

## **Richard Gumbleton Daunt: The Man, the Physician and the City of Campinas (1843-1893)**

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### **Abstract**

*Dr Richard Gumbleton Daunt was an Irish doctor born in England in 1843, related to the Daunts of Kilkascan Castle in Cork, who settled in the city of Campinas in the state of São Paulo. This paper describes Dr Daunt's forebears and the society in which he lived in Brazil and how they influenced his thinking. A staunch traditionalist, his Irish background and the privileged Brazilian elite of which, through his marriage, he became a part, were reflected in his views on medicine and politics of his adopted country.*

*I am of Ireland  
And the Holy Land of Ireland  
And time runs on*

W. B. Yeats

### **Introduction**

At the outset of her biographical research on the Irish physician Richard Gumbleton Daunt, the historian Ana Gicelle García Alaniz quotes John Donne's widely-known Divine Meditation XVII: 'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main'. Inasmuch as this critic tries to present an unbiased and accurate account of the doctor's life, she admits to having conceived such a man in terms of the places and time that he lived in. In her own words, 'I have tried to cast man and city in a single unit with a view to understanding, through this intimate and hybrid relationship, the impact of modernization on both' (Alaniz 1999: 14). (2) Nevertheless, Alaniz also brings the readers abreast of the main features of Brazilian society in the nineteenth century which enabled Dr Daunt to carry out his medical and political pursuits. In this sense, instead of a one-dimensional study that simply embellishes one's course of action, she introduces the main political debates of that time, taking into consideration the most important aspect of Brazil during the Second Empire (1840-1889): the experience of incongruity (Schwarz 2001). According to the literary critic Roberto Schwarz this is the social impact of an ex-

colony whose ideals oscillate between the modern liberal ideas of enlightenment and the conservative imperialistic ideology of slavery.

The Second Empire in Brazil was strongly characterised by a huge drive on the large landowners' part to contain popular demonstrations. In order to assure their power, the coffee producers, who were the bulk of the elite, ensured that the fifteen-year-old Emperor, Dom Pedro II, would pay heed to their needs. Likewise, each state's governor took on board the task of repressing any democratic revolution, while ensuring that coffee supplies would continue to meet all foreign demands. The City of Campinas was exemplary in this respect, due to its effective control of its workers and the continued success of its business classes. Had it not been for the yellow fever epidemic that frightened citizens out of their homes during the years of 1889 and 1897, Campinas would have become the most important city of the whole state. This is the period when Dr Richard Gumbleton Daunt entered the spotlight. Not only was he traditional in his personal concerns, but also in his medical ideals, since he was a huge supporter of traditional and preventive medicine. Contributing to the discussion between scientific and alternative treatment, the

Irishman expressed his philosophical and intellectual beliefs on that topic.

For the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraph and others which will be developed further throughout this article, it should be affirmed that Dr Richard Gumbleton Daunt was a 'great man'. As regards the legacy of the militant intellectual Professor Fernando de Azevedo, one of the most prominent Brazilian sociologists and critics, Antonio Candido stated, quoting a Dominican priest: 'the characteristic of a great man is that he discovers the fundamental necessity of his time and devotes himself completely to it' (Lacordaire *apud* Candido 2002: 309). (3) Even though history has swept Dr Richard Gumbleton Daunt's memory under the carpet, his deeds, although highly controversial and debatable, could be considered those of a great man. Not only do we state this due to its contradictory attitudes, but also because their outcomes help us to plumb the depths of the history of medicine in Brazil, more specifically on how the process of modernization was largely embedded in the development of healthcare.

In order to recount the facts traced by Ana Gicelle Garcia Alaniz the article is divided into three sections: the first accounts for the intermittences of medicine in the vertiginous eighteenth century in Campinas. The second one explores Dr Daunt's familiar and personal activities. And the third one seeks to explain his interventions in the health arena of the period. We will also include a last section as summary of the issues touched on.

### **Medicine and Politics in the Eighteenth Century**

According to Alaniz, the city of Campinas was absolutely essential for Dr Daunt mainly because it acted in a dialectical relationship with his personality. Not only did the city transform his character, but he also changed some of the features of that place. We must, hence, remember that Brazil was the most important Portuguese colony, since the Portuguese nobility transferred to Brazil in 1822 following the Napoleonic invasion of Portugal. Coerced by England, which was the country with which

Dom João had numerous debts and long-established business, the king literally opened Brazilian ports to foreign investors, allowing its landowners to trade with any part of the world. Indeed, this is a contradiction in itself, for colonial relations start to fade out of sight at the very moment the monopoly colony-metropolis is undone.

Owing to the substitution of the local power, it was only a question of time before large Brazilian landowners had complete freedom from the monarchy. After the Declaration of Independence in 1822, with the intention of building up a liberal modern republic, a bourgeoisie started to take shape in various parts of the country, since the male sons of those landowners took up medicine and law. In an extremely committed way, those newly graduated doctors took responsibility for improving the quality of the cities. The area most in need of improvement was health. Nevertheless, their scientific models and principles from European universities were not up to par with the ancient shibboleths perpetuated by the old aristocracy. This configuration, then gives rise to a clash of ideals and practices: on the one hand the European immigrants who were highly praised for their depth of knowledge, wisdom and white-coloured race (one of the Brazilian's government secret agendas was to 'whiten' the population); on the other hand the actions they proposed were not quite applicable in Brazil.

It goes without saying that Dr Gumbleton Daunt, in spite of picking up on some of those old values from having married into a traditional family from the interior of São Paulo, was one of the most arduous defenders of public health measures. In the period that ranged from 1869 to 1871 he was elected town councillor, and amidst bickering and wrangling among politicians, he was able to address higher authorities on the matter of projects of hygiene. Nonetheless, his attempts were hampered by higher matters of state, such as disputes about political posts and old-fashioned prejudices. For the most part, the whole question of public and private health was embedded in the capitalist development of the

country: while the structure of the city needed to provide the minimum necessary for a worker to carry out his duties, on the other hand it also needed to prevent rebellion. Thus, in order to put that into practice, the diseased and criminals were confined to asylums on the outskirts of the town, leaving the physicians with the task of excluding from the public sphere not only those who suffered from a bodily ailment, but also a psychological, or revolutionary, one.

To understand how this project affected Dr Daunt, let us establish the main facts regarding his life and relationship with the city, as well as its citizens and their frame of mind.

### **Dr Richard Gumbleton Daunt: the Man and his Reputation**

In the words of one of the cultural critics who has theorised widely on the theme of subjective and geographical displacement, Homi K. Bhabha, 'the concept of people is not a "given" as a... homogenous part of society *prior to politics*; "the people" are there as a process of political articulation and political negotiation across a whole range of contradictory social sites' (Bhabha 1990: 220). This is significantly relevant in our case, mainly because there is a discrepancy regarding the place of birth of Dr Daunt. While Alaniz affirms that he was born in Cork, in Kilcascan Castle, she points out that this may not be totally precise, for his University résumé indicates he was actually from East Yorkshire, in England. Through our researches, and with the aid of the researcher Joseph Daunt Johnston, we came to discover that he was in fact born in Yorkshire. However, even though his place of birth was England, he was to consider himself an Irishman, probably because of his beloved ancestors, and as he was so obsessive about his origins.

Going back over Dr Daunt's genealogy, it is possible to trace his ancestry back to William the Conqueror who was accompanied by a Norman knight, Dauntre, in his conquest of Britain in 1066. Throughout the course of history, the Daunts established partnerships and alliances with important monarchs and kings. During the Wars of the Roses, they

supported the House of Lancaster but, with Protestant reform and the Tudor ascension, especially of Elizabeth I, they were alienated in such a society, being Catholic. The most renowned member, Thomas Daunt Owlphen, from Throckmorton, who had taken part in the Catholic party's conspiracy to put Mary Stuart on the throne of England, was forced to migrate to Ireland, giving birth to the branch that would later produce Dr Daunt. Although he established powerful affiliations in Ireland, other members of the family were not so lucky in the old kingdom. Some were executed or ostracised in England. Such was the case of Francis Daunt Throckmorton, who was hanged for religious treason, and Elizabeth Throckmorton, wife of Walter Raleigh, the explorer of America and one of the Queen's favourite vassals without Her Majesty's consent. Once in Ireland, Owlphen allied himself with the Catholics in defence of their religion and Ireland.

Even though Dr Daunt, in his studies, attributed Thomas' success on Irish soil to his associations with the patriotic family of Roderick O'Connor, the suzerain monarch who died in 1198, historians long discounted such connections for lack of sufficient evidence. General Francisco O'Connor, Símon Bolívar's Chief-of-Staff, made similar assertions, which were also disregarded. According to Daunt Johnson, the part of his genealogy that the doctor ignores is William Daunt MacCarthy-Reagh, Prince of Carbery (1801-1874), of Palmyra, Wisconsin, who had a well-established claim to Irish royalty. Nevertheless, it seems the Irish doctor was more interested in inscribing his identity within the borders of the Irish soil, for he always referred to the English as usurpers and would remain true to Catholic and aristocrat ideals. This is also ironic when we come to discover that his father, Captain Richard Gumbleton Daunt, was a commander in the British navy and that his mother was of English ancestry. According to Bill Bailey, present owner of Kilcascan Castle where Dr Daunt was brought up, his father was married twice: to Anna Dixon, possibly from Yorkshire, and to Margaret Gumbleton, who was not only

his cousin, but also the sister of his brother's second wife.

As was made clear at the beginning of this section, the definition of people is constantly part of a much larger whole of implications and identifications. Dr Daunt was indeed a cultivated man - most likely due to the instruction he received from his uncle, Dr Isaac Dixon. With an intrinsic passion for family roots, in addition to having married the daughter of an illustrious family, the Camargos - original descendants of Father Diogo Antonio de Feijó (1784-1843), the Regent of the Empire of Brazil from 1835 to 1837 - he also tried to adhere to Brazilian culture by searching for noble deeds amongst prosperous wealthy families. In his correspondence with Baron Francisco Ignacio Marcondes Homem de Melo, the doctor discusses his in-laws, the Joaquim dos Santos Camargos', connection to Fr. Feijó. Apropos of the subject, Emperor Dom Pedro I established a commission to determine the parentage of Feijó at the time he was serving as Minister of Justice and Deputy to the Court of Lisbon. What was established was that Feijó was a foundling raised by Maria Gertrudes de Camargo, widow of Felix Antonio Feijó. In the 1860s Dr Daunt decided to reveal the dark family secret that Feijó was the illegitimate son of Maria Gertrudes' brother, Padre Fernando Lopes de Camargo who was avoiding all scandal prior to his appointment as bishop.

Following these lines, what should be perceived is that Dr Gumbleton Daunt was a conservative traditionalist and he defined himself as a noble Irishman. His domestic attitude and fascination with familiar resonances proceeded from a 'transnational' and 'translational' strategy of cultural self-representation (Bhabha 1992: 438). By transnational, we mean that specific values and traces of Irish culture, or even the idealisation of such, were transplanted, in other words, translated, into the Brazilian context. The whole intrigue of families and the distinguished nobility are indeed traces of a mythological Ireland that existed nowhere else, but in the doctor's mind, for real Ireland, at that time had to tackle problems such as

*agricultural problems, and the prevalence of bare subsistence standards in regions like the west... This climaxed, horrifyingly, with the potato famine of mid 1840s. Under-invested and labour-extensive agrarian practices coexisted with inadequate smallholdings and congested populations; temporary employment, endemic poverty, and a universally execrated land system were the usual targets of contemporary criticism (Foster 1989: 166).*

A clear example of Dr Daunt's search for a common ground of ethical and aesthetic values was seen in his letter addressed to the Brazilian Geographical Institute, in 1883. After recognising that he could not express himself in Gaelic, due to the British rule that imposed the English language on the Irish people, he claimed:

*I intend to consult a person, versed in the Irish language, about the signification, in this language [Portuguese] (because thanks to the tyranny of the German race that inhabits England, I, as many individuals that belong to the Irish race, am ignorant of the language that was supposed to be the vernacular) the origin of the word Brasail or Brasil, for it is an extraordinary coincidence that... further down West, there was a land... called Hy-Brasail, the land of the fortunate ones (Daunt apud Alaniz 1999: 82). (4)*

Such was his fascination with race that his research on the Celtic root of the name of Brazil led to Dr Daunt being made a member of the Gaelic Union. Through this complex mechanism, it can be perceived 'the articulation of cultures [was] possible not because of the familiarity or similarity of contents, but because all cultures are symbol-forming or subject-constituting interpellative practices' (Bhabha 1990: 210). Given that Dr Daunt needed to find a *point d'appui* in a society whose liberal European ideals were misplaced, there was nothing better than mythical atemporal folktales to find meanings and means to exist in that specific historical period. On the grounds of his quasi-anthropological diggings, his reputation in the Camargo family was unblemished. While being so enthusiastic about his wife's relatives, the very thought of a *mestiza* or *mestizo* would leave him disgruntled

and out of sorts, as we can observe in a letter written to Dr José Couto de Magalhães, on the occasion when he called Feijó a mestizço himself:

*The Regent... as well as my family... are... descendants of Princess MBycy (baptised as Donna Isabel Dias) for her daughter Donna Catharina, but it seems to me that you have another reason to classify Feijó as a kind of Mestiço (Daunt apud Alaniz 1999: 84). (5)*

Returning to power relations in Brazil in the nineteenth century, we can also observe, as pointed out by Roberto Schwarz, that the three classes that made up the social structure were: landowners, slaves and freemen. As the work was performed by the slaves, freemen depended on a favour-based type of relationship to exercise their activity. In this way, doctors, lawyers, small farmers, amongst others, were deeply indebted to the influential landlord - 'favour then is our universal mediation' (Schwarz 2000: 5). One of the instances that perpetuated this twisted logic was the institution of the family. Since Gumbleton Daunt found his way to the core of Brazilian coffee owners, his nine offspring were the beneficiaries: Haroldo (1846-1886), vicar of Capivari, Torlogo (1847-1909) lawyer, Fergus (1949-1911) vicar of São Paulo, Alicia (1851-1933) single lady, Briano (?-1889), lawyer, Winifrida (1857-1928) had an arranged marriage with José Salles Leme, Fernando (1858-1930) unknown profession, Cornélio (?), teacher and Rogério (1862-1914) lawyer. Although they had vast properties, those were diminished by the crises in the coffee plantation. Accordingly, when Dr Daunt passed away, due to a stroke - according to the medical report in 1893, his belongings were divided among their remaining sons and daughters.

In short, these were the main facts and idiosyncrasies that surrounded his private and familiar life. In the last section before the final remarks, it is necessary to explore more profoundly how his dislocated identity impacted on the field of medicine.

### **Homeopathy, Allopathic and Antipathy**

On 28 August 1850 Campinas witnessed the onset of a war between two areas of medicine: homeopathy on the one hand, and allopathy on the other. The field of such a battle was the municipal court of law which received Dr Daunt's appeal against José Francisco dos Santos, due to the fact that the latter was an occasional practitioner of medicine, and the former, a traditional clinic with specific expertise. Having graduated at Edinburgh University, Dr Daunt was utterly opposed to the new specialists who were experimenting in treating the recent yellow fever epidemic with specific herbs and botanical compounds. The grounds of the complaints were that Santos was unconventionally trying to persuade Dr Gumbleton Daunt's patients - and openly offending his morals as a physician - to opt for homeopathy instead of traditional medication. The trial took place and a number of people were requested to give their testimony on the fact. Even though the results were negative for Dr Daunt, since Santos was absolved of every accusation, their contention was typical of the discussions on the treatments of that time: while ordinary citizens were suffering from a myriad of diseases due to the poor sanitary conditions, respectable men of law were wasting their time on personal quarrels.

As someone who moved in cultured erudite circles, Dr Daunt would hardly ever restrict his theoretical discussions only to his professional peers; he constantly had to resort to the laws to solve his problems. Not only had he to exercise his professional activities, but also his public rhetoric, within the community. There is substantial likelihood that this is one of the reasons why his fame reached the *Scottish Medical Times*, a journal that published some of his studies and essays. Although his researches in the medical field spread through the British Isles, his conclusions proved to be somewhat inaccurate and uncertain, unquestionably due to the historical conditions of his time. In addition to the specific configuration of his time, Dr Daunt proved to be a man whose prejudiced vision on the new flow of immigration also contributed to his

diagnostics as a doctor and as a member of the elite.

As the doctor would himself attest, the only way to fight this fatal illness was the isolation of the immigrants in shelters in the outskirts of the city:

*The state of sanitation in São Paulo is far from being satisfactory. This disgrace (the yellow fever) is due to the introduction of immigrant farm-workers. First, in bringing them in the boiling hot months, second in not keeping them in quarantine or not having a procedure of disinfection before allowing them into the interior. Brazil, at least, São Paulo is governed by children, or near their like in ignorance (Daunt apud Alaniz 1999: 159). (6)*

Furthermore, Dr Daunt goes as far as to say that the water used to supply the city was a 'corpse soup' (*sopa de cadáveres*), mainly because there was neither proper water treatment, nor a sewerage system; and to make matters worse, the main cemetery was located in the central part of the city, giving rise to contaminations. Owing to his presence in such hard times, Dr Daunt's requests were indeed heard. In 1881 central cemeteries were closed and corpses were buried in outlying districts. Immigrants and sick patients were also confined to outlying hospitals. Although doctors had an almost divine aura due to their interventions, as Alaniz highlights, there is no clear evidence that these measures were taken because of Dr Daunt's demands. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that, with the materials and scientific advances of his time

and space, he changed the city, especially in what pertained to space, in many ways.

### **Conclusion**

In his explanations about the artist as an individual, one of the most sensitive philosophers, the German Theodor Adorno, draws attention to the fact 'the artist, provider of the work of art is not just that character who produces, but the one who becomes representative... of the social subject' (Adorno 2003: 2e03). Notwithstanding the fact that he was not an artist, as a man and a public figure, Dr Daunt was a man who could not be otherwise because he was born in England, raised in Ireland as a nationalist and grew as a professional in Campinas, a city whose function was to provide supplies for the Empire. All these social connections enabled him to fight for what he believed in as a man shaped by these specific historical details.

This article, in line with Ana Gicelle Alaniz's intention in her PhD thesis, is an attempt to recover a forgotten fragment of history left in the archives of Brazilian records. If on the one hand we could follow the historian's point of view, on the other hand these served as guidelines through which we could consider the migrant condition as a process of 'othering' (Bhabha 1990: 219) and assimilation. Selecting the most pertinent facts was, then, another way to approach the Irish traditionalist who made the city of Campinas his dis-utopic Hy-Brasil.

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### **Notes**

1. PhD student at University of São Paulo and full-time researcher, Carvalho de Anunciação holds an MA on the theme of exile in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. She now studies the theme of the city in the poetry of Northern Ireland. Acknowledgements: I am thankful to Daunt Johnston for making available his researches on Doctor Daunt's ancestors; to Billy Bailer for the information on the Kilcaskan castle; to João Marcos Fantinatti for the pictures in the city of Campinas; and to Michael Breslin for revising the language of my article.
2. All translations are mine. *Realizamos uma tentativa de fundir o homem e a cidade num sujeito, visando, a partir dessa relação híbrida e íntima, desvendar o impacto da modernização no cotidiano de ambos.*
3. *A característica do grande homem é descobrir qual a necessidade fundamental de seu tempo e consagrar-se a ela.*

4. *Pretendo igualmente escrever para consultar com alguma pessoa versada na língua irlandeza sobre a significação n'esta língua (porque graças á tirania da raça aleman, que abita a Inglaterra, eu, como milhares de individuos de raça irlandeza, ignoro oque (sic) devia ser o meo idioma vernáculo) da palavra Brasail ou Brasil, pois é uma coincidência extraordinária, que... mais ao poente avia uma terra... e a esta terra davão o nome de Hy-Braasail e terra dos bem-aventurados.*
5. *O regente... assim como minha família... era descendente da Princesa MBycy (em Baptismo Donna Isabel Dias) por sua filha Donna Catharina, mas parece que a V<sup>a</sup>. S<sup>a</sup>. tem algum outro motivo para especialisar o Feijó como typo Mestiço.*
6. *O estado sanitário de São Paulo tambem está longe de ser satisfactorio. Esta desgraça (a febre amarella) é devida à estúpida introdução de colonos, primeiro em trazer-los nos meses de calor, segundo em não sujeital-los em um lugar apropriado a uma quarentena de desinfeção antes de dar-lhes entrada no interior. O Brazil, ou ao menos S. Paulo, está governado por crianças, ou por quem as iguala na ignorancia.*

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