is Irish and our manager is Irish.

At least for a couple of months a year I'd like to live in West Cork. It's beautiful, I've been there twice, I love the West of Ireland. I would like to live there for a while. I don't know, I just know I can't stay in one place for a long time, I have to keep moving.

Claire Healy

More information, music and concert dates available on the excellent website, www.rodgab.com. I am very grateful to Gabriela Quintero, for so enthusiastically doing the interview, and to Carlo Polli, for organising it.

Notes

[1] 'Two adventurers and music-lovers went off to seek their fortune overseas, and encountered praise and applause.'

Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

Saint Patrick pray, pray for all of us, pray for me

By Iván Portela *

Translated by Claire Healy

*Who is it that enlightens the assembly
upon the mountain, if not I?
-Aimbirgin*

You, who banishes the snakes,
Casting them out to sea,
Denying them refuge in the flesh
Of the man who repents in good faith.
You loved him fervently,
And even converted Macaldus
On a boat of chains and disasters,
After suffering so much weeping.

You, who started with a shamrock,
Who brought hope to the green fields,
Who, from afar, bequeathed to the mountains
A touch of magnificent learning.

You, who carries the sun inside your soul,
You, who holds the chalice in your hand
And comes with the sceptre,
Walking in the wind or in the calm...

You, Saint Patrick,
Who has the strength of a thousand soldiers,
The faith of four Celtic provinces,
The charity of the sea that surrounds you,
That shall not unleash its raging tides
Against your brave Christian people.

You, Saint Patrick,
Who in centuries and universes of distance
Bears a holy name in my confines...
The name you bear embroidered in your cloak
Is the most holy name of Erin

Saint Patrick,
Return your gaze
To a World convulsed, preparing
For a future that could never
Convert the planet of Christ!
Saint Patrick pray, pray for all of us, pray for me!



* Iván Portela (b. 1943), known as the bard of the Mexican-Irish, writes poetry in Spanish about the Irish and Ireland. He has taught at the Universidad Iberoamericana since 1981, and presents a daily selection of 6-7 mythological tales, entitled 'The Myth and You' on Mexican ABC Radio. His favourite selections have always been from Celtic mythology. He has been interviewed by Irish, North American and Mexican publications, and among his many published books are *La otra cara de Irlanda* (Mexico City, 1986), and *Cantos de Tír na nÓg* (Mexico City, 2006), from which this poem has been taken.

Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

La vida no es de nadie - todos somos la vida [1]
Address by the President of Ireland Mary McAleese
to the Senate in Mexico, 6 April 1999

Edited and introduced by Edmundo Murray



Johann Theodor de Bry, Map of New Spain, 1597 (detail)

Introduction

Between 31 March and 7 April 1999, the president of Ireland Mary McAleese and her husband Martin visited Honduras and Mexico. In Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, the president viewed the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch (October 1998) and met with the authorities and volunteers. On Sunday, 4 April 1999, McAleese travelled to Mexico for a five-day state visit, the first visit of an Irish president to Mexico. She held a meeting with the then Mexican president, Ernesto Zedillo at the National Palace in Mexico City, and made preparations to open the Irish embassy in Mexico later in the year. Two memoranda of understanding, on cultural and educational exchanges, were signed in the presence of the presidents of both countries. During her visit, president McAleese was given the freedom of Mexico City, she laid a wreath at the monument honouring Irishmen who fought for Mexico, and was guest of honour at a state dinner given by president Zedillo. The Irish delegation included Sean O'Huiginn (ambassador to Mexico), Frank Murray (secretary general to the government), Padraic McKernan (secretary general at the Department of Foreign Affairs), Eileen Gleeson (special advisor to the president), Brian Nason (chief of protocol), and Mel Cousins (advisor to the Minister of Social, Community and Family Affairs).

The solemn session at the Mexican Senate commenced at 10.40am on 6 April 1999, when the Senate president Juan Antonio García Villa welcomed Mrs. McAleese and the Irish delegation. Senator García Villa expressed the view that Mexico and Ireland 'share common goals towards the attainment of a new world order, based on unrestricted respect for legal equality among states, and the intrinsic capacity to decide on their type of government and to build their own future'. After the Irish president's discourse, García Villa closed the solemn session at 11.55am, adding that the senators were given the 'pleasant surprise that most of [Mrs. McAleese's address] was in the language of Cervantes and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz' (Senado de la República, *Diario de los Debates: Versión Estenográfica*, 1999, available online at <http://www.senado.gob.mx/>, cited 15 February 2007).

Text of the Speech by President Mary McAleese (6 April 1999)

Mr. President,

Madam, Gran Comisión President,

Senators, Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for your introduction, Mr. President, and your kind words of welcome. I am deeply honoured to accept your invitation to address the Senate of this great and diverse nation of the United States of Mexico. Although separated by geography, Ireland and Mexico have long had much in common. We each have a rich cultural legacy, a vibrant tradition of literature, music and folk culture. We both bear the scars of a traumatic history, an experience that has deeply wounded the psyche and soul of our nations. We both know the pain of losing generations of our young people to emigration. Yet we each know, too, that from that history and that pain, it is possible to build a better future. It is a long slow path, a path that each of us has travelled and is travelling still. But we in Ireland are living proof, if proof were required, that the difficult experiences of the past can be transformed into strengths, which hold the promise and possibility of a better life for all our people.

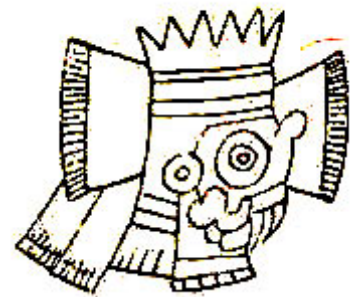
It is that journey that we in Ireland have made, and which I believe will have a resonance and a value here in Mexico, that is the subject of my address to you today. In recent years, Ireland has become a land of hope and a place of infinite possibility. The social, economic and cultural energies of our people - which all too often in the past found full expression only outside Ireland - are now, with remarkable dynamism, transforming our country.

The question, of course, is how that transformation came about. It is all the more remarkable in view of where we had come from as a nation. At the time of our independence in 1922, Ireland's economy was largely agricultural, and almost entirely dependent on one market, that of Britain. From its inception, the young Irish State relied on economic protectionism coupled with wariness towards foreign investment. That dependence on Britain was not confined to the economic sphere. Centuries of domination had left us drained of confidence, full of uncertainty about our own talents. We looked to Britain not only for economic survival but also for social and cultural reassurance. We existed in a damaging love hate relationship, bristling with antagonism for our nearest neighbour, yet valuing its language, outlook, culture and traditions more than our own. The lesson we had learnt over centuries of domination was too deeply ingrained to be dissolved through a mere declaration of independence. That experience had also engraved on our psyche a deep and lasting fear of outside influences. Our history had taught us that the outside world was a threatening place, a place where might was right and to be a small, insecure nation was to risk being overrun and dominated by a larger one. We shored ourselves up on the periphery of Europe and witnessed from the sidelines two World Wars, which seemed to prove the truth of our fears. We convinced ourselves that our only chance of survival was to isolate ourselves, to save what little we had by cocooning ourselves against the outside world. We educated our young only to see them leave to seek in other lands the opportunity for economic survival they could not find at home.

Yet slowly but surely things started to change. The 1960's brought with them a new sense of openness to new opportunities, new influences. We began to see that isolation, far from guaranteeing our economic and cultural survival, would be its death knell. Major initiatives were taken at the time to generate an investment climate which would encourage foreign export companies to locate in Ireland. The first steps away from reliance on protectionism, and towards a more open and trade oriented approach, were taken.

It was, however, our membership of the European Economic Community, as it was then, to which we acceded in 1973, which really spurred on our economic development. Membership increased the attractions of Ireland as a base for manufacturing industry. We targeted key industrial sectors, producing sophisticated and high-value products which would offer the best growth potential.

Membership of the European Union proved to be an important first step on our way to economic success. Yet we would have been unable to avail of the opportunities it offered had it not been for our most important resource: an educated and skilled workforce. The opening up of free second level education to all our people in the 1960's proved to be one of the most far-sighted and important elements in securing our later economic success. It provided opportunities to a far wider range of people, from all social and economic backgrounds, and thereby released a huge reservoir of talent and energy. It is a resource from which we are now reaping the benefits a hundred-fold. It taught us that such an investment is not only worthwhile but indispensable if a country is truly to reach its full potential. I know that many of you here today share that view and have shown huge commitment and energy in applying it here in Mexico. I warmly commend you on your continuing efforts.





Juana Inés de la Cruz de Asbaje y Ramírez
(c.1651-1695)

Nowhere has this policy had more effect, and more benefits, than in relation to women. For generations, indeed for centuries, the talents of women were confined to the narrow sphere of home and family. Their contribution as wives and mothers helped to seedbed and support the success of their husbands and sons. Yet it was a confined sphere, imposed by cultural norms and traditions, often internalised by the women themselves. The influx of outside influences in the 1960's and particularly our membership of the European Union, challenged those past certainties that there could be only one role for women. It brought new opportunities in education and employment. It changed expectations and for the first time created real choices for women. Many grasped them with enthusiasm and energy. They proved once again that a nation which relies on only half its resources can expect to realise only half of its potential.

Today in Ireland, there is an extraordinary level of confidence among women. They have started to take their rightful place in business and in politics, in all aspects of the private and public spheres of Irish life. Indeed as the second woman in succession to be elected as President of Ireland, a reality that would have been unthinkable a generation ago, I have particular pride in coming here today to this gathering of highly distinguished Senators, women as well as men.

I have great pleasure in seeing that in Mexico, as in Ireland, the talents and giftedness of women are also blossoming. This was brought home to me in particular when I was greeted a few moments ago by Senadora María de los Ángeles Moreno Uriega, the President of the Gran Comisión of the Senate, and by having already had the pleasure of meeting your distinguished Foreign Minister, Mrs. Rosario Green, during her recent visit to Dublin.

Indeed their success should come as no surprise, for Mexico has an honourable tradition as an advocate of women's rights. More than three hundred years ago, Sor Juana, a remarkable poet and nun who was born near Mexico city wrote the poem *Hombres Necios*. [2] It speaks of the imbalance of power between men and women, in a way that seems very modern and relevant to today's world.

Indeed, if we think that the term 'male chauvinist pig' is a modern invention, we need only turn to her work to see that feminism was alive and well in seventeenth-century Mexico!

Three hundred years on, that exclusive ownership by men of the structures of power has started to change. We have now entered a new era of partnership. Indeed I believe that the next millennium will be a time when the potential that women have already demonstrated, will be fully recognised and harnessed. An era when both our societies will utilise the talents and energies of all our people, men and women alike, and be astonished by the dividends that will flow from this for society as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have spoken of how, in the span of a single generation, Ireland, as a member of the European Union, has been economically and socially transformed - a transformation underpinned by broadening educational and employment opportunities and by opening up to the outside world.

There is another critical factor in our success that I have barely touched on so far, but which has striking parallels to the Mexican experience: that is, the richness and uniqueness of our cultural heritage. Ireland has long been renowned for its literature and poetry. Yet often, they were resources that found more acclaim abroad than at home. Other aspects of our heritage - our language, traditional music, folklore and dance - were in danger of being lost and forgotten, inextricably linked in the minds of our young people with a poor, rural past which seemed to have little relevance for the new, more affluent and more urban world we wished to join.

Our membership of the European Union taught us the value of what we were in danger of carelessly discarding. It provided a showcase in which that heritage was seen and admired by others. They respected its uniqueness in a world that seemed to be becoming increasingly homogenised, and their admiration helped us realise for ourselves the extraordinary resource we had at our disposal. We came to see that the old can sit comfortably beside the new, each enriching the other. We went out into the world with a new pride, a new sense of confidence, which has engendered a cultural renaissance. Our musicians, dancers, poets and writers, traditional and modern alike, are now acclaimed both in Ireland and throughout the world. Our language in particular, which almost disappeared through the experience of colonisation, has now been re-found and reinvigorated by a new generation.

Indeed, we have turned the experience on its head, re-colonising the English language as demonstrated by our having given the world four Nobel Prize Winners for Literature. This is a source of great pride for us. It shows once again that what could have been a cultural disaster has become a cultural strength.

We have come at last to realise the truth of what one of our great poets, Patrick Kavanagh, [3] told us many years ago:

around you, don't forget is genius which
walks with feet rooted in the native soil....
...this tradition is what the stranger comes to buy or borrow
what you would leave to chase a worthless mission.

I believe that this renaissance has had an impact beyond the cultural sphere, that there is a close link between cultural confidence and economic success. That confidence has filtered into a much wider understanding that we can compete with the best in any sphere, compete and succeed. We need not fear or eschew outside influences: we can learn from them and adapt them to our own circumstances.

That confidence has translated into the development of a vibrant indigenous business sector. Our young people not only have the necessary knowledge and skills, built up through our education system and through their experience of working in multinational companies. They also now have the confidence to take those skills and apply them in establishing their own high-tech companies. My hope is that Ireland's example can support and encourage Mexico to follow a similar path. Mexico, with its great Aztec, Mayan and other ancient heritage, also possesses an enormous cultural resource. Its writers have greatly enriched the literature of one of the great world languages. It is important to value that resource as a national treasure, to use it a source of energy which can build up national confidence and pride. For Mexico, as for Ireland, that sense of confidence is a vital ingredient in future economic success on the world stage. If it can be correctly channelled, no difficulty, however great, is insurmountable.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the most painful and intractable problems that any country can face is witnessing the loss of its young people to emigration, year after year. It drains a country of its most talented and energetic members, the very ones who have the capacity to create opportunities in their native country.

Milestones in Ireland-Mexico Diplomatic Relations	
1928 (March)	Irish minister in Washington Timothy A. Smiddy accredited in Mexico
1975 (August)	Bilateral relations established
circa 1977	Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. appointed honorary consul of Ireland in Mexico
1987 (October)	Michael O'Kennedy (minister for agriculture) visits Mexico
1990 (April)	Desmond O'Malley (minister for industry and commerce) visits Mexico
1991 (June)	Mexican embassy established in Dublin
1991 (September)	Gerard Collins (minister for foreign affairs) visits Mexico
1992 (February)	Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor opens Mexican embassy in Dublin
1992 (December)	Irish commercial mission to Mexico
1993 (July)	Charlie McCreavy (minister for tourism and trade) visits Mexico
1994 (January)	Albert Reynolds (Taoiseach) visits Mexico
1997 (May)	Vicente Fox (governor of Guanajuato) visits Ireland
1999 (March)	Rosario Green (Mexican secretary of foreign affairs) visits Ireland
1999 (April)	President Mary McAleese visits Mexico
1999 (July)	Mexican parliamentary mission to Ireland Irish embassy opens in Mexico - Art Agnew appointed first ambassador
1999 (October)	
1999 (September)	Sile de Valera (Irish minister for arts and heritage) visits Mexico
2002 (November)	President Vicente Fox visits Ireland
2003 (January)	Bertie Ahern (Taoiseach) visits Mexico
2003 (February)	Reyes Tamez Guerra (secretary of public education) visits Ireland
2004 (December)	Martha Cecilia Jaber Breceda appointed ambassador to Ireland
2005 (July)	Dermot Brangan appointed ambassador to Mexico
Sources:	
- <i>Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Debates</i> , vols. 22 (1 March 1920), 300 (23 June 1988), 310 (24 February 1988), 438 (1 February 1994), 498 (9 December 1998), 514 (16 February 2000), and 516 (23 March 2000).	
- Embassy of Mexico to Ireland, Relaciones Bilaterales (available online http://portal.sre.gob.mx/irlanda/ , accessed on 16 February 2007).	

Murray, Edmundo (ed.). 'La vida no es de nadie - todos somos la vida': Address by the President of Ireland Mary McAleese to the Senate in Mexico, 6 April 1999.....

We in Ireland understand that plight which Mexico faces, for until recently we faced it ourselves. Generation after generation, unable to eke out a living on the land which had barely supported their ancestors, were forced to seek opportunity in foreign lands. Yet we have demonstrated that it is possible to escape that vicious circle, to create instead a charmed circle as we enter the new Millennium. We have now experienced a return of many of our most recent emigrants, whose experience abroad has enriched the economic and cultural fabric of our country. We have seen too, that the generations who were forced to emigrate, and who put down roots in other countries, today form a global Irish family which is an immense resource. We have friends in every corner of the world. They are people who look with affection on Ireland, and who have provided very tangible support in our efforts to bring peace to Northern Ireland, both politically and in terms of financial support through initiatives such as the International Fund for Ireland.

Our experience provides hope for other countries, including Mexico, that what is now an immense loss can one day become an extraordinary resource.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

Our countries are so distant, and yet share so many similarities, that I feel there is much we can learn from each other. A strong sense of independence - combined with a keen appreciation of the necessary interdependence of nations - is at the core of our consciousness as peoples. It is a happy coincidence - or indeed perhaps no coincidence at all - that inside the Column of Independence here in Mexico City, there stands a statue to Guillén de Lamport, born in Wexford, Ireland, in 1615, and recognised as one of the earliest precursors of Mexican independence.

It is important that we continue to build on those historical links. I greatly welcome the launch last October by your Foreign Minister, Mrs. Green, of a branch of the Ireland Fund of Mexico, the first in Latin America. This fund will promote cultural and educational exchanges between our two countries, including, in particular, exchanges between underprivileged students.

In recent years we have also built closer links in academic and cultural relations. Trinity College Dublin has a cooperation agreement with the College of Mexico City. There is a Centre for Mexican Studies in University College, Cork.

Such ties are being reinforced at a more global level by increased co-operation and partnership between the European Union and the countries of Latin America. In June of this year, Mexico will co-host the first ever Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and of Latin America and the Caribbean. I welcome this initiative, which will reaffirm the historic and ever closer bonds between the New World and the Old Continent.

The EU Presidency, in inaugurating the first ever EU-Mexico Joint Council last July, set our relations firmly in the context of respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Presidents Mary McAleese and Ernesto Zedillo during the state dinner at the National Palace of Mexico
(*Presidencia de la República de México*)

No less than the European Union, Mexico has declared a clear commitment to these principles. You have the authority of your own history for the conviction that deep respect for human rights is an essential component of peace and security both in the world at large and within nations. We in Ireland share those values, for we know that smaller countries, outside the main power-blocks, have a vital role to play in strengthening those rights internationally. We look forward to future co-operation between our two countries, through the mechanisms of the UN, in playing an active and constructive role on the world stage.

Outside this Senate Chamber is a plaque to President Benito Juárez,

who in the last century recognised with remarkably modern political judgement, that: *Entre los individuos, como entre las Naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz.* [4] May the wisdom of Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian lawyer from Oaxaca, be our guide as together we enter a new and closer relationship at the dawn of the new millennium.

May his words also guide us in Ireland, as we seek to bring peace and reconciliation to Northern Ireland. The signing of the Good Friday Agreement just over a year ago, has brought that prospect ever-closer. We do not yet have a perfect peace - isolated groups have continued to carry out acts of savagery which, being now so much rarer than they were, seem in some ways all the more shocking.

What is important is that, in working to resolve the difficulties which inevitably have arisen and will arise, we do not lose sight of the immense strides which have been made in so short a period, or of the enormous potential which will unfold over time. The values which inform the peace process are nevertheless universal in their significance. We believe that our experience can be of potential interest and value to those elsewhere who seek to resolve conflict through dialogue.

In our endeavours, we have been encouraged and assisted, in good times and bad, by the unfailing interest and support of the international community, and, on behalf of the Irish Government, I offer my thanks to the Government and people of Mexico.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The relations between Mexico and Ireland have long been characterised by shared feelings of respect and affection. It is my earnest hope that my visit will contribute to the further development of the warm ties that exist between us.

I am deeply conscious of the honour conferred on me by your invitation to address the Senate today. It has been my great pleasure to accept your invitation. I am equally conscious that my visit to your country has afforded me the unique opportunity to witness at first hand the innumerable achievements, over many generations, of the warm, vibrant and immensely diverse people of Mexico. That too has been an honour, eagerly embraced, and one that will endure in my memory.

Let me leave you with one final thought which springs from the poem "Piedra de Sol [Fragmentos]", by Mexico's Nobel Prize Winner, Octavio Paz. In this poem, he asks: *La vida. ¿Cuándo fue de veras nuestra?* [When was life truly ours?]

He tells us: *La vida no es de nadie - todos somos la vida.*

In the end, life is ours if we make it ours. That is what our two countries are striving for: to make life, and the opportunities that life brings, something which belongs to all of us, to all our people. That is what brings peace and prosperity. This is what we must aim for and achieve in the coming Millennium.

Thank you, Mr. President



Octavio Paz (1914-1998)

Notes

[1] Life is no-one's - we are all life. Poem by Octavio Paz, *Piedra de sol* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957). Translated in English as *Sun Stone*, by Muriel Rukeyser (London: New Directions, 1962).

[2] *Stubborn Men*, redondilla (ca. 1680)

[3] Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967), major Irish poet

[4] Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace (this quotation from president Juárez is inscribed on Oaxaca's coat of arms).

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr. Stephen Lalor and the Office of the President for kindly providing the text of this speech and the authorisation to publish it.

Bernardo O'Higgins' Plans The Arrival of Irish Immigrants in Mexico

By Fabián Gaspar Bustamante Olgúin



Bernardo O'Higgins
(Biblioteca Nacional de Chile)

It is not surprising that attracting Irish immigrants to the south of Mexico (particularly to Osorno and Isla de la Laja) was among the ambitions of the Liberator of the then 'New Republic of Chile.' Of course, the Liberator was a direct descendant of an Irish military man in the service of the Spanish crown, Ambrosio O'Higgins, who always had a desire to bring Irish immigrants to Chile (especially to the city of Osorno). This he achieved on 19 September 1797, when he was Viceroy of Peru (1796-1801). His son, Bernardo (1778-1842), also wanted to fulfil his father's wishes. He proposed a similar project in his letters to Sir John Doyle, written in Peru between 1823 and 1830 during his exile, where he turns his attention towards a project that, together with the independence of his native country, was his dearest wish - Irish immigration to Chile. What then was the relationship between Irish immigrants in Chile and Mexico? This will be explained in what follows, by detailing who Sir John Doyle was and then referring to the letter that O'Higgins sent to Doyle regarding Mexico.

Sir John Doyle (1756-1834), one of the four children of Charles Doyle of Bramblestown, was a distinguished officer who participated in the events of 1798, his main aim being to suppress the Irish insurrection. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, Doyle served in the English army in the United States and in 1784 returned to Ireland where he was elected to the Irish parliament for Mullingar (County Westmeath). In 1794, John Doyle organised the famous 87th Regiment that fought in Holland and many other places, including Buenos Aires in 1807. Later he would join the Princess Victoria Regiment, which took the name Royal Irish Fusiliers. Doyle also served in Gibraltar and Portugal, where he gained a great military reputation, with Sir Arthur Wellesley among his superior officers. He was the Prince of Wales' private secretary for a time, and then he retired to the island of Guernsey where he acted as governor.

Bernardo O' Higgins's letters to Doyle were written in Peru during his exile between the years 1823 and 1830, and in them O'Higgins turns his attention to 'a project that, together with the independence of his native country, was his dearest wish - Irish immigration to Chile'. In regard to Mexico, one of his letters to Sir Doyle, written in Lima on 26 July 1830 states the following:

In our correspondence I have only concerned myself with the Irish colonisation of the south of Chile, but once this is completed, I would say that Northern Mexico could also be considered; regions like California, Chihuahua, New Mexico and Texas. I would propose beginning with California and then continuing with Texas: the first colony should be established in San Francisco, California. In 1825, wishing to probe deeper into the issue and to know how the Mexican government would cooperate with me, I wrote to my friend Colonel Wavel, who was in that country on a mission to which I had appointed him when I directed Chile's destiny; in said letter I told him of my father's [Ambrosio O'Higgins] plans and the possibility that the north of Mexico be populated by Irish Catholics, instructing him to broach this matter with President Vitoria. I received no reply and presumed the missive must have gotten lost.

I later learnt that Wavel was not in Mexico; I am now told that he has rejoined your service and I have no doubts that we can count on a friend in our plans. Regarding Mexico's leaders, be it Vitoria, Guerrero, Santana or Bravo, I also believe I will receive total approval, as they will understand the



John Doyle (1756-1834)
(William Say, 1817)

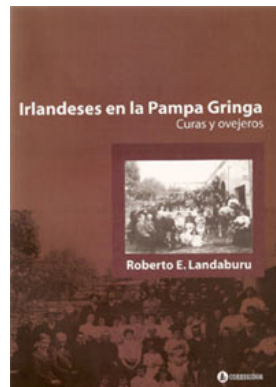
importance of a colonisation comprising such industrious and brave people who will also reinforce the extensive frontier (without defences) of that nation against the traps of Russians and North Americans (p.456).

Unfortunately for O'Higgins, neither in Chile nor in Mexico did his project of bringing Irish immigrants *en masse* to these countries prosper. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting this man's initiative to populate the continent with people from such a far distant country as Ireland.

Fabián Gaspar Bustamante Olgúin

Review of Roberto E. Landaburu's
Irlandeses en la Pampa Gringa: curas y ovejeros

By Ana M. Castello
Translated by Annette Leahy



Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2006
381 pp., ISBN 9500516357, ARS \$35.00

Between approximately 1840 and 1880, a significant number of Irish people, the majority from counties Westmeath and Longford, disembarked in a nascent Argentine Republic. As early additions to the heterogeneous group of migrants arriving from Europe, they soon populated the countryside of Buenos Aires Province, the province with the richest soil in the country. They made a living through sheep farming, moving from the Southeast to Northeast, first as share-croppers or tenant farmers. From the 1860s, several of them became landowners linked to the export boom in their products.

In *Irlandeses en la Pampa Gringa: curas y ovejeros*, Robert E. Landaburu follows this well-worn path in order to recount the later experience of their consolidation as rural inhabitants of the Buenos Aires Pampa. He examines the movement of some Irish people into the bordering province of Santa Fe, following the colonising logic typical of the expansion of the frontier into lands suited to agricultural production. Moving in a sphere that he already dominates due to his residency in Santa Fe, and his previous works on rural immigration, Landaburu expands upon the foundation and development of the sheep-farming colony of Venado Tuerto in 1883 as a case study.

In the *partido* of General López, an immense expanse of fertile public lands recently seized from the indigenous people was bought for this very purpose by the Irish-Argentine landowner and businessman Eduardo Casey. He purchased the land between 1880 and 1882 with the aid of British capital, comprising Venado Tuerto, el Loreto (present-day Maggiolo) and the surrounding areas. This economic undertaking of seventy-two leagues - 270 thousand hectares - would be auctioned off in lots among its future settlers in 1881 and 1883, the majority Irish or Irish-Argentine. Many of these settlers had already been living in the Buenos Aires countryside for some time in the *partidos* of San Nicolás de los Arroyos, Salto, Monte, Lobos, Lincoln, Junín, Rojas, Navarro, Carmen de Areco, San Pedro, Pergamino and Ranchos, among others. Enticed by their wealthy countryman, these farmers, tenant-farmers and share-croppers accepted the favourable conditions and promises they were offered. Many ultimately succeeded in becoming owners of cheap land, with others worked for those who were better off for a time or for their whole lives, depending on their luck.

This work forms a fundamental part of the *corpus* of studies - Argentine and foreign - on this community in Argentina. The novelty of this monograph lies in its taking a rural micro-region practically ignored by historiography, and focusing on the settlement, customs and development of the Irish and their descendants in the Buenos Aires countryside. The direct and simple prose chosen by the author is far from rigorous academic writing, and makes it easier to get his points across to a much wider public. However, the specific nature of the theme and this linguistic register would seem to privilege an audience linked to the descendants of the Irish pioneer families and to Irish-Argentines in general, as well as the reader interested in rural immigration.

Underlining the will of its founder, Eduardo Casey, to create a settlement exclusively for Irish people and the children of Irish people, the author proposes to show the decisive role played by Irish Catholic priests in convincing their fellow countrymen to settle on these lands, experiencing the difficulties every agricultural settlement has with a congregation. Although the colony, due to the existence of other colonies, both foreign and native, naturally moved away from its original purpose of recreating a 'little Ireland', the tenacious shepherds and the leadership of their advisor-priests, who kept the faith of their flock in foreign lands, is the core of a description which, nevertheless, is slow to make itself clear to the reader, in favour of lengthy explanations, the aim of which is to frame the central theme within a context.

The various chapters, of irregular length, give the text a complex *leitfaden*. Instead of a predictable chronological organisation, the title and subtitle organise and announce smaller themes. These are interwoven in all of the chapters with a certain super-imposition and repetition in their explanation. Despite this, three main sections can be identified in this work.

In the first, Landaburu attempts to situate this local narrative by developing a wider framework which is as much historical as it is thematic. The wool trade, the development of meat-curing and of refrigeration along the River Plate, the movements of the frontier and the appropriation of lands in the *Pampa Húmeda* that were generally dedicated to production throughout the twentieth century, are interspersed with a brief description of the early Irish community, the reasons for its arrival and its most prominent representatives. This is based on an abundant 'Irish-Argentine' literature together with censuses and estimates, providing information on the number of arrivals, their demographics and distribution, figures (10-45,000) which are contested by those who study them in detail.

The 1887 census in the province of Santa Fe, in this sense, becomes his official, objective and most reliable source for calculating the number of people who resided in the area in question. Thus Landaburu reconstructs this successful economic development between 1870 and 1890 with essays and research into national origins, primary testimonies and several other specific studies on regional rural history, as well as others on agricultural economic development during the immigration era.

What is lacking is the use of recent and foreign sources; in his selection the author has recourse to Argentine historians writing from a nationalist historiographical approach. They belong to a school of thought more critical than others when it comes to dealing with the conduct of English capitalists, their large territorial investments, and the financial goals of the British community in Argentina. In his approach in this section, as at the end, the author resorts to a verbal style through the use of a certain subjectivity, and comparisons with the immediate present, which distance the work at times from the basic objectivity that is required, and which does indeed characterise other segments of the research.

Landaburu provides previous studies on the life of Eduardo Casey, underlining his financial abilities and his characteristics as an adventurer. Confirming the latter's profile with the testimony of his descendants, he makes great use of the historical interview, a resource which constitutes one of the pillars of this work, consistently used to corroborate his affirmations. A man of great reputation amongst the British business class and the native large landowners, Casey is shown to have been the main agent in the realisation of this colonising endeavour. Acknowledged as a *primus inter pares* among his community, Landaburu paradoxically informs the reader that, while Casey was making his countrymen rich, the speculative fever in land sales during the 1880s and the economic crisis of 1890 divested him first of his fortune and then of his life. This section closes with the process of buying land, dividing it into lots, propaganda and the auction of this extensive area. The advertising sought to attract - according to the author - exclusively Irish people between 1881 and 1883.

In the second part, Landaburu focuses on the core theme: the beginnings of the Venado Tuerto colony and the settlement of its 'founding' families, together with its religious dynamics. He provides the names of these lucky buyers. They were already *estancieros* in the *partidos* of the Province of Buenos Aires. Favourable purchasing conditions and the affordability of the land would allow them - according to their capabilities - to own between thousands and hundreds of thousands of hectares in the Santa Fe plains.

This land was suitable for fattening calves and growing the finest feeds - such as the new crop, alfalfa - and cereals, as well as the opportunity that an unstable market for land afforded for resale values. The difficulties in driving such large herds of sheep from Buenos Aires, the precarious life and the scarcity of resources, are part of a lengthy and colourful collection of stories which the author gathers through an exercise in oral memory via the testimonies of the relatives of these pioneers. Through their language that has become Spanish-American, they recreate, as if using brushstrokes, the quotidian aspects of these Irish people: their standards of behaviour, habits and customs, their religiosity and their attitude towards the 'natives', their experiences and the ties of solidarity between them.

The religious dimension of the work makes its appearance here, returning first to the actions of the men of religion in the Province of Buenos Aires. He recounts their arrival, names and activities between 1825 and 1879, highlighting the legendary Anthony Fahy, resident in Buenos Aires from 1844. Fahy had wide-ranging parochial duties, and acted with the permission of the local diocesan clergy. With patriarchal qualities he spurred on and reorganised the community, setting up institutions and providing services for its basic functioning. The services required were both

material and spiritual, financially maintained by the Irish themselves and under the leadership of their compatriot clergy.

With the arrival of priests requested from Ireland in 1856, Fahy decentralised his duties, creating the Irish chaplaincies that divided the territory of the Province of Buenos Aires into four zones, each one in the care of an Irish priest who would live there and attend his compatriots.

In order to discuss the creation and the dynamics of these rural chaplaincies, the author takes his bibliographic focal point from the classic studies of Santiago Ussher. He underlines the main role that this man would play, along with his benefactor countrymen, in sustaining and creating rural chapels and parish churches in the *estancias* and towns of the *partidos* under his leadership. Thus an independent and parallel church organisation to the local one was constituted, and well described by Landaburu.

The author then examines those clerics who were involved in the creation of the colony in Santa Fe, summoned from Dublin by Fahy in the 1860s: Patricio José Dillon, later Dean and provincial member of parliament for Buenos Aires, who was his aide in the city of Buenos Aires and natural successor, on his death, to the leadership he had exercised over the whole community. Head of the chaplains and closely related to the political leadership and the Argentine clergy, Dillon was a great promoter of this undertaking through the newspaper he founded for the community, *The Southern Cross*. Largo Miguel Leahy, chaplain of the zone with its centre in the *partido* Carmen de Areco, was a great propagandist for Casey's project among his parishioners, and even bought some of the fields himself.

Edmund Flannery, chaplain since 1869 of an extensive area comprising the north of Buenos Aires Province and the south of Santa Fe Province, accompanied his parish through the first years of the colony's foundation until 1887, when a chaplaincy was created in Santa Fe. Flannery's occasional assistant, Santiago Foran, was assigned to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. Friends of Eduardo Casey, all these men gave financial advice, spiritual attention and encouragement to their countrymen during the colony's initial stages. Landaburu stresses the status of 'gaucho-priest' that these men acquired. The desolate landscape demanded that they not only be good priests, but also good horsemen and in full health in order to travel large distances through unfamiliar territory.

The new Chaplaincy of Santa Fe, with its base in Rosario, was under the leadership of Juan Morgan Sheehy since 1887, whose long pastoral activity is described. This secular Irish clergy was gradually reinvigorated and renewed with the arrival of religious communities to attend to the English-speaking Catholics in the 1880s, like that of the Passionists (1879) and later that of the Pallottines (1886). Financed by the economic and material help of a well-off Irish minority, within which Eduardo Casey stands out, Passionists and Pallottines acted to reorganise the dynamics of missionary work in the *partidos* of the countryside. They visited *estancias*, and called 'missions' and 'meetings'; they founded educational and novitiate institutions, first in the Province of Buenos Aires - like those in Capitán Sarmiento and Mercedes - and later in Santa Fe. The Sisters of Mercy, a religious order at the service of the community on and off since 1856, would only arrive in Venado Tuerto in 1930, to take over the Santa Rosa School.

Without proposing a specific analysis, Landaburu thus hints at the process of control that the Argentine diocesan Church will slowly exercise over the autonomy achieved by the priests, their chaplaincies and their *modus operandi*. This titanic sacramental and pastoral task is complemented by the work of other priests of the secular Argentine clergy. In this sense, the arrival of the first parishioners with a permanent base in Venado Tuerto, dependants of the diocese of Rosario, is recovered, as is the construction in 1889 of its parish church, now a cathedral, beside the first church built in 1884 with Eduardo Casey's money.

Throughout his narrative, Landaburu interweaves the surnames of the pioneer families and the most illustrious landowners, as much as for the number of hectares as for their beneficent acts, traditionally linked to religious activity: the Cavanaghs, the Maxwells, the Leahys, the Murphys, the Downes, the Kavanaghs, the Caseys, the Gahans, the Hams, as well as Eduardo Casey's agent, the powerful Basque businessman and rancher Alejandro Estrugamou, linked to this community, and several others which have descendants there. Many were seedbeds of future vocations.

The author briefly outlines the Irish and Irish-Argentine priests who, at the turn of the twentieth century, acted for the parishioners of this area, among many others, José Tomás Maxwell and José Boyle. Interspersed within this analysis of the religious experiences of the colony, there are various specific themes, such as the nationalist and collaborative attitude of some settlers and priests with regard to events in Ireland, or the skills of some and the difficulties of the majority in speaking Irish Gaelic.

In what can be differentiated as a third section, the author places long lists at the disposal of future researchers. By way of conclusion, these lists provide information about the older members of the Irish community who lived in the Venado Tuerto zone and its surrounding area, and about their descendants, according to the Provincial Census of 1887 and the Civil Registry of the Province of Santa Fe. Valuable death certificates and attached documents demonstrate the existence of family trees that cross branches, demonstrating the strong tendency towards endogamous marriage that many of these families maintained well into the twentieth century.

Landaburu has not proposed an exhaustively analytical work, nor a work that establishes specific issues, but rather an explanatory and descriptive monograph, the essence of which resides in the factual and in the oral. His idea is to unfurl in a simple manner the origins, evolution and vitality of a colonising migratory group, part of a frontier society, supporting his account mainly with a visual structure derived from the memories of its descendants.

The rhythm of the book is thus characterised by oral traditions, personal correspondence and the perceptions of modern-day families about their ancestors and their actions. The perhaps excessive insertion of the narrator's 'I' in the account, together with broad statements about some controversial events in national history, lead him to compare the immigrants with those of recent times to the point of falling into, in some passages, the expected level of scholarship. This is clearly present - though he uses colloquial language - in the quantitative treatment of the themes and in the explanation of concepts with meticulous and detailed notes at the end of the book, data that greatly strengthen and enrich his work.

A very valuable contribution is the inclusion of a series of photographs that document marriages, family, religious and cultural celebrations, and shows the faces of the main players in this account. These photographs run throughout the pages as a result of the help offered by the descendants of families who settled in Venado Tuerto and its adjoining area. There is no lack of references, nor tables of statistics nor quotes from local papers. Extracts are frequently used from articles in the community's newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, and in the English-language newspaper *The Standard*, owned by the Mulhall brothers, invaluable first-hand sources.

Though the work does not neglect to mention basic cartographical information and adds a sketch, there is a notable absence of complete maps - modern and old - of the provinces concerned, and of some of the land in the south of Santa Fe. The geographical delimitation chosen by the writer makes these all the more necessary, especially for interested readers who, perhaps due to their regional or foreign origins, are not accustomed to imagining these landscapes and wish to calculate distance, size and coordinates. The result of persevering and fruitful research in censuses, personal, municipal, parochial and diocesan archives and long personal interviews, this work combines the themes and biographies of the lay and religious people related to the development of the colony, up to the year 1950.

Due to its nuclear approach the work can be located flexibly, on the one hand, in the already abundant bibliography on the history of rural immigration in Santa Fe, linked, in this sense - but in a local and cultural microsphere - to the classic and more rigorous work of Ezequiel Gallo, *La Pampa Gringa*. On the other hand, its decision to focus on a migratory community makes it fundamentally closer to a recent body of literature which proposes renewing interest in studying the development and behaviour of the Irish community in Argentine lands, revising the accepted assumptions, while at the same time delving into other connections and less-studied aspects.

Precisely due to this crossing of themes, this diverse information and material will be very useful to anyone who works in research on topics such as the general history of rural colonisation, or the specific story of other towns in Santa Fe Province. The book's detailing of networks of Irish-Argentine parentage will be opportune for those who take an interest in genealogical studies. With the religious biographies, Landaburu also makes an unexpected contribution to Argentine ecclesiastical history by providing interesting cues to be followed up on by those dedicated to the evangelising actions and internal dynamics of the religious orders in Argentina.

Ana M. Castello

Author's Reply

In response to the bibliographical summary provided by Ana Castello, I should emphasise *a priori* that it strikes me as a balanced and meticulous work that is testament to a precise and objective analysis. Due to this, I generally share and accept the observations and criticisms of said work, with the clarifications I will now expand upon.

It is true that I chose a 'direct and simple prose, [...] far from rigorous academic writing' because - as Castello points out so well - this work was aimed at every kind of reader.

Where 'lengthy explanations' are mentioned, this is correct and should possibly have been placed in an attached document, for readers who wished to expand, and thus not disadvantage those with a more synthetic and concrete approach. Regarding the comment that 'little use has been made of recent and/or foreign bibliography,' I do not believe this to be the case. In the index, works by foreign researchers who have dealt with the theme in recent years (for example, Román Gaignard) are cited. Castello is however correct in mentioning 'recourse to Argentine historians writing from a nationalist historiographical approach,' and this is so because it entails a personal attitude, rather than an all-encompassing general view.

The 'comparisons with the immediate present' made in some sections of the work should possibly have been recorded as final thoughts. Regarding the level of erudition that is demanded in some of the analysed sections, this is compatible with my academic training. I am not an expert in history, but rather an Argentine concerned and

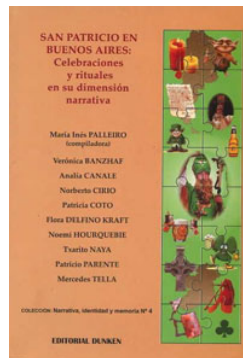
occupied with *'lo nuestro'*, trying to express the history or events of what 'is no longer' through these essays. The evaluation is correct regarding oral traditions being fundamentally rescued through life testimonies, because this is an intangible cultural heritage, destined to be lost to the silence of the ages if it is not documented.

I fully share the view that insufficient charts or illustrative maps were included in the book, despite the data and identification in the bibliography section. This should be kept in mind for future editions. Finally the diagnosis is correct regarding the book's aim to be of use to coming generations, as a starting point for future research.

Roberto E. Landaburu

**Review of San Patricio en Buenos Aires:
Celebraciones y rituales en su dimensión narrativa,
edited by María Inés Palleiro**

By Irina Ionita *



Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2006. 218 pp., ISBN 987-0213383

As an original collection of essays dedicated to the analysis of St. Patrick's Day in present-day Buenos Aires from a general perspective of socio-cultural anthropology, *San Patricio en Buenos Aires* is a significant book which is likely to become a reference work for further studies in this field.

Furthermore, this book represents an excellent starting point in this direction, including an array of articles and a 'multiplicity of converging, diverging, and juxtaposing viewpoints about the figure of St. Patrick and the Celtic world to which he is traditionally linked' (13). These perspectives include and follow shared principles like the 'artistic performance, the expressive form, and the aesthetic and cognitive response that draw on traditions rooted on social contexts' (13).

This is the fourth volume of the *Narrative, Identity and Memory* collection, and it is dedicated to 'the study of different discursive modes of memory building, with a particular focus on the narratives understood both as discourse mode and cognitive instrument for experience articulation (Bruner 2003)' (11).

Ethnic and Religious Celebrations

In order to contextualise this review, it is necessary to explore a brief history of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Buenos Aires

According to Thomas Murray, the first recorded St. Patrick's Day celebration in Buenos Aires was in 1843, and it 'took the form of a dance at Walsh's Tea Garden, [1] which lasted all night and was attended by some one hundred merry-makers' (Murray 1919: 125). However, the author recognises that the function of that year was not the first of its kind in Buenos Aires. Maxine Hanon came across the first news about this celebration in the *British Packet* newspaper as early as in March 1829: 'St. Patrick's day on the 17th. inst., was duly commemorated by various private individuals of this city, natives of Erin's Isle, although no public entertainment took place. The flag of old Ireland floated from the top of Mr. Willis's Naval Hotel (Irish Jemmy's) [2] and its occupants seemed to have no other thought but to honor the day' (Hanon 2005: 70). The fact that *Irish Jemmy* was Protestant and his guests were indistinctly Catholic or Protestant suggests that the common Irish origin of the people celebrating St. Patrick's Day in that early period was more important than their religious background.

In 1830, the *British Packet* commented that St. Patrick's Day 'did not go off so dryly as last year. [...] Captain O'Brien, of the Chili brig Merceditas, in the inner roads, displayed the flag of that republic from his vessel; and there were several private parties, in which every honour was paid to the sainted day' (Hanon 2005: 70). In addition to Willis and Welsh, other organisers of the Irish festivity at that time were Edmund Kirk and Patrick Fleming. In 1833, Welsh had sixty guests in his tea garden, and three other parties were organised by Kirk and others. The

British ship *Iris*, captain Pagan, and the Argentine *Domingo*, captain O'Brien, hoisted Irish flags and the paper commented: "This year Saint Patrick cannot complain that his sons in Buenos Ayres did not honour his [relics] and memory' (in Hanon 2005: 70, my translation).

In 1837, the celebration at Edmund Kirk's house was chaired by the Irish priest Fr. McCartan, [3] and drinks were offered in honour of William IV, Princess Victoria - 'the hope of Ireland and the Empire' - Daniel O'Connell, General Juan Manuel de Rosas, and others. Addressing the public, Fr. McCartan praised Princess Victoria as 'she is imbued with liberal sentiments; and upon the prolongation of her life are fixed the hopes of peace, justice and prosperity for your native land, and the tranquillity of the Empire. [...] The Government of His Excellency General Rosas has been attended with the most beneficial results, that is, it has produced public order, and given security to property and life, where all had been heretofore anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed. Such a marked change for the better is exceedingly creditable to the head and heart of His Excellency, whose health I have now the honour to give' (Hanon 2005: 70).

We do not know the details of these celebrations. In 1839, there were seventy people who dined, toasted, sang and danced up 'till Aurora, envious of the enjoyment of such much sublunary pleasure, speeding the pace of her spirited steeds, came forth' (Hanon 2005: 70). About thirty years later, when reading a letter from John Pettit of Australia and formerly from Buenos Aires, 'Mrs. Kirk [...] told of the many St. Patrick's day dinners they had had together and how when she would speak of what they should have, he would say "never mind old woman, give them plenty of fish and potatoes"' (Sally Moore to John James Pettit, 25 October 1866, in Murray 2006: 94). The following year, on 17 March 1840, the celebration went public when a band played *God Save the Queen* through the streets of Buenos Aires

From the mid-1840s, when Irish migration to Buenos Aires was significant compared to migration from other countries, nationalism became a frequent topic in the celebration of St. Patrick's day. In 1844, Queen Victoria and Governor Rosas were proposed in the toasts. However, there were also drinks in the honour of 'Daniel O'Connell, Ireland's Liberator and the Repeal of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland', 'the principles proclaimed by the Volunteers of 1782', [4] 'Ireland for the Irish and the Irish for Ireland', 'the U.S. of America - the generous asylum of persecuted Irishmen', 'the sympathisers with the wrongs of Ireland, in every part of the globe', and 'Admiral William Brown - he has proved himself by his undaunted courage in a hundred combats, a true son of Erin' (Hanon 2005: 71).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, at the same time that St. Patrick's Day marches were held in New York and other locations of the Irish Diaspora, the festivity was also celebrated in Carmen de Areco, San Andrés de Giles, Capilla del Señor, Lobos, Venado Tuerto and other Irish settlements of the provinces of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe. In addition to the nationalist speeches and symbols, the religious character of the celebration was emphasised by the Irish Catholic chaplains, who from that time became the main organisers and leaders of the Irish communities, at least in the rural areas. Protestant elements were avoided and the Irish-Argentine press focused on the connections between the saint and Catholic Ireland. Sometimes the celebration coincided with the opening of chapels in areas of Irish settlement, Killallen in Castilla (1868), St. Brigid's in Rojas (1869), St. Patrick's in Capitán Sarmiento (1870), Sts. Michael and Mel in San Patricio (1870), the parish church of Venado Tuerto (1883), and Las Saladas in Navarro (1898). On 17 March 1875, many of the women attending the mass at the San Nicolás de Bari church of Buenos Aires were 'displaying green ribbons and feathers'. Later at the dinner in Hotel de la Paix, many men wore 'green rosettes and shamrocks in their hats', and 'the dining salon was most tastefully decorated: the green flag of Erin, the flag of England and the Argentine flag were gracefully hung at the head of the hall'. This was 'the first time in twelve years that St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires was celebrated in a befitting manner' (*The Southern Cross*, week of 17 March 1875 in *The Southern Cross: Número del Centenario*, pp. 9, 100).

It was on Sunday, 17 March 1912, that the saint's day was celebrated in Luján Basilica with a national gathering of almost all of the Irish communities in Argentina. From that time, whenever St. Patrick's Day falls on a Sunday, there is a crowded reunion in Luján which is emblematic of the ethnic and religious character of the festivity. 'On the 17th, St. Patrick's day, Mrs. O'Loughlin, Julia, Laura, Lawrence and I went to Luján for the pilgrimage. There was a great crowd there' (Memoirs of Tom Garrahan in Murray 2005: 130).

The celebration has evolved from a national reunion in the nineteenth century to a religious festivity in the first half of the twentieth century to a social gathering today.

From National Festivity to Dionysian Merriment

As well as the depth of its contents, *San Patricio en Buenos Aires* stands out for its copious bibliographical references and multi-disciplinary perspectives. The different authors offer both synchronic and diachronic angles of anthropology, sociology, literature, 'classic' history and history of religions, and linguistics. The book is addressed to readers with a specialisation in the above-mentioned fields, and it will be very useful for students of socio-cultural anthropology and history. However, the multidisciplinary approach offers a wide standpoint for the general reader interested in understanding St. Patrick as a Celtic symbol in the context of the Irish diaspora in Argentina

The introduction by María Inés Palleiro *et al.* sets out the theoretical framework, examining links with folklore and presenting different concepts. Among them are the folkloric performance (23) and Derrida's *arkebé* (25), as well as the recreation of traditions to support the construction of new messages from historical paradigms. Narratives are also positioned in a cognitive perspective, and the contemplation of rites from a performative and artistic point of view. Based on the Irish migration to Latin America, and more precisely to Argentina, an analysis of the commemoration of the bishop Patrick as patron saint of all the Irish, including (or particularly) those living in the diaspora. Both as a symbol of the Catholic church and as an ethnic epitome, Patrick becomes a justification for the identity rebuilding process of Irish emigrants. This process is performed through the liturgy - including the exemplary rhetoric and the inflexible structure - and at the same time through its antithesis, Celtic festivals and street gatherings with structural elements of medieval carnivals. Within the global and marketing context in which the space-time continuum stretches under the effects of the 'virtual Nation' (83), the street party becomes increasingly significant and visible.

The eight essays included in this volume focus on different aspects of memory and identity, with their heterogeneous approaches to performance through diverse discourses. The first contribution, by M. I. Palleiro, presents a comparative diachronic analysis of a medieval version of the European *Purgatory of St. Patrick*, and an oral version within the contemporary Argentine context. The following article, by V. A. Banzhaf, focuses on the development of Celtic and Christian cultures, as well as the diffuse border between history and myth in the various medieval versions of *The Purgatory of St. Patrick*. P. H. Coto de Attilio analyses the 'ideological context' of a personal history that emphasises the individual and group subjectivity of memory and identity. P. Parente studies the normative and exemplary narratives in Christian hagiography through two fairytales. In his article, N. E. Hourquebie covers the identity aspects of images representing Celtic fairies in tattoos, within the framework of social exclusion. The sixth essay, by N. P. Cirio, examines the reinvention of Celtic music as a ritualised practice, and its re-actualisation in the Argentine contemporary context. F. Delfino Kraft's chapter is dedicated to the two-fold discourse on alcohol consumption as a practice linked both to the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, and to exemplary Irish history, with reference to its negative effects. The closing piece, by A. Canale, revises the reinvention of tradition signifiers and of local identities in Buenos Aires, together with the street celebrations of St. Patrick's Day.

The articles are exposed with a lucid approach and include meticulous argumentation, in which the form corresponds to the content and the well-developed internal logic is by and large convincing. An excessive compulsion to present minor details and to include a great quantity of references resulted in a substantial work. However, this complexity may also be a weakness since sometimes the text moves away from the main objective. Therefore the introductory essay is occasionally crammed with detailed explanations, as in the section 'La celebración litúrgica del patrono de Irlanda en la Argentina' (42-46). As a particular element of the celebration, the mythic discourse (43) is indeed an important feature, though it may be excessive to dedicate one page to the contextual analysis of Eliade and Jakobson. The reader may lose focus with information that is certainly interesting but too specific for the book's objective. The same detail is apparent in the following pages (51), where the etymology of *enxemplo* is examined. This abundance of references and detail would be better positioned within the context of more specific and critical studies.

The articles in this book are interesting, well documented and reasoned, though on the other hand their heterogeneity begs the question of what the connection is between them and the object of the book as represented in the title. Particularly, V. A. Banzhaf's 'El "Purgatorio de San Patricio" en versiones medievales: los cruces de una tradición' (119-136) is a good example of this. This essay is valuable and well-structured from the perspective of comparative literature of medieval texts. However, it is difficult to establish a connection to the rituals and celebration of St. Patrick's Day in present-day Buenos Aires. This is balanced by its accurate placing after the comparative article of M. I. Palleiro, which gives Banzhaf's piece a continuity and structural coherence within the book. The subsequent essay, 'Una pequeña historia: memoria e identidad en un relato personal' de P.H. Coto de Attilio (137-150), raises the same sort of questions. The analysis of certain healer practices - which would be better situated in a book about medical anthropology - covers a field study in the context of contemporary Argentina, but it is too distant from Saint Patrick as a symbol and his commemoration.

Nevertheless, the achievement of this multi-authored work is to reunite heterogeneous reflections on a concrete subject. The editor and the authors are to be congratulated for their accomplishment within the framework of anthropological research about the Irish Diaspora in Argentina. The problems of identity and memory, as well as the diverse discursive and performative expressions, are at the heart of Palleiro's collection. As mentioned above, it is necessary to consider her work as a point of departure for the multiple avenues of analysis and knowledge improvement.

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Translated by Edmundo Murray

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Notes

[1] Welsh [Walsh], Michael (ca. 1790-1847), mason, was born in Clonmel, County Tipperary. In 1819 Michael Welsh arrived in Buenos Aires with his wife Cecilia, *née* Bowers, and their daughters Brigid and Margaret. Welsh specialised in chimneys and stoves, and worked on improvements in the installations in *saladeros* (meat-curing plants), churches - like St. John's Anglican cathedral - and private houses. He also worked in Montevideo at different periods. His house in Viamonte and Cerrito was the location selected for numerous St. Patrick's Day celebrations and, in 1838 and 1841-1843 opened as a tea garden. Michael Welsh died on 24 July 1847 in Montevideo (Hanon 2005: 836).

[2] Willis, James (b. ca. 1790), publican, was born in County Kilkenny, and arrived in Buenos Aires in August 1816 with his son John Willis. By 1829, he owned the public house and naval hotel known as Irish Jemmy's, in the 25 de Mayo Street of Buenos Aires. He was one of the founders of the British Hospital in 1844 (Hanon 2005: 862). On 4 August 1829, James Willis married Mary Quin of Cork, Ireland, at the British Protestant Episcopal Chapel (Jeremy Howat, *St John's Marriages, 1828 to 1832*).

[3] The Catholic priest Michael McCartan (1798-1876) was born in Belfast and entered Maynooth in 1817 to study for the priesthood. He was ordained on 16 June 1821 by the Archbishop of Dublin Dr. Daniel Murray. McCartan had some disagreement with the bishop of Dromore, seemingly for political reasons. He wrote letters to the press criticising the bishop, and was banished to Nova Scotia. He travelled to England, North America, the West Indies and Chile, and arrived in Argentina in 1836. He was appointed parish priest in Concordia, Entre Ríos Province, from where he was banished for extreme political opinions. After that he ministered at San Roque Chapel of Buenos Aires. He then left Argentina and travelled extensively in South and North America, before returning to Argentina in 1862. He died on 23 June 1876 in Fr. Patrick Dillon's house [Murray 1919: 98-100].

[4] The Volunteers were an armed force in Ireland recruited in 1778-1779 originally to guard against invasion, but who soon took on a wider political importance as an expression of middle-class consciousness. The Volunteers supported the more militant patriots, and their Convention at Dungannon of February 1872 provided the starting point for the final, successful drive for legislative independence (S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, p. 581).

Author's Reply

This summary managed to capture the fundamental aspects of our research into St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires from a synchronic and diachronic perspective. We would like to emphasise that the distinctive feature of this research was its placement within a human resources training programme, dedicated to Training in the Process of Folk Tradition Research (EPIF), based at the Folk Tradition Section of the Anthropology Institute of the University of Buenos Aires, headed by Ana María Dupey. I was in charge of co-ordinating this programme under Ana María Dupey's supervision and with the valuable advice of Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, of Cork University. In this inter-disciplinary programme, young graduates and advanced students carried out a general investigation, which had as its starting point a field research ethnographic paper based on an initial theoretical framework which I had established (Palleiro 2004) and reformulated for the specific study of Ireland's patron saint. In this framework, the performance of social belonging in a context, the communicative dimension and the aesthetic elaboration of folk events were taken into account. In the general research, Verónica Banzhaf worked on aspects relating to medieval sources referring to the figure of the patron saint of Ireland, between history and legend. Patricio Parente surveyed and analysed the street celebrations in the urban context of Buenos Aires, and I, with the help of Flora Delfino Kraft

and María del Rosario Naya in field research, analysed aspects relating to the liturgical celebration. For her part, Mercedes Tella focused on the analysis of the advertising and marketing generated around the celebration and Flora Delfino Kraft focused her interest on examining the debates surrounding this celebration on the internet's virtual fora.

On the basis of this general research, those who took part in the programme also developed individual articles, the thematic focal points of which were highlighted with great incisiveness by the author of the summary, and consulted with qualified researchers and specialists in various issues linked to the narrative construction of identity and memory, such as Analía Canale, Norberto Pablo Cirio, Patricia Coto and Noemí Hourquebie. These experts, using St. Patrick's Day and Celtic culture in Buenos Aires as a basis, contributed their research on, respectively, the Buenos Aires' carnival and *murga*, [1] Celtic music, the oral narratives of migrant communities and the micro-narratives of body tattoos.

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin's prologue deserves special mention and highlights the two-fold local and global dimension of St. Patrick's Day, which functions both as an emblem of identity configuration for the Irish community and as a symbol of its opening to a transnational dimension which includes, in his own words, 'the Boston police band as much as the Killarney boy scouts and the revellers in Retiro.'

Ana María Dupey's incisive preliminary commentary is also worth highlighting as it stresses the framework of our work on St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires within an opening up of the disciplinary field of folk studies to diverse aspects and manifestations.

It is also worth giving special mention to the reading made by Alejandro Frigerio, expert researcher in ritual anthropology, who, at the paper's presentation, linked our research on St. Patrick in Buenos Aires with issues such as the celebration of St. Patrick associated with the cult of the *orixás* in Afro-Brazilian culture.

A large part of these aspects were identified and highlighted with great incisiveness by the author of the summary, who we thank for her careful reading of our paper and her pertinent framework within studies on Irish migration, paying special attention to the excellent work of Edmundo Murray, whose legitimisation of our paper is of great importance for our research group in Argentina.

The warm support of the Irish community in Argentina deserves our gratitude, particularly that of Kevin Farrell, President of the Federation of Irish Associations in Argentina, of Teresa Deane Reddy from the Irish newspaper *The Southern Cross*, of the priests Eugenio Lynch, Thomas O'Donnell, Ambrosio Geoghegan, Pablo Bocca and Carlos Cravea, and of Maradei de Morello, from San Antonio de Areco, who gave us the initial contacts to begin our work in that area.

All of these contributions resulted in our paper, with its framework of studies on Irish culture at international level, thanks to the authors and editors of this summary, who contributed valuable observations based on personal experience and knowledge, allowing us to redefine not only the paper but also the new research we are carrying out, focusing on the theme of belief.

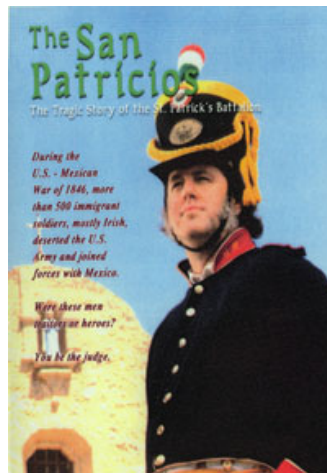
María Inés Palleiro

Translated by Annette Leahy

[1] A form of popular musical street theatre performed during carnival

Review of Mark Day's documentary film
The San Patricios
The Tragic Story of the St. Patrick's Battalion

By William H. Mulligan, Jr. *



DVD and VHS, 49 minutes

Produced and directed by Mark R. Day, narrated by James Lancaster,
edited by Joanne Hershfield. Original music by Steven A. Yeaman

When this documentary was first released, the San Patricios were a much-neglected aspect of Irish American history and the history of the Americas generally. During the ensuing decade, they have received a great deal of attention both with the publication of books and with other documentaries, one of which was shown at the national meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies in St. Louis, Missouri, in April 2006. At least some of the credit for rescuing the San Patricios from neglect must go to Mark Day.

The story of the San Patricios is deceptively straightforward. A group of Irish immigrants who were serving in the United States army deserted and formed a unit in the Mexican army that fought against the United States during the war with Mexico. Some had deserted before the war began, - as it turned out, a salient point - and others after the war began. The generally harsh treatment of enlisted men in the US army at the time and discrimination against Irish Catholics were factors in their desertion - all accounts agree on this point. When United States forces captured them, those who had deserted after the war began were hung in an especially cold and calculated way. The leader of the San Patricios, John Riley, was from Galway and had worked on Mackinac Island, Michigan before enlisting in the army. There is not much disagreement on any of these issues.

Where things begin to diverge is in how the San Patricios are viewed. The documentary makes the point that they are honoured in Mexico as heroes who fought and died for Mexico. A memorial was unveiled in Ireland honouring them while the documentary was being made. In the United States, they are often seen as traitors - when their existence is acknowledged at all. For many years, the US army apparently denied that the incident had ever happened. Clearly, the incident happened. We can debate why the US army would deny it. The motivations of the individuals in the unit for their decision, especially those of their leader John Riley; the motivation behind their harsh punishment; and what, if anything, the incident tells us about the position of the Irish in the United States, together with a range of other historical questions, are less straight forward and are subject to speculation and debate. Like many immigrants, the individual San Patricios left little behind with which to study their motivations and thoughts.

However, the real question in this review is: how effectively does *The San Patricios: The Tragic Story of the St. Patrick's Battalion* tell its story? The answer is neither simple nor straightforward. The production values generally are first-rate. This is a well-executed, professional piece of work without question or quibble. It is sharp, clear, in focus at all times, unlike another documentary on the same topic that I had seen. There are still too many historical documentaries that do not have these basic qualities. There is a nice mix of period graphics, scholars offering facts and

interpretations, and footage of battle and other reenactments that are quite well done. Visually this is a successful production. The documentary also has a clear argument that organises the information presented and structures the presentation.

With the exception of Kerby Miller, the 'expert scholars' are not especially impressive. One, Rodolfo Acuña, seems to have a political agenda to champion rather than a historical interpretation to present and journalist Peter Stevens does not appear to know much about scholarship on Irish migration to the US, even allowing for the fact that the programme is ten years old, or much beyond the handed-down, popular history of the Irish in America. This raises questions about the point of the presentation - is it intended to explore a little-known episode in US history or is there a political agenda of accentuating the racism of United States society and past discrimination against Irish Americans, and even of supporting Mexican groups seeking to regain the territory lost in the war between the two countries? Neither Acuña nor Stevens provides much of historical substance nor shows any evidence of a deep knowledge of the incident itself, US military history, or the history of Irish migration to the US. Having an opinion is one thing, having an opinion based on familiarity with the relevant primary source materials and scholarship is another.

There are other problems. Riley is an elusive figure and little can be said about him with certainty. The examination of his character is probably handled as well as it might be, although the uncertainties undermine a solid acceptance of the thesis advanced. More troubling is the confused way in which the history of Irish migration to the United States is presented. Many of the graphics used to illustrate life in Ireland date from after the period when Riley and the other San Patricios left. They do not show their Ireland, but a later, post-famine Ireland that was markedly different. The entire discussion of Irish emigration to the United States is confused at best, especially as it relates to the war between Mexico and the United States. Kerby Miller tries to sort it out, but the other experts do not seem to have the chronology clear in their own minds. The discussion of the idea of Manifest Destiny in the United States is weak, especially in relation to the issue of slavery. Since it was a critical factor in the war, it should be more fully and clearly developed. There are other issues, mostly small ones that could be raised.

Despite these problems, the programme succeeds, to a considerable extent, in achieving its goals. The San Patricios are portrayed in a sympathetic light and the brutality of their treatment is clear. It sustains interest throughout because of its technical excellence. In raising questions and making the viewer engage with the topic and seriously weigh the material presented, even if in disagreement, it has accomplished a great deal. As a testament to the significance of the documentary, I will be using it in my military history course because its perspective needs to be considered seriously and the issues it raises discussed.

William H. Mulligan, Jr.

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Author's Reply

I would like to thank Dr. Mulligan for his kind remarks about the San Patricios documentary, especially his reference to the film's production values as first rate.

I would also like to thank him for his scholarly analysis of the documentary's treatment of Irish immigrants, the unjust US intervention in Mexico of 1847 and the doctrine of Manifest Destiny that to this day influences US foreign policy. This is exactly the kind of discussion that I hoped this documentary would spark. The purpose of all historical texts should be reflection on times past and how they speak to us in the present. In that spirit, I would like to share some of my thoughts regarding the ideas expressed in his review.

Mulligan asks: 'Is it intended [my documentary] to explore a little known episode in US history, or is there a political agenda of accentuating the racism of US society and past discrimination against Irish Americans, and even of supporting Mexican groups seeking to regain the territory lost in the war between the two countries?' In other words, does Mark Day have a political agenda, a specific point of view, a bias? Yes, of course. Everyone operates from his/her particular bias. To deny bias becomes an agenda in itself. There is no such thing as 'pure' history. Historical facts are interpreted. And those interpretations are themselves historically contingent.

The most commonly recounted history of the US, from the genocidal treatment of Native Americans through slavery and on to the military conquest of Mexico, has been the grand narrative written by the victors, not the losers. One of the chief spoils of conquest and colonisation is the power to tell the stories of history. Traditionally, these storytellers are, for the most part, white, conservative and middle-aged men who believe the lens through which they interpret the world is pure and unbiased. In other words, the normalising gaze of power hides the reality that history is always told through an ideological lens. The question that I believe to be most important is: Who benefits from this interpretation of historical facts? Not to do so belies a cultural blind spot, a blind spot born of the privilege of power.

So instead of stories about resistance from Native Americans and the rebellions of slaves, we learn about the exploits of presidents and generals. Instead of life and death struggles of workers and trade unions, we are told about wealthy bankers and the golden ages of industry and commerce. And instead of learning about the humiliation of Mexico with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, we are regaled with stories about the rugged individuals who tamed the West. We learn about History with a capital 'H,' but very little about the histories of the people who shaped and were affected by the onward rush of events. We seldom learn about history told from the bottom up.

Historian Howard Zinn points out some examples of this historical amnesia. He writes about the glorification of Christopher Columbus as a man of skill and courage, but the omission of criticisms from contemporaries such as Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. The latter writes of Columbus: 'The admiral was so anxious to please the King that he committed irreparable crimes against the Indians' (Zinn 1990: 57).

Zinn also mentions historians' omission of the Ludlow massacre of miners' wives and children by the Colorado National Guard in 1913. He suggests that it might be considered 'bold, radical, or even communist' to talk about these class struggles in a nation that prides itself on the oneness of its people. And where, he wonders, are the stories about the abolitionists, labour leaders, radicals and feminists? Zinn writes that the 'pollution of history' happens not by design, but when scholars are afraid to stick their necks out, and instead play it safe (Zinn 1990: 62; Zinn 2003). This provides strong evidence that the project of history itself is inherently political.

This is why the story of the San Patricios always intrigued me. I first learned about this motley band of mostly Irish renegades from César Chávez when I worked as an organiser with the United Farm Workers Union in the late sixties. But it was due to the scholarly work of Robert Ryal Miller and his book, *Shamrock and Sword* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), that I discovered the story behind the battalion, formed by Irish immigrants in the Mexican army. Later, working on the film put me in contact with several Mexican scholars and ordinary citizens who saw the story from a totally different angle, from the viewpoint of the conquered, the vanquished. I also spoke with experts on nativism in mid-nineteenth century America.

This leads to another question. Are there parallels in the nativist attacks against the Irish in US history and the resurgence of nativism against Mexican and Latin American immigrants today? I would suggest that parallels are to be found in the tendency to exploit and scapegoat newcomers, the shared colonial experience and Catholic faith, the crude stereotypes applied to both groups, and the perceived threats of immigrants to the job market and American culture, to name a few. The similarities in nativist rhetoric from that period are so closely related to the current situation that you can simply remove the word 'Irish' and replace it with 'Mexican'. Few people today would recognise the difference. But I did not make this documentary to accentuate nativism and racism. These realities come forth because they were endemic to that period, much to the dismay of those who would like to downplay them for ideological reasons.

Lastly, was the intent of the San Patricios documentary to support those who wish to regain the territory that Mexico lost with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo? Hardly. Aside from commentator Lou Dobbs of CNN and his nightly nativism, the only people talking about the so called *reconquista* or re-conquest of the Southwest are fringe groups like the Minutemen vigilantes and Pat Buchanan, who attract a miniscule following among ordinary US Americans. Most Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants, like their nineteenth-century Irish counterparts, simply want what most US Americans seek - to live in peace, to work hard and to be accepted, like everyone else. In short, they are seeking the US American dream. It has been gratifying to witness the lively discussions at the screenings of the San Patricios, to watch the interchanges between disparate groups of people, and to get feedback from students and professors who have benefited from the film. If it advances understanding about Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century and the situation in Mexico, then and today, I am more than satisfied.

Mark R. Day
Vista, California

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- *Ibid.*, 62. See also Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).

William Lamport [*Guillén Lombardo*] (1610-1659), author of an early declaration of Mexican independence and self-proclaimed 'King of New Spain'

By Ryan Dominic Crew



William Lamport (1610-1659)

(*Enrique Alciati, 1910.*

*Monumento a la Independencia,
Mexico City)*

Lamport, William [*Guillén Lombardo*] (1610-1659), author of an early declaration of Mexican independence and self-proclaimed 'King of New Spain', was born in Wexford Town, County Wexford, Ireland, around the year 1610. He is more popularly known in Mexico and Latin America by his Spanish alias 'Don Guillén Lombardo de Guzmán'. His parents, Richard Lamport and Alonsa Sutton, were both of Old English descent. William had at least one sibling, John Lamport. William's family claimed relations to local nobility, but by trade they were merchants - and at times, pirates. Like many Old English in the late sixteenth century, William's family saw their traditional autonomy and their Catholic religion threatened by renewed English efforts to subjugate Ireland. His grandfather, Patrick Lamport, was among those who decided to align with the Gaelic chiefs' wars against Tudor colonisation. Lamport's ships aided Don Juan de Águila's Spanish expeditionary force that disembarked at Kinsale in 1600, and for years afterwards he was a known threat to English shipping off southern Ireland. Finally apprehended in 1617, Patrick was executed on the personal orders of James I. About four years after the execution, his grandsons William and John left Wexford, entrusted to churchmen who schooled them.

After a few years studying at a Jesuit school in Dublin, William began university studies in England at Gresham College. There he studied Greek and Mathematics. He soon fled the country, however, after publishing a treatise denouncing King James I. As he escaped to France, a company of pirates near Saint-Malo captured him. He spent several years with them and fought with them in the siege of La Rochelle as mercenaries for the French. Eventually escaping the band of pirates in Bordeaux, he made his way toward the Irish exile community in La Coruña, Galicia, Spain. There William hispanicised his name to 'Don Guillén Lombardo' and entered the Irish exile community school in Santiago, the Colegio de Niños Nobles. He won the attention and support of Irish and Spanish nobles after he converted his former pirate band to Catholicism and loyalty to the Spanish monarchy at the Galician port of

Deán. He received a scholarship to study at the Colegio de Irlandeses in Salamanca, and two years later, King Philip IV's principal minister, the Conde Duque de Olivares, placed him in the select Colegio de San Lorenzo del Escorial - a training ground for the elite servants of the monarchy.

This educational background allowed William to rise into a select group of educated Irish exiles who served in the Spanish ecclesiastical and imperial administration. He proved to be a loyal servant to powerful patrons, who led the Spanish monarchy's war efforts in Europe. He fought at the battle of Nördlingen (1634), and led Irish soldiers at the siege of Fuenterrabía (1638). A unique record of William's military and diplomatic service survives in pictorial form. While serving in Brussels in the mid-1630s under the King's representative, Jean-Charles della Faille, the famed painter Anton Van Dyck - or at least one of his students - made a preliminary drawing for a portrait of Don Guillén. The portrait itself was never completed; the drawing is now housed at a museum in Budapest, Hungary. William appears dressed as a student under his coat of arms, presenting a lengthy piece of writing to della Faille.

Returning to Madrid, William apparently served in diplomatic and espionage missions for the effective head of Spanish government, the Conde Duque de Olivares, particularly in Catalonia. While it is difficult to corroborate these claims, a published panegyric in honour of the Conde Duque de Olivares authored by William provides some indication that William became an *hechura*, or protégé, of the Conde Duque. At this time he also publicly appropriated the Conde Duque de Olivares' principal last name, *Guzmán*, thus becoming 'Don Guillén Lombardo de Guzmán.'

In 1639, William became involved in an Irish rebel scheme to seek Spanish support at Court for a reconquest of Ireland. An Irish mercenary recruiter named Gilbert Nugent, known in Spain as Don Fulgencio Nugencio, arrived in Madrid and stayed with William. Nugent operated secretly with William's assistance at Court. Their request pleaded for 100 ships, 8,000 Spanish soldiers, arms for 50,000 rebels, and 1.5 million pesos in exchange for 'three types of tribute' that the Irish would pay to the Spanish Monarchy after victory. The Conde Duque de Olivares and his secretary Don Martín de Axpe dismissed the request as 'ridiculous.' Nevertheless, they offered the exiles some logistical assistance in Northern Spanish ports. William, with the title of *Maestro de Campo*, or field-commander, was appointed to assist the secret expedition.

During this period in Madrid, William courted a woman named Doña Ana de Cano y Leyva. Evidence on her origins is contradictory, some suggesting that she was a noblewoman, others claiming that she was a Portuguese *converso*, - a descendent of forcibly-converted Iberian Jews. It is also unclear as to whether they contracted matrimony - some evidence points to scandal surrounding their unwed cohabitation. Ana became pregnant with his child around 1639 - 1640. Fleeing either a scandalous affair with this noblewoman or an unwanted marriage, William sailed on the Indies fleet bound for Mexico from Cádiz on 21 April 1640.

William travelled to the Viceroyalty of New Spain (present-day Mexico and parts of North and Central America) in privilege, on the same ship as the newly-imported viceroy, the Marqués de Villena. William later claimed that he travelled to Mexico with a special appointment from the Conde Duque de Olivares to spy on his behalf on the social situation in Mexico. There is some reason to lend credibility to this claim: In early 1640, the Conde Duque received a message from the sitting viceroy that the *criollos*, or Mexican-born descendants of Spanish conquerors and settlers, were on the verge of revolting against Spanish authority. William's mission, he claimed, was to spy on elite *criollos* in Mexico City and report all rumours and evidence directly to his patron in Madrid.

In Mexico City, William established relations with the *Escribano Mayor* (chief clerk) of the Mexico City government, Don Fernando Carrillo. Carrillo was a prominent elite *criollo*, who had been involved in recent protests against Spanish tax and revenue policies. William tutored Carrillo's son, Sebastián Carrillo, and rented a room in their home. Through the Carrillo family, William became acquainted with local *criollo* politics - indeed it appears that he became embroiled in a *criollo* conspiracy against Viceroy Villena led by the Bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza. William aided the overthrow by sending a long report to Madrid denouncing the actions of the viceroy. As a result, the Conde Duque de Olivares dispatched a secret order to Bishop Palafox that authorised his takeover of the government. With troops in tow, the Bishop deposed Viceroy Villena in June 1642.

William sought a post in the Bishop-Viceroy's new regime, but to no avail. In the summer of 1642 he met an indigenous petitioner who had come to the Carrillo household seeking legal advice, named Don Ignacio. William began to meet frequently with Don Ignacio and assisted him in preparing a legal brief denouncing abuses against indigenous workers in the mines of Taxco. On one occasion, the two consulted the future through *peyote* (Central American cactus containing mescaline, used as a psychotropic sacramental drug) and Don Ignacio predicted that William would lead a rebellion in New Spain and that the miners of Taxco would support his movement. This prediction, combined with William's sense of self-importance and his uncertain future in the turbulent politics of Mexico City, coalesced into his plan for Mexican independence in the summer of 1642.

Increasingly secluded, William drew up a plan that sought full sovereignty for Mexico and broad social change in this colony wrought by deep ethnic and class divisions. His tactical plan included the formation of a militia composed of indigenous rebels, enslaved African people, and disgruntled *criollo* militiamen. After assuming control of the government of New Spain, William would call for general assemblies in all the plazas across New Spain. There, all parts of society - Spanish, indigenous, and African - would proclaim him 'our liberator, our Emperor and King of New

Spain'. There would follow a period of radical social reforms: Freedom would be granted to all those slaves who co-operated with the rebellion, co-operative indigenous towns would be relieved of *repartimientos* (forced labour drafts) and tributes, and free trade would be established with Europe and China. With Mexican silver now remaining in Mexico, instead of being sent to Spain in the form of taxes and the *quinto* or 'royal fifth' rights to all silver deposits, William believed that this New World sovereign power would rise to prominence among the nations of the world. Finally, William's regime would not be an absolute monarchy; he proposed a limited monarchy, with himself 'or whoever the people choose', as a king who would rule in consultation with an active parliament.

Rumours surrounding William's plan eventually landed him in trouble. In October 1642, he was jailed by the Mexican Inquisition. He was charged with heresy, principally linked to his use of *peyote* (his independence plan, representing a crime of treason, would have fallen under the civil law). During his seventeen-year incarceration, he resisted the Inquisitors' logic with wit and intelligence. Those years in prison have left us with several extensive treatises, a memoir, and a collection of 900 Latin psalms which he wrote on his bed-sheets. He made a vain attempt to escape in 1651. During his last years in solitary confinement, he slipped into insanity. Lamport was sentenced to be executed in the *Auto de Fé*, or public execution by the Inquisition, in 1659. Defiant to the end, he managed to hang himself on the stage before the executioner reached him, robbing the Inquisition of his own death. Thereafter, his body was burned on a pyre.

Since his death, William Lamport has occasionally appeared in history and myth. Mexican historians in the nineteenth century debated over the place that he should occupy in the history of Mexican independence struggles. More recently some speculation has emerged as to whether William's life could be the source of the 'Zorro' myth. In his historical context as an Irish exile, William was a privileged yet marginal observer of Mexican society. His remedy for his adopted society, with its promise of freedom on a new sovereign soil, continues to intrigue historians both as a possibility and as a mirage.

Ryan Dominic Crewe

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Tomás Antonio O'Horan (1776-1848), public official in Mexico and Guatemala

By Fabián Gaspar Bustamante Olgúin



Tomás Antonio O'Horan (1776-1848)
(*Diccionario Porrúa de historia, biografía y geografía de México*)

O'Horan, Tomás Antonio (1776-1848), public official in Mexico and Guatemala, was born in present-day Guatemala, the first child of John [Juan José] O'Horan and María Gertrudis de Argüello y Monte, of Campeche. John O'Horan, son of John O'Horan (*sen.*) and Jane Ready, was born in Aughane, Co. Cork, and resided in the Canary Islands before heading to New Spain.

On 13 December 1817 Tomás A. O'Horan married Gertrudis Escudero de la Rocha. Their eldest son, Tomás O'Horan y Escudero (1819-1867), served as an officer against the second French invasion of 1862, but was shot by the forces of Benito Juárez in 1867. The seventh child, Agustín Jorge O'Horan y Escudero (1828-1884) graduated in 1853 from the medical school and practised in Mérida, Yucatán.

Between 1794 and 1799, Tomás Antonio O'Horan studied in the Seminario Conciliar of Campeche, where he was later appointed professor of law. Then he studied in San Ildefonso seminary at University of Mexico, where he graduated in canonical law. In 1805 O'Horan was appointed solicitor at the Royal Audience of Mexico. He served as financial auditor and law counsellor. In Veracruz Tomás A. O'Horan served as government counsellor, and he led the company of police mounted lancers and a military force against insurgents.

On 23 December 1816, O'Horan was appointed prosecutor at the Royal Audience of Guatemala, succeeding Juan Ramón de Oses. His appointment was confirmed by the king on 25 January 1817. He also acted as elected prosecutor in Santa Fe and, in 1821, and as auditor in Guatemala. In 1823-1824 Tomás A. O'Horan was a member of the triumvirate that governed the United Provinces of Central America. In 1835 he served in the Mexican senate representing Yucatán and later as magistrate in Mérida. O'Horan died on 21 August 1848 in his home province of Yucatán.

Fabián Gaspar Bustamante Olgúin

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Arthur Sandes (1793-1832), commander of the Rifles Battalion in the South American wars of independence

By Moises Enrique Rodríguez



Arthur Sandes (1793-1832)
(*The Irish Sword*, Vol. XII N° 47, p. 139)

Sandes, Arthur (1793-1832), commander of the Rifles Battalion in the South American wars of independence, was born in 1793 in Dublin or Kerry and fought at the Battle of Waterloo in Belgium. He left the British army in 1815 and two years later joined Colonel Frederick Campbell's Regiment of Chasseurs (Rifles). This was a unit recruited in London for service in Venezuela by Luis López Méndez, Bolívar's representative.

The Rifles sailed for Venezuela in January 1818 as part of the 'Expedition of the Five Colonels' (800 men) but virtually dissolved in the West Indies, before ever reaching the battlefield. There were no ships readily available to take the soldiers of fortune to the mainland and no money to honour the false promises made in London. Fatal illnesses, duels, resignations and desertions took a heavy toll. When his son Duncan (an officer serving in his unit) died of a fever, Colonel Campbell had had enough. He resigned his commission and returned to Britain accompanied by his second son, who had fallen ill. Major Robert Piggot, an Irishman, assumed command and finally reached Angostura with between 30 and 60 men on 23 July 1818. In August, the mercenaries, now reduced to 10 or 11 officers and 8 other ranks, went with General Anzoátegui to Misiones del Caroní. There, Piggot, who had since been promoted to Colonel, recruited and trained 400-500 indigenous people and created the '1st Rifles Battalion', also known as the 'Black Rifles'. He led this unit at the battle of Gamarra on 27 March 1819, which was its baptism of fire, but left the army shortly afterwards because of ill health.

He was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Sandes, who commanded the regiment for the rest of the war. The Rifles fought at virtually every theatre of operations and although the troops changed (1818-1819 Venezuelans, 1819-1821 New Granadans, 1822-1825 Ecuadoreans and Peruvians) the backbone of Britons and Irishmen remained constant and ensured continuity. It has been argued that the Rifles, a South American unit organised along British lines and led by a mixed cadre of European and *criollo* officers, was the best regiment in Bolívar's army.

After its service in the Venezuelan plains during the first half of 1819, the Rifles was part of the expeditionary force taken by Bolívar across the 'Llanos' and the Andes and fought in the campaign which resulted in the liberation of central Colombia. The battalion was present at Gameza (where it was mentioned in dispatches), Vargas (where Sandes was wounded twice and had his horse shot under him) and Boyacá (where it took part in a decisive charge against the Spanish artillery). Soon after this battle, an epidemic broke out in the Patriot army. Colonel Sandes fell seriously ill but fortunately later recovered. During 1820 and 1821, Sandes led his regiment in operations in Northern Colombia and Venezuela. It distinguished itself in the battles of Ciénaga (10 November 1820) and Carabobo

(24 June 1821). Unfortunately, the climate proved deadlier than the Royalists and the regiment was greatly reduced in number by an epidemic which broke out in Santa Marta province in October 1821.

The Rifles next went south and fought the Spaniards on 7 April 1822 at a place called Bomboná, a battle which was one of the unit's finest hours. In this feat of arms, it was the Rifles who outflanked the Royalist positions and after a fierce bayonet charge forced the enemy to withdraw from the field. After the battle, the Liberator rewarded the Rifles' gallantry and among the promotions was that of Lieutenant Colonel Sandes to full Colonel. The regiment was renamed 'Rifles of Bomboná, 1st of the Guard' and all its members were awarded the 'Order of the Liberators', one of the few occasions during the war on which this decoration was bestowed upon an entire unit. Arthur Sandes, now aged 29, had risen from Captain to Colonel in only four years, a meteoric rise in many armies but not uncommon in the Patriot forces, a young force where merit was rewarded and where quick promotion was made possible by a terrifying casualty rate.

After Bomboná, Sandes and the Rifles took part in the suppression of the rebellion led by Benito Boves in Pasto and played a key role in the battles of Taindala and Yacuanquer in December 1822. In March-April 1823, the regiment was sent to Peru as part of the Colombian expeditionary force led by General Sucre and its conduct in this last campaign of the Wars of Independence was equally courageous. The Rifles took part in the crossing of the Andes and were present at Junín on 6 August 1824 as part of the Patriot reserves. However, the unit did not actually fight in this action which was exclusively a cavalry encounter.

Their hour of glory came at Corpaguayco on 3 December 1824. As part of the operations which led to the decisive battle of Ayacucho, the Royalist and Patriot armies were manoeuvring against each other. The Spaniards attacked the South American rearguard when Sucre's forces were crossing a river. The brunt of the assault fell on the Rifles who put up a stubborn resistance. Heavily outnumbered, the regiment managed to stop the Royalists' advance long enough to allow the bulk of the Patriot army to escape. They paid a terrible price: 200 of their members were killed, including Major Thomas Duckbury, the second-in-command, and 500 others were wounded, captured or went missing in action. The Rifles were reduced to a mere skeleton. The battle over, it is reported that Colonel Sandes sat down and cried. Sucre had been forced to sacrifice his rearguard in order to save the rest of his army. There would have been no victory at Ayacucho on 9 December 1824 had it not been for the Rifles' gallant stand at Corpaguayco six days before.

At Ayacucho, the remains of the regiment were part of the Patriot order of battle but remained in the reserve and did not take part on the fighting. Instead, the Rifles and another battalion, the 'Vargas', were given a nerve-wracking mission: guarding the arsenal and the numerous Spanish prisoners. At any given moment there were only 50 Riflemen posted to keep an eye on 2,500 weapons and 2,000 prisoners-of-war. A number of the regiment's officers were temporarily transferred to other units and fought in the battle.

As a tribute to their bravery during the Junín-Ayacucho campaign, Sandes was promoted to Brigadier General on Sucre's recommendation and the Rifles were authorised to add one more battle honour to their colours: 'Liberators of Peru'. A Decree of Congress dated 1 February 1825 extended the gratitude of the nation to the regiment, a rare distinction. In November 1825, Bolívar ordered General Salom to give Sandes a reward of 25,000 pesos for his services to the Republic.

After Ayacucho, the Rifles followed Sucre into Alto Peru (present-day Bolivia) where Sandes left the regiment. As Brigadier General, he was now too senior to be in charge of a single battalion and was made second-in-command of a division which included his former unit. With the war over, Sandes remained in Peru as part of the Colombian garrison and was expelled from the country in January 1827, when Lima overthrew the pro-Bolivarian government and got rid of its troops. He was appointed Commandant General of Guayaquil in December and in 1828 fought in the war between Peru and Colombia. After organising the port's defences, Sandes led one of the two Colombian divisions at the battle of Portete de Tarqui on 27 February 1829, the Colombian victory which decided the outcome of the war. Peace restored, Sandes was appointed Governor of the Department of Azuay and settled in Cuenca. He died in this city on 6 September 1832 and was buried in a Carmelite convent.

Concerning his personal life, O'Connor mentions that Sandes and Sucre coveted the hand of the daughter of the Marquis of Solanda, a beautiful lady from Quito. With characteristic chivalry, the Venezuelan General declined to use his more senior rank to press his advantage over the Irish Colonel. The winner of a card game would propose to the girl, the loser would withdraw from the race. Sucre won and married his sweetheart but marital bliss proved fleeting: the Marshal of Ayacucho was assassinated in Berruecos in 1830. According to Lambert, Sandes never married, but Hasbrouck tells us that 'some of his descendants were said to have been living in Venezuela as recently as 1911' (this is not necessarily a contradiction).

Ecuador still remembers her adopted son. There is an Avenida Sandes in Cuenca and the Irishman's name is engraved on the monument at Portete de Tarqui.

Moises Enrique Rodríguez

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**Miguel Godínez [formerly Michael Wadding] (1591-1644),
Jesuit missionary to New Spain**

By Edmundo Murray

Godínez, Miguel [formerly Michael Wadding] (1591-1644), Jesuit missionary to New Spain, was born in 1591 in Waterford, the son of Thomas Wadding and his wife, Marie *née* Valois.

Orphaned at an early age, Michael Wadding was sent to Spain, where he studied at the Irish College in Salamanca and adopted the name of Miguel Godínez. On 15 April 1609 he entered the Villagarcía novitiate of the Society of Jesus. Fr. Godínez obtained permission from his superiors to go to the Jesuit missions in Mexico, where he professed on 26 August 1626. He was first assigned to the mission of Sinaloa, and in the late 1620s he was working among the Tepehuan indigenous people of Sonora. He also worked with the Comicarís and, having expended much effort, converted the Basiroas. Miguel Godínez taught in various colleges in Mexico, including San Ildefonso and the Jesuit Collegium Maximum. In 1642 he became involved in the Mexican Inquisition as counsellor and advisor.

Fr. Godínez was the confessor of several religious women in Puebla de los Angeles and Mexico, including the mystic nuns Isabel de la Encarnación of the Carmelite convent, and María de Jesús Tormellín of the Inmaculada Concepción convent. Godínez charged their secretaries, Sor Francisca and Sor Agustina de Santa Teresa respectively, to write the biographies of both mystic women, and significantly influenced their writings. Politically, Fr. Godínez was part of the faction supporting Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Bishop of Puebla de los Angeles and then Archbishop of Mexico and interim Viceroy of New Spain.

Miguel Godínez was the author of a popular theological treatise, *Práctica de la theología mystica* (1681), which was published posthumously owing to the reservations of the local inquisitors. A biography of María de Jesús Tormellín entitled *Vida de la Madre María de Jesús*, written by her secretary Sor Francisca, is sometimes attributed to Fr. Godínez.

Fr. Miguel Godínez died on 12 (or 18) December 1644 in Mexico City.

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Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

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Rómulo Antonio O'Farrill [Jr.] (1917-2006), media entrepreneur

By Edmundo Murray



Rómulo Antonio O'Farrill Jr. (1917-2006)
(*Mundo DUMAC Septiembre-Octubre 2006*)

O'Farrill, Rómulo Antonio [Jr.] (1917-2006), media entrepreneur, was born on 15 December 1917 in Puebla, Mexico, the eldest son of Rómulo O'Farrill Silva (1897-1981) and his wife, *née* Naude. His father was an automobile industrialist, and later publisher, who co-founded Telesistemas Mexicanos, *Novedades* and *The News*, as well as the Instituto Mexicano de Rehabilitación. A street in Mexico City is named after him.

The O'Farrill family of Mexico represent a traditional and powerful group with interests in the media, publishing and other industries. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, County Longford brothers Stephen O'Farrell (b. 1807) and Joachim O'Farrell (b. 1809) emigrated to Spain and then to the Caribbean region, together with a third brother whose name is unknown. Stephen went to the United States, Joachim to Mexico and the third brother to Cuba (although the well-known O'Farrill family of Cuba, descended from Richard O'Farrill of Montserrat, may have not been directly linked to the Mexican branch). Joachim O'Farrell settled in Puebla and changed his name to Joaquín O'Farrill. He had a daughter, Rosa María, and at least two sons, José Adrián and Miguel, the latter being Rómulo O'Farrill Silva's grandfather.

Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. was raised in Mexico City. In 1933 he was sent to study at St. Anselm College, a school run by Benedictine monks in Manchester, New Hampshire (US), where he learned English and graduated in 1937. He later obtained an MBA at the Detroit Business Institute.

In 1949 Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. and his father obtained from the government the concession for XHTV-Channel 4, the first commercial television station in Mexico. The first remote transmission was made in July 1950 from the Auditorium of the National Lottery, and consisted of a programme televising a raffle for the subscribers of the *Novedades* newspaper. The first televised sports event, a bullfight, was transmitted the following day. The first commercial broadcast was the state of the union address of President Miguel Alemán Valdés in September 1950. The O'Farrill's television holdings increased and developed into Telesistema Mexicano, later renamed Televisa, which Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. first managed and eventually headed as chairman of the board.

Together with another media specialist, Andrés García Lavín, in 1969 the O'Farrills established a newspaper chain that distributed the newspaper *Novedades* in the states of Acapulco, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo. In 1950, they also launched *The News*, which until its demise in December 2002, was one of Latin America's most well-distributed English-language dailies.

Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. has sat on the board of several corporations and banks, including RCA Victor de México and Sears Roebuck de México. In 1962-1963 he was president of the Inter-American Press Association. He was also a founding member of the Mexican Council of Businessmen, and honorary consul of Ireland in Mexico for over twenty years. O'Farrill Jr. and his various companies are reputed to have maintained close relations with the Mexican governing elite and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. married Hilda Ávila Camacho (d. 2003), eldest daughter of Maximino Ávila Camacho and Feliza Casazza, and a niece of the former Mexican president Manuel Ávila Camacho.

After a long illness, Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. died on 18 May 2006 in Mexico City.

Edmundo Murray

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Edmundo O'Gorman (1906-1995), historian

By Edmundo Murray



Edmundo O'Gorman (1906-1995)
(Academia Mexicana de la Historia)

O'Gorman, Edmundo (1906-1995), historian, was born on 24 November 1906 in the city of Mexico, the second son of the Dublin-trained mining engineer and painter Cecil Crawford O'Gorman (1874-1943), who arrived in Mexico from Ireland in 1895, and his wife and cousin Encarnación O'Gorman, *née* O'Gorman. Cecil O'Gorman was the son of John O'Gorman, educated at Eton in England, and grandson of Charles O'Gorman, who in August 1823 was appointed the first British consul to Mexico. Other children of Cecil and Encarnación O'Gorman were the artist Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982), Margarita O'Gorman and Tomás O'Gorman, a notary public.

Edmundo O'Gorman attended the University of Mexico Law School, where he graduated in 1928, but then decided to research and teach history. In 1948 he obtained his doctorate in philosophy and in 1951 in history. In 1932-1952 he worked at the Mexican public records office, and contributed to the *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*. O'Gorman was appointed a member of the Mexican academies of literature in 1969 and of history in 1972.

An agitated historical debate developed in 1985 between Miguel León Portilla, who published 'Encuentro de dos mundos' in *Cuadernos Americanos* 2 (1987, pp. 188-191), and Edmundo O'Gorman, who replied with 'Encuentro de dos mundos o lo superfluo' in the same journal (pp. 192-213). O'Gorman was against the use of concepts such as 'discovery of America', 'encounter of two worlds', and 'natural mixing' and, as a result, he resigned from the academy of history.

For his outstanding research, Edmundo O'Gorman was awarded the Mexican National Literature Award (1964), the Rafael Heliodoro Valle History Award (1983), the Humanities Teaching Award of the Universidad Autónoma (1986), and an *honoris causa* doctorate from that university (1978).

Among Edmundo O'Gorman's works are *Historia de las divisiones territoriales de México* (1937), *Fundamentos de la historia de América* (1951), *La supervivencia política novohispana* (1961), *México: el trauma de su historia* (1977), *La incógnita de la llamada 'Historia de los indios de la Nueva España', atribuida a Fray Toribio Molina* (1982), and *Destierro de Sombras* (1986). However, his most popular book is *El proceso de la invención de América* (1958), in which O'Gorman opposed the

traditional concept of *discovery* to an innovative reading of the primary sources from original perspectives. He argued that in European culture, the American continent was the result of an intellectual creation. For his work with contemporary sources on Columbus and other conquistadors, Edmundo O'Gorman is often singled as one of the pioneers of post-colonial studies in Latin America.

Edmundo O'Gorman married the art historian Ida Rodríguez Prampolini (b. 1925) of Veracruz. He died on 28 September 1995 in Mexico City.

Edmundo Murray

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Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982), Mexican architect and artist

By Edmundo Murray



Juan O'Gorman (1905-1982)
(Juan O'Gorman, 1950)

O'Gorman, Juan (1905-1982), Mexican architect and artist, was born on 6 July 1905 in Coyoacán, Mexico D.F., the eldest son of the Dublin-trained mining engineer and painter Cecil Crawford O'Gorman (1874-1943), who arrived in Mexico from Ireland in 1895, with his wife and cousin Encarnación O'Gorman. Cecil O'Gorman was the son of John O'Gorman, educated at Eton in England, and grandson of Charles O'Gorman, who in August 1823 has been appointed the first British consul to Mexico. The other children of Cecil and Encarnación O'Gorman were the historian Edmundo O'Gorman (1906-1995), Margarita O'Gorman and Tomás O'Gorman, a notary public.

Juan O'Gorman graduated in 1927 from the school of architecture at San Carlos Academy. He joined the studio of Obregón, Tarditi & Villagrán García, and later Obregón Santacilia. He lived in San Ángel, where in 1929 he bought two tennis courts facing a restaurant, and built a small house on one of them, including a miniature staircase and a glass-walled room on the upper floor, which would become emblematic of the *new architecture*.

O'Gorman was one of the architects who worked on the reconstruction of the Bank of Mexico. In 1931 he frescoed the library of Azcapotzalco and in 1937 decorated and painted the murals in Mexico City's first airport. In 1940, after an eight-month stay in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was engaged in the great mural of Gertrudis Bocanegra Library, including scenes of the conquest of Michoacán, and the struggle for independence from Spanish rule. Juan O'Gorman's most imposing work was the decoration of the Central Library on the campus of the Universidad Autónoma, where he worked in 1949-1953 painting four thousand square metres with representations of historical scenes. Other important works include the Social Security Centre, the International Bank on Reforma Avenue, parks, theatres, museums, primary schools in Mexico city and private houses, such as that of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, styled 'the functional house'. Among his murals are those in the Independence Room of Mexico city's Chapultepec Castle.

Juan O'Gorman married Helen Fowler, a prestigious botanist and author of *Mexican Flowering Trees and Plants* (Mexico: Ammex Asociados, 1961). They adopted a daughter, María Elena [*Bunny*] O'Gorman, who studied and lives in the USA. According to Elena Poniatowska, Juan O'Gorman was 'an untainted, circumspect, honourable character. [...] his eyes are poignant and charming. He wears coveralls and a tweed coat against the cold weather' (Poniatowska 1999).

Juan O'Gorman incorporated Mexican culture, history, and environment in his works. He studied the styles of Le Corbusier and Villagrán, and as a muralist, was a member of the group formed by Diego Rivera, Clemente Orozco, Pablo O'Higgins and Rufino Tamayo. Evidencing a radical socialist influence in the early years of his career, Juan O'Gorman turned away from functionalist design and developed an organic use of space under the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. He took his own life on 18 March 1982 in his house at San Ángel. To ensure that this act would not fail, O'Gorman put a ladder against a tree, tied a sturdy electrical cord around the tree and then around his neck, then drank cyanide and shot himself through the temple. He was buried in Mexico City.

Edmundo Murray

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**Pablo O'Higgins [formerly Paul Higgins Stevenson] (1904-1983),
artist and art teacher in Mexico**

By Edmundo Murray



Pablo O'Higgins (1904-1983)
(P. Pollack, *Graphic Witness*)

O'Higgins, Pablo [formerly Paul Higgins Stevenson] (1904-1983), artist and art teacher in Mexico, was born on 1 March 1904 in Salt Lake City, Utah, to a family of Irish-American origins. His father was a lawyer and his mother was a farmer. Until 1909 Pablo O'Higgins lived at the family's ranch 'El Cajon' in California. He was sent to primary school in Salt Lake City and high school in San Diego and Salt Lake City.

He received piano lessons, and in 1914 gave his inaugural concert. A year later he was initiated into the field of painting and his family relocated to San Diego, California. In 1922, he abandoned his career as a musician and entered the Academy of Arts in San Diego. He became acquainted with Diego Rivera in 1924, and joined the post-revolutionary artistic movement. For two years up to 1926, Pablo O'Higgins helped Diego Rivera to paint the murals in the former chapel of Chapingo and the Public Education Secretariat. His works were exhibited for the first time in 1925 in San Francisco, California. He contributed artwork to *Mexican Folkways* magazine and sat on the editorial committee.

In 1927 Pablo O'Higgins joined the Mexican Communist Party, and in the following two years worked on Cultural Missions in Durango, Hidalgo, Veracruz, and Zacatecas. His membership of the Communist Party would last until 1947. In 1930, he co-published, with Jean Charlot and Frances Toor, *Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada*, a Mexican engraver. In 1931 O'Higgins founded, together with Leopoldo Méndez and Juan de la Cabada, the Proletarian Intellectual League. This same year he contributed illustrations to the *Daily Worker*, the newspaper of the USA Communist Party. For this work, he was awarded a grant by the Moscow Academy of Arts. By 1933, Pablo O'Higgins was teaching drawing in primary schools. That year he co-founded the Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, LEAR). In 1937, he founded Taller de Gráfica Popular (Popular Graphics Workshop, TGP), together with Leopoldo Méndez, who would be implicated in the murder of Leon Trotsky in 1940. In 1943 O'Higgins's works were exhibited by the Association of American Artists. In 1948 O'Higgins and Xavier Guerrero founded Sociedad para el Impulso de las Artes Plásticas, and the Salón de Plástica Mexicana in 1949. In 1952 he joined the National Assembly of Artists. His paintings were exhibited at the Salón de Plástica Mexicana, whose catalogue included commending notes by Diego Rivera about his work. He also exhibited works at the Gallery of Mexican Arts.

In 1959 Pablo O'Higgins married María de Jesús de la Fuente Casas, a lawyer from Monterrey born in Rayones, Nuevo León. The same year, he was awarded the first prize by the Salón Anual de Pintura, Grabado y Escultura of the INBA for his lithograph 'El chichicuilotero'. In 1961 O'Higgins became a Mexican citizen in honour of his contributions to the national arts and education. During his travels in 1968, he gave courses in mural painting in Moscow and Eastern Europe. In 1971 he received the Elías Sourausky Award in arts.

Pablo O'Higgins died on 16 July 1983, and a funeral was organised at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts). He was buried in Nuevo León.

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