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Mario Vargas Llosa at the monument inside McKenna's Fort near Banna Strand in Co. Kerry, where Roger Casement was captured on 21 April 1916.

(Photo by Angus Mitchell)

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Literary Connections between Ireland and Latin America</i> , by Laura P. Z. Izarra and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, Guest Editors..... | 133 |
| <i>An interview with Mario Vargas Llosa</i> , by Angus Mitchell | 137 |
| <i>The Theatre of Marina Carr: A Latin American Reading, Interview, and Translation</i> , by Patricia Novillo-Corvalán..... | 145 |
| <i>Interview with Larry O'Loughlin</i> , by Laura P. Z. Izarra | 155 |
| <i>Joycean Aesthetics in Spanish Literature</i> , by Marisol Morales Ladrón | 165 |
| <i>Joyce's Ulysses in Argentine Literature</i> , by Carlos Gamero..... | 177 |
| <i>Baroque Historiographies: Joyce, Faulkner, and García Márquez</i> , by Diana Pérez García..... | 185 |
| <i>Two Contemporary Medéas</i> , by Zoraide Rodrigues Carrasco de Mesquita | 195 |
| <i>The Transfiguration of History: Knowledge, Time and Space in Northern Irish Poetry</i> , by Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação | 205 |
| <i>An Exile Guidebook for the Inhabitants: The Reception of William Bulfin's Rambles in Eirinn in Ireland: 1901-1904</i> , by Rebecca Geraghty and Patrick Geraghty | 213 |
| <i>Interpreting history in Eduardo Cormick's Entre gringos y criollos</i> , by Andrés Romera..... | 223 |
| <i>Henry Sheridan and the beginnings of Argentine art</i> , by Mariano Galazzi | 231 |
| <i>Una poca de gracia: Irish Music in Latin America</i> , by Edmundo Murray | 239 |
| <i>From Cuyo to the Seaboard: Irish Roots in Popular Argentine Music</i> , by Eduardo Cormick | 249 |
| <i>Beneath the Hieroglyph: Recontextualising the Black Diaries of Roger Casement</i> , by Angus Mitchell | 253 |
| Book Reviews | 267 |

Literary Connections between Ireland and Latin America

By Laura P. Z. Izarra and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán

Guest Editors

In his seminal essay 'The Argentine Writer and Tradition' (1951), Jorge Luis Borges invented a model of Argentine – and Latin American – literature based on the example of the Irish tradition. He declared Ireland a sister nation in view of its peripheral position in relation to mainland Europe and encouraged Latin American writers to follow the example of the Irish who, as outsiders, had turned the Western archive to their own advantage. The innovativeness, irreverence and iconoclasm of Ireland, claimed Borges, resided in the fact that throughout history the Irish felt entitled to freely recreate Western discourses without any sense of duty or attachment to them (Borges 1999: 426).

Borges illustrated his thesis with the names of some of the most illustrious Irishmen: the eighteenth-century philosopher George Berkeley, the satirist Jonathan Swift and the playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw. This list spreads outwards to include Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and prominent contemporary voices such as Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel, Paul Muldoon, and Marina Carr, to name a few. By re-inventing Latin American literature through the model of the Irish, or by superimposing one tradition upon another, Borges opens the door to a wide range of cross-cultural relations. What has been, therefore, the outcome of this complex engagement? Have Latin American artists and writers – as Borges predicted – looked upon the mirror of Irish art to find a secret reciprocity, a composite image that reflected their own creative endeavours? Have the Irish, in turn, gazed across the Atlantic Ocean at the vast, fluid, and intriguing shapes of the Latin American landscape?

If we take as an initial example Borges's own literary trajectory, we learn that at the tender age of nine, a precocious Borges launched his literary career with an impressive Spanish translation of Wilde's story 'The Happy Prince'. In 1925 a youthful and avant-gardist Borges continued and developed his passionate

engagement with Irish literature with a pioneering translation of the last two pages of Joyce's revolutionary *Ulysses*. If an Argentine writer had been wandering through the labyrinthine streets of Joyce's urban novel, in the 1940s a young Irish writer, Samuel Beckett, was making his own excursions through the fertile ground of Mexican poetry. Like Borges and Joyce, Beckett was a notorious émigré and an accomplished polyglot: his linguistic repertoire boasted an impressive range of European languages: English, French, Italian, German and a reading knowledge of Spanish. Beckett combined his linguistic dexterity and poetic sensitivity to superbly render into English an extraordinary anthology of Mexican poetry compiled by Octavio Paz. His translation strategy, moreover, had much in common with the model practiced by Borges's French writer Pierre Menard, in that Beckett sought to produce a type of translation that is richer, more subtle than the original. He translated the poetry of the most eminent Mexican men of letters of the nineteenth and twentieth century, including, amongst others, Alfonso Reyes, Enrique González Martínez and Ramón López Velarde. At the heart of Beckett's translation of Reyes's poem 'Sol de Monterrey', lies a lyrical sentiment, a fervent desire that seeks to conjure up the essence of poetry, an aesthetic impulse shared by Irish and Latin American writers:

*When I with my stick
and bundle went from home,
to my heart I said:
Now bear the sun awhile!
It is a hoard – unending,
unending – that I squander.
Cuando salí de mi casa
con mi bastón y mi bato,
le dije a mi corazón:
- ¡Ya llevas el sol para rato!
Es tesoro – y no se acaba:
no se me acaba – y lo gasto' (Reyes 1997: 90).*

The omnipresent warmth and luminosity of the sun of Monterrey stands as a symbol for an ars

poetica, an art of writing that fuses the mutually complementary Spanish and English discourses of Reyes and Beckett. 'The main thing is to write for the joy of it', whispers the ghost of James Joyce to Seamus Heaney in his imaginary encounter with the blind Irish bard in Station Island (Heaney 1990: 192). In his tributary poem to Joyce, a blind and elderly Borges similarly called forth:

*I am the others. I am all those
whom your obstinate rigor has redeemed.
I am those you do not know and those you continue
to save.
'Yo soy los otros. Yo soy todos aquellos
que ha rescatado tu obstinado rigor.
Soy los que no conoces y los que salvas. (Borges
1999:288-9).*

The redeeming joy of writing that the phantasm of Joyce conveyed to both Heaney and Borges from beyond the grave encapsulates the active dialogue between past, present and future generations, so that the ever-recurring investment between Ireland and Latin America can continue to be realised. For this reason, it is important to remember that the otherwise separate literary paths of Borges and Beckett eventually converged in 1961, when a jury in France jointly awarded them the prestigious Prix Formentor. Amongst other things, this double gesture fulfilled Borges's prophetic words about an Irish and Latin American brotherhood and, in a larger way, contributed towards the combined repositioning of Ireland and Argentina in world literature.

Another way of looking at the interface between Ireland and Latin America is through the Irish diaspora and their descendants, particularly in their contributions to literature, painting and music. As Declan Kiberd puts it: 'Wilde believed that it would be, in great part, through contact with the art of other countries that a modern Irish culture might be reshaped' (Kiberd 1996: 2). Indeed, the conviction that transcultural contact between different literatures, cultures and languages would give birth to, or encourage the formation of, an invigorated modern Irish culture lies at the centre of the historical exchange between Ireland and Latin America.

This special issue of *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* seeks to explore, analyse and document

the literary, artistic and cultural interactions between Ireland and Latin America. It remains undeniable that Irish artists, writers and philosophers have cast their powerful spell in the Latin American imagination. Equally significant is the inverse phenomenon, whereby the Irish have looked to Latin America as an inexhaustible source of inspiration and enrichment for a wide range of creative projects. The unique interviews with the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa and the Irish playwrights Marina Carr and Larry O'Loughlin that open this issue are testament to this continuing exchange of ideas. This complex engagement has contributed to the creation of a long-standing dialogue that has woven the multifaceted figures of a complex tapestry. The historian Angus Mitchell interviewed Vargas Llosa about his current novel based on the life of the Irish revolutionary Roger Casement. For the first time, Vargas Llosa spoke in detail about his recent trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to conduct vital research on Casement's human rights mission in 1903, the historical controversy surrounding the publication of the Black Diaries, as well as the much debated issue of Casement's sexuality. In her interview with Marina Carr, Patricia Novillo-Corvalán engaged in a fascinating dialogue with one of Ireland's most gifted female dramatists. Their lively and magical conversation revealed a two-way transmission of culture as they charted new literary interconnections between Ireland, Spain and Latin America. Carr openly talked about her childhood in County Offaly, the essence of her theatre, as well as her predilection for Spanish and Latin American writers such as Federico García Lorca, Gabriel García Márquez, and Jorge Luis Borges. In her interview with the Irish playwright Larry O'Loughlin, Laura Izarra directed her attention to the intersection between literature and history and the aesthetic process of representing the conflict between the United States and Mexico in the American-Mexican war (1846-48), as depicted in O'Loughlin's one-man play about five hundred Irish soldiers who deserted the American Army during the war and joined the Mexican side where, led by John Riley from Clifden, County Galway, they fought as the San Patricio (St. Patrick's) Battalion. O'Loughlin

enthusiastically explained the art of storytelling which configures his drama.

The broad spectrum of articles that comprise this special issue of *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* aspires to develop new transnational approaches, thus uncovering a planetary dimension to Irish Studies, particularly in their ability to point to numerous directions and locations, languages and cultures, unveiling a diasporated model that seeks to complement and expand upon national perspectives of Ireland. The issue begins with a triangular response to James Joyce's widespread impact in the Hispanic world, offering three outstanding articles by international Joyce scholars: Marisol Morales, Carlos Gamerro and Diana Perez García. Their enlightening articles survey the reception of the Irish Modernist icon in Spain (Morales), Argentina (Gamerro), and the cross-cultural transactions between Joyce, García Márquez and Faulkner (Perez García). In 'Two Contemporary Medeas', Zoraide Rodríguez Carrasco de Mesquita uncovers an unprecedented comparative reading of Euripides' *Medea* through the light shed by two contemporary afterlives of the classical tragedy: Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* and Pontes and Buarque's *Gota D'Água*.

In 'The Transfiguration of History: Knowledge, Time and Space in Northern Irish Poetry', Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação explores Seamus Heaney's and Ciaran Carson's poetic responses to a painting by the Spanish artist Francisco Goya entitled *Shootings of the Third of May*. She argues that both poets' historical transfers dislocate categories of time and space in order to produce a poetic translation that projects Goya's Spanish shootings onto the political conflict of Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

At a time when it has become paramount to examine the cultural effects of the Irish diaspora on a global scale, it is essential to study the transformative and cultural effects of the several generations of Irish descendants in Latin America. Six interdisciplinary articles from the fields of music, art, literature and history address this issue of extreme relevance. Rebecca and Patrick Geraghty explore the life and works of the Hiberno-Argentine writer William Bulfin through his engagement with issues of nation, travel writing, exile, home and nationalism. Andrés Romera examines the legacy of the Irish diaspora as portrayed in the fiction of contemporary Argentine writer Eduardo Cormick. Mariano Galazzi takes the reader on a pictorial tour of the nineteenth-century Irish-Argentine painter Henry Sheridan, while Edmundo Murray and Eduardo Cormick explore the complex legacy of Irish music in Latin America, charting musical genealogies and retelling tales that have been woven into a national mythology, such as the heroic achievements of the Argentine musician Buenaventura Luna. In a circular way, the journal ends with Angus Mitchell's provocative and thoroughly engaging article: 'Beneath the Hieroglyph: Recontextualising the Black Diaries of Roger Casement', which not only complements his momentous interview with Vargas Llosa, but also immerses the reader in the turbulent waters of Casement's *Black Diaries*.

Above all, it is our hope that the interviews, essays and book reviews that make up this issue will further consolidate the cultural brotherhood between Ireland and Latin America, and will serve as a solid foundation for the enlargement, enrichment and sustained scholarly interest in this historical engagement.

Laura P. Z. Izarra and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán

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An interview with Mario Vargas Llosa

By Angus Mitchell *

The announcement by the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa of his intention to research and write a new novel about the Irish revolutionary, Roger Casement, locates him within a tradition stretching across the twentieth century. Both during his life and after his execution, Casement attracted considerable interest from writers, novelists, poets and playwrights. He met Joseph Conrad in the Congo and kept in touch with him for many years afterwards. Mark Twain wrote a pamphlet in support of the Congo Reform Association, an early human rights organisation that Casement co-founded with the activist E.D. Morel in 1904. Arthur Conan Doyle based a character in *The Lost World* on Casement's Amazon adventures and helped organise one of the petitions of clemency after his trial, which included the signatures of several well-known writers. William Butler Yeats sent a letter to the government in 1916 pleading for his reprieve and George Bernard Shaw penned a discarded speech from the dock. As Vargas Llosa comments in the course of the interview below, Casement 'seems to be a character whose natural environment is a very great novel, not the real world.'

The question of the reasons why Casement has remained so influential on the literary imagination is an intriguing one to consider. Joseph Conrad partly explained it when he wrote in a letter to the Scottish adventurer and writer R.B. Cunningham Graham: 'He could tell you things! Things I've tried to forget; things I never did know.' This was a comment codifying the paradoxes that have determined Casement's life between memory and forgetting, telling and not telling, secrecy and revelation.

To anyone familiar with Varga Llosa's work there is perhaps something inevitable about his intention to write a novel based on Casement's life. Themes and tropes that appear and reappear in several of his earlier works, such as the jungle, insurgency, millenarianism, sexuality, violence, the conflict between the indigene and modernity, (trans)nationality, the excesses of

power and individual betrayal are all intrinsic to Casement's history.

In this interview, the historian, Angus Mitchell, who has published extensively on Roger Casement's life and afterlife, speaks to Mario Vargas Llosa about why he is writing a book about the executed Irishman.

Mario Vargas Llosa (MVL): Let me say first that I am very grateful for the books you have sent me and I've read both of them and enjoyed them tremendously.

Angus Mitchell (AM): Well, thank you, and I've enjoyed reading your books.

MVL: (Laughing) It is reciprocal then. I particularly enjoyed very, very much your edition of *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (1). I think you did a wonderful job.

AM: Thank you, I hope it was useful.

MVL: The notes in particular are very illuminating about the context ... a wonderful, wonderful job. Congratulations and thank you very much.

AM: Did you see the follow-up volume *Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness* (2)?

MVL: Yes, absolutely. It's so rich all this material that sometimes I feel lost with all the richness of the raw material that I have ... I am writing a novel so I am using this with, let's say, freedom, you know.

AM: How long have you been working on the novel?

MVL: A year and a half and I am still at the beginning, but it doesn't matter because now I am starting to enjoy it. At the beginning I was a bit lost, but now I am working with great enthusiasm.

AM: When did you first encounter Casement?

MVL: I am a great admirer of Joseph Conrad, like everybody I suppose, and I was reading a new biography on Conrad, and then, when I discovered that Roger Casement had played a very important role in the experiences of

Conrad in the Congo and that probably without the help that he received from Casement he wouldn't have written *Heart of Darkness* as he wrote it, I became very curious to know about Roger Casement. I started to research him and I discovered that he had been in the Amazon, he had played a very central role in the denunciation of the inequities committed during the caucho [rubber] boom period, and then I discovered that he was a fascinating character himself. All these roles he played in different political environments and then his tragic end. Then, as has usually happened with all the books I've written, the image of Roger Casement, the history of Roger Casement started to loom in my mind, in my life. It's always like that. And one day I discovered that without knowing it, I had already been working in a vague project around Roger Casement.

AM: I was struck when doing some research into your own background that you were brought up within diplomatic circles and then, in the 1980s, you were asked to lead a commission selected to investigate the atrocity of the journalists at Uchuraccay. There are obvious echoes here with Casement's life. Do you consider these points of experiential contact important?

MVL: Probably, these similar experiences made the case of Roger Casement more attractive. I should say that the experience with what happened at Uchuraccay with the killing of these eight journalists was an experience which had a tremendous impact in my life. (3) I discovered another dimension of my own country which I knew nothing about and, I suppose, this kind of experience, to be suddenly immersed in a very different cultural world and cultural environment and to discover the tremendous social, political, cultural problems, so different from the problems of the world in which I had been living before. This made me very sensitive to the kind of problems which Roger Casement faced in part of his life. He was a very tragic figure. Probably the life of Roger Casement was a very difficult life: solitude, prejudices around himself, the difficult transformation of a pro-British Irishman into a nationalist, his rejection of empire and of colonialism in his youth he thought were the tool of modernisation, of democratisation, of Westernisation from the rest

of the world, is an extraordinary transformation and that he did this by himself through experiences and through his character is extremely attractive and at the same time very dramatic. No?

AM: Yes, it is an incredible story, it has almost every ingredient.

MVL: He seems to be a character whose natural environment is a very great novel and not the real world.

AM: In preparation for writing this book you travelled to the Congo. Where did you visit? What were your impressions of the Congo? Did you find any significant evidence of Casement's continued presence in the Congo?

MVL: It was only two weeks but it was so useful for me because I wanted to be in the places in which he had lived for so long. Boma and Matadi have not changed much. Matadi has grown, but still you find the traces of the colonial city. But Boma has hardly changed at all, when the administration moved to Kinshasa, Boma was completely abandoned and practically has not grown since and still you find the city with the colonial houses. It's very impressive. You can really reconstruct the environment in which Casement lived for so many years. I was lucky, I found a very interesting person Mr. Monsieur Placid-Clement, who is probably the only person in Boma interested in the past, trying to rescue, to preserve all that is a testimony of the old life of Boma and so he's a kind of librarian. The problem is there are no books in Boma. He preserves anything: papers, letters, all the papers that he can find are in his office because there is no local archive. He was very, very useful as an informant on the past in Boma.

AM: Did you find any significant evidence of Casement's continued presence?

MVL: What for me was very sad is that very few Congolese people knew about Casement. It is very sad because if there is one person who fought for years to denounce all the tragedy of the Congolese people, it was Casement and nobody remembers him. There are a few university teachers but even then they have a very vague idea of him and the importance of Casement. But the tragedy of the Congo is such

that they have forgotten the past, they are not interested in the past at all because what they see in the past are such horrors that they prefer to forget about the past, about tradition, about history. They are completely absorbed by and concentrated on the present, because the present is so atrocious you know. You can't imagine the poverty, the corruption, the violence. I thought I knew about misery, about violence in Latin America, but when you go to Congo you discover that Latin America is modernity, civilisation, by comparison to the tragedy of the Congo society. It is really indescribable ... unspeakable ... But at the same time it was very interesting from, let's say, a personal point of view to be exposed to this social disintegration, the disintegration of a society at all levels.

AM: It is something which Casement described in his own time and a hundred years later the same tragedy is occurring?

MVL: Absolutely, Casement's report on the Congo is still very valid, very, very valid. You still find exploitation and brutality which has disappeared from the rest of the world, even in Africa. Slavery is still a very vivid institution in Congo. What doesn't exist any more is a central power because now, with the decentralisation of the country, there is no central power. For the rest, what he described and what he saw in the Congo is still very present.

AM: How is Casement remembered in Peru? Is he reviled for his investigation, or upheld as a champion of indigenous rights, or is he simply forgotten?

MVL: In Peru he is more remembered. What is very interesting is that there is still this controversy that the *Blue Book* produced one hundred years ago is in a way still going on. (4) 'There are still people who say ... 'well the *Blue Book* was written to favour the Colombian pretensions in the Putumayo region. Roger Casement was not fair. He was very biased' ... But on the other hand you have people who admire enormously what he did, particularly in the Amazon in Iquitos. I was in Iquitos recently talking to historians there and they remember Casement with great admiration and gratitude. I think what Roger Casement did was absolutely

useful at least to make visible a problem which the great majority of Peruvians ignored completely. They didn't know what was going on in the Amazon. They didn't know the kind of exploitation, brutality, atrocities which were committed by the caucho people in the Putumayoregion. Now they were very ignorant about that, so the scandal was at least very educational and instructive for the majority of the country. But still Arana is a controversial figure. There are historians who consider that in spite of everything he introduced a kind of modernity in a very primitive and prehistoric world. It is very interesting because in a way Casement is much more remembered in Peru than in Congo. All the mystery that surrounds Roger Casement in Iquitos is fascinating and no one knows what happened to Saldaña Rocca. You are the only person who mentions that Saldaña Rocca (5) went to Lima, lived very poorly in the capital and died. There is no way to find testimonies of the last years of Benjamin Saldaña Rocca in Lima.



Cartoon from the anti-Arana newspaper *La Felpa* - Archivo Nacional, Peru

AM: Can we talk now about this novel in the context of your other work? It strikes me that there's something almost inevitable about your decision to write about Casement. You have experimented in several of your novels with multiple perspectives. *Captain Pantoja and the Secret Service*, *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* and *The Feast of the Goat* are three examples. Casement is composed of often conflicting layers of meaning and myth and in his contradictions as villain and hero, traitor and patriot, and the public and the private, there is plenty of room for

experimentation with perspectives – would you comment?



Frontpage of Iquitos-based newspaper *La Sancion* showing Guiseppe Garibaldi - *Arquivo Nacional, Peru*

MVL: Probably the aspect of Roger Casement which for me is more and more interesting is how his life rejects all kinds of stereotypes. You cannot use stereotypes for Roger Casement because the nuances are absolutely essential in his personality, nuances and contradictions, and in this sense I think he is much more human than the usual heroes. Heroes in history or heroes in literature, in general, are of a piece. But in Roger Casement there are so many nuances in all the periods of his life, or in the roles that he played in his life, that what is really the human condition of a hero is always present in his case. In other cases, because of the stereotypes, the hero becomes so attached to the idea of a hero that he is dehumanised. He's never been dehumanised, he's always at the level of humanity, even when he accomplished the most extraordinary achievements. On the other hand, I think it's very moving how even in the periods in which he was more celebrated, admired, he preserved a kind of modesty, a kind of distance from his public figure which is very unusual among heroes or public figures. Another fascinating aspect is that, in spite of everything that historians have discovered about him, there is also a large measure of mystery. It is difficult to tap him entirely.

AM: Several critics have discussed the intertextuality in your work, and I'm thinking here most obviously of *The War of the End of the World*. (6) Casement's own voyages of investigation were themselves shaped, some would argue, by Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Would you comment?

MVL: The subject is very different but my approach to the character is the same. I have tried to read everything I can, visiting the places he lived or that were important for his work. But I don't want to write a book of history which is disguised as a novel, not at all. I want to write a novel and so I'm going to use my imagination, my fantasy, much more than historical material, as I did with *La Guerra del Fin del Mundo*, as I did with the book on Trujillo [*The Feast of the Goat*], as I did in the book about the dictatorship of President Odría of Peru in *Conversations in the Cathedral*. I love history but I am a novelist. I want to write a novel, a book in which fantasy and imagination are more important than the historical raw material.

AM: Yes. I'd like to talk more about history and the imagination in a moment.

MVL: That is a fascinating subject, a very large subject.

AM: Casement felt he was informed by his duality, his double consciousness as an Irishman working for the British Empire. In his trajectory towards Irish separatism he was clearly motivated by his own interpretation of Irish history and his opposition to colonial authority.

MVL: There is such ambiguity, but what is interesting is how he escaped from these conditions. He worked for the British Empire and that was not an obstacle for him to be very critical about the institution which he served with such efficacy and loyalty for most of his life. At the same time he discovered all the sinister aspects of colonialism and he acted in a very coherent way working against what he considered was evil.

AM: Have you considered Casement in the light of postcolonial theory?

MVL: I think what you say in your book is absolutely true. One of his great achievements is to have understood better than most of his

contemporaries the evil aspect of colonialism and acted in a very coherent way against colonialism from the centre of colonial power itself. That is what is really unique in his case. He did it with such efficacy because when we talk about colonialism, we are talking not only of powerful countries which invade, occupy and colonise others, but we are talking about internal colonialism of the westernised Peru against the primitive Peru. He denounced this in the same way that he denounced the Belgians against the Congolese. He denounced the colonialism of the westernised *blancos* and *mestizos* against the Indians of the Amazon region, who were treated like the Congolese by the Belgians in Africa. He was very lucid in that respect and much more in the *avant garde* than the majority of his contemporaries.

AM: London was your home for many years, and you have studied and taught in British universities. Do you think this affinity allows you to empathise with Casement as an Irish patriot?

MVL: I think so. I think the years I lived in England were very important for, how can I say, my intellectual horizons. Yes, I perceived many, many things. I learned many, many things about not only literature but politics, social matters.

AM: You know there is this deep and long-standing conflict between Britain and Ireland that is lived out on a level of history - and Casement is perhaps the most complex of all the figures who interferes in that relationship.

MVL: But I think in this case you have to place Roger Casement in his times, which are essential to understanding for example the belligerency of his attitudes, and are very different today. It was very difficult in his time. He was in a very lucid minority, a very small minority, in a given moment. I think he was very courageous, very, very courageous and at the same time it was very tragic for him because for many years he had his ideas and at the same time his public figure was in total contradiction with what he thought, what he believed.

AM: The question of sexuality has played a disproportionate role in the discussion on Casement. Would it be wrong to guess that the so-called Black Diaries are central to the shaping of your own historical novel? In a recent interview in

The Guardian you were quoted as saying that 'There is a great debate about his [Casement's] homosexuality and paedophilia that has never been resolved and probably never will be.' (7)

MVL: Let me correct this a little bit. I don't think that there is a possible doubt about Roger Casement's homosexuality. I think he was a homosexual, but what I think is still, particularly after reading what you have done in *The Amazon Journal*, that it is still possible to discuss the authenticity of the Black Diaries. You give very strong perceptions of all the contradictions between the Black Diaries and the report. But I think he was a homosexual. This is another very dramatic, tragic aspect of his life if you place homosexuality in the context of the prejudices and persecution of homosexuals.

AM: I would say that the issue of authenticity is now more about the textual rather than the sexual.

MVL: That's right, absolutely. Exactly. It is the textual which is controversial. It is very strange all these contradictions in very concrete facts in texts written almost simultaneously. I was in Oxford very recently with John Hemming (8) and we were discussing this and he was saying 'No, no, no the diaries are authentic. I assure you that they are authentic. There was no time for British Intelligence to fabricate them, there was no time.' But I answered: 'How can you explain the inaccuracies in the Black Diaries if he was writing both things at the same time. So I think this is something that can be discussed and still considered controversial. But not his homosexuality. The homosexuality was something which was another very personal element of the tragedy he lived all his life. No?'

AM: Very interesting. A few years ago there was a brief exchange between two figures involved in the controversy about who could legitimately speak for Casement. The suggestion was put that only a gay man could really understand and speak for Casement. How would you respond to this point of view?

MVL: (Laughing) That is a terrible prejudice. If that was so a man couldn't write about women or Peruvians couldn't write about Europeans. No, no, I think literature is a demonstration of how this is all absolutely ridiculous prejudice. A writer

can write about every type of human and character, because there is a common denominator which is more important behind the sexual orientation, the cultural tradition, the language, the races. No, I believe in the unity of the human kind, I think literature is the best demonstration of the universal experiences that can be understood and shared among people of very different extractions, very different identities and other levels of life including, of course, sex.

AM: That's very reassuring. We touched a little earlier on the relationship between fact and fiction and history and imagination. Your interview in *The Guardian* also quoted you as saying that you were 'not looking for historical precision but for something to shake me out of my insecurity'.

MVL: (Laughs)

AM: Moreover, in a recent letter explaining your intentions for the novel you wrote how you were 'writing a novel in which fantasy and imagination will play a more important role than historical memory.' What value do you give historical memory in the context of this story?

MVL: I think what is important when you use history in writing a novel is to reach the level where all experiences are an expression of the human condition. Not the local or regional characteristics, but on the contrary, what is general, something that transcends these limitations or conditions let's say *Ulysses*, something that can be understood by people of very different cultures. I read *Ulysses* for the first time when I was in Lima and I hadn't been in touch with other cultures and I was moved, deeply, deeply moved by Leopold Bloom and the Dublin of Joyce. When you read *War and Peace* you don't need to be a Russian or a contemporary of Napoleon to be deeply moved by the story that Tolstoy told. I think that this is the importance of literature as something that makes clear what is common, what is shared among the great variety of experiences, of traditions, of customs. I think that this is what you should try to achieve when you write a novel based on history: this common denominator in which we recognise each other even if we speak in very different ways or we believe in very different things. So that is what I've tried to do. I know that I am not Irish so

probably in my novel Irish people will find many things that they do not recognise, but I hope the novel overall will justify the inaccuracies.

AM: Many distinguished writers have touched Casement's life in different ways: Joseph Conrad, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, W. G. Sebald, to name a few ...

MVL: This is one of the great things of Irish literature, universality. Even when Ireland was still very provincial, [it could] produce these dreamers - the great poets and the great novelists who were so universal. That's an example to follow!

AM: Conversely, historians have steered a wide berth away from him as a subject. Despite the size of Casement's surviving archive and his implacable pursuit of 'facts' and 'truth', he appeals more to the literary imagination than to archive-based research. Why do you think this is?

MVL: Probably because in order to really understand Casement you have to use as much research and academic discipline as fantasy or imagination. Without the fantasy and a lot of imagination you don't reach a character like Casement. He was very exceptional, he was extraordinary in the variety of his roles, of his experiences, there is so much shadow, I think you need a lot of imagination and fantasy and probably that is why he is so appealing for literary people.

AM: Which historical novelists do you admire?

MVL: Tolstoy. I am a great admirer of Tolstoy and the nineteenth-century novelists, Stendhal, Victor Hugo. Contemporary novelists who have written a lot about socio-historical matters. For example, I admire André Malraux very, very much and his novel *La Condition humaine* which is a masterwork, but very neglected by people because of political reasons. (9) Malraux was a Gaulliste, and his work has been neglected, but I think *La Condition humaine* is a masterwork as a political novel. That is something very difficult to write: a political novel.

AM: I've heard it said of your own work that you use writing in order to challenge social inadequacies, oppression and political

corruption and to encourage active, critical citizenship. Has the telling of the Casement story helped you do this and how?

MVL: Yes, I think he is a fantastic character to denounce the selfishness of people, who are unable to see more than self-interest. He was a very generous man, his life was orientated around great goals: social, political, cultural, and he was absolutely ready to sacrifice his own personal interests. It's very moving how he spends all his money on humanitarian organisations, cultural organisations. On the other hand he was a victim of all kind of prejudices and if you want to describe in a very contemporary way the stupidity of religious, political, sexual prejudice, you have a fantastic

example in Roger Casement. On the other hand he was human, he also had his own limitations. I think you can discuss in a given moment the way in which his nationalism became a cultural nationalism and he was restricted in a way that can be, I think, criticised. He was not a superman, he was a human being, he was a very extraordinary man but he was not a superman. I think that this is the aspect I would like to emphasise in my book.

AM: Señor Vargas Llosa thank you very much.

MVL: I've been very pleased to talk to you.

Angus Mitchell

Notes

* Angus Mitchell has lectured on campuses in the US and Ireland and continues to publish on the life and afterlife of Roger Casement. He lives in Limerick.

1 Angus Mitchell (ed.), *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London & Dublin, 1997).

2 Angus Mitchell (ed.), *Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness* (Dublin, 2003).

3 On 26 January 1983, eight Peruvian journalists, most of them from Lima, and their guide, set out for the rural community of Uchuraccay, a remote Andean village in the province of Ayacucho, to investigate reports of human rights abuses. Soon after their arrival, they were murdered, apparently by the villagers themselves. Mario Vargas Llosa was asked to head up a commission to investigate the tragedy.

4 The Blue Book refers to the official government publication containing Casement's reports on his official investigation and interviews with the Barbadians recruited by the company to work on the rubber stations. Miscellaneous no.8 (1912) *Correspondence respecting the treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians employed in the collection of rubber in the Putumayo district* [Cd. 6266]. Publication of this report had a significant impact on investment in the Amazon region.

5 Benjamin Saldaña Rocca was a socialist agitator who lived and worked in Iquitos and galvanised the first protest against Julio César Arana and his rubber-gathering regime through his two newspapers, *La Felpa* and *La Sanción*. Nearly complete editions of both newspapers are held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford N.2343 b.10 (1). In 1908 Saldaña Rocca was forced to leave Iquitos and went to live in Lima, where he died destitute in 1912. His efforts, however, had a great influence on Walt Hardenburg, who awakened interest in the Putumayo atrocities in London in 1909.

6 Published in 1984, *The War of the End of the World* is Vargas Llosa's imaginative interpretation of the Canudos rebellion which occurred in the backlands of Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century and inspired one of Brazil's most lauded novels, *Os Sertões* (Rebellion in the Backlands) by the Brazilian writer Euclides da Cunha.

7 *The Guardian* (London), 4 October 2008.

8 Historian of the Amazon, John Hemming, has written the key popular works on Amazon history. For his contribution to the Casement controversy see 'Roger Casement's Putumayo Investigation' in Mary E. Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin, 2005).

9 Andre Malraux, *La Condition Humaine* (1933) was translated initially as *Storm in Shanghai* (1934) and later as *Man's Estate* (1948).

The Theatre of Marina Carr: A Latin American Reading, Interview, and Translation

By Patricia Novillo-Corvalán (1)

Abstract

*This article brings together three interrelated parts: an interview with Marina Carr, a translator's preface, and a fragmentary Spanish translation of her play *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998). The interview seeks to capture the unique voice of Carr in a relaxed and informal conversation that reflects on her life, theatre, influences, as well as her overall fascination with Spanish and Latin American literature. The translation is the first rendering of *By the Bog of Cats...* into Spanish. It is preceded by a translator's prologue which offers a discussion of Carr's drama and comments upon the several difficulties encountered during the translation.*

Marina Carr (born 1964) has recently been described as 'Ireland's leading woman playwright' (Sternlicht 2001: xv), 'one of the most powerful, haunting voices on the contemporary Irish stage' (Leeney, McMullan 2003: xv), and 'the only Irish woman to have her plays produced on Ireland's main stages in recent years' (Sihra 2007: 19). Undoubtedly, Carr has emerged as one of the most gifted new voices in the Irish theatrical arena and stands side-by-side with prominent fellow Irish playwrights Brian Friel, Frank McGuinness and Tom Murphy. She has written more than a dozen plays, including *The Mai* (1994), *Portia Coughlan* (1996), *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998), *On Raftery's Hill* (2000), *Ariel* (2002), *Woman and Scarecrow* (2006), and *The Cordelia Dream* (2008). She won the E. M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2001) and the Irish American Fund Award (2004). She has been writer-in-residence at the Abbey Theatre and Trinity College Dublin, and has recently served as Heimbold Chair of Irish Studies at the University of Villanova.

Patricia Novillo-Corvalán (PNC): Many of our readers would like to know about your upbringing in County Offaly, and how this countryside setting influenced your work. Could you tell us a bit more about this?

Marina Carr (MC): I grew up in a place called Gortnamona, which means 'field of the bog', for the first eleven years, and then moved a half-mile down the road to a place called Pallas Lake. Our house was on the shore of the lake. There were swans, there were bulls, there were

dragonflies, there were fishermen. My sister and I spent long summer evenings sitting on an old oak tree looking out at the lake, laughing our heads off at anything, everything, nothing. The winters were cold, sometimes the lake froze. I went to my mother's school along with my brothers and sister. She was the principal there. She loved history and mythology. When the weather was fine she would let us play for hours outside. She would walk around and around the schoolyard in her sunglasses speaking Irish. We put on plays at home and at school. It was a good childhood, free and fairly wild.

PNC: Your plays have been variously linked to a range of theatrical traditions, including Irish drama, Attic tragedy, Shakespeare and Ibsen. In relation to modern European drama, nobody to my knowledge has yet mentioned the name of the Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca as one of your influences. I recall that while I was reading the final speeches of Sorrell and Dinah in *On Raftery's Hill*, I was transported to the ending of *The House of Bernarda Alba* in which all the daughters have lost their chance of achieving any happiness and will be locked forever in the claustrophobic walls of the maternal house. Also, your play *By the Bog of Cats...* – for all its parallels with Greek tragedy – is above all a blood wedding, with passionate acts of love, jealousy, and revenge. How familiar are you with the work of Lorca? And, do you feel any kinship with his drama?



Joan O'Hara as Catwoman and Olwen Fouéré as Hester Swane in the 1998 World Premiere of *By the Bog of Cats* by Marina Carr. © Abbey Theatre Photo: Amelia Stein

MC: I love Lorca, he's always fascinated me. I spent a long time reading and re-reading his plays in translation: *Yerma*, *Blood Wedding*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*. They are incredibly powerful, Lorca is a poet of the theatre, like Ibsen, Chekhov, Wilde and Beckett. In 2006 I saw a wonderful production of *Yerma* here in Dublin (Arcola Theatre, in a new stage version by Frank McGuinness featuring Kathryn Hunter as *Yerma*). I'd love to see other productions of his plays. And yes, I feel a strong affinity with Lorca and I wouldn't be surprised if you find echoes of his theatre in my plays. My reading is very eclectic and is not just confined to Irish- and English-speaking authors.

PNC: Are there any other Hispanic or Latin American writers you admire?

MC: I've read most of Marquez's work including *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Love in the Times of Cholera*, and recently his compelling autobiography: *Living to Tell the Tale*. I found it so fascinating that I'm still waiting for a sequel to be released! I also adore Borges, although he demands a very different type of reading. Not long ago I was re-reading his *Fictions*, enjoying his paradoxes, and his speculations on infinity. I then realised that there is an Irish poet, Paul Muldoon who's written a book, *The Annals of Chile*, which I think is very Borgesian. Muldoon has a wonderful voice and is always playing intellectual games. His book traces a number of

parallels between Ireland and Latin America and is written in English, mixed with Gaelic and Spanish words. I'd imagine that Muldoon is familiar with Borges's work, the connection is certainly there.

PNC: What you were just saying reminds me of Borges's essay 'The Argentine Writer and Tradition' in which he talks about a sense of brotherhood between Ireland and Latin America. We can think of their marginality, colonial histories, imposed languages, and deeply ingrained Catholicism. Borges advised Argentine (and Latin American) writers to follow the example of the Irish who tried out every subject, 'the universe is our birthright', he said.

MC: I can clearly see the parallels, and I'm not at all surprised that a writer like Borges could so perceptively find a connection between the Irish and Latin American imaginations. Yes, the Irish writer draws from a wide range of sources, and so does the Latin American. They have taken stuff from all over the place, and they are happy to admit it, like Borges. You've got so many wonderful writers out there. For instance, I've started reading a short story collection entitled *Last Evenings on Earth* by the Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño.

PNC: That's fascinating! Have you read any of Bolaño's novels?

MC: No, I haven't yet; this is the first book I encountered. But I'd like to read more. Which one would you recommend?

PNC: Well, there's *The Savage Detectives* and his gigantic masterpiece 2666, which has been praised by Irish writers such as John Banville and Colm Tóibín. Whenever people ask me about it I usually say – tongue in cheek – that if Joyce and Borges ever got together to write a book, this is the book they'd have written (*laughter*).

MC: (*Laughter*) sounds fascinating. Are there any other Latin American writers you'd recommend worth reading?

PNC: I think you'd really enjoy Julio Cortázar's short stories. There's one called 'Letter to a Young Lady in Paris', which is about a man who keeps coughing up little rabbits, a bit like your

Catwoman in *By the Bog of Cats*... who's got mouse fur growing out of her teeth.

MC: I'd love to read it. (Makes note of Cortázar's name).

PNC: Now I'd like to know a bit more about one of your latest plays, *The Cordelia Dream*, which may be read as an afterlife of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. It's significant that Irish and Latin American writers have for centuries talked back to Shakespeare: Wilde, Shaw, Joyce, Borges, Neruda, Carpentier, they have all done it.

MC: In my case I've been dealing with the ghost of Shakespeare for quite a long time. I love *King Lear*, it's one of my favourite Shakespeare plays. I've always been fascinated by the four howls and the five *nevers* in Act 5, when Lear enters with Cordelia dead in his arms: 'Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones./Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so/That heaven's vault should crack [...] Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,/And thou not breath at all? Thou'lt come no more./Never, never, never, never'. So I decided to write a play which captured that unique moment, which is in essence the blood bond between a father and a daughter.

PNC: Is the Daughter, then, a twenty-first century version of Cordelia?

MC: Well, she is a version of Cordelia but also Goneril and Regan: a mixture of the three sisters. The father demands a test of love and devotion from his daughter, he asks her to be silent.

PNC: Like Cordelia in *King Lear* when she refuses to perform in Lear's ceremony: 'Love and be silent'.

MC: Yes, the sacrifice that the father demands from his daughter and which eventually kills her.

PNC: Your plays are haunted by the mysterious forces of the supernatural. You bring to the stage the eerie world of ghosts, visions, prophecies, and voices and sounds from the Otherworld. A critic has vividly described this dark dimension of your work as: 'Carr cracks open a window onto the ghost world that troubles her sleep and allows her audiences to overhear the tumult' (Harris 2003: 232). Could

you tell us more about your relationship with death?

MC: I suppose that in transcendental terms there are moments when one realises that there's a link between this world and the next. They are not two completely separate places. How many other worlds are there? That's a question I keep asking myself when I write. I'd say that I'm interested in that shadowy area, the borderland between life and death. It's a different way of seeing the world, it opens another dimension. Having said this, I also believe that you have to make the most of it in the world you are in. It's important to enjoy this life.

PNC: Yet in spite of the powerful tragic forces of your drama, there is an undeniable touch of dark comedy in your plays. How important is comedy for you?

MC: I think it's important to strike a balance between the tragic and the comic, and humour is such an essential aspect of life. Tragedy does not necessarily rule out comedy. I like to transport my readers and audiences into a magical world, to make them feel the power of the theatre, and that also includes amusing them.

PNC: Have your plays been translated into other languages?

MC: Yes, German, Italian, Croatian, Dutch and many others. There have been stage productions all around the world including China, South Korea, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Canada, the United States, and here in Ireland, of course.

PNC: Would you give me permission to include a fragmentary Spanish translation of *By the Bog of Cats*... in *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*?

MC: I'd be delighted to reach out to Hispanic audiences.

Reading and Translating Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*...

As a young Irish dramaturgist, Marina Carr is writing in the wake of a longstanding tradition of Irish playwrights associated with the birth

and development of the Abbey Theatre at the beginning of the twentieth century – including W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J. M. Synge. But for all her creative engagement with rural Ireland – its language, people, themes, and landscape – Carr's theatre also stages the grand-scale subject matter of Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. Marianne McDonald has recently identified a special kinship between Irish literature and ancient Greek tragedy: 'In the twentieth century, there seem to be more translations and versions of Greek tragedy that have come from Ireland than from any other country in the English-speaking world. In many ways Ireland was and is constructing its identity through the representations offered by Greek tragedy' (McDonald 2002: 37). Indeed, Greek tragedy – and mythology in a broader sense – has cast a powerful spell on the Irish writer's imagination: James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a rewriting of Homer's *Odyssey*; Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* is a modern Irish version of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*; Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act* is a Northern Irish translation of Sophocles' *Antigone*; Euripides' *Medea* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* have undergone a complex metamorphosis in Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* and *Ariel* respectively. The list is endless. The main point here is that Irish writers from Joyce to Carr are able to transcend the parochial limitations of a strictly national art by offering a complex fusion of the Irish tradition they have inherited, and the wider panorama of Greek myth and world literature. The provincial limitations of the Celtic Renaissance may be transcended by this complex lacing of literary traditions, thus allowing the Irish writer to be both national and international, and to be able to speak to audiences at home and abroad.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Marina Carr's drama is her distinctive use of a regional variant of Hiberno-English spoken in the Irish Midlands. She skilfully portrays the speech patterns of a linguistic community as part of a creative endeavour that seeks to represent the accent, local slang, mannerisms, proverbial expressions, and folklore of a particular region in rural Ireland. Frank McGuinness has pertinently referred to Carr's theatre as a 'physical attack on the conventions of syntax, spelling, and sounds of Standard English' (McGuinness 1996: ix) and Melissa Sihra has

argued that: 'Carr's linguistic inventiveness refuses standard English, imagining new modes of expression' (Sihra 2007: 210). It soon becomes clear that a translation of Carr's plays must therefore become a recreation, and that the translator should negotiate a form of writing that privileges an essentially transformative strategy. My translation of *By the Bog of Cats...* (*El pantano de los gatos*) aims to rewrite the play in the variant of Spanish known as River Plate, mainly spoken in Argentina and Uruguay. The central decision here was to steer away from translating the play into Standard Spanish, which is precisely what Carr is resisting in her ideological endeavour to give voice to Hiberno-English versus Standard English. It is important to stress, however, that there is a vast repertoire of Spanish dialects from Latin America, Africa and even the Iberian Peninsula, which would have also offered rich and varied alternatives. In *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*, the American critic and translator Suzanne Jill Levine addresses this specific translation issue as: 'Should the translator supplant one local dialect with another? [...] Every translator has a personal version of what a particular slang sounds like, and of which slang is a more appropriate substitution' (Levine 1997: 67). Levine is saying that no translator could possibly reproduce the Irish Midlands dialect of the original, but should rather try to find a speech variety which may recontextualise the play in an entirely different dialect. For this purpose, Walter Benjamin's instructive lesson in his seminal essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1923) proves extremely relevant. He claims that the translation issues form the 'afterlife' of the original, as the work of art extends its life through the redeeming power of the translation, thus embarking on another stage within its continuing life as it moves across language, history, and culture (Benjamin 2000: 16). (3)

My choice of Spanish dialect stems from the crucial fact that there is a long-standing tradition of Argentine writers translating Irish literature into River Plate Spanish. This genealogy begins with Jorge Luis Borges's fragmentary translation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In 1925 a youthful Borges wrote a pioneering review of *Ulysses* and a translation of the last two pages of 'Penelope' for the Buenos Aires avant-garde journal *Proa*.

Borges opened his review of *Ulysses* with a boastful declaration: 'Soy EL PRIMER AVENTURERO (4) hispánico que ha arribado al libro de Joyce' (Borges 1993: 23); ('I am the first traveller from the Hispanic world to set foot upon the shores of *Ulysses*') (Borges 1999: 12). What is implicit in Borges's emphatic assertion is not only his belief that he is the first Hispanic explorer of the epic *Ulysses*, but also the awareness that he was touring Joyce's epic geography for the later enlightenment of the Spanish-speaking world. The most noteworthy feature of Borges's fragmentary rendering of 'Penelope' is its distinctive colloquial tone rich in Argentine diction. Borges's decision to present the readers of *Proa* with an Argentine-speaking Molly Bloom corresponded to the literary credo he professed in the 1920s, in which he advocated a colloquial use of River Plate Spanish (Novillo-Corvalán 2008: 1). In his overt attempt to challenge standard practices that utilised the Standard Spanish personal pronoun *tú* as the customary norm for written texts, Borges instead decided to employ the River Plate colloquial form *vos* in order to give legitimacy to a primarily oral vernacular (see Borges 1997: 201-2). Two decades later, a similar translation practice was adopted by fellow Argentine writer J. Salas Subirat who in 1945 gifted the Hispanic world with the first complete translation of *Ulysses* into Argentine-Spanish. In 1948 the writer Leopoldo Marechal offered a more radical exercise in translation and rewriting by transplanting *Ulysses* from Dublin into the streets of Buenos Aires and from Hiberno-English into River Plate Spanish. This fascinating history of the migration of *Ulysses* to Argentina, its successive translations and metamorphosis, cannot but consolidate the reciprocity between Irish and Argentine writers, and the ever-recurring dialogue between the literatures of Ireland and Argentina. Above all, it celebrates a textual space in which two different cultures, languages, and histories meet and interact with each other. In this way, Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*... also embarks on a journey to the Southern Hemisphere, and is reborn in the dialectal variety of Spanish spoken in Argentina, absorbing its idiosyncratic linguistic features (yeísmo, voseo, verb conjugation, local slang, and proverbial

expressions), thus offering a rich and distinguishing language on which to transpose Carr's play.

Another aspect of *By the Bog of Cats*... which presents further challenges to a translator springs from the fact that the names of the dramatis personae carry a wealth of symbolic, evocative, or linguistically playful associations. Indeed, in *By the Bog of Cats*... names are rarely arbitrary and in most cases underscore a set of values, beliefs, and superstitions which are deeply rooted in the play's natural environment. This onomastic polyvalence cannot be ignored, since the act of naming offers Carr the possibility not only to interact with her landscape, but also to summon the multitude of ghosts that haunt her imagination. This is evident in inventive names such as Hester Swane, Ghost Fancier, Father Willow, Black Wing and Catwoman. For example Carr's heroine, Hester Swane, is tragically aware of the allegorical significance of her family name. Her mother, Josie Swane, has imposed a deadly curse upon her daughter by reading behind the pun of her name and predicting the exact timing of her death: "Swane means swan' [...] 'That child', says Josie Swane, 'will live as long as this black swan, not a day more, not a day less' (Carr 1999: 275). Whereas the translation of proper names has always been a questionable subject in translation theory, I decided to recreate Hester's family name Swane under the new Spanish version 'Cisnero' in order to preserve the pun with 'swan', as a Spanish speaker would easily associate 'Cisnero' with the noun 'cisne'. Another challenge was presented by the suggestive compound 'Ghost Fancier', which results from Carr's ingenious merging of two previously unrelated words in the English language. In this way, 'Ghost Fancier' sounds colloquial and poetical, menacing and humorous. Only Carr's individual voice may give birth to such a wondrous creature, an 'angel of death' – as Sternlicht (2001: xvi) puts it – who comes down to earth to 'eye up' ghosts, and whose description in the stage directions renders him as 'a handsome creature in a dress suit' (Carr 1999: 261), thus arousing feelings of both fear and affection upon an audience. Whereas the Ghost Fancier has foreknowledge of Hester's death and is thus a mysterious

instrument of the inexplicable forces of Fate, it is still devoid of the evil and malice of Shakespeare's weird sisters in *Macbeth*. In his characteristic politeness, he apologises to Hester for getting his timing wrong as he mistakes dawn for dusk during his first visitation. The complexity of a spectral presence such as the Ghost Fancier begs for an inventive translation strategy rather than a word-for-word rendering which would produce an inadequate result. In this way, I turned Ghost Fancier into Fantasma Galante, in a recreative gesture that privileged the imagery of seduction and the supernatural inherent in the original, as well as the poetical quality of the name. (5) Moreover, the expression also allowed a greater play on meaning as the adjective *galante* in Spanish carries an old-fashioned flavour, serving to reinforce the idea of a *galán*, a smartly dressed, seductive and handsome figure who, in Carr's play, is also a messenger of Fate who comes to lead Hester into a dance of death. There is thus a literary quality to the word *galán*, in that it may also bring into mind Lope de Vega's play *El galán de Menbrilla*, which was based on the Spanish popular folk song of the same name, in which the *galán* seduces a Spanish maid and takes her away with him. The Ghost Fancier, then, is reborn on a Hispanic stage as a complex figure that yields up a range of meanings and associations, yet still embodies the main features of Carr's character.

Finally, another compelling aspect of Carr's drama resides in her creation of passionate female heroines who have been usually described as exiled, outcasts and dispossessed, living a purgatorial existence in the margins of society (Sihra 2007; Russell 2006; Leeney 2004). Neither innocent maidens nor devoted housewives, Carr's tempestuous women have been interpreted as transgressions of the traditional figure of the virtuous woman in Irish society. 'Carr's disintegrated domestic scene', writes Melissa Sihra, 'challenges the rural idyll fetishized by De Valera in his 1943 address to the nation 'whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads [and] the laughter of comely maidens'' (Sihra 2007: 211). Instead, Carr's tortured female beings have more in common with the larger-than-life figures of Greek tragedy: Medea, Electra, Phaedra,

Antigone, hence dramatising the themes of murder, infanticide, sacrifice, incest and revenge which loom large in the tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides. Carr's female personages also join forces with the emancipated heroines of Ibsen's plays: the restless spirits of Hester Swane, Portia Coughlan, and the Mai could only have been conceived in the wake of Nora's controversial door slam in *A Doll's House*, and Hedda Gabler's discontented married life, manipulative actions and desperate suicide. The sheer intensity, imaginative scope, and Hellenistic revival of Carr's theatre serve to contradict George Steiner's fatalistic oracles in *The Death of Tragedy* of the gradual decline and eventual demise of tragedy. In the vastness of her art and the intensity of her feelings, Marina Carr can prove that tragedy is as alive in the twenty-first century as it was in fifth-century Athens.

Patricia Novillo-Corvalán

El Pantano de los Gatos

ACTO PRIMERO

Cuadro Primero

Amanece. El pantano de los gatos. Un paisaje blanco y desolado de hielo y nieve. Música, un violín solitario. Ester Cisnero arrastra el cadáver de un cisne negro por detrás suyo, dejando un rastro de sangre en la nieve. El Fantasma Galante se encuentra allí mirándola.

Ester ¿Y vos quién sos? No te había visto antes merodeando por estos pagos.

Fantasma Galante Soy un fantasma galante.

Ester Un fantasma galante. Nunca en mi vida había escuchado nada igual.

Fantasma Galante ¿Nunca viste un fantasma?

Ester No exactamente, a veces creí sentir cosas de algún otro mundo, pero nada a lo que me pudiera aferrar y decir: 'Eso es un fantasma'.

Fantasma Galante Bueno, donde hay fantasmas hay fantasmas galantes.

Ester ¿Es así? ¿Y a qué te dedicás, Señor Fantasma Galante? ¿Andás haciéndole ojito a los fantasmas? ¿Los hacés tus amantes?

Fantasma Galante Depende del fantasma. Hace rato te vengo siguiendo. ¿Qué hacés arrastrando el cadáver de ese cisne como si fuera tu propia sombra?

Ester Es el viejo cisne Ala Negra. Lo conozco hace años. Cuando era chiquitita solíamos jugar juntos. Una vez me tuve que ir del Pantano de los Gatos y cuando volví unos años después este cisne se me apareció brincando por el pantano para darme la bienvenida, se me tiró encima y me chantó un beso en la mano. Anoche lo encontré congelado en un hueco del pantano, lo tuve que arrancar del hielo, perdió la mitad de su vientre.

Fantasma Galante ¿Nunca nadie te dijo que es peligroso meterse con cisnes, especialmente cisnes negros?

Ester Son sólo viejas supersticiones hechas para asustar a la gente, lo único que quiero es enterrarlo. ¿Qué pensás, que me van a fulminar por hacerlo?

Fantasma Galante ¿Vivís en esa casilla rodante?

Ester Vivía, ahora vivo en el callejón de por allá arriba. En una casa, aunque nunca me sentí muy cómoda ahí. Y vos, Señor Fantasma Galante, decíme ¿Qué fantasma andás acechando por acá?

Fantasma Galante Ando al acecho de una mujer llamada Ester Cisnero.

Ester Yo soy Ester Cisnero.

Fantasma Galante No puede ser, estás viva.

Ester Lo estoy y quiero seguir vivita y coleando.

Fantasma Galante (mira a su alrededor, confundido). ¿Está amaneciendo o atardeciendo?

Ester ¿Por qué te interesa saberlo?

Fantasma Galante Decíme.

Ester Es esa hora que podría ser tanto el amanecer como el atardecer, la luz es muy parecida. Pero está amaneciendo, mirá como sale el sol.

Fantasma Galante Entonces me he adelantado. Confundí esta hora con el atardecer. Mil disculpas.

(Se empieza a retirar. Ester lo detiene).

Ester ¿Qué significa que estás adelantado? De verdad, ¿Quién sos?

Fantasma Galante Te pido disculpas por haberme entrometido así en tu vida. No es mi estilo. (Se levanta el sombrero y se va).

Ester (lo sigue a los gritos). ¡Volvé! No me puedo morir – tengo una hija

(Aparece Mónica).

Mónica ¿Qué es lo que te pasa, Ester? ¿A qué le estás gritando?

Ester ¿No lo ves?

Mónica ¿A quién?

Ester A él.

Mónica No veo a nadie.

Ester Allá (señala).

Mónica No hay nadie, pero vos sabés lo que es este viejo pantano, siempre cambiando y cambiando y engañando la mirada. ¿Qué tenés ahí? Che, es Ala Negra ¿qué le pasó?

Ester: Vejez, lo apostaría, anoche lo encontré congelado.

Mónica (Toca el ala del cisne). Bueno, ya vivió sus buenos años, ha requete pasado el promedio de vida de un cisne. Pero vos estás helada, vagando durante toda la noche, ¿no? Te estás buscando la muerte en este clima. Cinco grados menos de lo que anunciaron en el pronóstico y se nos viene peor.

Ester Juráme que volvió la edad de hielo. ¿No te hubiera hasta gustado, que nos borrara a todos del mapa como a los dinosaurios?

Mónica La verdad que no – ¿te estás yendo o qué, Ester?

Ester No me sigas preguntando lo mismo.

Mónica Vos sabés que las puertas de mi covacha están siempre abiertas.

Ester No me voy para ningún lado. Acá está mi casa y mi jardín y mi porción del pantano y nadie me va a sacar a patadas.

Mónica Vine a preguntarte si querías que me la lleve a Josefina a desayunar.

Ester Todavía está durmiendo.

Mónica Esa criatura, Ester, vos vas a tener que hacerte cargo de ella, vas a tener que dejar este empecinamiento y rehacer tu vida.

Ester Total yo no fui la que desbiro todo esto.

Mónica Y vos vas a tener que dejar esta casa que ya no es tuya. Andaba yo el otro día de compras en

el pueblo y me la veo a Carolina Cassidy diciendo cómo iba a tirar abajo todo esto y construirse una casa toda nuevita.

Ester Carolina Cassidy. Ya me las voy a arreglar con esa. De todos modos ella ni siquiera es el problema, sólo un mínimo detalle.

Mónica Bueno, has llegado un poco tarde para arreglar las cosas con ella, porque ya tiene la mente puesta en todo lo que es tuyo.

Ester Si ese se piensa que me va a poder seguir tratando de la forma que me ha tratado, se las va a tener que ver conmigo. A mí no me mandan al carajo cuando a él se le antoja. Si no fuera por mí, él hoy no sería nadie.

Mónica Me imagino que todo el pueblo está enterado.

Ester Y si lo está ¿qué? ¿Por qué se han cruzado todos de brazos, y dale que cuchichear? Todos piensan que a Ester Cisnero, con su sangre de gitana, no le toca lo que se merece. Todos piensan que ella tiene una cierta noción de las cosas, la que hizo su vida en una casilla al lado del pantano. Todos piensan que dio un paso adelante por llevarse a Cartago Kilbride a su cama. Todos piensan que sabían que eso nunca duraría. Bueno, están equivocados. Cartago es mío para siempre o hasta que yo decida que no es más mío. Yo soy la que elige y descarta, no él, y por cierto ninguno de ustedes. Y no ando con la cola entre las piernas solo porque cierta gentuza me quiere fuera de su camino.

Mónica Ahora estás enojada y no podés pensar claramente.

Ester Si él hubiera vuelto, estaríamos bien. Si sólo pudiera tenerlo unos días para mí solita, sin nadie metiendo las narices por donde no se debe.

Mónica Ester, él te dejó y no va a volver.

Ester Ah, vos pensás que conocés todo de mí y Cartago. Bueno, no es así. Hay cosas mías y de Cartago que nadie sabe excepto nosotros dos. Y no les estoy hablando de amor. El amor es para los niños y los idiotas. Nuestro lazo es más fuerte, somos como dos rocas, machacándonos el uno con el otro y quizá eso nos hace mas unidos.

Mónica Esas son cosas que te metés en la cabeza, al tipo ni le importás, si no ¿por qué anda haciendo lo que hace?

Ester Mi vida no tiene rumbo sin él.

Mónica Estás hablando en acertijos.

Ester Cartago sabe de lo que estoy hablando – Supongo que debería enterrar a Ala Negra antes de que se despierte Josefina y lo vea (Se empieza a alejar).

Mónica Te vendré a ver en un ratito, te traigo el almuerzo, te ayudo a hacer las valijas.

Ester Acá nadie va a hacer las valijas.

Salen las dos en direcciones opuestas.

Notes

1 I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Aoife Monks for introducing me to the theatre of Marina Carr.

2 Patricia Novillo-Corvalán is a lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London.

3 Yet as much as theatre translation becomes an exercise in rewriting that transforms an original and situates it within a new context, it also aims to stretch – however slightly – the limits of the target language through its contact with the original, as well as to preserve the ‘essence’ of the original.

4 The upper case is Borges’s.

5 Marina Carr gave her blessing to my rendering of Ghost Fancier as Fantasma Galante: ‘I love fantasma galante. It sounds amazing and captures exactly what the ghost fancier is’ (email correspondence, 20 May 2009).

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Interview with Larry O'Loughlin

By Laura P. Z. Izarra (1)

With the valuable participation of the historian Salvador Méndez Reyes, I interviewed the playwright Larry O'Loughlin in the virtual space – the inter-subjective, double-way synchronic temporality created by emails nowadays. I first came in contact with his work when I visited the website of 100 More Like These 100morelikethese.com and saw the clip taken from a creative writing workshop given by Larry and Stephen Jones as part of National Poetry Day 2008, organised by Poetry Ireland's Writers in Schools summer programme. His visual image with long white hair and beard reflects the confidence and self-assurance of middle-age experience. His voice of an innate storyteller invites his young audience to get involved and experience vividly the process of writing a play. I also learned that he is a writer for children and teenagers, author of other books and that his social concern and worldview mean that he takes part in international anti child-labour education programmes.

Sending and receiving emails has allowed informal and regular communication, creating the enriching suspense given not any more by the geographical distance of the letter-writing practice, but mainly by time-space. I must confess that I have waited for each of Larry's responses as if it were a story told in episodes (email of 24 June 2009). His answers show the lightness of thought, his lively enthusiasm in sharing stories and the art of constructing them. At one moment, he said with typical Irish humour, 'I do hope that at this stage you are not beginning to regret asking me about the San Pats because, as you will have noticed, I have the Irish habit of talking and talking and talking and ... without ever having mastered the art of brevity – well, perhaps I have that when I am teaching. I will try to make this part less of an opus' (email of 26 June 2009). Certainly, this feeling of expectation for what will come next is the soul of his work and I would like the readers of this journal to experience it also.

In this interview, Larry's play 100 More Like These, a one-man play performed by Stephen Jones, is the focus. It is based on the story of 500 Irish soldiers who deserted the American Army during the three years of the American-Mexican war (1846-1848) and joined the Mexican side where, led by John Riley from Clifden, County Galway, they fought as the San Patricio (St. Patrick's) Battalion. The story is narrated by a fictional character, Tomas O'Byrne from Tallaght, County Dublin.

Lights on!

Laura Izarra (LI): What was the source of inspiration for 100 More Like These? What made you first think of writing a play about the St. Patrick's Battalion?

Larry O'Loughlin (LOL): What brought the San Patricio to my attention was, as I explain on the website, mishearing the very end of an interview with Mark Day on Irish radio around 1997. And the very first piece of research material I acquired was Mark's excellent documentary. If I had not turned on the radio at the very moment, I would never have discovered this story of sacrifice, courage, valour and tragedy. My friend Dr. Ernesto Valdés of the Department of Oral History, University of Houston, Texas, described it as a story with all the romance and pathos of *Les Misérables*.

I am primarily a children's author with 13 titles to my credit. What intrigues me is story: the personal journey/encounter and how characters interact with and respond to any set of circumstances or characters they encounter. For me, therefore, it is of crucial importance that the vehicle and language used to impart or convey the story do not interfere or obscure the story. Think how the beauty of Isabel Allende's prose delivers such powerful stories as *Eva Luna* (1988) and *House of Spirits* (1985), and of course *Paula* (1995). It is the beauty of precision and economy: triumph of story over style. So, the starting points for my work on the San Pats were: (a) to understand the circumstances that

gave rise to the story, and (b) to find an appropriate vehicle for the delivery of that story.

LI: Could you tell us about your creative process? How do you intertwine history and fiction?

LOL: I find the last line of your email (24 June 2009) most interesting and insightful, because 100 More Like These was in fact written and performed episodically. I don't know if you have viewed the full performance on the website but I think that episodic/linear narrative drives the story and builds an empathy between the actor and the audience. I know I tend to use those words empathy and relationship quite frequently, but for me as a writer they are my primary concerns/goals when creating a piece of work. If I may divert from the San Pats a moment, in my first teenage novel *Is Anybody Listening*, I strove to do three things:

(a) describe the life of and build empathy for child carpet weavers (bonded labourers in India);

(b) give some insight and again build empathy for a teen girl/street kid who survived the Candelaria Massacre in Rio in 1993;

(c) tell the story of an Irish teenage girl who was slowly feeling herself alienated from her lifelong friends.

To tell this story with very diverse themes in a way that would not confuse, and would bring my audience to the sense of compassion I wanted to bring them too, without actually preaching at them, I tended to touch that place of empathy: that place where they almost felt at one with the characters.

My device for doing this was the Irish teenager Laura Byrne (who, as I have just noted for the first time actually shares the same surname as Tomas in 100 More). I actually made Laura an empathy who could feel, see, smell and touch everything that my two other characters could (Sanjid in India and Rosa in Brazil – both based on real characters that I found in my research). But for the story to work, I really had to make my readership care about her and what she was going through. So, I had to carefully build up her character, her family, her environment and make her someone we would genuinely like to

know, and someone we would genuinely want to see safe, and once I had done that now we shared her concern, fears, horror and terror at everything that happened to the others. If Laura was not real to us the others wouldn't be either, and we wouldn't really care. So, I unfolded her story episodically to reach and bring us to that point of empathy.

LI: So, if the main elements that you selected from the historical narrative were reinvented in an episodic dramatic way, what were your main thematic preoccupations in building up the story? Are questions of home or the portrayal of failure and loss part of it?

LOL: In 100 More Like These, the story of Tomas unfolds episodically and through him we meet firstly the story of the nineteenth-century Irish Catholic immigrant – a story shared by most immigrants, but particularly those who were Catholic. Secondly, we meet the story of those immigrant soldiers in the American army, and observe the brutality, prejudice and religious repression they encountered and endured. Thirdly, we meet the experience of those who changed sides (Tomas himself changes after the Battle of Monterrey), we meet their love of Mexico, their sense of 'coming home' – finding a new land to love, their sense of pride in and admiration for the courage of the ordinary Mexican soldier and some of the officer class, their sheer frustration with the Mexican officer class and their internecine squabbles, concern with reputation, which leads to an ineptitude in command: something that was quite common in European armies of the period, where the main qualification for leadership was class and social rank, and the major preoccupation was to be seen to outshine one's comrades – and if possible make them look inept so that you would advance at their expense. At the infamous battle of the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimea war, when British cavalry were ordered to attack Russian canon, the primary concern among the officer class was not that so many men had been lost but rather that blame should not be attributed to them. Similarly at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, the second battle of the American-Mexican war, General Ampudia delayed sending the commanding officer General Arista news that

the Americans were attacking (Arista presumed it was a bluff), because it was of as much importance to him that Arista, who had replaced him in command only days before, get blamed for any calamity, as it was that the American advance be halted. Of course, the Mexican forces were defeated and Arista was held responsible. So, Tomas allows the story to develop in that linear narrative way and, hopefully, because he has established a personal relationship with the audience and they have developed an empathy with him (there go those words again), they feel his emotion almost as keenly as he does, and the story becomes something that is alive not a relic of the past. Actually, on that point of empathy, at the stage where Stephen is talking about the San Pats' last battle (Churubusco) he tees the audience up by saying that the only thing that could prevent a Mexican victory this time was running out of ammunition, and then continues 'And guess what, that afternoon that's exactly what happened.' Even though the audience know the outcome of the story before entering the theatre, every time the piece has been performed there is an audible intake of breath at that stage. In one performance, one young boy who was with his father was so caught up in the story that when Stephen said 'And guess what?', he screamed out 'WHAT?' I don't know how Stephen managed to avoid laughing.

I am sorry, I am now straying way off the point and will return to addressing the questions.

LI: Characterisation and the viewpoint of the narrator are crucial in storytelling. It creates the atmosphere and a tight bond with the audience, as your anecdote has shown.

LOL: For me, story works by having a character you care about inserted into a variety of situations, encountering a variety of characters, and seeing how they react. An alternative way of viewing this is to say that it is about someone overcoming obstacles and in the process learning something about themselves: the personal quest of Legend. For Tomas the situations were the events leading to his flight from Boston, his enrolment in the army, his decision to change sides, his participation in every major battle after Monterrey, his court martial, death sentence and eventual reprieve.

All the events described (with the exception of his role in the design of the San Pats banner) are based on actual events that took place during the course of the conflict. What Stephen and I do is create a reaction within a fictional character to actual events, but these reactions have to be consistent with the character as drawn: a twelve-year-old Irish immigrant witnessing what he would have witnessed.

In Irish writing tradition, as in much of Latin story telling, our tales are strongly character-driven. So it is with *100 More Like These*. In the course of his journey Tomas meets a variety of characters - many real (from the U.S. military General Taylor, General Twigg, General Scott, Captain Robert E. Lee, Colonel William Selby Harney, and from the Mexican military, Santa Anna, General Arista, as well as San Patricios including John Riley, James Dalton and Francis O'Connor). He also meets a number of fictional characters created to allow him to develop an insight and understanding of the unfolding events. Because the play and novel were being created as fiction and not history, as a writer I could allow myself some licence in the interpretation of events and the portrayal of characters, but I could not re-write history to change outcomes or alter characters to make them unrecognisable. But again, characterisation and interpretation of historical figures can be subjective, depending on perspective.

Take for example the character of Santa Anna. How does one portray a man who loses a leg in a war and, when he becomes President, for (I think) the third time, has it dug up and buried in a State funeral; who force-marches his soldiers for almost three weeks, gets them to fight a battle which they are commanding, then orders withdrawal because they are exhausted, leaves the field to the enemy, but races back to Mexico City with captured cannon to proclaim a victory: who asks American representatives for a million dollar payment to stop the war, gets ten thousand and then continues the war? My interpretation, having trawled through numerous articles on websites, read of his exploits in books on Mexican history, is of a self-serving, self-promoting aristocrat who put his own reputation ahead of that of his men, pretty much like so many European soldiers and

statesmen of the day (...or indeed any day...). But Many Mexicans I spoke to in Mexico in 2006 hail him as a hero because he 'defended' them against the yanqui [yankee]. Am I fair to him? I think so. Certainly as he appears to me. For others, for example Taylor, Twigg etc., again, I have tried to portray them as I have found them through my trawls through books and articles. Sometimes, if I have put words in their mouths, they are either words actually attributed to them, or words in keeping with the characters as I have perceived them.

When I initially began researching the San Pats, someone gave me a quote attributed to the Mexican leader, General Antonio López de Santa Anna: 'With one hundred more like these men of Riley's I could have won this more.' When I came to write the play I could think of no finer compliment to the bravery, courage and skill of those men and so adapted the quote for my title.

LI: In a one-man (or -woman) play, rhetorical language plays a very important role in constructing the dramatic atmosphere. Playwrights use various strategies to reach a specific tone, some even write entirely in verse. Could you explain to us your relationship with dramatic language?

LOL: The project began life originally as a teenage novel with a third person narrative. When it became a play, the narrative became first person. Because we were now working in the first person and, initially in small theatre spaces (70-100 seats) the storytelling process could become much more intimate, and potentially a much more emotional experience. Our decision to stage the show without props, other than the two boxes on which Stephen sits and the shackles used as example, meant that there was nothing to act as a barrier between narrator and listener. To reinforce the sense of intimacy, we adopted a direct storytelling approach: the time is sometime in the future – perhaps fifteen years – and the narrator is recounting his war and immediate pre-war experiences to a group of visitors to his cantina in Matamoras. The visitors (the audience) have come to enquire about the San Pats. This approach means that the audience and their reactions have now become part of the whole

storytelling process. During the course of the performance, Stephen plays approximately twenty-five different characters, in one scene playing three different characters involved in one conversation – two recruiting officers and Tomas.

SMR: On the historical level, do you think that the Saint Patrick's soldiers supported Mexico because this country suffered an unjust invasion as in Ireland?

LOL: What drew me to this story was that it was a piece of Irish history, that these men were/are part of our diaspora and had a fascinating story and yet, as a people, we were almost totally unaware of them. In the decade since I first became interested in this story, I have met only three other people who have heard of the San Pats. Now, there was a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of their executions in 1999, a commemorative stamp and the unveiling of the plaque/statue in John Riley's home town of Clifden, but it seemed to have passed most people by – me included. There was also a feature film 'One Man's Hero', which premiered here and then passed into obscurity, but the San Pats remain, in the words of one commentator on the play 'the greatest Irish Heroes never celebrated'. I saw these men, thanks initially to Mark Day's film, as having a heroic, romantic passionate story that deserved to be remembered, and not as some heroic failure. In some ways the outcome was irrelevant from the Irish perspective - although for the respective histories of the US and Mexico (both political and economic), the relationship between the two, and US attitudes to foreign policy, the outcome was profound. What was important was the action they took, and the factors that predisposed them to this course of action.

All the research material I used when researching the play were secondary sources. (2) As I have already said, my first piece of research material was Mark Day's film. Shortly afterwards I acquired *The Shamrock and the Sword* by Robert Ryal Miller, Michael Hogan's *Irish Soldiers of Mexico* and Anton Adam's *The War in Mexico*. Adam's book is very much weighted towards military history, with fairly detailed descriptions of battle strategy, weaponry etc.

and while it was to prove invaluable in the writing of the novel/play, in the initial period, I based my research on Miller and Hogan's work which, although their perspectives on the San Pats were very different (traitors versus heroes/soldiers of conscience perspectives) they were clearly in agreement on three major points:

- a) The Irish and other foreign Catholics in the nineteenth century did meet a clear anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic prejudice, this prejudice having its roots in Old World hostilities arising from post-reformation Europe and manifesting itself in 'Protestant supremacist/nativist' culture;
- b) This culture continued into the armed forces, where the brutality, prejudice and religious suppression visited on Catholic/immigrant troops was almost part of the disciplinary code, that is, the brutality of punishment meted out to foreign soldiers far exceeded that received by native-born soldiers convicted of the same offence;
- c) The Protestant supremacist culture plus a perceived need for expansion plus Old World enmities between Britain and Spain plus New World enmities between the US and Mexico post-1836, saw the rise of the belief in 'Manifest Destiny', which saw the imperatives to expand west and south into Mexican lands both in terms of spreading Protestant culture and freeing people from the ignorance of popery.

SMR: Therefore, on the religious level, do you think that one of the causes that made the Saint Patrick's Battalion fight for Mexico was the Catholic faith common to Irishmen and Mexicans?

LOL: The identification of these three strands I just mentioned leads inevitably to three fields of enquiry:

- a) The Protestant ethic and its implications for the development of American social/political thought.
- b) The experience of Catholic immigrants entering a society forged by this Protestant ethic culture.
- c) The relationship between two such diverse neighbouring cultures as the (theoretically) egalitarian, democratic, Protestant America and

the highly class stratified, autocratic/plutocratic, Catholic Mexico. Literally Old World versus New World perceptions: although given a strongly emergent industrial/merchant class plus an embedded plantation 'aristocracy', the egalitarianism/ plutocratic difference may have been more illusory.

For the first strand, the Protestant ethic and its implications, a couple of general histories of the U.S. on the internet follow particular strands; for example, *Errand into the Wilderness* by Perry Miller (Belknap Press of Harvard University). Miller's book paints a very vivid picture of what those who formed the Massachusetts colony saw as their mission: 'This errand was being run for the sake of Reformed Christianity; and while the first aim was indeed to realize in America the due form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, the aim behind the aim was to vindicate the most rigorous ideal of the Reformation, so that ultimately all Europe would imitate new England.' (Perry: 15) "For wee must Consider that wee shall be a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us." (John Winthrop, founder of the Massachuttes Bay Colony, quoted in Perry: 13).

If the vision of Winthrop and others was to establish a Protestant theocracy (in their case Puritan), by implication it carried with it a view of Catholicism as unreformed, archaic, superstitious, idolatrous and corrupted Christianity. Over the course of the two centuries following the establishment of Winthrop's colony in 1630, these views became firmly part of the Protestant culture and with the growth of the concept of nationhood in the years prior to 1776, and its acceleration in the years after, Catholicism took on a further, sinister anti-national tinge: if Catholics' first allegiance was to a Pope in Rome, how could they be loyal to the State?

This view is expressed frequently in the writing and utterances of such people as Rev. Lynam Beecher (father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and Samuel Morse, creator of Morse code and fanatically anti-Catholic (some attribute this to an incident when he was an art student in Rome, refused to take off his hat when the Pope passed by and

had it knocked off by a member of the Swiss Guard).

Second strand: By the mid nineteenth century, this anti-Catholic sentiment had expressed itself in several anti-Catholic incidents, the burning of the Ursuline Convent 1832, and anti-Catholic riots on Broad Street in Boston. The flames were fanned still further by the appearance of Morse's 'Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States', which related the growing flood of immigrants to a papal plan for world domination, with the immigrants being the advanced vanguard of a papal army determined to overthrow the Government of the United States. Beecher's 'Plea for the West' extended this argument by forecasting that the last battle against the Vatican would be fought in the West and that 'the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West.'

SMR: How is this historical fact seen in Ireland?

LOL: In Ireland, our view of Boston is of a city that is amongst the most Irish cities in the world: the fact that it is some 3,000 or so miles from this island is just a matter of geographical accident. Yet, as can be seen from above, this was not the experience of the immigrant in the mid-nineteenth century. My challenge as a writer was to explain all of the above without losing my readers or my audience, but without diluting the fact of the reality. In the book (which was of course, three-quarters written when I put it on hold in favour of the play), I achieved this by having Tomas overhear snatches of conversation from three Americans in First Class (Lynam and Morse and the story of Maria Monk and other anti-Catholic propaganda – particularly the piece about the West) and acting them out for his mother and other steerage passengers.

Other books consulted when researching the Boston/nativist element of the story included Hogan's Molly Malone and the San Patricios, Joseph O'Connor's Star Of The Sea, and Marita Conlan McKenna's Wild Flower Girl (all novels), The Great Hunger by Cecil Woodham Smith, Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses: A Short History Of Boston by Thomas H. O'Connor, The Hub: Boston Past And Present by Thomas

H. O'Connor, The Factory Girls edited by Philip S. Foner and Brass Knuckles, Crusade: The Great Know-Nothing Conspiracy by Carelton Beals.

LI: What is that particular story of Maria Monk about?

LOL: Websites used were too numerous to name, but many of them carry reprints of actual anti-Catholic tracts and publications. One particular story, The Story of Maria Monk, tells of a lady who claimed to be an ex-nun who had fled a convent in Canada to escape the debauchery of the priest (they, apparently, used nuns as mistresses, got them pregnant, then baptised the new-born infants before slitting their throats). It was a huge seller in the early 40s and the lady went on a nationwide tour telling her story. Even when it was proven that she was mentally ill and a habitual liar, neither sales figures nor audience attends decline. A 1930s reprint of this book is available to read online at, amongst other places, www.reformation.org. And it is clear from the introduction that despite all that has been said of her insanity, the person writing the introduction still takes her story at face value.

LI: And what other stories dialogue with this one?

LOL: The Ursuline, Broad Street riots material plus the anti-immigrant ethos I wove in and out of the narrative, such as "Think things are bad now," the old lads in North End (the Irish area) use to say "You should have been here in the thirties: nativist mobs burning the Ursuline, anti-Irish riots on Broad Street. This is nothing compared to that, nothing." Maybe so, but hardly a day went by when the police weren't in the water pulling out the body of some poor immigrant who'd gone down to the docks looking for work, been set upon by nativist thugs, beaten senseless, and thrown in the water to drown. And there were still bars around town with signs "No dogs, no black, no Irish" signs in their windows...'

Because of time constraints in the play we - Stephen is also a playwright so he had some input when it came to adapting the book into the play - omitted the elements that took place on board ship and used the information from

that scene a little further on in the play, but still in the opening scene in Boston.

SMR: Is the Saint Patrick's Battalion therefore a symbol of the struggle against the ones in power who oppressed the weak?

LOL: Finally, the above examples could be expanded focusing on the third strand: The relationship between America and Mexico. Think of the statement 'People say, when did you come over? I say, the border crossed over me in 1836' (Marcos Longoria, Head of the TB Eradication Programme, Houston Texas).

Growing up on a diet of John Wayne, Roy Rodgers and Gene Autrey, American history was quite simple: the great cowboys tamed a savage land, and that meant freeing parts of it from the nasty, brutal Mexicans. Unfortunately, that wasn't just a view confined to my childhood. That is American history as understood by many Americans (change Mexican to Iraqi and/or Afghan and ask what's changed?) But taken in light of the comment given above to Beecher, Morse, and even the early colonists, one can see that this belief gains it validity from an inherent belief in the supremacy of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. If there is one true religion and race, then by default everything else is inferior and needs to be civilised. This wasn't of course a uniquely WASP view, the conquistadors in Mexico sought a Vatican ruling on whether or not the indigenous peoples were human or not and therefore worthy of baptism, after a year they received the marvellous ruling known as baptism by the sword: if they convert they're human, if not kill them and conversion will follow death.

In the early nineteenth century, Imperial Spain invited American empresarios to establish settlements in her lands north of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande to Americans) to provide a bulwark against marauding bands of Native Americans and to provide a similar bulwark against the growing United States. To qualify for land grants, settlers had to convert to or be Catholic. Many of those who moved onto the land were what Mitchner in his novel *Texas* describes as "home Methodists", professing Catholicism to get the grants but practicing their own religion

in private. Novels such as Mitchner's and non-fiction works paint a picture of the relationship between the Mexican population of Tejas (Texas) and the settlers as cordial and harmonious. And indeed under the Federal Constitution which gave the provinces a large degree of autonomy in their affairs, there was a fairly cordial relationship between settlers and the Government in Mexico City. In 1836 Antonio de López de Santa Anna, President of Mexico, changed the constitution, making the Government of the country centralist: effectively abolishing provincial autonomy and vesting all power in the hands of central government: even enacting a law which made the carrying of a weapon an act of 'piracy' punishable by death.

Texans, Mexican and American, rose in revolt. Santa Anna's reply was swift and brutal. He destroyed the American force at the Alamo – no prisoners. A few days later the Texan force at Goliad surrendered, but Santa Anna ordered the prisoners executed. With these two acts, he ensured the undying hatred of the Texans. At San Jacinto, when the American force under Sam Houston surprised the resting Mexicans, the battle was over but, according to the audio visual display at the San Jacinto monument, the killing went on all day. As a result of the war, Mexico ceded all rights to Texas and agreed to move her force back beyond the Rio Grande.

Here arose one of the planks that would surface as a 'cause of war' a decade later. The traditional border of the state of Tejas had been the Rio Nueces, but Texas now claimed that Mexico had ceded to it all land as far south as the Rio Grande, a full one hundred and fifty miles south. So, we have a dispute that simmers on. At the same time, America is casting her eyes to the West partially for the reasons mentioned by Beecher and co., but primarily to offer further living room for a growing population and the belief that it was her Manifest Destiny to do so: '...the destiny of North America is ours, ours is the right to the rivers, and all the sources of future opulence and power..' (New York Post, 1803); '...it is the manifest destiny of the English race to occupy this whole continent and display their practical understanding in matters of government and colonisation which no other

race has given such proof of possessing since the Romans' (James Russell Lowell).

To these were added voices saying it was her religious duty to convert the ignorant.

Mitchner's novel *Texas* was invaluable in painting a broad picture of this period, with non-fiction books such as *West*, and interviews with Marco Longoria, ethnically Mexican, but born in what is now the US, despite the fact that his family never moved, my friend and compadre – his daughter is married to my son and we are both grandfather to a little Tex-Mex-Irish grandson – Dr. Ernesto Valdés, University of Houston, and other leading members of the tejano community yielded a great insight into this period.

Again, whilst all this is covered in the novel, in the play it has to be reduced to a few sentences, without losing anything. So, when Tomas meets the recruiting sergeants trying to get people to enlist for the war, I give them the line:

'If this war comes it'll only last a few weeks... if that', which allows Tomas to inform the audience. 'As far as I was concerned there was no if about it. From what I'd heard on the boat, America wanted the West, the fact that it was part of Mexico wasn't going to worry them. This was America we're talking about. They'd already tried to but it and been turned down. So, the question was what next. And the answer to that seemed to lie in Texas.

Texas had been part of Mexico until it rebelled in 1836, setting its borders a full 150 miles further than its traditional boundary on the Rio Nueces. Since then, Texas had considered itself independent, but Mexico considered it a state in revolt. No we were all set for war all we needed was a spark.'

And of course to avoid this being seen as too dense it is put in as part of a scene with Tomas going to place a rose in the water for his mother's birthday, she had died on the boat over. So the information is contained in a scene that starts with humour, Tomas buying a flower, and ends with pathos. And in between, Stephen plays no less than six characters.

LI: If the bravery of the Irish soldiers is seen as a symbol of love for freedom, wasn't it an irony

dying in a foreign country for a cause that it wasn't their own?

LOL: In 1691, after the Treaty of Limerick brought the Williamite/Jacobite Wars to an end, many Irish soldiers left the country for service abroad. Amongst them was the soldier hero Patrick Sarsfield. Two years later in 1693, he was fatally wounded at the battle of Landen, Belgium, in the service of the French. His final words are said to have been 'Would that this had been for Ireland.' One wonders how many more of the diaspora died with a similar sentiment on their lips. Certainly John Riley is reported to have said something similar. In the case of the San Pats there is possibly a greater irony in that they were fighting against the same ethnicity and thought process that had been in the ascendancy in their home land. In my play I actually have Tomas remind the audience by quoting John Riley's (or to be more exact, words I put into his mouth) 'these are the first cousins of those who leave our people at home to starve with grass in their mouth. So when we hit them, hit the bastard hard. And when we've won this one, we'll go home and win that one too.' But as a number of San Pats actually stayed in Mexico, I also like to think that Mexico did become 'home' and 'their own'. Again, words I put into the mouth of Tomas's brothers: 'This is our home now. Home and it's free and we'll keep it that way or die trying'; and at another time 'Just like home, only with sunshine.' This is in fact the immigrant experience, some never lose the sense of loss of being an exile, others embrace their new country as home and Ireland as a place where they grew up and many of their family still live. As the son of Irish immigrants to England, I grew up in the West Midlands experiencing both viewpoints: the first from my mother, the second from my father.

LI: Would you say that the story of *100 More Like These* is therefore an allegory of the tragedy suffered by oppressed Latin American countries?

LOL: An allegory for Latin America. Good question, I hadn't thought of that, but inevitably my own perceptions and belief systems will come into influence in whatever I write, either overtly or – more hopefully – covertly. 'The world has enough for every man's need but not

for every man's greed' - Mahatma Gandhi. Whilst the San Pats story is set in Mexico, I believe that the societal models and mores it mirrors are not restricted to Latin America, but are universal. The control of resources vested in an oligarchy or plutocracy or autocracy (be that presidential or monarchic); the exploitation of the majority by that elite, double exploitation of indigenous peoples (not only exploited by the elite but frequently by the non-indigenous lower classes); these national problems compounded by the threat of force or invasion or exploitation by an external force. These themes are universal. Think of any continent and almost any society within that continent and this is history or is - in most cases - their present reality. So, perhaps it is an unintended universal allegory, if that doesn't sound too pretentious.

LI: What was the reception of your play in Ireland?

LOL: The play has been performed a number of times since its debut last November (it had actually been scheduled for 10 September 2007, the 160th anniversary of the executions, but Stephen became ill), and it has received very favourable reaction. We have been invited to take it to the Edinburgh Festival and some interest has been shown in staging it in various parts of America. Its last performance was in April and it is now off the road as both Stephen and I are involved in the new project, *Wanted, The Legendary Stone Mountain Band, Dead Or Alive*, a musical comedy which is about as far removed from the San Pats as it is possible to get. It will be back for a brief tour in mid-September and again in October, and possibly a longer run in New Year, but this really depends on Stephen's schedule as he is committed to working on two new plays in November, with talk of a return for *Stone Mountain* in December.

LI: To produce a play and put it on stage involves many decisions, mainly the selection of the right actor for a one-man play. You mentioned here that Stephen plays approximately twenty-five characters, and sometimes three or six involved in conversation. That is really difficult and requires a great talent and practice in acting. Did you already know

Stephen Jones? Have you worked together before?

LOL: This question is answered with not a little pride: in summer 2001, I was facilitating a creative writing course which was due to run one day a week for six weeks. As these things tend to, it took on a life of its own and ran once a week for six years. Amongst the students that came to these after-school sessions was a fifteen-year-old named Stephen Jones. Even then, he was a wonderful writer. In 2004 Stephen and another student entered university. My advice to them was that to develop their writing, they should involve themselves in the student drama society as both actors and writers: I believe that if someone acts they understand the necessity of developing a character, creating a persona from words on the page, something which is essential in the creative writing process. Of course this comes from someone who could not act if his life depended on it. Neal Richardson got involved in the History and Philosophy Society but Stephen joined Dramsoc and talk about destiny calling! He had never acted before, but from his very first performance in *Twelve Angry Men* it was obvious that he truly was a natural. He also continued his writing and began directing. In one year he won Best Script, Best Actor and Best Director at the student drama awards. He completed his MA in creative writing last year, a year which also saw him have one of his plays given a public reading by Druid, one of Ireland's leading theatre companies, and also made history by becoming the first white actor to appear in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead*, a play based in a township in Apartheid South Africa. Incidentally, Neal went on to write a non-fiction book about Irish soldiers in World War One, which is now being adapted by him as a stage play which Stephen will appear in and direct in November. And another member from that group, Sean Ferric, has his first play on in mainstream theatre next week.

LI: Could you tell us about your present projects? Are they related with national and international theatre? Where are they set – in a classical or contemporary context?

LOL: Currently I am outlining a project on five Irish women who were in America in the mid-

to-late nineteenth century: one of them, Lola Montez was a courtesan in Germany before becoming an actress in the States, another - Nellie Cashman - was last year inducted into the cowgirl hall of fame, and a third whose name escapes me, lived her life as a man and Civil War veteran. I will probably write it – if I write it – in something like five interlinked stories, all told in snatches rather than continuous narrative. I am also completing the outline of a piece for one man and a karaoke machine entitled ‘The Last Great Karaoke Show’, and making notes for a potential project on four very strong women from Irish mythology who all had a role in the fate of one of greatest mythological figures Cuchulain. These are all theatre pieces and concurrent with them is my work to complete the San Pats novel for teenagers.

But there is also a San Pats-related story that intrigues. All of the Catholic immigrant soldiers in the American Army endured the same prejudice, brutality, repression of religious freedom at the hands, in the case of the Irish, of members of the same ethnic group that oppressed and subjugated them at home. They all experienced in Mexico a culture which in

terms of religion, love of music and dance and expression was so like their own. They were all aware that they were in a Protestant Anglo army invading a Catholic country, an occurrence which had such strong echoes with their own history, yet only 500 or so (the number varies depending on the source consulted) changed sides. Why didn't more of them go?

LI: Many thanks Larry for sharing with us your fascinating stories and work. We wish you great success!

LOL: Thank you so much for all the questions. They really made me think about my work, my techniques and indeed my *raison d'être* in a way that I rarely do. As I mentioned at the beginning of our correspondence, my starting point is usually a story or story idea, followed by an image of a character and then a headlong leap into the writing process until I emerge at the out of the other side of the process with - hopefully - a decent product. So, thank you. This has been an interesting experience.

Lights off.

Laura P.Z. Izarra

Notes

1 Laura P.Z. Izarra is a Professor of English Literatures and Irish Diaspora Literature at the University of São Paulo, Brazil.

2 In another email, Larry wrote: ‘I see I omitted the names of some of the sources on Tex-Mex history; The Tejano Community, 1836-1900 by Arnolde de Leon, Hispanic Presence in the United States by Frank de Varona, Hispanic Texas by Helen Simons and Cathryn A. Hoyt, and Land!: Irish pioneers in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas by Graham Davis. Other books included on various themes are novels, such as Mexico by James Mitchner, Gone For Soldiers by Jeff Shaara, Saint Patrick's Battalion by Carl Krueger, Saint Patrick's Battalion by James Alexander Thom; and non-fiction, The Rogues March: John Riley and the Saint Patrick's Battalion by Peter F. Stevens, Many Mexicos by Lesley Byrd Simpson, History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio by Adina de Zavala, The West: An Illustrated History by Wards, Ives and Burns. Texas Handbook online is an excellent source for snippets on Texas history, and the US-MEXICAN WAR, 1846-48 PBS HBO Video is an extremely good compliment to Mark Day's film.’

Joycean Aesthetics in Spanish Literature

By Marisol Morales Ladrón (1)

Abstract

*James Joyce is undoubtedly one of the most influential writers of contemporary literature. Although his production has been studied in relation to that of other canonical authors such as William Faulkner, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, John Dos Passos, or Thomas Mann, to name only a few, the comparison of his work with that of other Spanish writers has only recently begun to receive some critical attention. Spanish letters were, however, surprisingly early in their acknowledgement of Joyce's achievements, which began even before *Ulysses* had been published in book form in Paris in 1922. Interest in the innovations propounded by Joyce emerged in Spain earlier than in other European countries and continued for several decades till writers in the line of Luis Martín-Santos —with his masterpiece *Tiempo de silencio* (1962) [*Time of Silence*]— followed in Joyce's footsteps, experimenting with language and style in a manner akin to Joyce. The purpose of my discussion, therefore, is firstly to offer an account of the process of transmission of James Joyce's work in Spain from the early twenties to the sixties, and secondly, to analyse the nature of the innovations of writers from the sixties onwards, when the renewal of Spanish prose narrative involved the incorporation of Joycean literary devices and aesthetics.*

That James Joyce was one of the most influential writers of twentieth-century literature need not be debated. Although his literary production has been studied in relation to such canonical authors as William Faulkner, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, John Dos Passos, Alfred Döblin and Thomas Mann, to name only a few, the comparison of his work with that of Spanish writers has only recently begun to receive the critical attention it deserves.⁽³⁾ Spanish letters were surprisingly early in their recognition of Joyce's achievements, which began even before *Ulysses* had been published in Paris in 1922. Likewise, interest in the innovations propounded by Joyce emerged in Spain prior to in other European countries and continued for several decades until authors of the likes of Luis Martín-Santos – with his masterpiece *Tiempo de silencio* (*Time of Silence*) (1962) – followed in Joyce's footsteps, experimenting with language and style in a manner akin to those of the Irish author. The purpose of this article, therefore, is first to offer an account of the creative reception of James Joyce in Spanish literature from the early 1920s to the 1960s, and, second, to analyse the nature of the innovations undertaken by writers from the 1960s onwards, when the renewal of Spanish narrative involved the incorporation of Joycean literary devices and techniques.

Although I will focus on the influence of Joyce's literary production on the Spanish literary panorama throughout my article, I will briefly comment on the impact of Joyce's work on the overall Hispanic world, which turned out to be a phenomenon of amazingly wide proportions. In Latin America, writers like Jorge Luis Borges (4), Julio Cortázar, Miguel Ángel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier, Juan Rulfo, José Lezama Lima, Agustín Yáñez, Leopoldo Marechal, Mario Vargas Llosa, Juan Carlos Onetti and Carlos Fuentes, among many others, incorporated Joycean aesthetics in their writings. Robin Fiddian suggests that Joyce played a consequential role in the evolution of the Latin American fiction of the thirties, sixties and seventies, and, especially, in the development of the 'new novel' since 'the Joycean novel became both generally writable and unavoidable' (1989, 23). Accordingly, Carlos Fuentes argued that the process of 'joyceisation' or 'joycismo' in Latin American literature attained a continental magnitude (1976, p. 108) (5). In Spain, a survey of attempts to assimilate Joyce's narrative innovations also became a fruitful endeavour. Already in the early twenties, news about the ongoing process of Joyce's writings and their impact on the future of the Spanish novel had arisen as an issue widely discussed in influential journals such as *La Pluma* (*The Pen*), *El Imparcial*

(*The Impartial*), *La Gaceta Literaria* (*The Literary Gazette*) and *Revista de Occidente* (*Review of the West*), among others. It should not surprise us, then, that the following generations of writers displayed in their writings a mode of narrative experimentation that could easily be compared to that of Joyce.

I will first concentrate on the creative reception of the Irish writer in the early years. From the twenties onwards, interest in Joyce's accomplishment was significant and many a writer experimented with techniques and devices that would later be associated with Joycean aesthetics. This is the case of Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Juan Ramón Jiménez and some of the members of the Generation of 1927, authors to whom I will return later. In the same decade, particularly significant was the reception of Joyce by a group of Galician writers who supported the Irish Literary Renaissance (6) because of its peripheral location, its nationalism and their shared Celtic origins. Ironically enough, Joyce had rejected the Irish nationalist movement and had maintained that his self-imposed exile enabled him to preserve his artistic integrity, in contrast with the narrow provincialism of contemporaries like W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory or J. M. Synge. Vicente Risco, the editor of the Galician journal *Nós* (*Ourselves*) – who had devoted several issues to Ireland and to its relations with Galicia between 1921 and 1926 – published in 1929 a rhetorical exercise based on the recreation of Joyce's major protagonist, Stephen Dedalus. In his 'Dedalus en Compostela' ('Dedalus in Compostela'), Stephen goes through his final adventure in Galicia. The main purpose of his visit to this town, as the last pilgrim who is preparing to die on the Celtic fields, is to abide by the pact that he had made with the devil. Curiously enough, Risco had referred to Joyce in similar terms: 'one might think – if one can describe him in that way – that he has made a pact with the Devil' (7). Apart from this story, Risco also wrote a short narrative, *O porco de pe* (*A standing pig*) (1928), which also shows a clear Joycean influence (De Toro 1994, 34). It is highly ironic that three decades later Risco admitted that *Ulysses* was not only an inaccessible novel, but

that he was never able to read all of it and even doubted whether anyone could actually do it and that the endless hours of reading one had to go through in order to understand it were not worth the effort (1954, p. 6).

The work of another Galician writer, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, also shows remarkable similarities with that of Joyce, although there are no explicit references to Valle's knowledge or interest in the Irish writer. Anthony Zahareas, for instance, argues that Valle's experimentation with language is similar to Joyce's (1968, p. 78) and William R. Risley maintains that Valle's aesthetic philosophy cannot be fully understood without taking *A Portrait of the Artist* into consideration (1979, 78). Darío Villanueva has pointed out that Valle's *Luces de Bohemia* (1924) (*Lights of Bohemia*) recalls *Ulysses*, and he has also put forward more than fifteen possible parallelisms between the two writers (1991, 62-69). Furthermore, the Galician author Manuel Rivas has also considered the need for a new approach to study the remarkable correspondences between these two 'Celtic druids' (8). Valle's knowledge of other languages and literatures kept him well informed about foreign literary trends. Like Joyce, he felt a strong love-hate relationship with his homeland, Galicia, and used this as the leitmotiv of his oeuvre, attacking what he regarded as its oppressive institutions: the church, the military and the narrow-mindedness of a theatrical tradition that lacked imagination. However, the most significant point of contact between the two writers concerns Valle's theory of literary representation, grounded on three different ways of perceiving reality: kneeling down, standing up and lifting in the air. The last position, according to Valle, echoes that of the demiurge, who does not consider himself to be made of the same substance as his characters (Zahareas 1968, 86-87), an idea he developed in his work *La lámpara maravillosa* (*The Lamp of Marvels*) (1916). With this equation of aesthetics and optics it is not difficult to relate Valle to Stephen who, in *A Portrait*, reveals that the artist becomes a demiurge ideologically and emotionally detached from his creation when

he states that the god of creation has to be 'invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails' (p. 215). In addition, *La lámpara maravillosa* incorporates a method of sudden spiritual manifestation that heightens the correspondences with Joyce's use of the epiphany (see Morales 1994).

However, one of the earliest indications of Joyce's impact on Spanish literature is constituted by the work of Juan Ramón Jiménez. (9) Between the forties and fifties, from his self-imposed exile, Juan Ramón wrote a critical essay dedicated to Joyce and two long poems in prose, entitled *Espacio* (*Space*) and *Tiempo* (*Time*), which bear some remarkably Joycean traits, notably in their use of the interior monologue and their overall approach to time and space (see Morales 1996). Juan Ramón considered himself a symbolist and a modernist. His personal search for innovation led him to adopt impressionist devices, an essentially symbolist language and a collage technique, which generate similarly Joycean effects. An example of this can be perceived in his *Diario de un poeta recién casado* (*Diary of a newlywed poet*) (1916), which contains a series of announcements and journalistic titles that suggested the existence of a fragmented and even grotesque world, as a reflection of contemporary reality (Albornoz 1988, 297-98). The effect of this technique does not differ much from that of the 'Aeolus' chapter of *Ulysses*. Juan Ramón's modernist symbolism can also be perceived in his poetry collection *El caleidoscopio prohibido* (*The forbidden kaleidoscope*), in which he uses the image of a kaleidoscope in order to highlight the multiplicity of perspectives one can adopt to depict reality. According to Pilar Gómez Bedate, Juan Ramón's desire to capture the multiple and variable perceptions of reality is a characteristic common among the heirs of symbolism, including, among others, Marcel Proust and James Joyce (1981, 27). Explicit references to Joyce's oeuvre appear in four of his critical essays, 'James Joyce', 'T. S. Eliot', 'Marjen a St. John Pearse' ('Marjen to St. John Pearse') and 'En casas de Poe' ('In Poe's houses'), collected in *Prosas críticas* (*Critical prose*) (1981). In these texts he comments on several features of the

aesthetics of Joyce, such as his highly personal use of language, the relationship between the concepts of modernism and romanticism, his genius, the difficulty of his work, the musical quality of his language and his universality. It is interesting to note that in the essay devoted to Joyce, Juan Ramón overtly confesses his difficulty in reading what one presumes to be *Ulysses*, a work he does not explicitly refer to by title:

When I attempt to read Joyce's work (and I say attempt because I don't have the pedantry to believe that I can wholly understand his so very personal and particular creations, even less so if I have to receive assistance in my reading of the original text), I always see myself in his writing as the so-called eyes of my Andalusian Guadiana, that part where the river, by being Andalusian, flows out of the earth and progressively hides its flow in her.... This is, I believe, the secret of James Joyce. Joyce, in the flowing of his work, opens his eyes in his writing, a continuous internal and superficial current, so that he can see, not so that he can be seen. (10)

Another literary group that strengthened the influence of Joyce's work in Spain was the Generation of 1927, formed by figures like Dámaso Alonso (who, under the pseudonym of Alfonso Donado, published the Spanish translation of *A Portrait* in 1926), Jorge Guillén, José Bergamín, Rafael Alberti, Federico García Lorca, Gerardo Diego, Vicente Aleixandre, Pedro Salinas and Luis Cernuda (11). These poets shared similar concerns such as the search for balance between the intellectual and the sentimental, a perfectionist approach to writing, the aspiration towards the achievement of aesthetic purity and the mixture of the elitist and the popular, of tradition and renovation. They acknowledged the influence of avant-garde movements like Ultraism, Creationism and Surrealism and manifested an interest in the work of Joyce, especially in his adaptation of myth to the modern world and in his use of the subconscious, which added a new poetic background to their writings. In 1933 Luis Cernuda published his article 'Unidad y diversidad' ('Unity and diversity'), in which he referred to Juan Ramón's writings to establish a

link with the work of Joyce. Carlos G. Santa Cecilia points out that, initially, the poets of the Generation of 1927 adopted Joyce's writings and T. S. Eliot's poetry, and that both Jorge Guillén and Vicente Aleixandre had read Joyce in 1926 and 1928, respectively. For them, 'the new methods proposed by Joyce and developed by Eliot were not at odds with their own literary resources, on the contrary, they provided them with new poetic possibilities'. (12)

By the end of the twenties, Joyce was well known in different literary circles in Spain, although more for *A Portrait* than for *Ulysses*. Between the 1930s and 1950s, however, the reception of Joyce's work was less intense, with two important gaps in its course, following the outbreaks of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. The Civil War brought about the closure of the Spanish borders to Europe, interrupting the early and fertile reception with the consequently decreasing interest in the evolution of the novel as a literary genre. In addition, the period of the Second World War was represented by more important social and political events, which were at the forefront of public concern, when debates about the extreme formality and snobism of Joyce's writing were substituted by more urgent needs. In spite of the frequent allusions to and news about Joyce's production in journals and the press 'no writer could actually assimilate and develop Joycean techniques in their writings.... In the reception of Joyce there is, in this precise moment, proof of a lost link'. (13)

Around the same time, a new critical wave began to regard Joyce's writings as too elitist, too mannerist and far too formalist. On the one hand, when the poet Antonio Machado was invited to join the Royal Academy of the Spanish language (14), he remarked in the lecture's preliminaries that Joyce's work was incoherent, chaotic, and impossible to comprehend in rational terms. He even considered *Ulysses* a piece of writing conducted by the devil, a satanic work produced by a madman, in short, 'a dead end, a cul-de-sac of lyric solipsism'. (15) On the other hand,

Ricardo Gullón's study *Novelistas ingleses contemporáneos* (*Contemporary English Novelists*) (1945), a significant contribution to the reception of English literature in Spain, devoted a chapter to James Joyce. Although he acknowledged that the Irish writer had become the most influential author in English literature, and wrote a very favourable criticism, he also asserted that only snobs read his work and that it had not yet reached a popular readership (pp. 119-21). At the end of the fifties, the Spanish writer Ramón Pérez de Ayala also commented that while reading the first fragments of *Ulysses* he never thought they could be taken seriously, nor that in two or three years the author would become a most distinguished literary genius. Moreover, he affirms that if he had heard someone predicting the book's success, he would have thought him a fool and, worst of all, he maintains the same opinion to this day (1997, p. 51).

In the thirties in Galicia, nonetheless, Ramón Otero Pedrayo – the first translator of fragments from *Ulysses* into a peninsular language – published his novel *Devalar* (*Flowing*) (1935), which bears some noticeable Joycean echoes. De Toro, who analysed the presence of the Irish writer in Otero Pedrayo, summarises the similarities: the depiction of its protagonist, Martiño Dumbriá, who presents significant parallels to Stephen Dedalus; the construction of the narrative spaces of Santiago de Compostela and Dublin, respectively; the original deployment of the interior monologue; and the use of alliterations and other verbal games (1994, 34). Furthermore, for De Toro, *Devalar* can be interpreted as a 'Joycean epiphany, represented ... by the obsession with capturing the exact moment in time and raising its category, the situating of Santiago (here equivalent to Joyce's Dublin) as the axis at the centre of a concentration of forces, and the cyclical structure of the novel (in the sequence of autumn – winter – spring – summer)' (1995b, 88).

During the forties and early fifties, some works emerged that pioneered innovative literary devices. This is the case with José Suárez Carreño, who received the Nadal award in 1949

for *Las últimas horas* (*The Final Hours*), which employed the interior monologue and displayed a deeper level of psychological introspection than authorial intervention, all in a limited use of time and space. Two years later, Luis Romero's *La noria* (*The wheel*) (1951) was awarded the same prize. The novel followed the context of the previous one in its setting and it involved the presentation of the inner life of dozens of people during one day in Barcelona through several narrative techniques, among which we find a systematic use of the indirect free style. Finally, *La gota de mercurio* (*The Drop of Mercury*) by Alejandro Núñez Alonso, also shortlisted for the same prize in 1953, drew on a constant introspection into the minds of the characters as well as narrative fragmentation, experimenting with the limitations of time and space. Although these novels could be considered attempts to adapt innovative literary devices to the Spanish narrative, on the whole, they did not actually contribute to the renewal of modern prose in the same way as Martín-Santos did in the early sixties. According to Julio M. de la Rosa, Núñez Alonso was the only one among all the writers who belonged to the Generation of 1950, who showed similarities to the work of Joyce. In an interview, the writer himself confirmed that he was familiar with Joyce's oeuvre, and that 'the universe of Joyce ... brings light to the realist parochialism of the Spanish novel. Nobody has read Joyce here'. (16)

The sixties opened the doors to a new wave in the reception of Joyce, with the publication of Luis Martín-Santos' *Tiempo de silencio* (17), the first Spanish novel that encapsulated Joycean aesthetics in a mature and modern experimental manner. In this decade a possibly less rigid censorship, along with theories on modern linguistics, the organisation of international conferences and a critical practice that was endowed with greater freedom of expression, allowed the country to escape its own insularity, which had dragged Spanish prose into a state of monotonous social realism. It was the very character of the sixties, with its temporal distance from the horrors of the war, that brought a new interest in stylistic experimentation and left behind the depressed

and crude reality that previous generations of writers had constantly denounced. The absence of an innovative trend in Spanish fiction comparable to that of Europe, can thus be explained by means of the particular social, political and literary circumstances. The novelty of Martín-Santos' book allowed it to evade complete censorship, and it is highly ironic that the censored passages were not the most subversive ones. The relationship between Joyce and Martín-Santos was indeed rich and fruitful. Among the main parallelisms between the two writers, the following can be mentioned: the limited use of the units of space and time; the focus on the inner lives of the characters; the systematic use of the interior monologue and the soliloquy; the inclusion of different narrative perspectives; the coincidence in the construction of the main characters and their respective wanderings through the towns of Madrid and Dublin; and the inclusion of the Homeric myth as a pillar to sustain the narrative structure (see also Curutchet 1968, Palley 1971, Rey 1988 and Morales 2005).

The definite integration of Joycean aesthetics in Spain took place at the end of the sixties, when a series of novels that followed the publication of *Tiempo de silencio* advocated the use of innovative literary and linguistic techniques and displayed a notable assimilation of Joyce's writings. Truncated syntax, incoherent sentences, deviated norms in the construction of paragraphs, complex and unconventional developments of plots, uncommon protagonists, the use of archetypal myths or the indeterminacy of reading functioned as some of the transgressions that characterised the path followed by this new stage in the evolution of the novel. This is the case with authors such as Antonio Martínez Menchén, Juan Marsé, Francisco Umbral, Juan García Hortelano, José María Guelbenzu, Rosa Chacel, Juan Benet and Juan Goytisolo, among many others. According to Robert C. Spires (1976), the emergence of this innovation in the Spanish narrative was the product of an aesthetic change in the evolution of the role of the reader, which inevitably influenced the formal aspects of the novel.

Martínez Menchén's *Cinco variaciones* (Five variations) (1963) was classified as a deeply intimate novel, and consists of five stories of solitude, the introspection of which contrasts with the presence of multitudes of people. As the direct inheritor of Martín-Santos, Menchén plays with time and with a variety of voices, and he succeeds in abandoning the restrictions of the monotonous realism of previous generations of writers. In his critical study *Del desengaño literario* (*On Literary Disappointment*) he also refers to the 'reactionary' work of Joyce in order to comment on the influence exerted on Martín-Santos (1970, 98-99). Innovations of similar quality appeared in several novels published since the mid-sixties, such as Juan Marsé's *Últimas tardes con Teresa* (*Last Evenings with Teresa*) (1966) or Francisco Umbral's *Travesía de Madrid* (*Crossing Madrid*) (1966), which, according to Sobejano, shows Joyce as one of its predecessors (1970, p. 463). The collection of short stories, *Gente de Madrid* (People from Madrid) (1967), by Juan García Hortelano, also evoked Joyce. José María Guelbenzu's first novel, *El mercurio* (*The Mercury*) (1968), integrates the use of pastiche, the absence of a central plot and the violation of linguistic patterns in such a way that it becomes 'an experimental enterprise of the renewal of the usual structures of our novel'. (18) Finally, the writer Rosa Chacel has repeatedly manifested herself as a follower of Joyce and has acknowledged him as the father of everything (Santa Cecilia 1997, p. 85; see also Crespo and Rodríguez 1982). Her work makes ample use of introspective devices and epiphanic moments, although, in matters of linguistic experimentation, she has followed traditional patterns. In an interview, she claimed that she saw herself as an innovator in form – but not in language – and that the discovery of Joyce made her first novel become a sort of premonition of the French nouveau roman (Mateo 2001, p. 61) (19).

There were other writers, like Juan Benet, who failed to understand the implications of Joycean aesthetics. Benet's novel *Volverás a Región* (*Return to Región*) (1967), in its display of different narrative levels, stylistic distortions and antirealism, has been frequently associated

with Faulkner and Joyce (Santa Cecilia 1997, pp. 256-58). Nevertheless, in Benet's essay that originally prefaced the Spanish version of Stuart Gilbert's classic James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1930), he maintained that Joycean innovation and experimentation had a minor quality, 'as it corresponds to a minor writer'. (20) In the same vein, in another article published a few years later, suggestively entitled, '¿Contra Joyce?' (Against Joyce?), he also claimed that the interior monologue of Ulysses had become an exhausted and useless form (1978, p. 26). Benet's interpretations of Joyce's work are markedly significant inasmuch as his own creation displays a more than perceptible Joycean echo. In fact, not only critics have recognised the presence of Joyce in his writings, he himself has acknowledged it. Like Joyce, Benet's prose is said to be elitist, obscure, complex, experimental and even pedantic (Benet 1981, p. 63). In the article mentioned above, after a direct critique of Joyce's work, he ironically ends up manifesting that: 'Besides this, I have the highest respect for the figure of Joyce, for the determination in the creation of his oeuvre, for having been able to maintain a certain intransigence, for not having made the most minute concession and for not being daunted by the terrible solitude his enormous rectitude brought' (1978, p. 28) (21).

Juan Goytisolo's trilogy of the Sacred Spain, *Señas de Identidad* (*Marks of Identity*) (1966), *Reivindicación del conde don Julián* (*Vindication of Count Julian*) (1970), and *Juan sin tierra* (*Juan the Landless*) (1975) evoke Martín-Santos's as much as Joyce's narrative innovations. (22) In his three novels, Goytisolo deployed the most varied literary devices and techniques, including counterpoint, the interior monologue, temporal disruptions, different voices, narrative fragmentation and linguistic experimentation. In 1991, on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Joyce's death, he published an article in the Spanish newspaper *Abc*, in which he confirmed his attraction to the line opened up by Joyce:

To remain deaf to Joyce's literary proposal is to be condemned not to understand either modernity or the literature of the end of this millennium: to

repeat formalised and sterile novelistic patterns, to produce, in short, a dead piece.... Joyce – like Cervantes and Sterne – disrupted the rules of the game and showed that novels cannot be written following recipes or previous schemes.... Joyce, like the great poets, turned the language into the true protagonist of his work.... Those whom I admire and who mean something in the novelistic production of this century have been enriched by the example of the daring enterprise of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. (23)

In the seventies, other writers emerged who went even further. This is the case with the Galician author Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, who has published some novels, notably his first *Javier Mariño*, and *La saga/fuga de J.B. (The Saga/Escape of J.B.)* (1972), which cannot be analysed without establishing a direct connection with Joyce's oeuvre (see further Zamora 1968, Grimferrer 1972, Ridruejo 1977 and Becerra 1982). In his own article about Joyce, entitled 'Mis lecturas sobre Joyce' ('My Readings on Joyce'), he described his first encounter with *A Portrait* as more effective than his reading of Proust. He declared that he preferred Joyce precisely because his form of narrative seemed to be new, yet it could be predicted or sensed as recognition and also as a mirror (1978, p. 13). However, when listening to the recording of some fragments of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* by Joyce, he admitted that the Irish writer had not caused a great impact on him, even though he did see himself as a Joycean (Santa Cecilia 1997, pp. 136-37).

In the eighties and nineties, other writers who could not avoid Joyce's legacy kept appearing. Among these, Julián Ríos, Luis Goytisolo, Suso de Toro and Manuel Rivas have become well-known literary figures. Julián Ríos's extremely experimental novel *Larva: Babel de una noche de San Juan (Larva: A Midsummer Night's Babel)* (1983) stands out as a deliberate attempt to create a replica of *Ulysses* in Spanish, because of its radical rupture with anything published before. *Larva* has thus been defined as a monstrous novel that has provoked equal admiration and rejection, in such a way that the writer Juan Goytisolo has vindicated a place

outside the literary tradition of Spanish prose until that date (1992, p. 368).

Luis Goytisolo – brother of the above-mentioned Juan – has also made extensive use of the Irish writer, although the outcome is of a different nature. His parodic rewritings of earlier literary works include Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. In his collection of short narratives *Investigaciones y conjeturas de Claudio Mendoza (Research and conjectures by Claudio Mendoza)* (1985), he includes an essay, 'Joyce al fin superado' ('Joyce surpassed at last'), that functions as an attempt to rewrite Joyce's last work through the creation of a fictive *Gigamesh* – itself a rewriting of the epic *Gilgamesh* – in order to surpass the genius of Joyce's word games in *Finnegans Wake*. The result is a humorous text that parodies Joycean aesthetics and deals with questions related to authority and creativity (see Morales 2002).

In Galicia, Suso de Toro Santos has acknowledged the influence of Joyce in some of his novels, especially in *Polaroid* (1986) and *Tic-Tac* (1993), and to a lesser extent in some of his subsequent work. The impression that the Irish writer has made on many Galician writers is indeed profound, as Suso de Toro has tried to explain, alluding to the historical parallelism between the two Celtic lands:

We share with him his origin from lands of an injured language; we share with him his awareness of the fact that speaking a language is not a "natural" act since there is a choice between languages, one is the prize (yours in which I am writing now), the other is the punishment (mine which awaits me), and whether we choose one or the other we would have already lost linguistic innocence. (24)

De Toro's words could easily be applied to another Galician writer and professional journalist, Manuel Rivas, whose work has also been exposed to the influence of Joyce, mainly in *Un millón de vacas (A Million Cows)* (1989), *Os comedores de patatas (The Potato Eaters)* (1991) and *En salvaxe compañía (In Savage Company)* (1994).

Throughout this discussion I have focused on the reception of Joyce's writing in Spain in an early period, when Joyce's production

underwent a process of assimilation preceding the translation of some of his major works, and from the 1960s onwards when his influence became more visible. My purpose has been to demonstrate that Joyce played an influential role in the renewal of Spanish modern narrative. From the early 1920s many writers have incorporated innovative techniques in their writings that can easily be identified with Joycean aesthetics although, at the same time, they cannot be reduced to the simplicity of this

statement. Lack of space has prompted me to leave out other writers who will have to be analysed on another occasion. What this article ultimately attempts to demonstrate is that Joyce's creation has unquestionably flared up in an outstanding number of contemporary works not only within but also outside Europe.

Marisol Morales Ladrón

Notes

1 This article was originally published in the book *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe*. Volume II: France, Ireland and Mediterranean Europe (eds. Geert Lernout and Wim Van Merlo, London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp.434-44. I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to the publishers for granting me with permission to publish it again.

3 See, for instance, García Tortosa and de Toro Santos 1994 and 1997, Santa Cecilia 1997 and Morales Ladrón 2005.

4 In 1925 Borges published a short note in the Argentinean journal *Proa (Pron)* with the intention of introducing *Ulysses* to Latin American readers. Expressing his pride for being the first Hispanic writer to have made such a discovery, he discusses the positive consequences of Joyce's influence on Latin American literature. Although he includes his own translation of some passages of Molly's monologue, he confesses that he has not read the novel in its entirety (1925, 3).

5 On the other hand, Pedro Manuel González remarks that Joyce's influence has led to negative results by encouraging petty imitations that have turned Joyce's genius into grotesque and extravagant pastiches of eccentric syntax, punctuation and language (1967, 49).

6 Along with Galicia, another peripheral part of Spain, Catalonia, was early to acknowledge the new narrative techniques with which Joyce was experimenting..

7 'uno puede pensar –si es tal y como nos lo describen– que tiene un pacto con el Demonio' (Risco 1926, 2).

8 'druidas celtas' (Rivas 1992, 16-17).

9 Jiménez signed the letter against Samuel Roth's piracy of *Ulysses*, together with other writers and intellectuals like Miguel de Unamuno, Antonio Marichalar, Jacinto Benavente, Azorín, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Gabriel Miró and José Ortega y Gasset. Villanueva (1991, 56-57) and Díaz Plaja (1965, 255) have also added Valle-Inclán to the list, although his biographer, Robert Lima, has questioned this (1988, 266 n94).

10 'Cuando intento leer la obra de Joyce (y digo intento porque no tengo la pedantería de creer, y menos si tengo que leer ayudado en la lectura del texto original, que puedo comprender del todo creaciones del tipo tan personal y tan particular de la suya) me represento siempre en su escritura como los llamados ojos de mi Guadiana andaluz, ese trayecto donde el río, por andaluz, sale de la tierra y se esconde sucesivamente de su cauce en ella.... Éste es, creo yo, el secreto de James Joyce. Joyce, en la raudal de su obra, abre los ojos en su escritura, corriente interna y superficial sucesiva, para ver él, no para que lo vean' (1981, 327).

11 This generation has sometimes been referred to as 'Generación de la amistad' ('Generation of Friendship'), although it was more of a group than an actual generation. It lasted until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

12 'los nuevos métodos planteados por Joyce y desarrollados por Eliot no están reñidos con su bagaje literario, sino que muy al contrario les ofrecen nuevas posibilidades poéticas' (Santa Cecilia 1997, p. 95 and p. 97).

13 'no había ningún autor capaz de asimilar y elaborar las técnicas joyceanas en su obra.... En la recepción de Joyce hay en este preciso instante constancia de un eslabón perdido' (Santa Cecilia 1997, 156).

14 Antonio Machado was elected in 1927 but could not occupy his place due to the outbreak of the war.

15 'una vía muerta, un callejón sin salida del solipsismo lírico' (Machado 1997, 40).

16 'el universo de Joyce ... pone al descubierto el aldeanismo realista de la novela española. A Joyce aquí no lo ha leído nadie' (Alonso 1994, 16).

17 The critical response to the novel was quick to acknowledge Joyce's presence. In an interview Martín-Santos mentioned Joyce as one of his major influences and in *Tiempo de silencio* there is an explicit reference to *Ulysses*, when the narrator comments that this novel cannot be ignored since everything stems from it (1987, 81).

18 'una empresa experimental de renovación de las estructuras usuales de nuestra novelística' (Grimferrer 1968, 38). See also Bozal 1968, who adds Guelbenzu's use of avant-garde narrative techniques taken directly from Joyce.

19 This interview was originally published in 1993, as part of Mateo's critical study *Retrato de Rosa Chacel* (Portrait of Rosa Chacel). I am quoting from the extract published recently in the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*.

20 'como corresponde a un escritor menor' (Benet 1971, 4). In another article, published a decade later, Benet announced that his major discovery was Faulkner, since 'from that day in 1947 I devoured all the Faulkner, Kafka, Proust, Sartre, Malraux, Mann and Green I could get hold of.... I always like to remember the independence I reached with those readings' (1981, 60).

21 'Aparte de esto, yo guardo el mayor respeto por la figura de Joyce, por el empeñamiento con que hizo su obra, por haber sabido mantener cierta intransigencia, por no haber hecho nunca la menor concesión y por no arredrarse ante la terrible soledad que le deparó su gran rectitud'.

22 For a comparison between Joyce's *Ulysses* and Goytisolo's *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*, see Lázaro (1996).

23 'Permanecer sordos a la propuesta literaria de Joyce es condenarse a no entender la modernidad ni la literatura de este final de milenio: repetir esquemas novelescos formalizados y estériles, producir en suma una obra muerta.... Joyce –como Cervantes y Sterne– trastornó las reglas del juego y mostró que no se puede escribir novelas a partir de recetas y esquemas previos.... Joyce, como los grandes poetas, convirtió el lenguaje en el verdadero protagonista de su obra Cuantos admiro y significan algo en la novela de este siglo se han enriquecido con el ejemplo de la audaz empresa de Ulises y Finnegans Wake' (Goytisolo 1991, xi).

24 'Con él compartimos su procedencia de territorios de lengua herida, con él compartimos su conciencia de que hablar una lengua no es un acto "natural", porque hay que escoger entre lenguas, una es el premio (esa vuestra en la que escribo ahora), otra el castigo (esa miña que me agarda logo), y escojamos la que escojamos ya habremos perdido la inocencia lingüística' (De Toro 1994, 11). The phrase "esa miña que me agarda logo" is Galician.

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Joyce's *Ulysses* in Argentine Literature

By Carlos Gamerro (1)

Translated by David Barnwell

Ulysses is probably the foreign novel which has had most influence on Argentinean narrative fiction. At times it seems to be as much ours as if it had been written in Argentina. And in a way it was. *Ulysses* was published in Paris in 1922, and its odyssey through Argentinean literature began, as might be expected, with Jorge Luis Borges. As early as 1925 Borges boldly claimed 'I am the first explorer from the Hispanic world to make landfall on Joyce's book'. A year earlier he had attempted what may very well have been the first Spanish version of the text, a translation, in a heavily Buenos Aires dialect, of the final part of Molly Bloom's soliloquy.

In his article 'El *Ulises* de Joyce' (Joyce's *Ulysses*), Borges said that he approached *Ulysses* with 'the vague intensity exhibited by ancient travellers upon discovering a land new to their wandering surprise'. He was quick to anticipate the question inevitably asked of everyone who reads this endless novel: 'Did you read it all?' Borges replied that he had not, but that even so he knew what it was, just as one can know a city without having walked down every one of its streets. More than just a caprice, Borges's response in fact represented a shrewd methodological statement: *Ulysses* should be read as one might walk through a city, making up an itinerary, sometimes retracing one's steps on the same streets and completely ignoring others. Similarly, a writer cannot be influenced by all of *Ulysses*, but rather by one or other of its chapters, or one or other aspects of the book.

Borges did not imitate Joyce's styles and techniques, but the young 25-year-old Borges was fascinated by the breadth of the Joycean enterprise, the concept of a total book. The book of sand, the library of Babel, the poem 'La Tierra' (The Earth) that Carlos Argentino Daneri tries to write in 'El Aleph', all spring from Borges's fascination with Joyce's novel. Like the total poems of Dante Alighieri or Walt

Whitman, or the *Polyolbion* of Michael Drayton, they suggest the possibility of putting *all* reality into one book. In his later years Borges continued trying to deal with this book that most obsessed him. '*Ulysses* is a kind of microcosm, isn't it? It includes the entire world, although of course it's pretty long, and I don't think anyone has read it all. A lot of people have analysed it. But as to reading it in its entirety from beginning to end, I don't know if anyone has done it', he said in one of his conversations with Osvaldo Ferrari.

What is fundamental in Borges, especially when he dealt with infinite dimensions such as the universe or eternity, is to condense. He worked through metaphor and metonymy, never by piling up detail. In *Ulysses*, Joyce expanded the events of one day into 700 pages, in 'El inmortal' (The Immortal), Borges compressed 2,800 years into ten. Faced with the ambition of Daneri, 'Borges' (the Borges character in 'El Aleph') sums up Aleph in a paragraph that suggests both the vastness of the Aleph and the impossibility of putting it into words. Joyce, on the other hand, might have worked like Daneri, though with more talent. 'His unceasing examination of the tiniest minutiae of consciousness obliged Joyce to overcome the fleetingness of time with a calming gesture, as opposed to the frenzy with which English drama encapsulated a hero's entire life into a few crowded hours. If Shakespeare – according to his own metaphor – put the deeds of ages into one revolution of a sand-dial, Joyce inverted the process, and the single day of his hero unfolds into the many days of his readers', Borges comments in the essay referred above.

Joyce and Borges had styles that were almost opposite - if we can even talk about *one* style in the case of Joyce. Borges catalogued these styles in his *Evaristo Carriego*. There was the 'reality style' appropriate to a novel, exact, all-consuming, the Joycean style *par excellence*. And there was the style that Borges cultivated, that

of 'remembrance', tending towards simplification and economy of language and event. 'Night appeals to us because it suppresses irrelevant details, just like memory', he adds in his poem 'Nueva refutación del tiempo' (New Refutation of Time), while 'La noche que en el sur lo velaron' (The Night that they kept Vigil in the South) contains the line 'night, which frees us from our greatest grief, the prolixity of reality.' What Borges calls the 'reality style' is of course the perception style, which defines the aesthetics of realist fiction and reaches its apogee in the *nouveau roman*. Contrasting with the systematic and articulate description created by someone from the model set before him, memory is essentially 'holding onto isolated elements'. In this context, forgetting is not the opposite of remembering, but rather its fundamental creative mechanism. Except, of course, if one is Funes, whose memory holds no forgetfulness and would thus be incapable of writing stories. Or Marcel Proust, for whom memories are more vivid and detailed and intense than what he sees in front of him. 'Funes el Memorioso' (Funes, the Memorioso) can in fact be read as Borges's joke on Proust (a writer in whom, unlike most of his contemporaries, Borges had little interest).

What brings Borges and Joyce together is their literary setting. Both writers were from marginalised Western countries, colonial or neocolonial. Out of that limitation they were able to create literature which encompassed all culture, both their own and that of the colonial master, even refining the language of that master. Joyce taught the English how to write in English, Borges did the same for the Spanish.

While Borges may partly be defined as the first reader of Ulysses, Roberto Arlt defines himself as the one who could not read it. In 1931, in the preface to his novel *Los lanzallamas* (The Flame Thrower), he wrote angrily: 'On the other hand, some people are scandalised by the brutality with which I described certain perfectly natural situations in the relations between the sexes. Those same society pages have spoken of Joyce, rolling their eyes. This

springs from the spiritual delight occasioned by a certain character in *Ulysses*, a man who eats shall we say an aromatic breakfast in his toilet, sniffing the stink of what he has just defecated. But James Joyce is English. James Joyce has not been translated into Spanish, and it is considered good taste to speak of him. The day that James Joyce becomes available to all, the society pages will invent a new idol, who will be read by no more than a half-dozen of the initiated'.

There was a happy time when the choice between Borges and Arlt was put forward as the Scylla and Charybdis of Argentinean literature. (Lately, with even less success, there has been an effort to replace this with the choice between Borges and Walsh.) It is certainly clear that between 1925 and 1931 *Ulysses* divided the literary world: there were those who could read it and those who could not. 'I am the first person to read *Ulysses*,' boasted Borges. 'I'll be the last to read *Ulysses*,' declared Arlt just as proudly 'and that makes me who I am.' In the words of Renzi, a character in the novel *Respiración artificial* (Artificial Respiration) by Ricardo Piglia: 'Arlt gets away from the tradition of bilingualism. Arlt is outside of it, he reads translations'. If throughout the nineteenth century and even as late as Borges, we see the paradox of a national literature that is built out of the split between Spanish and the language in which it is read, which is always a foreign language, 'Arlt does not undergo this split [...] He is in contrast the first to defend reading translations. Take a look at what he says about Joyce in the prologue to *Los Lanzallamas* and you'll see'.

Early on it was said, and it continues to be said, that even with three versions of the book now in Spanish, *Ulysses* is literally untranslatable. Perhaps for that reason several authors in different parts of the world - Alfred Döblin with *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Luis Martín-Santos with *Tiempo de silencio* (Time of Silence), Virginia Woolf with *Mrs. Dalloway*, the female *Ulysses* - took on the task of rewriting it by setting the action in their own worlds, a kind of radical translation. Leopoldo Marechal, in his Adán Buenosayres, took on the ambitious task of

writing the Argentine *Ulysses*. *Adán Buenosayres* follows Joyce's *Ulysses* in minute and highly planned detail. Its systematic use of Homeric parallels towards the end (in "Viaje a la oscura ciudad de Cacodelphia" (Voyage to the Dark City of Cacodelphia)) gives way to echoes of Dante. Borges always expressed surprise at critics' enthusiasm for the Homeric parallels in *Ulysses*, and used his short story 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote' (Pierre Menard, author of Quixote) to poke fun at them indirectly: 'One of those parasitical books that put Christ on a boulevard somewhere, Hamlet on the Cannebière in Marseilles or Don Quixote on Wall Street'. This aspect was of special interest to Marechal, and in his work at some length appear the shield of Achilles, Polyphemus, Circe, the Sirens and the descent to hell. He also shares with Joyce the ambition of recapturing the epic tradition for the novel. The confessed Catholic Marechal seeks to rediscover the epic *spirit*, while the renegade Catholic Joyce, enemy of any philosophy that would distance us from earthly life in all its richness, would have been fascinated by what Marechal in his 'James Joyce y su gran aventura novelística' (James Joyce and his Great Novelistic Adventure), called 'the demon of the letter'. 'Joyce concludes by giving prominence to the means of expression, to such an extent that the continual interchange of resources and the free play of words make us lose sight of the scene and characters. It does not stop there, because there is a "demon of the letter" and it is a fearsome devil. To judge by his last work, the demon of the letter completely took over Joyce.'

Though begun in the early 1930s, *Adán Buenosayres* was not published till 1948. Three years earlier the moment foretold by Arlt had arrived - in 1945, scarcely three years after his death, the first translation of *Ulysses* into Spanish was published. This appeared in Argentina and the translator was the relatively unknown J. Salas Subirat. This translation was followed by two more, both carried out in Spain. The Argentinean version undoubtedly has the most errors, but it also has many fine elements, and when we consider that the Argentinean had no access to the vast critical

apparatus that his successors were able to avail of, his achievements can be considered to be of epic proportions. Further, they are a melancholy reminder of an era when Buenos Aires could be considered capital of Hispanic culture.

Many Latin American novelists of the 1960s took William Faulkner as a model. This was at least partly because Faulkner, like so many of them, belonged to the Caribbean, while the Faulknerian formula of combining a regionalist and rural literature with the latest modernist techniques is in fact the formula of the Latin American literary boom, from Mexico to Uruguay. In the case of Argentina, however, literature in the twentieth century moves definitively from country to city, moreover to a cosmopolitan city and one marked by European immigration. Joyce, who took on single-handed the task of getting rid of Irish pastoralism - the literature of the 'Celtic Revival' of Yeats and his followers - and putting in its stead a modern and urban literature, has for that reason been our model, rather than Faulkner. The rural towns of inland Argentina, especially those parts of the pampas where there was large-scale foreign settlement, are those most commonly depicted in our fiction (Rodolfo Walsh, Manuel Puig, Haroldo Conti, Osvaldo Soriano, César Aira) and they can be characterised more by their aspirations to the culture of Buenos Aires than by their own traditional culture. An example of this is the town of Coronel Vallejos in the work of Puig.

Puig confessed that he had never read *Ulysses* in full, feeling that it was enough to know that each of its chapters is written in its own style, technique and language. Already in his first novel, *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (*Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*), some chapters are purely in dialogue, others in interior monologue, and still others in what might be termed low styles such as the letter, school composition, young girls' intimate diaries, anonymous writing. *Boquitas pintadas* (*Painted Lips*) seems to spring from the pop chapter of *Ulysses*, 'Nausicaa' (a teenage girl's interior monologue, her sensibility, soul and language formed from women's magazines,

and *The Buenos Aires Affair* is the most consistently Joycean of all. If Borges adopted the cultured or postmodern aspect of Joyce, it was Puig who saw the way the postmodern wind was blowing, with its camp and pop, even kitsch, and its mass culture, so alien to Borges.

The work of Rodolfo Walsh, which, in simplistic readings, even today in vogue, is seen only in terms of social activism and critique, always exhibits the presence of Joyce. Of an Irish family, in a country in which that community has fiercely maintained its cohesiveness through language, religion and tradition, and educated like Joyce in an Irish Catholic boarding-school, Walsh did not escape the influence of his quasi-compatriot, though in his case it was *Dubliners* and especially *A Portrait of the Artist* that left their mark on his 'Irish Stories'. Like Borges, Walsh tended towards the laconic, and the proximity of Ulysses may have seemed foreign, even hostile to him. Nevertheless, his pampas stories, such as 'Cartas' (Letters) and 'Fotos' (Photos) constitute - as Ricardo Piglia astutely pointed out -, little Joycean universes, a condensed rustic *Ulysses*.

His 'Irish Stories' have an autobiographical basis. When Miguel Walsh, a farm foreman who had taken the risk of trying to become an independent landowner, lost all during the notorious decade of the 1930s, two of his children, Rodolfo and Héctor, were sent to a boarding-school run by nuns in Capilla del Señor, Buenos Aires Province, and subsequently to the Instituto Fahy in Moreno. Both of these schools served the Irish community. 'It is true that they are different to the others,' said Walsh in an interview. 'Clearly if we want to describe the tendency in writing style towards the widened use of words, that is to say a widening of the resources, we might call it epic in the sense that the stories and method are very small while the language is grandiose, and you can use this grandiloquent language for boys' stories that I would never use even if I were writing an epic.' The formula inverts that of Joyce: a scrupulously everyday language used for epic themes, an epic language used for minor stories, or, one might say, stories about minors. In the same interview

Walsh admits that there is a Joycean influence in his Irish stories, although he claims that this is more in theme than in style. The atmosphere of these stories reminds us of the first chapter of the *Portrait*, though with one fundamental difference. Clongowes is a boarding-school for rich children, while the Instituto Fahy is for the poor. What follows from this is that for the Walsh family, the father's ruin prompted entry into the boarding-school, while for Joyce, it forced exit from such a school. Joyce, for his part, focuses principally on the indelible mark that a Jesuit education can leave on a young man's soul, his own. Walsh on the other hand is concerned with the boarding-school as a whole, and is more worried about the emotional and physical damage that he suffered.

Joyce, who became a writer once he had cast off the two yokes of the Catholic Church and the duty to serve the Irish revolution, is hostile to any idea of ideological or political engagement. His work does not exclude the political (in fact it is steeped in politics—the short story 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room', the Christmas dinner scene in *The Portrait*, and throughout both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*). Yet that is all he does — he includes it. The mission of literature is nothing less than to 'forge the uncreated conscience of my race' and thus politics and religion are subordinate to it. In Chapter 5 of *The Portrait*, Stephen Dedalus puts forward his aesthetic theory: 'I mean that the tragic emotion is static. Or rather the dramatic emotion is. The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which excite them, pornographic or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing'.

Walsh's reply appears in his story entitled 'Fotos':

Things to say to M:

The aesthetic is ecstatic.

Integritas. Consonantia. Claritas.

Aristotle. Croce. Joyce.

Mauricio:

To hell with Croce.

No, my friend, now I get it. Art is for you people.

If anyone could do it, it would no longer be art'.

Jacinto Tolosa is the first to speak. He is a rancher's son and aspires to be a poet and a lawyer. Mauricio, his friend, is outgoing and friendly, a lazy son of a businessman, a passionate but unsure photographer. Jacinto is using Joyce to convince Mauricio that photography is not art. It is tempting to establish a parallel between Tolosa's view (photography is not art) and the view that would condemn Walsh's documentary work (those verbal snapshots of reality) to a secondary aesthetic level. 'Fotos' is, among other things, a defence of the artistic validity of non-fiction, of forms such as testimonial or documentary art. Walsh had a clear vision of the implications of Joycean aesthetics: the aesthetic experience is sufficient in itself, there is no need to justify it by invoking its supposed usefulness to individual or society. The kinetic arts – didactic, moralising, political or pornographic – impose a certain line of conduct, they take us outside the work, towards some form of action – revolution, perhaps, or masturbation. For Joyce, literature modifies – creates – consciousness, it shapes the soul. It is so profoundly political that it cannot be subordinated to politics. Compromise is antithetical to art. William Butler Yeats wished to write poems fit to accompany men to the gallows, Joyce wrote stories and novels to immunise men against the foolish temptation to ascend the gallows' steps.

In Juan José Saer, Joyce's influence at first glance seems less obvious, except perhaps in his novel *El Limonero Real* (The Royal Lemon Tree). Yet his particular style results from the conjunction of the flood of words in Faulkner's stories (he was in essence a disciple of Joyce) with a fondness for the minute French objectivism of Alain Robbe-Grillet and others. It is worth mentioning that French objectivism is evident in Chapter 17 of *Ulysses*, 'Ithaca'.

Saer's interest in *Ulysses* is in any case evident in his critical articles, for example the one entitled 'J. Salas Subirat' published in *Trabajos* (Works):

J. Salas Subirat's Ulysses (the imprecise initial lent his name a rather mysterious air) kept coming up in conversations, and his countless verbal inventions were interwoven in them without any need to be explained. Anyone between 18 and 30 who aspired to be a writer in Santa Fe, Paraná, Rosario or Buenos Aires knew them by heart and was able to quote them. Many writers of the generation of the 50s or 60s learned some of their narrative resources and techniques in translation. The reason is very simple. The turbulent river of Joyce's prose when translated by someone from Buenos Aires dragged with it the living speech that no other author - with the possible exception of Roberto Arlt - had been able to use with such inventiveness and freedom and clarity. The lesson from that work is clear. Everyday language provides the energy that fertilises the most universal literature.'

Joyce finished the task begun, among others, by Gustave Flaubert and Henry James, those who wiped out the traditional nineteenth century novel and heralded modernism in its place: to have done with the omniscient and personalised narrator, the spokesman for an author who in G. K. Chesterton's critique of Thomas Hardy, 'personified the universe in order to give it a piece of his mind'; to abandon stylistic unity within books and between an author's books, to multiply points of view. Faced with all this variation, Joyce chooses one fixed point: the terrain. Dublin is the scene of all his fiction, the same people reappear in different novels and short stories, their stories go on from book to book. Once this foundation is established, all else fluctuates. Dublin is a very real city in the early chapters of *Ulysses*, in Chapter 15, ('Circe') it is a city of dreams (not to mention *Finnegans Wake*), in Chapter 14 ('The Oxen of the Sun') it is different cities at different times. Faulkner was the first to learn from this: keep the territory, but vary the language, the style, the timeframe, the levels of fictive reality. However, unlike Faulkner and his fictional Jefferson and

Yoknapatawpha, Joyce opted for a real city, and did so to the fullest: 'If the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book'. And he was right. In its representation of Dublin, *Ulysses* is not just realist, but real. If Joyce places a certain house, business, or tree in his city of paper, it is because that is where it stood in the city of bricks and stone. Aside from his extraordinary memory, Joyce spent his time writing to relatives and friends to confirm the accuracy of his descriptions. In Chapter 10 ('The Wandering Rocks'), we follow several characters in their wanderings through the city. Readers who took the time to follow the trajectories in the book have shown that its timeframes coincide precisely with those of real life. (Joyce wrote this chapter with the aid of a map of Dublin and a stopwatch). It is thus surprising to realise that Joyce carried out this minute verbal reconstruction of Dublin from exile, without even once returning. Surprising, that is, from the practical point of view. From the emotional point of view, however, it is perfectly logical, for one only reconstructs so obsessively what one has lost for ever. Joyce's Dublin in this respect is like Guillermo Cabrera Infante's Havana, perhaps the most Joycean of Latin American writers. His novels *Tres tristes tigres* (Three Sad Tigers) and *La Habana para un Infante Difunto* (Havana for a Dead Prince) are, like *Ulysses*, detailed pictures of a beloved city that has been lost forever. The difference is that Joyce did not want to go back, while Cabrera Infante could not.

The choices made by Joyce and Faulkner determined those of their Latin American followers. Mario Vargas Llosa and Juan José Saer founded literary territories in real cities, such as Lima and Santa Fe. Juan Carlos Onetti, Gabriel García Márquez and Manuel Puig did the same with fictional lands: Santa María, Macondo and Coronel Vallejos. The novel *Respiración artificial*, by Ricardo Piglia, is a fictional essay in the style of some of Borges's short stories, such as 'Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote' or 'Examen de la obra de Herbert Quain' ('An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain'). It includes multiple reference to, and reflections about, the work of Joyce. All

the authors we have mentioned selectively draw on Joyce. They adopt some of his techniques (Marechal, Puig), some part of his referential universe (Walsh), or they write about Joyce himself in their work (Borges). Piglia tries to do all of this at the same time. He uses three Joycean techniques, stylistic parody, quotation and cryptic allusion, and applies them to Joycean themes and texts. The 'Joycean material' of *Respiración artificial* opens precisely with a comment on the omnipresence of parody: 'There are no more adventures, just parodies. [...] Where there used to be action, experience, passion, today there are just parodies. I tried to tell Marcelo this in my letters, that parody has taken over from history. Isn't parody the very negation of history? [...] He [Joyce] would I think have accepted his idea that only parody exists (because really, what was he but a parody of Shakespeare?).' These words are from Tardewski, a Polish intellectual who remained stuck in Argentina – it is not hard to see in him a fictional version of Witold Gombrowicz, who knew Joyce in Zurich. Tardewski then asks: 'Do you like his work - Joyce's work?' 'I don't think there's another writer in this century', replies Renzi. 'Okay,' responds Tardewski, 'but don't you think he was a little too realist?' To which Renzi replies: 'Basically, [...] Joyce dealt with one problem: How to narrate real events.'

A line further down, Renzi goes out to buy cigarettes, and in the bar listens to a story told in colloquial language, about a man who murdered five of his brothers by sticking a needle into their throats. Much later, near the end of the novel, Tardewski decides to answer Renzi back, commencing a polemic that might well be titled 'Franz Kafka or James Joyce?':

I do not share your enthusiasm for James Joyce. How can you compare the two? Joyce [...] is too ... how can I put it?... hard-working. An acrobat. Someone who performs sleights of words the way others perform sleights of hand. Kafka, on the other hand, is the tightrope walker, with no net [...] Joyce carries a placard that says "I overcome all obstacles" while Kafka writes in a notebook and keeps this inscription in his jacket pocket: All obstacles overcome me. [...] Better to keep quiet

than speak about the unspeakable, as Wittgenstein put it. How can one speak about the unspeakable? That is the question that Kafka tried to answer. [...] What would we say is unspeakable today? The world of Auschwitz. That world is beyond language, it is the frontier bound by the barbed wire of language. [...] Wittgenstein saw clearly that that the only work that might match his own was the fragmented work of the incomparable Franz Kafka. Joyce? He sought to awake from the nightmare of history in order to perform pretty acrobatics with words. Kafka, in contrast, awoke every day to enter that nightmare and write about it.

Piglia, it must be pointed out, speaks not just about but indeed from the other side of the wire: his novel was written and published in an Argentina that had been turned into a concentration camp by the last military dictatorship. In this context, the quote from the famous closing passage of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* acquires a second meaning, though without losing its primary meaning: 'What we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence', a sentence that may be linked to another posted by the military dictatorship on the Obelisk, the symbolic centre of Buenos Aires: 'SILENCE IS HEALTH'.

What appears to be at issue in the Renzi-Tardewski polemic is not the relative merits of Joyce or Kafka, but the relevance of any poetry, if indeed it is a case of 'writing poetry after Auschwitz'. The Pole Tardewski lauds Kafka, and *Respiración artificial* seems to give him the last word against his antagonist Renzi. Yet the author seems closer to his alter-ego Renzi, since both *Respiración artificial* as well as his subsequent novel, *La ciudad ausente* (*The Absent City*), are both closer to Joyce's loudness than to Kafka's inaudible murmur. This is exemplified by such things as the hyperliterary and often cryptic character of both books, their heterogeneous and fragmented textualities, their systematic use of allusion and parody, not to mention the long section dedicated to *Finnegans Wake*, and the inclusion of the character Lucia Joyce in *La ciudad ausente*. For to

speak of that which cannot be spoken, of the Argentinean terror in this case, Joyce could have been at least as effective as the more predictable Kafka. This is shown not just in the two novels of Piglia but also in the work of his contemporary Luis Gusmán, who in *En el corazón de junio* (*In the Heart of June*) explores the subtle, perhaps imaginary links between the most famous 16 June in Irish literature, *Bloomsday*, and the most famous in Argentine history, *Bombsday*, 16 June 1955. He follows the steps of, among others, the Italian-Argentine writer J. R. Wilcock, who translated fragments of *Finnegans Wake* into Italian. A later foreign novel resorted to Kafka to tell the story of the Argentine dictatorship, which with unconscious irony dubbed itself 'El proceso' (2): *The Ministry of Special Cases* (2007) by Nathan Englander.

The difference is not just one of literary theory: Kafka focuses on the process of destruction and its results (the lives of Gregor Samsa, Joseph K., the apparatus of the colonial penitentiary); Joyce, on the beauty of the world that the forces which dominate Ireland (the British Empire, the Catholic Church, Irish nationalism) seek to destroy. He critiques these forces particularly through Stephen Dedalus, but he ultimately stresses the positive, in the lives of Leopold and Molly Bloom. Ulysses may not be for everyone, but its general tone is of optimism and celebration. It is nearer to Whitman than T. S. Eliot, Giovanni Boccaccio than Dante, Cervantes than Fyodor Dostoevsky. And this, to conclude where we began, is what Borges brings out in his poem 'James Joyce':

Between dawn and night lies universal history.

From the night I see before my feet the roads where the Hebrew walked, Carthage laid low, Heaven and Hell.

Lord, give me the courage and joy to scale to the summit of this day.

Carlos Gamerro

Notes

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2 Translator's Note: 'Proceso' means both 'Process' and 'Trial'.

Baroque Historiographies: Joyce, Faulkner, and García Márquez

By Diana Pérez García (1)

Abstract

This article is the result of extensive readings of the early Anglophone and Latin American reception of Joyce's and Faulkner's work. It was thus possible to establish a parallel understanding of their work in both cultural contexts as essentially 'baroque'. A discrepancy arises, however, in allusions to the baroque in an Anglophone and Latin American context. Early Anglophone critics tended to find their 'baroquism' troubling. By contrast, Latin American mediators found in their baroque propensity a potential model for the expression of native concerns.

In the light of the above findings, the article centres on the connections between Joyce, Faulkner and García Márquez, focusing on the exploration of alternative and suppressed historiographies in their fiction. It discusses their deployment of a 'baroque' aesthetic of difficulty, duplicity, theatricality and temporal disruption to arrive at a representation of 'otherness' that voices their historiographic scepticism.

Faulkner and Joyce have long competed for the crowning position in Latin America's literary pantheon. This is not meant to be, by any means, a reflection on such aspirations. Both men were largely oblivious to the Latin American literary tradition and to the aesthetic and narrative conundrums faced by its writers in the course of the twentieth century. On the contrary, their work is intensely local and preoccupied with their own respective social, cultural and political milieus. Any desires they may have harboured towards universal influence and recognition would have been a result of their determined efforts to render their own cultures faithfully, and to honour them by such a rendition. Ironically, their preoccupation with the local may be the reason for the influential position that they have long occupied in Latin American letters, for it is arguably their intense localism and its accomplished artistic rendition that has proven inspirational for their Latin American counterparts. Ever since early mediators such as Jorge Luis Borges and Alejo Carpentier heralded their importance, they have been understood to occupy very distinct and, at times, mutually exclusive, positions with regards to their impact on the literature being produced in Latin America throughout the twentieth century. Thus, Joyce has been traditionally characterised as the master of literary audacity, spurring the work of linguistic mavericks such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante

and Julio Cortázar or of poets like Haroldo de Campos. *Ulysses*, the modernist novel of the city *par excellence*, would be seen as the inspiration behind some of the most important Latin American urban novels such as Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* and Carlos Fuentes's *Where the Air Is Clear*. Faulkner, on the other hand, would be heralded as inspiring a wealth of rural narratives, most notably Gabriel García Márquez's fiction, providing an example of colour and texture, to be deployed when depicting the hot and racially-mixed Caribbean area.

In this article I propose to follow a literary genealogy that goes against the traditional study of influence in two ways: firstly, by rejecting the understanding of García Márquez as exclusively 'Faulknerian' and, secondly, by advocating a multidirectional and dynamic approach to the comparative study of the three authors in question. The traditional understanding of literary influence would deny that Faulkner and Joyce have greatly enriched García Márquez's work. Although I do not intend to dispute this contention, I think it is also useful to consider how Joyce's and Faulkner's works have been revived by García Márquez's readings and those of fellow Latin American writers in ways that are enriching and revelatory of their artistry and accomplishments.

Viewing Joyce's and Faulkner's fiction through the prism of García Márquez's work can alert

us to the deep historiographic drive that underscores their narratives, as well as to the strategies that they deploy to register their historiographic scepticism. The narrative entanglements at the heart of their work can be explained, as I try to argue here, as the result of a desire to give voice to marginal and suppressed historiographies. It is this complex voicing of hidden historiographies that may ultimately anticipate the radical strategies of magical realism exemplified by García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The study of literary transmission is inevitably a study of reception and, as a result, I focus on the reception of Joyce and Faulkner by early Anglophone and Hispanic critics. Both groups fundamentally agreed in their assessment of both Joyce's and Faulkner's narrative 'challenges' as baroque in essence. The Anglophone critics' disdain for this baroqueism, however, contrasts with the tendency of the Latin American critics to embrace them – at least, in part – precisely because of their perceived affinity with a baroque genealogy. My use of the term 'baroque' in this article stems from this early critical reception, and I hope that it retains both its Anglophone connotations of excessive (and troubling) complication and its Latin American usage as a strategy for the expression of native cultural difference and inscription of the marginal. (2)

On 8 December 1982, Gabriel García Márquez closed his Nobel Prize lecture with a tribute to William Faulkner, and echoed the American writer's own visionary words upon reception of the same prize some thirty years earlier:

On a day like today, my master William Faulkner said, "I decline to accept the end of man". I would fall unworthy of standing in this place that was his, if I were not fully aware that the colossal tragedy he refused to recognize thirty-two years ago is now, for the first time since the beginning of humanity, nothing more than a simple scientific possibility. Faced with this awesome reality that must have seemed a mere utopia through all of human time, we, the inventors of tales, who will believe anything, feel entitled to believe that it is not yet too late to engage in the creation of the opposite utopia. A new and

sweeping utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth (García Márquez 1993: 20).

It is significant that García Márquez chose to honour Faulkner's own recognition of apocalyptic momentum (prefigured in the all too real possibility of nuclear holocaust) as a site upon which to found a 'utopia of life' filtered through the complementary acts of reading and writing. That, in García Márquez's understanding of his role as a writer, signals the act of literary creation as an act of re-creation, one that affords both the author and his readers the possibility of re-appropriating their historical and political destinies by means of visionary recognition. Thus, Faulkner's 'man', whose end he 'declines to accept', is rendered here as 'the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude', in what is not only an allusion to García Márquez's most famous, and arguably, most accomplished work but also a postcolonial celebration of the colonial subject's eventual liberation, depicted here as the triumphant obverse of apocalyptic demise. García Márquez's words represent a bipartite paean to the notion of literature as the space afforded to the colonial for self-expression and recognition, and for the understanding of history as a narrative whose secrets and possibilities constitute the threads out of which the Latin American writer will weave the rich tapestry of his redemptive tale.

Faulkner is here placed at the crux where history and literature intersect through Messianic re-telling, thus drawing suggestive parallels between his and García Márquez's fictions. Furthermore, this repositioning of Faulkner's 'man' as an analogue to Latin American man forces us to re-evaluate Faulkner's works from a postcolonial point of view, to ascertain why García Márquez experienced an illuminating moment of self-recognition in coming into contact with Faulkner's 'atmosphere and decadence' (García Márquez 2003: 135) or why he acknowledges Latin America's debt to Faulkner by stating that

'Faulkner is enmeshed in all Latin American literature' (García Márquez, Vargas Llosa 1968: 52-53). (3)

The apocalyptic is at the hearth of Faulkner's creative impulse, something that he revealed by observing that he thought of 'the world [he] created as ... a kind of keystone in the universe', a keystone that, were it removed, would provoke the universe to 'collapse'; as well as by foreseeing his last book as being 'the Doomsday Book, the Golden Book' (Faulkner 1960: 82) of Yoknapatawpha County, the fictional space inhabited by most of his creations. Although his readers were never treated to an apocalyptic culmination of the Sutpen, the Compson, the Bundren, or the Sartoris' dynasties akin to the Buendías' holocaust in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, his narratives are a constant re-enactment of the fire and brimstone of the hour of judgement: be it the biblical flood and fire which threaten to desecrate Addie Bundren's corpse in *As I Lay Dying*, the personal apocalypse of Joe Christmas and Reverend Hightower in *Light in August*, or the all-devouring fire which consumes Thomas Sutpen's dynasty and legacy by the close of *Absalom, Absalom!* In the light of Faulkner's recurrent fictive apocalypses, García Márquez emerges as a worthy disciple of the American 'prophet', daring to take his characters to absolute oblivion with the hurricane that devastates Macondo at the end of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, thus presenting us with the blank canvas on which to build that 'utopia of the future' that he salutes in his Nobel Prize lecture.

Both authors are further united in their deployment of a narrative exuberance that belies their tales of decay and disaster and underpins the melancholy failures of their characters. It is this exuberance, this 'explosive overcrowdedness', as André Blekaisten has described it, that sees Faulkner's 'language depart from the standards of stern sparseness and high finish the New Critics taught us to associate with Anglo-American modernism' (Blekaisten 1995: 92). It is in this overcrowded narrative space that I propose that we can find the third vortex in the literary triangle that I am

trying to trace in this article; for it is precisely in the 'baroque excesses', exemplified by Faulkner's prose and mirrored in García Márquez's novels, where we can find the echoes of that other excessive and baroque writer, James Joyce.

We are faced in James Joyce and William Faulkner with two atypical modernists, ill at ease with their contemporaries, perching themselves at the edge of a 'logorrheic' abyss in their attempts at encapsulating or, rather, re-creating or re-appropriating their native spaces through a profusion of language. Perhaps it was this affinity that prompted a contemporary critic to disparagingly describe the writing in *The Sound and the Fury* as 'more incoherent than Joyce' (Hartwick 1999: 629) and Wyndham Lewis to pithily summarise Faulkner as more 'Joyce than Stein' (Lewis 1999: 643), as an author whose 'hot and sticky' (Lewis 1999: 637) prose displays 'the rhythm' of 'Irish sentiment' (Lewis 1999: 643). If Lewis's summation is redolent of Arnoldian reductions transposed to the Southern States, other commentators have sympathetically framed Faulkner within the Irish tradition. Thus, Seán Ó Faoláin placed Faulkner's writing in a decidedly Irish context, by noting that life in Mississippi as filtered through Faulkner's prose sounded:

[V]ery much like life in County Cork. There is the same passionate provincialism; the same local patriotism; the same southern nationalism ... the same feeling that whatever happens in Ballydehob or in Jefferson has never happened anywhere else before, and is more important than anything that happened in any period of history in any part of the cosmos ... (Ó Faoláin 1956: 102)

Ó Faoláin's reading of Faulkner as a 'passionate provincial' could be added to a litany of similar appraisals of his work as that of a local raconteur *paradoxically* endowed with portentous linguistic powers, were it not because Ó Faoláin stresses the totalising nature of Faulkner's literary cosmos, whereby the Yoknapatawpha stories force the reader to re-evaluate history through the prism of the 'gnawing defeat' (Ó Faoláin 1956: 102) assailing Southern man, to the point where any other perspective is obliterated. This perspective

proved intolerable to many of Faulkner's contemporaries who, imbued as they were with an ideology that stressed the values of modernity, could not easily reconcile his *avant-garde* experimentalism with the recurrent presence of the irrational in his works. To quote Lewis once more, if Faulkner's 'novels are, strictly speaking, clinics' (Lewis 1999: 638), readers are asked to peruse these narratives by attending to the obsessions and preoccupations of the diseased and insane. In other words, their author demands that we adopt the point of view of America's 'otherness'.

This dislocation of perspective, this dis-establishing and maddening multiplication of voices that we encounter in Faulkner's work is, of course, central to the post-colonial writer's project. Ultimately, I believe, it is this powerful invocation of the 'other' that proves so seductive to a writer like Gabriel García Márquez, as well as aligning Faulkner with that other 'patron saint' of Latin American letters, James Joyce. Faulkner may have recognised as much himself by describing Joyce's influence with rich and suggestive biblical overtones, stating that '[y]ou should approach Joyce's *Ulysses* as the illiterate Baptist preacher approaches the Old Testament: with faith' (Faulkner 1960: 77). The potency of this image belies the lukewarm understanding of Faulkner's 'Joycism' as little other than a capricious and superficial appropriation of the latter's avant-gardism.

García Márquez's view of Faulkner runs counter to the characterisation of the latter's literary experimentation as mere technical folly. In García Márquez's readings, 'the Faulkner method' (García Márquez, Vargas Llosa 1968: 52-53) (4) represents a more than adequate tool to reflect his own reality. This perspective is not only advantageous for what I consider to be a more adequate understanding of the value of Faulkner's work and its impact on Latin American letters, it is also inextricably bound to a reading of Joyce as equally instrumental in the creation of a literary language that renders itself to the expression of colonial experience, and which baroque difficulty and excessiveness are coupled with the process of inscription of the

colonial subject's re-claiming of a distinct cultural and political identity. That is, far from being the product of overzealous commitment to cosmopolitan avant-gardism, Joyce's and Faulkner's daring formal experimentation is intrinsically bound to literary projects that are at once intensely personal and exemplary, as the Latin American García Márquez clearly understood. Thus, the overwrought intricacy of their style is entwined with their desire to re-tell their local and national histories as seen with the eyes of the defeated and colonised, and their minutely-rendered literary cosmogonies are the result of their wish to re-appropriate their native spaces. These are projects that shun the notion of language as a transparent means of expression, just as they underpin a disdain for history conceived as a linear and progressive enterprise, exposing this linearity as dependent on the suppression of the marginalised and oppressed. Their diction is best understood in terms of cannibalisation and repetition, of obsessive, even maddening inclusion, of radical heterogeneity and *heteroglossia*.

If Faulkner's voice had been neatly compartmentalised as a Modernist anomaly, whose 'monstrous' means of expression sat uneasily with his essential provincialism, Joyce was the victim of the opposite misreading, as the pugnacious specificity of his prose was reduced to 'a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history' (Eliot 1975: 177), in T.S. Eliot's celebrated words. The disorderly voice of the colonial is thus refashioned as that of a conservative saboteur, inaugurating decades of a critical understanding of Joyce as a relentless cosmopolitan intent on performing a salutary *exposé* on the perils of ignoring the crumbling edifice of Western Civilisation.

To return to Joyce's contemporaries, it may have been critically more profitable to attend to the objections of those shocked by the perceived squalor of his subject matter. Thus, in retrospect, there might be more truth in Aldington's words, whose review of *Ulysses* T.

S. Eliot criticises in '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth', than in Eliot's partial appropriation of Joyce's novel. In Aldington's summation, we encounter a variation of the same judgement levelled at Faulkner, that peculiar coupling of admiration and disgust, which exposes Joyce as an unruly, if precocious, child whose 'marvellous gifts' are ill-employed to 'disgust us' (Aldington quoted in Eliot 1975: 176). In wishing to counteract Aldington's simplistic didacticism, T. S. Eliot unwittingly exposes a didacticism of his own, revealing in his desire to rectify Aldington's misreading his own anxiety to control a book that is 'an invitation to chaos, and an expression of feelings which are perverse, partial, and a distortion of reality' (Aldington, quoted in Eliot 1975: 176). Joyce, on the other hand, was happy to absolve Aldington, describing his criticism as 'legitimate' in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver (Joyce 1957: 157).

'Perversity' and 'distortion' are, of course, primary elements of baroque expression. As Brigid Brophy has written, the baroque 'encompasses images devoid of dignity: comic images; domestic images; the taken literally imagist content of religious myths; images of such bodily secretions as tears and milk' (Brophy 1978: 149). In comparing the 'bold embrace' of baroque expression to 'a pair of giant curly brackets that clip together things irreconcilable' (Brophy 1978: 149), she provides us with a good metaphor to understand the revulsion unleashed by Faulkner's and Joyce's fusion of the demotic and the sublime in their fearlessly baroque experiments. In this context Clifton Fadiman's dismissal of Faulkner as 'a Dixie Gongorist' (Fadiman 1999: 263), as well as Jorge Luis Borges's analogy of Góngora's *Soledades* and James Joyce's works as failed linguistic experiments (Borges 2000: 447) (5), inscribe their re-enactment of baroque expression within the context of modernity. Although Fadiman's and Borges's appraisals may be ultimately disparaging, they provide us with a clear-eyed analogue in the figure of Luis de Góngora y Argote, the sixteenth century Spanish baroque poet, whose name has become synonymous in English with obscurantist linguistic experimentation (6). With his rich and ornate quasi-Byzantine poetry, Góngora

epitomises the 'perversions' and 'distortions' of the Spanish baroque, which, rooted in the culture of the Counter-Reformation, was anathema to the transparency and equilibrium of Neoclassical aesthetics. Góngora's poetry was the maximum exponent of that peculiar malady of irrational excess that afflicted Spain, a country frozen in the ecstasies of debasement and sublimation of the baroque in its stubborn refusal to join the rest of Europe in its march towards modernity. This reading of the Spanish baroque as a culture condemned to inhabit the fringes of Western Europe can be coupled with Jorge Luis Borges's identification of the baroque as an intrinsically Hispanic aesthetic. His reading of Joyce in the context of baroque expression is, for that very reason, more suggestive than it at first appears. In Borges's view, Joyce emerges as a marginal figure, inhabiting the fringes of Western culture, opting for a mode of expression that, in its historical definition, is essentially Catholic and critical of modernity. This vision coincides with Roberto González Echevarría's vindication of Góngora's poetry as, '[I]nclusive rather than exclusive, willing to create and incorporate the new, literally in the form of neologisms. He is anxious to overturn the tyranny of syntax, making the hyperbaton the most prominent feature of his poetry' (González Echevarría 1993: 197).

This inclusiveness of Góngora prefigures the inclusiveness of artists like Joyce and Faulkner, whose creation of neologisms signals a dissatisfaction with the limitations of conventional language, presenting us at word level with the fusion and duplicity of the baroque. González Echevarría also points out that Góngora was the first to reproduce African inflections in Spanish speech, in what he views as an early inscription of America's 'other' at the heart of Spanish baroque high art. An analogy can be drawn here with Joyce's incorporation of Hiberno-English as part of the cacophonous proliferation of voices and styles in *Ulysses*, as well as Faulkner's inclusion of African American and Southern speech, even if, unlike Góngora, Joyce and Faulkner are operating from the margins of their respective traditions. Góngora's mercurial use of

hyperbaton could not be ignored, as it should not be in Joyce's case. The attack against 'the tyranny of syntax' that hyperbaton supposes has been celebrated as a sign of Joyce's fastidiousness as an artist, best encapsulated in his famous preoccupation with word order within the sentence. We may recall here Clifton Fadiman's flippant description of Faulkner's involved and profuse syntactical structure in *Absalom, Absalom!* as a nightmare of parsing (Fadiman 1999: 263), in the context of a review that presents us with a Faulkner who, 'as a technician ... has Joyce ... punch-drunk' (Fadiman 1999: 263). The same critic usefully, if short-sightedly, decries Faulkner's narrative in the same novel as 'the Anti-Narrative, a set of complex devices used to keep the story from being told' (Fadiman 1999: 263). This 'anti-narrative', which constantly frustrates the readers' desire for completion and unity by keeping the story in the throes of a protracted resolution, reminds us of Joyce's parodic interruptions and digressions in 'Aelous' and 'Cyclops', the two chapters in *Ulysses* centred on the task of arriving at a native Irish historiography. It is no accident that *Absalom, Absalom!* should have been the novel where Faulkner most ambitiously tackles his own historiographic project: positing the impossibility of a univocal version of history through the digressive and conflicting range of voices that configure the novel's narrative structure. As Gerald Martin has persuasively argued, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is an equally impressive historiographic battleground, where competing versions of Latin American history wage a war whose victory seems to be ultimately a pyrrhic one (Martin 1989: 95-116).

Joyce's and Faulkner's use of time is also warped and distorted, foregrounding their use of a temporal unit that implodes the notion of linearity and the 'Apollonian' and discreet accumulation of time of classical reason: *the instant*. David H. Stewart wrote on Faulkner's deployment of time in these terms, by noting that in his novels, and more specifically in *Absalom, Absalom!*, '[t]ime, instead of being a process and a sequence with objective periods, is still a compressed instant' (Stewart 1999: 313). In *Ulysses*, the instant is the unit through

which Joyce's characters filter their sensory recognition of their surroundings provoking the collapse of the authorial, all-encompassing gaze. In this regard, Joyce foregrounds the figure of the *flâneur*, whose shifting perspective causes the disruption of linearity, as the cityscape is broken into myriad reflections that refuse univocal recognition. Faulkner's Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury* represents the culmination of instantaneous temporality and the absolute breakdown of sequential time. In García Márquez, the instant becomes the unit in which competing versions of (hi)story coalesce, a notion underlined in the memorable first line of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: 'Many years later, facing the firing-squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía would remember that remote afternoon when his father took him to see ice for the first time' (García Márquez 1987: 7). (7) This implosion of linearity is reckoned as central to the project of the baroque 'which mobilizes the notions of ambivalence and difference to provide ... the "Reason of the Other" which permits us to see the modern world from within' (Turner 1994: 22).

As González Echevarría has recognised, this 'Reason of the Other' is intrinsic to the adoption of baroque aesthetics in a colonial context. This explains why the aesthetics of the baroque was such an attractive proposition to New World artists in the Spanish colonies (8), even if the baroque was also the dominant mode of expression of imperial counter-reformation Spain. The vindication of the baroque as a primary Latin American mode of expression is echoed in Alejo Carpentier's definition of Latin American art as essentially baroque in his well-publicised essays about 'The Marvellous Real' in Latin American literature (Carpentier 1967: 92-112), as well as in José Lezama Lima's theories about its essential 'baroquism' (Lezama Lima 1969: 33-57). Thus, Alejo Carpentier's theories on the 'marvellous real' have the effect of transfiguring magical realism into another manifestation of an eternal Latin American baroque. Inscripting the work of a magical realist like García Márquez into a baroque genealogy forces us to consider how his work, with its assured historiographic drive, contributes to the multiplicity of versions of

history 'whose main feature is the shuffling of competing histories which attempt to find the master version of American history' (González Echevarría 1993: 171). This is an American history which preys on the monstrous and insatiable aesthetics of the baroque, and may well be engulfed in the cannibalising thrust of its expression.

It is at the crux of these warring versions of history that I propose we may encounter Joyce's, Faulkner's and García Márquez's baroque projects, as the Latin American artist seeks allegiances with those marginal figures of modernity intent on voicing their own history through the subversion of prevailing historiographies. A special kind of historiographic revision requires, thus, a special kind of expression, one that will enable us to hear the voices of the 'other', and will relentlessly pursue their cultural re-inscription. The language of baroque expression, characterised by cumulative exhaustion and disruption, and duplicity (exemplified by the stylistics of the pun, the portmanteau word, irony, pastiche, parody and allegory) represents the *summa aestetica* of the post-colonial imagination. In this regard, the deployment of baroque expression by the three authors under discussion will be understood as an *a fortiori* aesthetic source for the apocalyptic and Messianic drive of their narratives. It must be understood as uncompromisingly intertwined

with their re-creation of national and local narratives from the point of view of the colonial and the defeated, rather than as a felicitous or regrettable by-product of an aesthetic of modernity. Joyce's recourse to allegorical parable in 'Aeolus', where the aspirations for liberation of a colonial people are paralleled with the Mosaic Old Testament story of delivery from bondage, as well as the repeated elevation of Bloom to prophetic status in 'Cyclops' and 'Circe' attest to the impossibility of a univocal historiography resulting in the erasing of oppressed and marginalised voices. Stephen's 'Parable of the Plums' in 'Aeolus', as ambiguous, oblique and sensual an allegory as one could expect from baroque expression, acts as a further negation of a transparent and straightforward Irish historiography intent on suppressing the specificity of its subject(s). Faulkner's recurrent fictive holocausts act as a literary reminder of the dangers of burying a suppressed alternative historiography. As the last author in this genealogy, García Márquez brings the apocalyptic entanglements and complications of the post-colonial baroque to their resolute climax, ensuring that 'the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.'

Diana Pérez García

Notes

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2 According to Lezama Lima: 'amongst us the baroque was the art of counter-conquest' ('entre nosotros el barroco fue un arte de la contraconquista') (Lezama Lima, 1969: 47).

3 'Faulkner está metido en toda la novelística de América Latina'.

4 'el método faulkneriano'

5 In his preface to a 1971 edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Borges writes: 'To speak of literary experiments is to speak of exercises that have failed in a more or less brilliant way, such as Góngora's *Soledades* or the work of Joyce'.

6 Roberto González Echevarría provides us with the Webster dictionary definition of the term 'Gongorism' as: 'a Spanish literary style esp. associated with the poet Góngora and his imitators, characterized by studied obscurity of meaning and expression and by extensive use of metaphorical imagery, exaggerated conceits, paradoxes, neologisms, and other ornate devices- compare EUPHUISM. 2a: an excessively involved, ornate and artificial style of writing' (González Echevarría, 1993: 196).

7 'Muchos años después, frente al pelotón de fusilamiento, el coronel Aureliano Buendía había de recordar aquella tarde remota en que su padre lo llevó a conocer el hielo'.

8 Or how they may be 'a source as well as a tradition' (González Echevarría, 1993: 5).

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Two Contemporary Medeas

By Zoraide Rodrigues Carrasco de Mesquita (1)

Abstract

This article focuses on two rewritings of Euripides's Medea – Marina Carr's By the Bog of Cats (1998) and Paulo Pontes/Chico Buarque's Gota D'Água: Uma Tragédia Brasileira (1975) – with the intention of discussing the similar solutions found by the Irish and the Brazilian playwrights to culturally contextualise their versions of the Greek tragedy in contemporary times.

The five plays belonging to the second phase of Marina Carr's theatre production – the so-called 'phase of Midlands' (1994-2002) – present a common feature regarding the technique employed by the Irish playwright. This consists of, as Eilis Ní Dhuibhne observes, 'underpinning a play with a folktale or myth': 'Portia Coughlan alludes to Shakespearian drama, *By the Bog of Cats* and *On Raftery's Hill* to classical myths. In the case of *The Mai*, its folkloristic parallel is not a well-known story, but a local legend ...' (Dhuibhne 2003: 69). Although the essayist does not mention *Ariel*, the same technique is used in this play, since its starting point is classical myths as recorded by Euripides and Aeschylus.

Carr's characteristic technique is clearly an intertextual procedure, especially on two levels: allusion, which can be observed in all the five plays mentioned, and rewriting, which is the process used in *By the Bog of Cats*.

The aim of this article is to appreciate the way Marina Carr retells Medea as well as to establish a parallel between *By the Bog of Cats* and a Brazilian play, *Gota D'Água: Uma Tragédia Brasileira*, both of them based on Euripides' play. Manfred Pfister's criteria for examining intertextuality will be used as support for the analysis where necessary. In his "*Konzept der Intertextualität*" he proposes six criteria, four of which will be explained: *Referentialität* (reference), *Kommunikativität* (Communication), *Strukturalität* (structure) and *Selektivität* (selectivity).

By the Bog of Cats (1998) is referred to by Melissa Sihra as a 'contemporary version of *Medea* culturally contextualized' (Sihra 2003: 97), and

the same can be said about *Gota D'Água* (1975) by Paulo Pontes and Chico Buarque. Although each of these plays presents traces of its specific context, they are not limited to national problems, and it is surprising that playwrights from different countries and writing in different periods of time found similar solutions on rewriting the Greek tragedy. Moreover, the Irish and the Brazilian playwrights share the same concern about language. Carr has been praised by critics for the beauty of the images in her plays. For Eilis Ní Dhuibhne, for example, Marina Carr is 'a storyteller with a lyrical bent whose work combines poetic and narrative qualities' (Dhuibhne 2003: 66), while Melissa Sihra, when referring to *By the Bog of Cats*, comments that 'the landscape from which Carr writes' is 'where the world of poetry and storytelling is a necessary part of the everyday' (Sihra 2003: 103). On the other hand, Paulo Pontes and Chico Buarque chose to write their play in verses with the purpose of 'poetically' intensifying the dialogues, 'in part because poetry is better to express the depth of feelings that move the characters', and also because their intention, by using verses, was an attempt to make words regain their value. Taking into account that language is 'the medium for organised thought' (2), the Brazilian authors gave priority to language over any other theatrical devices, aiming to translate the complexity of the Brazilian situation at the time (Pontes/ Buarque 1975: 18).

As rewritings of Euripides' *Medea*, both the Brazilian and the Irish plays maintain the 'set of devices with which one text pointedly refers to another, its "pretext"' (Pfister 1991: 210): the

main characters as well as the topics of the Greek tragedy (abandonment, rejection, banishment, revenge and infanticide). Therefore, there is clear reference to Euripides' play; besides, as a literary canon, the 'pretext' can be easily recognised by the reader as the structural basis for the intertexts. The deviations from the 'pretext', however, are more relevant than the similarities, since they permit the appreciation of how old texts are renewed and contextualised. Such shifts correspond to Pfister's selectivity, which includes additions, suppressions and substitutions regarding characters, structure and motives.

The Medea protagonists, Hester Swane (*By the Bog of Cats*), and Joana (*Gota D'Água*) are similar to each other regarding personality; however, the Irish and the Brazilian 'Medeas' are distanced from the original one in relation to their position in society and also to the solution they choose at the end as a way of not submitting to their antagonist's power. Interestingly, these shifts also contribute to bringing Hester and Joana closer together.

The three Medeas have a wild temperament and possess magical, supernatural powers. Whereas Medea herself has the capacity to make potions to make old people look young and strong again, as well as the ability to prepare poison which can impregnate robes, Hester has secret powers that are not revealed, but also extraordinary, acute senses, as she sees things that are invisible to other people, hears ghosts and talks to them. On the other hand, Joana, the Brazilian Medea, takes part in rituals of African origin and practices *macumba*. These three strong women allow their instinctive nature free reign; they love and hate passionately, and they become furious when they face injustice, not fearing the experience of feelings of revenge. They are, in short, neither tamed nor submissive women. *Medea* is described as an impulsive and mad woman, and Jason calls her a 'lioness'. Hester is characterised as a 'savage tinker', a 'dangerous witch' and as a 'mad' woman. Joana is compared to a 'snake'; she is like 'hell' with her 'aggressive and intolerable temperament',

although she is also a 'princess' and a 'queen' for an admirer of hers (3). Carr emphasises the savage nature of women that is made manifest in the characters' names: Hester Swane, whose surname resembles 'swan', and Catwoman, the protagonist's double; moreover, as soon as Hester cuts her daughter's throat 'in one savage movement', she begins to 'wail, a terrible animal wail' (BBC: 339) (4).

On the other hand, neither Hester nor Joana is a princess in exile. Unlike Medea, they belong to the place where they live, although they are outcasts of society. Hester is a tinker (or a traveller), a 'national outsider'. (5) Joana, who does not have a regular job, had worked as a seamstress and as a midwife, had taken care of mentally ill people, had carried large buckets of water; in short, she did whatever was possible for her to make a living. Both Hester and Joana struggle to remain in their home which belongs to them by moral rights, although not by law. When they are banished, both of them choose death: Hester kills herself with a knife, after killing her daughter, whereas Joana, together with her two children, commits suicide by eating poisoned meatballs. The similar dénouement in the Brazilian and the Irish plays is an important shift in relation to Euripides's *Medea*, in which the device of *deus ex machina* is used to provide the heroine's escape in regal splendour.

Medea, as well as Jason, their children, Creon and the princess, have their counterparts in Marina Carr's and Paulo Pontes/Chico Buarque's plays; but regarding the other characters, the contemporary playwrights have proceeded to suppressions, substitutions or additions in order to contextualise their plays.

In *By the Bog of Cats*, the counterparts to the central group of characters are Hester, Carthage, their daughter, Xavier Cassidy and Caroline. Two other characters, Monica and Catwoman, maintain little resemblance to the Greek chorus, since they understand Hester's motivations, and encourage and defend her. Medea's nurse, her childminder, Aegeus, and the messenger, however, do not have correspondents. In their place, nevertheless, there are other characters that comprise the

social framework of the Bog of Cat's community: a representative of the Catholic Church (Father Willow), the new-rich (Mrs. Kilbride, Carthage's mother), and the waiters working at Carthage and Caroline's wedding party. One of these waiters, the Young Dunne, has a dream of becoming an astronaut. Hester herself is a tinker, whereas Xavier Cassidy, the counterpart to Creon in Euripides' play, is a rich land-owner. There is also a supernatural being, The Ghost Fancier, who appears in the Bog of Cats, to announce Hester's death.

Hester says that she has two sides, a decent one and a violent one. Her evil part surfaces when she feels threatened by banishment from her space. The figure who incarnates this threat is Xavier Cassidy. His very appearance in the last act of Carr's play is threatening: 'Xavier Cassidy comes up behind her [Hester] from the shadows, demonic, red-faced, drink-taken, carries a gun' (BBC: 328). The gun is the sign of violence that defines his personality. In his speech he expresses his prepotency. 'I ran your mother out of here and I'll run you too like a frightened hare' (BBC: 328), he says to Hester. The protagonist does not assimilate Cassidy's discourse. She does not accept his words, and this means that she does not accept his authority; it also means that she does not submit; but this very fact causes her expulsion. Hester does not fear her opponent and fights with him. At the end of this scene, her speech is ambiguous, giving the impression that she will continue to defy him, on the one hand, and that she agrees with Cassidy and will leave the place as ordered, on the other hand:

HESTER (laughs at him) – You're sweatin'. Always knew ya were yella to the bone. Don't worry, I'll be lavin' this place tonight, though not the way you or anywan else expects. Ya call me a witch, Cassidy? This is nothin', you just wait and see the real –' (BBC: 331).

Xavier Cassidy's main concern is the possession of land. For him, family is second to business, and he has accepted his daughter's marriage to Carthage only because his son-in-law might be useful: Carthage is young and can help him in his business of acquiring more and more land. Cassidy has purchased Hester's land

in the Bog of Cats; therefore, it belongs to him by law; nevertheless, Hester continues to be the real owner of it. The very name of the space reinforces her moral rights over the land: the real owner of the Bog of Cats should be the Catwoman, the protagonist's double. The conflict between Cassidy and Hester is caused by their irreconcilable views on the meaning of land. Whereas for Cassidy it is connected to business and the possession of material goods, for Hester it is coloured with sentimental tones. It is impossible for her to leave, since this is the place where she expects to join her mother, Josie Swane, who, although she abandoned her when she was a seven-year-old child, will one day return to the Bog of Cats, as Hester faithfully believes. The dialogue between Cassidy and Hester makes evident his concern with written and signed contracts, modes of legalisation used in our society. Hester offers him part of the money to recuperate the land which she had sold at the time when she 'was bein' coerced and bullied from all sides', but now that she has 'regained' her 'pride', she is certain that she must stay in the Bog of Cats. Her opponent, however, is inflexible: 'A deal's a deal' (BBC: 293). The discourse based on legality contaminates Caroline – 'sure ya signed it' – and Carthage – 'He [Xavier Cassidy] signin' his farm over to me this evenin' –', but it is not assimilated by Hester: 'Bits of paper, writin', means nothin', can aisy be unsigned' (BBC: 283 and 289). The characters' dissimilar points of view cause an unsolvable conflict between them. The fact is that progress and civilisation require the banishment of the marginalised travellers, and Hester perfectly understands the point: 'The truth is you want to eradicate me, make out I never existed' (BBC: 315). Although a strong and defiant woman, she cannot manage to defeat the rich man who is protected by law. Hester's sole triumph is to leave her permanent mark of blood on that soil, which morally belongs to her. The moment of her death is the impressive scene that closes the play. As in a ritual, she and the invisible Ghost Fancier 'go into a death dance with the fishing knife, which ends plunged into Hester's heart. She falls to the ground. Exit Ghost Fancier with knife' (BBC: 341). This scene, poetically

conceived for its beauty and ambiguity, matches the splendour of Medea's escape.

Closer to Euripides' *Medea* than *By the Bog of Cats*, including the process of not changing the names of some characters, such as Jasão (Jason), Creonte (Creon), and Egeu (Aegeus), by maintaining the chorus, by presenting a counterpart to Medea's nurse and her childminder blended into one character (Corina, Joana's best friend), and also by a sort of Messenger (Boca Pequena, who is, in fact, an informant who betrays his people), the Brazilian play, nevertheless, also focuses on social groups from a district located in Rio de Janeiro. Thus, the lower class is represented by a group of four washerwomen; by Egeu, an old man who repairs radios, by his wife Corina, and by three men who work all day – although what they do to earn money is not clear, except for Cacetão, who is a gigolo. In their spare time these men meet to drink beer and talk about their passions - football, samba, and women – at a bar owned by Galego, a foreigner. Four characters complete the social framework: Joana herself, who lives in this community of poor people; Jasão, a *sambista* (he composes and sings samba); Creonte, the rich and powerful man and his daughter, Alma, the petty bourgeoisie who is going to marry Jasão.

Politically engaged, *Gota D'Água* represents the Brazilian society of the 1970s, but it also points to the reality of all the humiliated people living elsewhere. According to Paulo Pontes and Chico Buarque, the play intends to show a society that was faced with a fierce capitalism 'produced by the brutal concentration of wealth' (Pontes/Buarque 1975: 9). During that time the lower classes were being ignored even by the culture produced in Brazil. The authors of *Gota D'Água*, however, credit the people with the source of national identity, and therefore the poor men and women who strive for life are central in their play. In this sense, it is evident why the authors had thought of a counterpart to the Greek chorus. Although the chorus is an element that defines the Greek tragedy, appropriate to ancient times when the collective experience was shared, by maintaining the chorus - composed by four

washerwomen - the playwrights emphasise the common experience shared by the people of a poor community whose suffering and deprivations motivate solidarity with each other.

In *Gota D'Água*, the heroine's antagonist is Creonte, the proprietor of ninety houses which had been sold to poor people. He is not a benefactor. In fact, Creonte has become very rich exploiting the poor. The people who bought their houses from Creonte believed that they would pay off for their debts in ten years. However, the instalments increase each month; moreover, interest and monetary correction are applied to the agreed value of the property; therefore, these people often fail to comply with their commitments. Joana is one of them. As for her, she has already paid a fair sum of money for her house, but still owes a lot of money to Creonte, who is a thief. She does not hesitate to call him names publicly, and her behaviour makes the big man furious. He is afraid of her powers and now she is a nuisance; in consequence, he decides to banish Joana from the community. Old Egeu, who is the only one aware of the exploitation suffered by his neighbours and himself, makes an attempt to protect Joana. He talks to his fellows, trying to make them conscious of the situation, and succeeds in convincing them that whatever happens to one of them affects all others. They can win the struggle against Creonte only if they keep together to claim their rights.

EGEU: ... *If we / let Creonte undisturbedly put/ this woman on the street, the dumped/ tomorrow can be you, .../ But no one can live in his place/ for which he had paid more than he owed/ and be dependent on the sympathy of someone else/ to live in peace. No. Your space is sacred/ ... (GA: 140) (6)*

Creonte's main target, however, is Joana. Very cleverly, he manages to calm the claimants down by promising not to charge them for the late instalments, with the condition that they pay the next instalments on time. Joana, however, must leave the house she lives in at once. He goes in person to the protagonist's house, accompanied by the police, in order to force her to leave. The dialogue below shows

the confrontation between the two characters. It is worth noting Creonte's violent discourse and the same concern with legal documents and signatures as Cassidy's in the Irish play:

CREONTE - ... *I am going to be friendly/ once again/ Take this money/ Leave without protesting, take it easy, I can give you / a little more...*

JOANA - *You can't force me to get out ...*

CREONTE - *Whether you voluntarily and quickly leave,/ or the policemen here can force you...*

JOANA - *This is my place...*

CREONTE - *Papers,/ document... Deed, where is it?/ This conversation is over./ No pardon, no agreement/ Either you quietly leave or we will have a scandal here,/ the choice is yours... (He beckons the policeman) / Guys... (GA: 155) (7)*

The scene that closes *Gota D'Água* presents two movements in quick sequence, as if following the syncopation of the samba. Firstly, just when Creonte is delivering a speech to praise his son-in-law during Jasão and Alma's wedding, Egeu and Corina suddenly enter the room: 'Egeu has Joana's corpse in his arms and Corina is carrying the children's corpses; they place the corpses before Creonte and Jasão' (GA: 174) (8). There is a pause; everybody stands still. The second movement prevents the audience's emotional involvement with the action by using the Brechtian technique, aiming to maintain the audience's awareness of the serious subject of the play. Thus, in the sequence, all the cast, including Joana and the two boys who played the role of her children, begin to sing the theme-song. The play closes with the projection of the headlines in a newspaper reporting on a tragedy in a suburb in Rio de Janeiro.

Notes

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A final remark on these two plays based on *Medea* may be made in reference to their titles. Neither Carr's nor Pontes/Buarque's heroines give their names to their plays. In the Irish rewriting, the space where the action develops stands for the title, emphasising the community and Hester's inner drama. "The Bog of Cats" is also one of the songs composed by Hester's mother that refers to the bog, a place of dreams and vain promises, a place to which Josie Swane 'one day will return,/In mortal form or in ghostly form' (BBC: 262). Curiously, the title of the Brazilian play also refers to a song actually composed by Chico Buarque and fictionally by Jasão, Joana's lover. Its refrain – 'Leave my heart in peace/ for it is a pot full of sorrow/ and any lack of attention/ please, don't/ can be the last straw' (9) (GA: 47) – refers to the problematic situation of the characters in the play. It is the image of Joana's deep sorrow for having been abandoned by Jasão and banished by Creonte and of what she can do in such circumstances, for she is about to explode with rage and bitterness. It also expresses the suffering of the people of the community since they are under pressure to pay for a debt they cannot afford.

The common concerns and the similar solutions presented in the two versions of *Medea* lead to the conclusion that, despite the traces of Irishness in *By the Bog of Cats* and of Brazilianness in *Gota D'Água*, the meaning of these plays are not limited to the historical contexts of the countries each one belongs to. Both of them mirror contemporary society: just as happens on stage, the marginalised temporally occupy the centre, but they are defeated in the end by the central dominant power.

Zoraide Rodrigues Carrasco de Mesquita

2 ‘... um pouco porque a poesia exprime melhor a densidade de sentimentos que move os personagens’
.... A linguagem, instrumento do pensamento organizado...’

3 ‘[Joana] tem gênio de cobra...’ (p. 56); ‘... você é um inferno ...’ (p. 134); ‘[Esse seu] temperamento agressivo e insuportável... (p. 130); [Ô, Joana... Joana...] princesa... rainha... (p. 154).

4 BBC stands for By the Bog of Cats.

5 In an interview (quoted by Enrica Cerquoni), Marina Carr explains why she has made the counterpart of Medea in *By the Bog of Cats* a traveller: ‘I chose to make her a traveller because travellers are our national outsiders, aren’t they?’ (2003: 178).

6 EGEU: ... se a gente/deixar Creonte jogar calmamente/ essa mulher na rua, o despejado/ amanhã pode ser você,.../ Mas ninguém pode viver num lugar/ pelo qual pagou mais do que devia/ e estar dependendo da simpatia/ de um cidadão pra conseguir morar/ tranqüilo. Não. O seu chão é sagrado/ ... Note: GA stands for Gota D’Água.

7 CREONTE: ... Vou ser camarada/ mais uma vez./ Apanha aí esse dinheiro/ Saia sem chiar, calma, sou capaz de dar/ mais um pouco...

JOANA: Você não pode me botar pra fora...

CREONTE: Se você não sair por bem, ligeiro, / sai no pau...

JOANA: Este aqui é meu lugar...

CREONTE: Papel, / documento... Escritura, onde é que está?/ Fim de papo. / Não tem perdão nem alvará/ Ou sai na macioteira ou no sarapatel, / escolhe... (Faz sinal para os guardas)/ Pessoal...

8 ‘EGEU carregando o corpo de JOANA no colo e CORINA carregando os corpos dos filhos; põem os corpos na frente de CREONTE e JASÃO...’

9 ‘Deixa em paz meu coração/ que ele é um pote até aqui de mágoa/ E qualquer desatenção/ faça não/ Pode ser a gota d’água’.

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Appendix

Marina Carr's *Ariel* (2002): translation into Brazilian Portuguese, by Zoraide R. C.

The passage below is the end of Act 2, the moment when Frances discovers that her husband, Fermoy Fitzgerald, had sacrificed their own daughter, Ariel, ten years earlier. It is worth noting the rapid sequence of events: as soon as Frances hears about Fermoy's crime, she does not hesitate and kills him as revenge for the death of Ariel.

FRANCES – Você não vai a lugar nenhum. Foi você, não foi? Foi você.

FERMOY – Você só percebeu agora? Pensei que você soubesse há muito tempo.

FRANCES – Que eu soubesse o que há muito tempo?

FERMOY – Frances... então, você não sabia... Olhe, agora não é hora para essa conversa.

FRANCES – Você. Sempre você, e eu que vasculhei o mundo para encontrá-la. Você. E eu me matando de tristeza. Você. Ontem à noite mesmo sonhei que ela entrava por essa porta e dez anos de loucura desapareciam. Ela tinha uma vida. Uma. E você está me dizendo que lhe tirou a vida?

FERMOY – Ariel foi, do início ao fim, um sonho que passou por nós. Tivemos o privilégio de sua companhia por algum tempo, mas ela nunca nos pertenceu. Trouxemos para esse mundo algo que não era daqui e que tínhamos que devolver.

FRANCES – Devolver? Nós a devolvemos? Devolvemos para onde?

FERMOY – Lembra as asas que ela tinha quando nasceu?

FRANCES – Asas? Que asas?

FERMOY – As asas em suas omoplatas.

FRANCES – Do que você está falando? Que asas? Em suas omoplatas? Aquelas excrescências nos ombros, é disso que você está falando? FERMOY – Eram o começo de asas.

FRANCES – Eram uma formação de osso e cartilagem endurecida, só isso, benignas, formações minúsculas, e que foram retiradas.

FERMOY – Você está chamando isso de todos os nomes, menos do que era de fato. Deixe-me lhe dizer uma coisa, Frances. Antes de conhecer você, muito antes, eu tive um sonho, um sonho tão lindo, que eu desejei permanecer assim, sonhando, até o fim dos tempos. Estou num campo amarelo, batendo um papo amigavelmente com Deus, quando essa menina de asas apareceu ao lado dele. Então pergunto: de quem ela é? E Deus diz que ela lhe pertence. E eu digo: empreste-me essa menina, por favor. Não, diz ele, ela não tem o sabor da terra, usando essa expressão, como se estivesse falando de sorvete. E eu, tolamente, digo: vou levá-la comigo de qualquer jeito. Está bem, diz ele, sorrindo sorratamente para mim, está bem, mas lembre-se de que é um empréstimo. Sei, sei, digo eu, mas de nada sabia. E o tempo chegará quando vou querê-la de volta, diz ele. Sim, sim, digo, voando do campo com ela, antes que ele mudasse de idéia. Ariel. Era a Ariel.

FRANCES – Diga-me onde ela está.

FERMOY – Estou dizendo, foi com Ariel que saí correndo do campo. E depois acordo e começa o encantamento. Você, Ariel, Elaine, Stephen. Todas as pequenas jóias deste mundo choveram sobre nós. Vivemos dez bons anos, não vivemos? Foram os melhores anos de nossas vidas e não sabíamos. Ele deu, deu, deu e, depois, como a maré, voltou e levou tudo embora.

FRANCES – (UM GEMIDO DE DOR, CHORANDO COMO NUNCA, FICA ALI, SOLUÇANDO, SUFOCANDO, GEMENDO) – Ariel... Ariel... Ariel... Como você teve coragem? Você amava aquela criança... Como você teve coragem? (SACODE-O).

FERMOY – Fui obrigado! Fui obrigado!

FRANCES – Foi obrigado!

FERMOY – É, fui obrigado! Você acha que eu queria sacrificar Ariel? Eu fui obrigado.

FRANCES – Sacrificar? Você a sacrificou? O que você fez com ela?

FERMOY – Já disse que tinha que devolvê-la para o lugar de onde ela veio.

FRANCES – Ela veio daqui mesmo, de você, de mim.

FERMOY – Ela apareceu do nada, veio de Deus, e para Deus foi devolvida.

FRANCES – Você a sacrificou! Aaaagh. Por que você não sacrificou a si mesmo se ele queria um sacrifício? Por que você não se recusou?

FERMOY – Claro que me recusei. Briguei com ele até não poder mais.

FRANCES – Não foi com nenhum Deus que você fez um pacto. Nenhum Deus exige essas coisas.

FERMOY – Meu Deus exigiu.

FRANCES – Você culpa Deus, culpa todo mundo, só não culpa a si mesmo. Tudo se torna claro agora, claro como água. Você fez tudo pelo poder, não foi, um vodu realizado nas trevas em troca do poder. Você colocou minha filha num altar de sacrifício em troca de poder. Você progrediu nestes dez anos desde o sacrifício de Ariel. Você subiu à custa da inocência de Ariel. Você negociou-a em nome de sua carreira.

FERMOY – Sim, é isso. Sim, é isso mesmo. Tinha que fazer o que fiz. Era o preço exigido.

FRANCES – E você ainda tem coragem de me contar historinhas de fadas sobre ela.

FERMOY – Frances, tenho consciência do que fiz. Admito minha parcela de culpa, mas quando estou prostrado diante dele, sinto-me impelido a lhe devolver a parte que lhe é de direito. Tenho vivido de acordo com as instruções dele. Ele pediu o impossível e obedeci, e depois ele partiu, deixando-me aqui transformado em cinzas. Tenho muito medo de que ele não esteja lá quando eu partir. Não, meu medo maior é que ele esteja lá.

FRANCES – (SUAVEMENTE) –Mas Ariel... Fermoy... É sobre Ariel que você está falando.

FERMOY – Não torne as coisas mais difíceis do que já são.

FRANCES – Você é que tornou as coisas difíceis. Antes o mundo era, para você, para os outros, como um playground.

FERMOY – Não é um playground, nunca foi. Aqui é onde ele nos persegue como se fôssemos corças e nos mantém vivos para se divertir. FRANCES – O que foi que vi em você quando o conheci?

FERMOY – Vou lhe dizer o que você viu. Viu um homem capaz de qualquer coisa. E isso incendiou sua vidinha. Viu um homem que poderia dar cabo de seus filhos e você não correu dele, mas para ele. Foi isso que atraiu você quando me conheceu e é isso que mantém você perto de mim. Túmulos, lápides, a excitação dos cemitérios e a promessa de novos funerais.

FRANCES – Você é capaz de dizer qualquer coisa para ter companhia em sua carnificina.

FERMOY – Você me queria e ainda me quer. Só seu orgulho a detém.

FRANCES – Eu queria bem a meu primeiro marido. Já estava farta de você antes mesmo da lua de mel. Você roubou-me a vida, tirou meus filhos de mim, tirou tudo que eu pensava que era e eu, uma boba sem nenhuma iniciativa, abri as portas para o ataque. Nunca mais.

FERMOY – Quer o divórcio? Você é quem manda.

FRANCES – Você pensa que vai se livrar facilmente? Onde ela está?

FERMOY – Você jamais saberá.

FRANCES – Venho de uma família de pessoas de bem, meu pai costumava salvar aranhas no bar, pegava os ratos nas mãos, levava-os para fora e os soltava no campo, pessoas boas, Charlie, James,

Ariel, pessoas meigas, meigas, meigas, não há lugar para elas neste ninho de cobras. Onde ela está?
(FERE-O COM UMA FACA)

FERMOY – (CAMBALEIA) – Frances.

FRANCES – (MAIS UMA ESTOCADA) – Onde ela está?

FERMOY – Você pensa que pode acabar comigo... Me dê isso.

LUTAM. FRANCES ESFAQUEIA-O NOVAMENTE.

FRANCES – E você pensava que eu tinha medo de faca. (OUTRA FACADA) Onde ela está?

FERMOY – (CAI NO CHÃO. ELA SOBE EM CIMA DELE) – Não... Frances... não... Pare... pare.

FRANCES – E por acaso você parou quando Ariel gritou por clemência? Parou? Diga onde ela está.

FERMOY – Não era... isso... Bom Deus em sua...

FRANCES – Fale. Onde ela está?

FERMOY – (SUSSURRA ANTES DE MORRER) – Lago Cuura.

FRANCES – Lago Cuura.

ELA JOGA FORA A FACA. MÚSICA “MORTE E VIDA”. APAGAM-SE AS LUZES.

The Transfiguration of History: Knowledge, Time and Space in Northern Irish Poetry

By Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação (1)

*"I will go back where I belong, / with one foot first and one eye blind,
I will go back where I belong / In the fore being of mankind"*

Louis MacNeice

Abstract

This article seeks to explore the various ways in which the poets Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson have creatively responded to a painting by the Spanish artist Francisco Goya entitled: 'Shootings of the Third of May 1808' (1814), by transplanting it into the medium of poetry. I will argue that in 'Summer 1969' (Heaney North, 1971) and 'The Third of May, 1814' (Carson Breaking News, 2003), both poets dislocate categories of time and space in order to produce a poetic translation that projects Goya's Spanish shootings onto the political conflict of Northern Ireland at the time of the Troubles.

In the twilight of what was going to be denominated artistic Modernism, Charles Baudelaire, in his visionary criticism, 'The Saloon of 1846', asserted:

Memory is the great criterion of art; art is a kind of mnemotechny of the beautiful. Now exact imitation spoils a memory [...] A memory is equally thwarted by too much particularization as by too much generalization" (Baudelaire 1995: 84).

Through his appreciation of painting and arts in general, which was conceived even before T. S. Eliot's revolutionary essay 'Tradition and Individual Talent', the poet called the critics' attention to the relationship between specific aesthetic features which are likely to last and others which are prone to get lost due to their historical transitoriness. He affirms that they contain in themselves an element of the absolute and of the particular. By the end of the article, he concludes that in all centuries people had their own idea of whether or not a piece of art was considered beautiful, though he emphasises that artists and critics must turn to a 'new and special beauty' that exists in the life

of the cities, which configures 'modern beauty' [...]. (Baudelaire 1995: 84,127).

Although Baudelaire was the first to perceive the modern beauty encapsulated in the streets of Paris, it was the German philosopher Walter Benjamin who envisaged them, alongside their idiosyncrasies and ambiguities, as revolutionary instances. Thus, for the first time poetry was interpreted not simply according to its formal structure but to its capacity to capture and transcend historical determinations. After the collapse of the promises of innovation and technology prompted by modernism, postmodernism is faced with the task of preserving what is still legitimate in its premises. This is the point where I turn my attention to another consideration made by the poet in the same article. In his words, modern beauty is simultaneously associated with the creation of a 'weird and particular genre' called 'historical landscape'. which is 'neither free fantasy, nor has it any connection with the admirable slavishness of the naturalists; it is ethics applied to nature' (Baudelaire, 1995:112). If, in accordance with such a premise, the depiction of a historical landscape is irrevocably bound up in ethics and nature, it is relevant to

ask, “in an age of bare hands/ and cast iron” (Heaney 2006:3) if poetry that apprehends the themes and motifs of historical painting is capable of resisting the chains of time? In other words, what do its weirdness and ethics have to offer to poetry? Such is the insurmountable crisis of representation brought about by the postmodern predicament that it is also pertinent to question its effectiveness in the world today, since cultures and traditions are in a constant flow of exchange and translation.

With a view to starting my exploration I would like to affirm that the concept of translation and cultural difference I am taking into consideration is not the neoliberal multiculturalism that praises and celebrates diversity. On the contrary, I wish to employ the term as developed by Homi Bhabha and based on Benjamin’s considerations on the task of the translator. The Indian critic, grounded in a differentiated perception, claims that comparison between different cultures is possible ‘because all cultures are symbol forming and subject constituting, interpellative practices’, thus, in order to transpose their local historical borders, the artists are required to go through a ‘process of alienation and of secondariness in relation to itself. (Bhabha, 1990: 210). Thus, cultures are constantly in a state of continuous translation. As regards art’s transformative capacity to go beyond historical and geographical borders, there is an extremely insightful case in which that tension becomes clearer: contemporary poetry produced in Northern Ireland.

Apparently, against all odds, northern Irish poetry more than ever proves to be hustling and bustling around the world. Not so much for its capacity to conceive ‘works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past’ (<http://www.seamusheaney.org/>), as the Nobel Academia praised Heaney, but for its inexorable need to translate the past, and place it, as Kiberd pointed out ‘into a disturbing relationship with the present’. Irish memory has often been derisively linked to those historical paintings in which Virgil and Dante converse in a single frame (Kiberd: 1996: 630).

In the light of the conclusion drawn by the critic Declan Kiberd, the present article wishes to explore the ways in which the authors Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson pick up on the theme of historical painting – as the genre described by Baudelaire – and transplant it into the formal structure of the poem. In my view, this is the strategy through which they dislocate categories of time and space in order to produce knowledge and reflexive thought. Thus, more than a discourse which seeks to find Beauty beyond all means, poetry remains a powerful piece of art. Nevertheless, due to the different tonalities and shades created by both lyrics, I am going to focus more clearly on two poems that describe the same canvas by the Spanish painter Francisco Goya: ‘Summer 1969’ (*North*, 1971) and ‘Francisco Goya: The Third of May 1808, 1814’ (*Breaking News*, 2003).

In his own lifetime, the French writer and Spanish descendant Charles Yriarte (1832 – 1898), wished to cast a new reading of Frederico Goya’s paintings, especially as regards ‘Los Desastres’ – etchings of the Franco-Spanish civil war. According to him, his political canvases were not ‘facts, particular episodes’ based on Verism, but ‘general ideas, analogies, sometimes true, always believable compositions’ (Yriarte apud Luxemburg 1998). Through the apparent chaotic placement of figures with no heroic action, and who are buried in a dream-like atmosphere of defeat, fear, and suffering, the painter sceptically portrayed life from a political outlook. In this sense, Goya became a special ‘modern philosopher’ who exploited the theme of war, despair and lack of hope. According to David Sylvester, Goya was modern, and intrinsically connected to the present times for, in addition to conveying stark landscapes inhabited by anonymous characters, he was the first to give importance to subtle details that change the broader picture. Apropos of that, the critic mentions his special shaping of the mouths and their expressiveness. More than being simply a stylistic feature, it figures prominently in Goya’s work due to its capacity to catch the viewers’ eyes, reminding them of residue of humanity left in those fluctuating bodies.

Bearing the critics' conceptualisations in mind, *The Third of May 1808* can be interpreted as an emblem of peace and mainly because it captures a particular moment of the Spanish resistance against the French invasion and goes beyond its historical determination. However, such transcendence is not going to be associated with a mystical salvation but, as Walter Benjamin observed, a dialectical awakening from the continuum of history (Benjamin 1996: 255). At a first glance, the observer is overwhelmed by the contrast of the people who compose the picture: on the one hand there is an aligned firing squad and on the other, a mass of citizens who have been, or are yet to be executed. The disproportion was commented upon by Kenneth Clark: "by a stroke of genius [Goya] has contrasted the fierce repetition of the soldiers' attitudes and the steely line of their rifles, with the crumbling irregularity of their target" (Clark 1960: 123). However, suddenly the Jesus-like peasant at the centre of the frame, whose arms are cast open in the shape of an X, and whose mouth nervously tries to beg for his life, takes over his or her sight. Differently from the other characters, he wears light-coloured shirts and trousers, and is notably illuminated by a mundane lantern situated on the ground between the two groups. In the same way, the light draws attention to the bodies on the left and some victims who resemble more shadows than humans at the back.

Perceptibly, Goya was not simply preoccupied with the representation of a specific day, "Los fusilamientos de la montaña del Príncipe Pío", or "Los fusilamientos del tres de mayo", but with its importance in the mythical-historical chain. Even though the painter alludes to Jesus Christ's crucifixion, the peasant not only stands in a position similar to that of Jesus Christ, but also has stigmas on the right hand. The light which stems from the ground can be seen as a reference to the Holy Spirit, and the firing squad, as the Roman Empire – since Napoleon and his army's victories were compared to the ancient ones. Nevertheless, instead of delivering the image as a symbol of salvation, the artist is inclined to view it as an ultimate failure. Thus, the man's rendering to the Christ

is troubled as long as the French take over the land and the Emperor's militia slaughter innocent citizens. Thus, as uncertain and contradictory as the future of Spain, the canvas remains an *Andachtsbild* – or visual allegory, in Benjamin's suppositions. The term surfaced when the theoretician formulated his theory on the nature of Brecht's epic theatre. Accordingly, it is an image that, due to its idiosyncrasies, promotes reflexive thought and sirs up new discussions regarding society and art. Moreover, it is the perfect metaphor for the artist's quandary:

vacillating between historical abstraction and political projection, between despondency and defiance, between assault and retreat. The image keeps the aggressive tension inherent in such a mentality in an abeyance that allows it to stay put within the politically disenfranchised, and hence ideologically overcharged, realm of culture (Werckmeister 1996: 242).

In this fashion, due to the fact that the canvas questions traditional visions of history while proposing new challenges to the public, Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson decide to immortalise it in their poetry. There is a substantial likelihood that they chose this picture in order to detach themselves from their own personal dilemmas and comprehend the ins and outs of the Anglo-Irish conflicts from a distanced point of view. However, although both poems experiment with techniques from different traditions, both are built around the idea of symbol as proposed by another modern writer, William Butler Yeats. If on the one hand, the traditional literary analysis tends to envision that as a fixed instance that captures a single meaning, Yeats understood it as the manner in which the artist could resolve the intricate relationship between tradition and modernity. In the essay 'The Symbolism of poetry', the poet asks:

How can the arts overcome the slow dying of men's heart that we call the progress of the world, and lay their hands upon men's heart strings again, without becoming the religion as old times? (Yeats 1999: 162, 163)

And after a long prelude he answers that there must be a change of nature, a 'return to the imagination, the understanding that the laws of art, which are the hidden laws of the world, can alone bind the imagination'. (Yeats 1999:163) Probably because both poets have been brought up and raised in the same cultural landscape, their sensibility was highly affected by Yeats's poetic and theoretical oeuvre. However, the result of such intake is going to differ enormously: if on the one hand the Nobel Laureate employs a more 'emotional symbol', Carson applies the 'intellectual' one. Once again, I am taking advantage of Yeats theories in order to examine the effects of such procedures in the re-writing of the historical painting. All the same, even though their interpretation of the canvas comes through the symbolist approach, their view is also associated to an emblematic event in Northern Ireland: the repression of the Civil Rights Movement of 1969 and the subsequent civil war which lasted until the beginning of the nineties.

According to J. H. Whyte, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, founded in 1967, did not question the existence of Northern Ireland as a state, nor did they act in confrontation with the contemporary system, but they did demand equal rights for the population as a whole, for the bulk of public posts were occupied by Anglo-Irish people. Inspired by the American Civil Rights Movement, the organisation promoted marches and protests in various towns. Nonetheless, due to the tense state of affairs between England and Ireland, the Protestant right wing interpreted these acts as a libertarian campaign and violently repressed the movement. As the plot thickened, the Irish Republican Army went on the offensive, and responded to the assaults with more aggressive acts. The situation reached its peak in March 1972, when 'the British government suspended the Northern Ireland government and parliament, and introduced a direct rule from Westminster... Violence during the spring and summer of highest level' (Whyte 1995, p. 346). Unsurprisingly, such a grievous situation affected the arts world in general and the artists were required to give their account

of the issue. Under pressure and constrained by public opinion, both Heaney and Carson interpret those acts differently; while the former found peace in a cottage in the interior of Wicklow, as an *inner émigré*, the latter dissolves his poetic persona within the dark corners of the city of Belfast.

The poem "Summer 1969" is inserted in the second part of the book *North* (1972) by Seamus Heaney. Quite polemical due to its slight deviation from actual history in order to expose the human motivations for violence and war, the book was, paradoxically, both heavily criticised and highly praised by the general reviews. While Christopher Ricks claimed that *North* was a powerful source of civilisation, 'bending itself to deep excavations within the past of Ireland and of elsewhere [and] achiev[ing] a racked dignity in the face of horrors' (Ricks 1979: 5), Ciaran Carson disapproved of the technique of 'applying wrong notions of history' which transformed the poet into 'the laureate of violence – a mythmaker, an anthropologist of ritual killing, an apologist for "the situation", in the last resort, a mystifier' (Carson 1975: 84). Both outlooks are quite constructive in view of the poem in question, as it resorts to myth to capture the essence of the work of art. However, by implicitly tackling the situation of Northern Ireland – the artist used the Viking rites as a metaphor – it perpetrated the liberal stance that wars, violence, battles and rapes have always happened, and will continue to happen whether we wish them to or not.

Nonetheless, with the intention of undertaking a sensible account of the poem, I will seek to pay heed to what I consider its most important characteristic: subjective displacement. Even Carson acknowledges that the second part of the volume does justice to Heaney's talent, since it shows someone "trying to come to terms with himself instead of churning it out" (Carson 1975: 86) and I quite agree with him because Heaney portrays the dilemmas of the exiles in the same way that Edward Said sees it: in a contrapuntual manner. According to the Palestinian critic:

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions. (Said 2001: 186)

Even though the poet was not forced to leave his country, his poetic consciousness reflects this perception of simultaneity in the first three lines of the poem:

*While the Constabulary covered the mob
Firing into the Falls, I was suffering
Only the bullying sun of Madrid.
(Heaney 1999: 141)*

While the poet feels that he is indeed suffering very little in comparison to his countrymen, his vision is expanded for he is forced to translate himself in the culture of the Other – of Spain. While this transition seems to have been smooth as he is comfortably settled in Spain, his guilt for leaving his country is intense and, producing a lyric piece that naturalises violence, he is forced to go through a process of subjective annulment and to find a new means of representing the Northern Irish conflicts. The manner in which this configuration is achieved is the emotional symbol Yeats conceives. But before bringing the two laureates together, I wish to describe briefly the overall tone and structure of the poem, which also hints at the symbolic version he portrays. The speaker of the poem, through five asymmetrical stanzas, expresses his loneliness in Spain at the moment that he hears about the marches on the Falls Road. Relentlessly, the author compares Northern Ireland and Spain: first it is the heat and fish market with Joyce, ladies in shawls with the Guardia Civil and then Federico García Lorca and the television news. Nevertheless, in the last two stanzas, he summons up both entities in a single symbol: the canvas by Goya. It is as if Heaney erases his name from the poem and in its place, writes Goya.

*He painted with his fists and elbows, flourished
The stained cape of his heart as history charged.
(Heaney 1999: 141)*

Through the excerpt the reader perceives the total dissolution of the speaker's identity, mainly for the reason that the poet's wish to emphasise Goya imprinted his personal dilemmas and tones in the Spanish war against the French. By stating that the poet painted with his fists and elbows, Heaney conveys he was not just an ordinary painter, but also a fighter, whose emotions and motifs were affected by the war. Hence, he has not just simply represented the conflicts, but also critically conceptualised the sensation of producing art at the moment that his country was compared to a battlefield. Through this last part, the poet also builds forms of solidarity between Spain and Ireland because his experience becomes part of a greater whole, whose effects and vibrations are seen and felt elsewhere. It is associated to what Bhabha identifies as the concealing of the subjectivity's sovereignty:

the fragmentation of identity is often celebrated as a kind of pure anarchic liberalism or voluntarism, but I prefer to see it as a recognition of the importance of the alienation of the self in the construction of forms of solidarity. (Bhabha 1990: 211)

If on the one hand, Heaney depicts his personal anguishes and antinomies, which are embodied and endured in the structure of the poem – the poetic foot indecisively oscillates between ten, eleven and twelve and its stanzas follow the same pattern, having two and fourteen verses. On the other hand, because these are symptoms of guilt, typical of someone who left the battlefield for the cool breeze of the Prado Museum, his arguments are more emotionally bound than intellectually: they “call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions” (Yeats 1989: 157). Thus, while the poet apparently seems to be building bridges of solidarity between the communities, he is in fact embellishing a reality that seeks precise answers – or questions – such as Carson dares him to do in his criticism.

Despite the fact that Heaney destabilises a simplistic discourse present in both the parties that promoted the conflicts in Northern

Ireland, he ends up falling into his own trap. No sooner does he deviate from the original motivation of the poem, which is the painful feeling of not being in his homeland while the Constabulary takes over Falls Road, than he praises the ethereal aspect of art which is enduring in spite of historical circumstances. This fatalistic tone is reached after he makes poignant descriptions of two of the canvases he saw:

*I retreated to the cool of the Prado.
Goya's 'Shootings of the Third of May'
Covered a wall - the thrown-up arms
And spasm of the rebel, the helmeted
And knapsacked military, the efficient
Rake of the fusillade. In the next room
His nightmares, grafted to the palace wall –
Dark cyclones, hosting, breaking: Saturn
Jewelled in the blood of his own children,
Gigantic Chaos turning his brute hips
Over the world. Also, that holmgang
Where two berserks club each other to death
For honour's sake, greaved in a bog, and sinking.
(Heaney 1999: 141)*

It is precisely the focus on the individual character of the artist that hampers the collective notion of history. Therefore, the last two verses are exemplary of a return to the laws of Beauty, such as explored by Frederic Jameson in his article regarding the End of Art. According to the American critic, postmodernism is defined by a double-edged sword: at the same time theory invigorates literary criticism, art falls back on pre-modern and romantic notions. In this way, they promote the Beautiful 'as a decoration, without any claim to truth or to a special relationship with the Absolute' (Jameson 1998: 84). Likewise, Seamus Heaney refers to the Real as simply a wound that is taking too long to heal in the face of the grandiosity of art and aesthetic. The indecisiveness of the formal structure evokes not the need for transcendence, but nostalgia for an art that is

concerned with its own nature and is 'non- or a-political' (Jameson 1998: 131)

I do not wish to dismiss Heaney's accomplishment completely out of hand, which is precisely getting away from simplistic views and trying to find other means to represent reality. And this is indeed achieved through a flabbergasting process of annulment of the subjective voice. However, where aesthetic and history is concerned, I feel quite obliged to support Carson's conspicuous attempt to reach the Sublime as Jameson explains. I would like to stress also that this deviation of tone stems precisely from their use of the symbol. While Heaney uses the painting emotionally, almost in a contemplative way, Carson pushes it to such a limit that it is inserted into that very space between symbol and allegory, as Yeats affirms: "It is hard to say where allegory and symbolism melt into one another, but it is not hard to say where either comes to its perfection" (Yeats 1989: 148). This is the point where Carson reaches the perfect symbolisation of the canvas: there is a unit of representation through which the reader sees or hears nothing but the unfolded eyes of the prisoner. Together with that, the audience does not have any idea of the poet's emotions, feelings and state of mind, it is a total erasure of outside references in order to invigorate more than the painting, the idea, or the leap of the Sublime from the canvas to poetry, but ultimately, a trans-aesthetic illumination.

Distinctively from Heaney, Carson's poem was published in 2003, long after the onset of the Troubles, in a book called *Breaking News*. Given the name of the volume, the author is evidently interested in revealing something of a unique weight, but contrary to what the reader might expect, it presents a sequence of 33 completely bare poems, as if they had been written by a poet who is just experimenting with the technique. Most of them have short poetic feet – two or three, maximum – and present short and brief stanzas. In one of the reviews of the volume, which received awards, John Taylor asserts:

The book evidently aims at getting poetry back to the immediacy of perception, also an age-old

preoccupation for the war poet. Yet despite the austere poetic form employed here, many images lastingly haunt, not least of all the leitmotiv of hovering British military helicopters. Such is Carson's "home," and the eponymous poem sums up the redoubtable clear-sightedness that he has attained, and must accept. Like blind Homer, he can "see everything." (Taylor 2004: 371)

Even though the review does not go into the depth of such a resourceful poetic collection, it manages to capture its central truth: the aspiration to see everything and report everything with just a few words. The comparison with blind Homer is also quite appropriate, for the main idea behind the enterprise is to view Belfast as “The war correspondent” would. Nevertheless, as opposed to the journalist who would go on about facts, the poet-reporter stares melancholically into the dark corners of the city and, as a ragman, collects the pieces of what was left after the battles and confrontations. Clearly inspired by the Baudelarian *flânerie*, the poet wanders in the city, where according to the French author, Modern Beauty should be found. This ragpicker stumbles on trash; he uncovers lost rhymes and old chants to compile a dissonant poetic symphony. Equally, it is in its utter failure that the poet reaches his ultimate breakthrough: the vision of the canvas by Goya. The first two lines, “behold/ the man”, highlight the mythic tone of this figure – as observed above – but, as soon as he pays heed to him, the lantern light assumes the next stanzas and give space to the description of his flung arms. Towards the end, the speaker of the poem states that he is offering his soul to the officer: like a spectre of a past whose shadow still imprints its sorrow in the present.

To sum up, Carson urges the readers to notice that “he is not/ blindfolded” and with that simplicity, calling “the mind’s eye [...] to see a capricious and variable world” (Yeats 1989: 151), he inserts a symbol within the canvas – which is already framed into a symbolist figuration of violence. As is widely acknowledged, the vision of the blindfolded lady carrying a balanced scale is the typical symbol of justice. Nevertheless, when the detail

of the vision becomes clear, the reader is forced to think about the canvas not in accordance with the historical period it was conceived, or with the atrocious bombings in Ireland, but according to its meaning in a post-war and post-history world. Generally speaking, the actuality of the painting is recuperated through “a construction whose place is formed not in homogenous and empty time, but in that which is fulfilled by the here-and-now [*Jetztzeit*]” (Benjamin 1996: 230). It is valid to point out the poem was published in 2003, a time when values such as justice and equality were totally compromised since inequality and unjustified killings prevailed.

Through the artistic translation of the canvas not into a symbol, but into an allegory, the poet recaptured what I believe to be a political function of art, like that of the canvas painted by Goya. As an alternative for the nostalgia presented by Heaney, the poet resorts to the Benjaminian melancholy, resuscitated by the ghost, in order to aspire not to the Beautiful, but to the trans-aesthetic Sublime, which might be conceived as the absolute mode through which truth comes into being ‘it believes that in order to be art at all, art must be something beyond art’ (Jameson 1998:83). In this sense, the poet finishes in a nothingness: ‘it ends, in other words, not by becoming nothing, but by becoming everything: the path not taken by History’ (Jameson 1998:83). This path is collectively represented by this man: the ethical and social system of justice – either colonial or post-colonial or imperial or post-imperial – that societies and cultures are subject to. At the same time, it poses a question on a global level: how can justice be signified and re-signified in the inequitable course of history? In other words, how can it “brush history against the grain” (Benjamin 1996:230) while the *continuum* of history still seems intact?

On the other hand, by trying to go beyond art and its laws of representation, Carson loses what Heaney gains with his piece: Beauty, a new aesthetic formed by the transfiguration of history into a distressing portrait of an artist in search of artistic bonds at a transcultural level. Through the subjective displacement, the split

Heaney/Goya who reconfigures Ireland in Spain and gives back Spain to Ireland in a new light becomes the very image of the subject exploited by imperialism. What is implicit in his formal indecisions or metrical oscillations is exactly the difficulty of producing art and beauty in a world grieved by war. On the other hand, Carson gains the Sublime, the notion that art must question the current state of affairs of the world.

Going back to Baudelaire's statement that art is about memory, continuation and losses, which poetry is more likely to last? Whose transfiguration of history, whose translation of history will answer the postmodern crises of representation? Maybe the answer is still to be found.

Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação

Notes

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An Exile Guidebook for the Inhabitants: The Reception of William Bulfin's *Rambles in Eirinn* in Ireland: 1901-1904

By Rebecca Geraghty and Patrick Geraghty (1)

Abstract

Written as a guidebook on the Irish landscape for the diaspora that were exiled from the island, William Bulfin's Rambles in Eirinn is often treated in a discrete context from his earlier works. Since Bulfin wrote the book outside of Argentina, and switched topics away from South America to write about Ireland itself, Rambles in Eirinn is often treated as a divergence from his earlier literary focus. In fact, Rambles in Eirinn was not only continuous with Bulfin's earlier writings, but also served to bridge the Irish Argentine diaspora with the emerging nationalist renaissance in Ireland. Rambles in Eirinn inadvertently presented a portrait of Ireland that catered to the nationalist aspirations of developing leaders within Ireland: Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and Michael Davitt. These figures praised the book in a network of correspondence, thereby acknowledging both their attention to and respect for Bulfin's efforts on behalf of Irish nationalism.

William Bulfin's impressions and recollections provide a collection of written sources about the daily lives of the Irish diaspora in Argentina. His book, *Tales of the Pampas*, and articles in *The Southern Cross* newspaper are frequently cited in historical surveys about the Irish Argentine immigrant community in the nineteenth century. These two sources of writing, *Tales of the Pampas* and *The Southern Cross*, formed the first phase of Bulfin's writing career, when he was still living in Argentina. In 1902, however, after re-emigrating back to Ireland, Bulfin wrote another influential book. He composed *Rambles in Eirinn* as a form of exile guidebook for the Irish diaspora that was separated from Ireland. Written as a guide to the Irish landscape, Bulfin filled *Rambles in Eirinn* with advice and comments relevant to the intended Irish Argentine reader. This second phase of Bulfin's writing career, after he had moved away from Argentina, is often treated in a discrete context from his earlier works. Since Bulfin was located outside of Argentina, and switched topics away from South America to write about Ireland itself, *Rambles in Eirinn* is often treated as a divergence from his earlier literary focus. In fact, *Rambles in Eirinn* was not only continuous with Bulfin's earlier writings, but also served as a bridge that linked the Irish Argentine diaspora with the emerging nationalist renaissance in Ireland.

Production of Irishness: The Southern Cross and Tales of the Pampas

In both phases of his writing career, Bulfin strove to produce a sense of Irishness amongst the diaspora. Given the fact that the Irish Argentines resided over five thousand miles away from Ireland, this collection of emigrants was separated from the homeland by an ocean, hemisphere and language. This community did not come to see itself as Irish because it was following directions from some inner biological connection to Ireland. Instead, due to their great geographical and cultural distance, it was conceivable that the Irish Argentine sense of affiliation to Irish roots might dissipate over time. As a result, certain community members such as William Bulfin carried out deliberate social efforts to promote and celebrate Irishness from this remote Argentine location. Motivated by a strong dedication to his national heritage, Bulfin aimed to construct and enhance the sense of Irishness amongst the community in Argentina. Using the tools of journalistic and literary output, Bulfin's writings provided an opportunity for the community to define itself around a common national heritage.

As writer, editor and owner of *The Southern Cross*, Bulfin presided over a connecting force that linked the Argentine Irish back to their point of origin.⁽²⁾ By reporting on international affairs, the newspaper kept the Irish Argentine community in touch with the geopolitical

events affecting Ireland. The late nineteenth century was a turbulent time in Irish politics, with the fall of parliamentary leader Charles Stewart Parnell, the failed Home Rule Bill of 1886 and the land wars that consumed the island. The regular coverage of these events in *The Southern Cross* created a degree of involvement amongst the diaspora in Irish affairs. They relied on each new edition of the newspaper to tune into the latest news, and, consequently, had the opportunity to form their opinions and aspirations for the future outcomes of events.

In addition to political and economic affairs, however, significant print space in *The Southern Cross* was devoted to Irish cultural matters. Following the disappointments of the failed paramilitary and political movements in Ireland during the second half of the century, the island underwent a vibrant cultural renaissance. This cultural awakening produced an innovative canon of Irish poetry, prose and theatre, with a particular emphasis on the native language of the island. Through *The Southern Cross*, Irish Argentines in both the city of Buenos Aires and across the vast stretches of the pampas were able to participate in this celebration of the Irish culture. *The Southern Cross* not only exposed them to the latest events hosted by proponents of the Irish language or theatre, but also reported on the Irish cultural activities that had been transplanted in Argentina. For instance, *The Southern Cross* regularly updated its readers about the Gaelic League of Buenos Aires, which was established in 1899 at the Passionist monastery (Murray 1919:466). Through these repeated notices on the Irish activities in Latin America, the periodical enabled the community to see itself as an active and contributing member to what was taking place in Ireland.

As a consistent and dependable source of Irish-themed topics, *The Southern Cross* provided the opportunity for this community to continue to define itself through an Irish national identity in spite of their distant location. In his public role as a journalist, Bulfin presided over this mouthpiece of Irish content to sculpt and mould a cultural enthusiasm for Ireland. Then, at the start of the next century, he applied his

writing skills to a different genre to further consolidate the community's relationship to its roots.

Bulfin provided a similar opportunity for the community to relate to their Irish heritage through his portrayal of Irish Argentine discourse in his book *Tales of the Pampas*. (3) A collection of humorous short stories on the lives of agricultural labourers in the province of Buenos Aires, the book recounted situations of Irish characters encountering *gauchos* and enchanted toads alike. While his narrative of the pampas applied to immigrants of many nationalities, Bulfin took care to record a linguistic experience that was distinctly Irish Argentine. The text was written neither in perfect English nor perfect Spanish, but instead in a middle place somewhere in between. Specifically, Bulfin wrote the dialogue to faithfully depict the sounds that he heard, thus recreating the phonetics of Irish accents. For instance, he described one character as: "...the biggest rogue in South America. He'd steal the milk out of St. Patrick's tay if he got the chance" (Bulfin 1997: 33). By spelling out the word 'tay', meaning 'tea,' this line refers to a manner of pronunciation unique to Irish people. The book is replete with phrases and words that Bulfin wrote out phonetically, thereby recording the unique discourse that circulated amongst these Irish Argentine farmers at the time. By memorialising Irish Argentine speech, Bulfin left a record of life on the pampas that referenced an indisputable Irish presence.

Through these two sources of writing, Bulfin invited the community to celebrate its Irish identity. In the public role of editor-in-chief of *The Southern Cross*, Bulfin enabled the diaspora to overcome the barrier of physical distance and feel connected to one another as members of an Irish network. Through *Tales of the Pampas*, he memorialised an experience unique to the community, and left a record of the Irish on the pampas that has survived long after the individual farmers were gone. By focusing on the lives, relationships and discourse of the community within Argentina, Bulfin's work placed Irish Argentine heritage in the spotlight. His writings extended the opportunity to the

community to overcome the barrier of physical distance to define itself around this Irish national identity. In his third piece of writing, *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin continued to write with this goal in mind. By composing a detailed account of the contours and features of the Irish landscape, he once again sought to defy the physical distance that separated the community.

Bulfin composed a literary portrait of the Irish landscape so that the Hiberno-Argentines could experience the topography of their homeland. As the narrator, he served as the information conduit that transmitted the sights and sounds that he observed back to the reader. By describing, explaining and depicting the features of Ireland, Bulfin hoped to make the reader feel as if they too had experienced the landscape. Whereas *The Southern Cross* and *Tales of the Pampas* had focused on international, cultural and linguistic representations of Irishness, *Rambles in Eirinn* dealt with the physical realities of Irish topography. By equipping the diaspora with this meticulous report of what it felt like to cycle across Irish terrain, *Rambles in Eirinn* was a mechanism to further instil in the community a feeling of being connected to a guiding principle of Irishness.

By concentrating on the topographic origin of the diaspora's identity, however, Bulfin's work resonated with a larger audience than he had intended. Despite having written with an Irish Argentine audience in mind, Bulfin's words struck at the heart of the cultural nationalist ideals gaining popularity within Ireland. The book unconsciously extended the opportunity to celebrate Irishness outside of the diaspora and towards residents of Ireland itself.

Although Bulfin had set out to write about the Irish landscape for the emigrants who could not see it, *Rambles in Eirinn* inadvertently presented a portrait of Ireland that catered to the nationalist aspirations of developing leaders within Ireland. *Rambles in Eirinn* captured the attention of emerging Irish thinkers and activists Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and Michael Davitt. These figures praised the book in a network of correspondence, thereby acknowledging both their attention to and

respect for Bulfin's efforts on behalf of Irish nationalism. Voicing a new perspective on the topography and squandered potential of the island, *Rambles in Eirinn* enabled Irish people across the globe to re-envision their relationship to the Irish terrain.

Rambles in Eirinn: Exile Guidebook

Bulfin initiated his *Rambles in Eirinn* tour after re-emigrating back to Ireland from Argentina in 1902 (Murphy 2001: 55). Although he had physically left Argentina, he continued to use his writing skills to foster a sense of Irish pride amongst his Irish Argentine base of readers. After settling his family on his estate in Derrinlough, County Offaly, Bulfin embarked on a bicycle tour around the island. (4) As he travelled, he recorded his perceptions of the landscape from an outsider's perspective. Placing himself in the mindset of a tourist visiting the countryside, Bulfin composed a travel guide for his former Irish Argentine comrades. His notes were published as a series of newspaper articles and later assembled into a guidebook that described the Irish countryside that the diaspora could not physically see.

Bulfin framed the book as an instructional guide for displaced Irish people, on the landscape and features of the island. He announced this ambition in the first few pages of his book, saying that *Rambles in Eirinn* centred around the "...sole object of sharing the writer's thoughts and feelings with certain Irish exiles on the other side of the world" (5) He described his route in detail, giving recommendations and tips to the potential traveller who might follow in his tracks. He often spoke in the second person, addressing the reader directly with advice such as "There is one particular hill close to the eastern end of the lake that you ought to climb. Leave your bicycle on the side of the road which turns off to the right from the shore..." (Bulfin 1981: 38). In this sentence, and many throughout the book, Bulfin comes across as excited and pleased with the natural wonders that he observes. Many other authors approached the Irish landscape with a similarly positive tone, but differed from Bulfin in one crucial respect. Most travel books had been composed by

British writers rather than by the Irish people themselves. They approached the island from a dispassionate perspective and tended to exoticise the features that they deemed the most striking. (6) Consciously diverging from this conventional approach, Bulfin framed his book in direct opposition to the orientalist descriptions of foreign writers. (7) Framing his narrative so as to instruct the Irish diaspora about Ireland's physical terrain, Bulfin parodied the traditional travel guide approach.

In *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin carried out an extended dialogue with a rival guidebook to differentiate his approach to the landscape. He explains that he purchased a 'road book, edited by a West Briton' along his route; and by describing the rival author this way Bulfin tapped into a culturally-charged word for nationalists in Ireland. 'West Briton' was a derogatory term used by cultural nationalists in Ireland to chastise Irish people who emulated British culture. Believing this author to be a cultural slave of the Empire, Bulfin mocked the book's predictable choice of travel route. He noted that the West Briton considered a certain route to be unworthy of travel, and responded heartily by saying, "An uninteresting route?" Not if you are Irish and know something of the history of your land...' (Bulfin 1981: 24). Presenting the rival author as someone who clearly knew nothing of his or her 'land,' Bulfin divested this book of its credibility. He cast past these descriptions of Ireland's physical terrain as the work of uniformed outsiders, who were neither sufficiently Irish nor familiar with the 'land.' Portraying himself to be a faithful source on the island, Bulfin then recast the rolling landscape in a cultural animation along nationalist lines.

Bulfin approached certain locations along his route with an appraising eye towards their future potential. Instead of passively observing what he saw, Bulfin instead used the landscape in front of him as a mental draft from which to make projections about what Ireland could become. He contrasted the situation before him with what 'could have been' if Ireland was free to manage its own affairs. For instance, he commented on the lack of trees in many parts of the island:

In Connaught, Ulster and parts of Munster, aye, even in sylvan Leinster, there is room for hundreds of thousands of acres of forest. Irish Ireland should set about planting them at once. It is work for nation builders (Bulfin 1981: 38).

Calling upon Irish people to return the landscape to its former condition, Bulfin's comment draws the reader's attention to this cultural nationalist interpretation of the Irish landscape. (8) Other travel publications might have made reference to the open fields they glimpsed before them. In contrast, Bulfin emphasised the absence of forest throughout the landscape on the horizon. He invited the reader to consider not only the visible features, but also the omissions that existed in the landscape due to the historical experience of colonialism. By encouraging the reader to think back to the pre-colonised past, Bulfin posited suggestions of how the cultural nationalist movement could lead to a better Irish future.

Following a cultural nationalist interpretation of the Irish situation, Bulfin lamented the lost potential of certain locations on the island. For instance, he maintained that:

Sligo should by right be a great Irish seaport town, but if it had to live by its shipping interests it would starve in a week. Like Galway, it has had such a dose of British fostering and legislation that it seems to be afraid of ships, and the ships seem to be afraid of it. The city lives independently of its harbour, which it holds in reserve for brighter and greater days (Bulfin 1981: 27).

This passage posits a 'what if' question, and thereby places this location in the Irish landscape into a spectrum of time, contrasting Sligo's present and possible future. Due to British 'legislation,' this potentially prosperous port was instead restricted to, and stifled by, land. Had these laws not come into action, Bulfin suggests that Sligo would have taken advantage of the ocean resources at its disposal. Yet, by looking to 'brighter and greater days,' Bulfin proposes that the town might reverse these current circumstances. His implorations encouraged the reader to project forward into the future and consider the favourable status that Sligo might one day achieve. By emphasising Sligo's future rupture from this

state of degradation, Bulfin framed the town's history in a nationalist perspective. Bulfin proposed that by overturning this colonial subjection, Sligo, and on a broader level, Ireland, could achieve improved prospects. Bulfin replicated this motif of a brighter future throughout the book. In this passage, he spoke about the future in a largely descriptive tone. In other sections, however, his words resonated as an immediate call to action.

At times throughout *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin's cultural nationalism crossed into the political realm. While reflecting on the Irish situation in the past and the present, he spoke to the reader directly by saying:

It is for the uptorn homes and the empty fields that you are angry. It is for these things that curses rise to your lips. It is against the infamous law which fomented and sanctioned and authorised the depopulation that you are a rebel to the inmost core of your manhood. And it is for the day that will see English rule swept out of the island... (Bulfin 1981: 44).

This passage openly addresses the reader as a mutual partner in these furious emotions, addressing the reader directly as 'a rebel to the inmost core of your manhood.' The strength of Bulfin's tone, looking to the day when 'English rule [is] swept out of the island,' appears to suggest that he was sympathetic with the physical-force branch of Irish nationalism. However, as a piece of writing, this rhetorical source cannot be cited as a demonstration of nationalist action. We must remain mindful of the distinction between individuals who thought and wrote about nationalism, and those that acted upon these independence aspirations. While Bulfin's words are intense in this passage, there is no evidence to suppose that he stepped into the constitutional or physical-force realm of nationalist politics. Nonetheless, while Bulfin may have confined himself to the orbit of cultural nationalism, thinking and reflecting on the Irish situation and its future prospects, his words and ideas affected others who actively fought for independence.

While Bulfin himself remained within the literary arena of cultural activity, his book

attracted the attention of nationalists of many persuasions. Nationalists within Ireland had first been exposed to *Rambles in Eirinn* when it appeared as a series of installments throughout 1902 in Arthur Griffith's newspaper, *The United Irishman* before being published in book form in 1907. As sections of the book diffused through newspapers such as *The United Irishman*, *Sinn Féin*, and the *New York Daily News*, enthusiasts of Irish culture across the globe began to take note (Kiely: 1948). In a stream of correspondence directed towards the author, constitutional, cultural, and even physical-force nationalists expressed their approval of his writing. Bulfin noted his own surprise at the widespread attention that the book received, saying:

It never occurred to me that Irish people at home would take any special interest in my efforts to describe the things I saw and express the things I felt: and even when the literary men of Irish Ireland urged me to publish the 'Rambles' in an Irish newspaper, I imagined that their judgment had been obscured by their friendship. (9)

To Bulfin's own surprise, therefore, *Rambles in Eirinn* elicited applause and praise from the developing leaders of the Irish nationalist movements within Ireland. Bulfin consequently found himself welcomed into the network of prominent intellectuals and thinkers engaged in renewing Irish national identity.

Rambles in Eirinn: Reception in Ireland

Bulfin received praise from a multitude of nationalist figures of both cultural and paramilitary orientations. Some praised his work in particular, while others expressed general admiration for Bulfin himself. This web of correspondence indicates that Bulfin's cultural work had caught the attention of the highest reaches of the evolving nationalist network, and that these individuals held his words in high esteem. These letters reveal that the upper echelons of the emerging nationalist movements believed *Rambles in Eirinn* to constitute a work of comparative value to the Irish nationalism. As a continuing feature of *The United Irishman* periodical in 1902, *Rambles in Eirinn* elicited the particular praise of the paper's editor.

Arthur Griffith

The letters from *The United Irishman's* editor, Arthur Griffith, exhibit a deep respect for this Irish Argentine author. Griffith was the founding father of the Sinn Féin political party that was a prominent organising force for activists in the War of Independence later in the twentieth century. At this point, in 1902, Griffith's ideas were slowly gaining followers through his editorial leadership of *The United Irishman* newspaper. In the paper, and the Sinn Féin publication that followed, Griffith presided over a dialogue in which questions and debate over the question of Irish sovereignty were worked out. When Bulfin began submitting sections of the book to the paper, Griffith replied, 'Thanks ever so much for articles they are splendid. I envy your cycling rambles.' (Arthur Griffith to William Bulfin, MS 13810). Describing the writing as 'splendid' and vigorously thanking Bulfin 'ever so much,' Griffith's friendly tone points to a sociable relationship between the two correspondents. In fact, they had been in contact the year before, before Bulfin had relocated to Ireland, when Griffith had applauded the efforts of the Buenos Aires Gaelic League. At that time Griffith had said:

Thanks a thousand times for your offer of course I should be glad of a note now and then from Argentina which is immensely popular here since the Southern Cross has worked up the Gaelic movement there. I am glad you are thinking of paying a visit. (Griffith to Bulfin, 11 July 1901).

By expressing his approval of *The Southern Cross*, Griffith indicates that he was aware of Bulfin's efforts to promote Irish activity within Argentina. In a later letter, Griffith demonstrated further esteem by entrusting Bulfin with control over the American branch of his successor newspaper to *The United Irishman*. He wrote to the paper's staff members in the United States instructing them that '...Mr. W. Bulfin is authorized to act and complete arrangements on behalf of the Sinn Féin Daily newspaper in the United States' (Arthur Griffith, undated, MS 13810 Folder 12, Bulfin Papers, Manuscripts Department, National Library of Ireland). (10) *The Sinn Féin*

newspaper was Griffith's brainchild, and hosted the spirited conversations where he worked out his ideas and ambitions for Irish sovereignty. The fact that he was willing to hand control of his pet project over to this fellow journalist signals Griffith's faith in Bulfin's capabilities to see this periodical through. His readiness to entrust Bulfin with a task of this volume points to the respect he held for Bulfin's role as a fellow cultural nationalist. In addition to these trusting sentiments from Griffith, Bulfin also corresponded with the physical-force and constitutional nationalist, Michael Davitt, from whom he received further praise for his pro-Ireland efforts.

Michael Davitt

The Davitt-Bulfin letters display an eagerness on the part of the older nationalist to interact with this Irish Argentine. A formidable figure in Irish politics, Davitt had been arrested for his participation in the Fenian rebellions of the 1860s, and had worked alongside Parnell to lobby for Home Rule in the 1880s (Boyce 2004). Davitt was at the twilight of his hybrid physical-force and constitutional nationalist career upon writing to Bulfin, as he died two years later in 1906.

In one 1904 exchange with Bulfin, Davitt expressed his sorrow that they had not been able to meet in person a week prior. At the time, Bulfin was on a visit to Dublin from Argentina, and had apparently called at Davitt's home. Although Davitt had missed him on this occasion he alerted Bulfin that: 'In case you may have to pass through the city at any time, I would run to meet you if I knew on what date and hour I would be likely to meet you.' (Davitt to Bulfin, 23 September 1904). For a seasoned nationalist, who had participated in some of the most controversial parliamentary and paramilitary struggles of the era, to assert that he would 'run to meet' Bulfin, Davitt must have been particularly intrigued. (11) He articulated similar admiring sentiments in an introductory letter that he composed for the Irish Argentine in preparation for Bulfin's upcoming visit to New York.

Passing the torch from his nationalist generation to the upcoming one, Davitt

expressed warm praise for Bulfin's activities in this letter of recommendation. He wrote to a contact in New York, Mr. Bourke Cockrane, applauding Bulfin's work on behalf of Ireland: 'Senor [sic] Bulfin is a firm representative of our race in the Argentine Republic and takes a warm and patriotic interest in the progress of the Irish Cause, especially in the fortunes of the Gaelic language movement.' (Davitt to Mr. Bourke Cockrane, 20 September 1904). By referring to him under the title of 'Senor Bulfin [sic],' Davitt first paid homage to Bulfin's Argentine base of operations. Next, though, Davitt heightened this title by portraying Bulfin as the 'representative of our race.' Rather than merely citing Bulfin as a nationalist, Irish Argentine activist, or even an Irishman, Davitt instead elevated his role to a racial ambassador. Finally, by making note of Bulfin's 'patriotic interest' in promoting the 'Gaelic language movement,' Davitt singled out his work on behalf of the language. This particular area of praise can also be found in Bulfin's correspondence with another cultural nationalist who shared his love for the Irish language.

Douglas Hyde

The visionary of the language movement himself, Douglas Hyde, also echoed Davitt's praise. Hyde had founded the Gaelic League in 1893 to halt the cultural decline that threatened the native Irish language in the face of spoken English. Through the League, and his essay "On the Necessity of De-Anglicizing Ireland," Hyde strove to overturn the negative associations of poverty and degradation that had become associated with the language (Lysaght 242). (12) He instead portrayed Gaelic as a repository of Irish cultural value, and organised classes to train a new generation of speakers. Branches of the Gaelic League gained substantial popularity, both in Ireland and diaspora locations such as Buenos Aires and the United States, and served as an organising basis from which nationalism slowly extended. William Bulfin maintained a direct line of communication with this language activist, as Hyde praised his writing and ideas.

Hyde wrote to Bulfin expressing positive comments about both *Tales of the Pampas* and *Rambles in Eirinn*. He explained that he had '...read your pampas story with great interest. I never read anything quite like it...My wife has just finished your story and says "tell Mr. Bulfin to send some more!"' (Hyde to Bulfin, 24 December 1902). The personal dimension to this letter, involving the praise of Hyde's wife, points to Hyde's enthusiastic reception of the literary output that Bulfin was producing. This was not merely a routine expression of thanks, but instead a hearty congratulations from both Mr. and Mrs. Hyde. At the close of the letter, Hyde also implied that an additional Irish nationalist might have been praising Bulfin's work on *Rambles in Eirinn*.

Hyde stated in the postscript of his letter: 'P.S. I heard old J O'L last night violently praising your articles! We all applauded!' (Hyde to Bulfin, 24 December 1902). Although we cannot be certain, the initials 'J O'L' could refer to the physical-force nationalist John O'Leary. Active in the Fenian movements of the 1860s, O'Leary had articulated separatist political aspirations in a variety of publications, and served in a financial role in the revolutionary campaign (O'Day, September 1904). After years of imprisonment in British jails as punishment for his role, O'Leary returned to Ireland. As an icon of the separatist aspiration of a free Ireland, his memory was later immortalised in the line 'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, It's with O'Leary in the grave' from the poem "September 1913" by W. B. Yeats (Webb 1991: 73). O'Leary was active in the Irish literature efforts, and conceivably may have read and approved of Bulfin's articles in *The United Irishman*. If Hyde was talking about O'Leary, then Bulfin's work was even admired by the iconic Fenian of the nineteenth century nationalist campaigns.

Applauded and praised by cultural, constitutional and physical-force nationalists, these letters demonstrate that Bulfin's role as a producer of Irishness was vocally confirmed in Ireland. Nationalists in Ireland were not only aware of what Bulfin was doing to produce cultural writing on the island, but also believed

Rambles in Eirinn to provide a valuable impetus to the development of an Irish consciousness.

Conclusion

In his quest to cultivate an appreciation for Irish terrain through *Rambles in Eirinn*, Bulfin demonstrated a continuation of his earlier efforts to carve out a space for Irishness that differentiated the community from its foreign surroundings. Since he was writing with similar objectives, Bulfin initially believed himself to be dealing with the same audience of the diaspora. Upon publishing *Rambles in Eirinn*, however, Bulfin found that his audience had in fact multiplied. Now that his literary object was Ireland itself, he provided the opportunity to celebrate Irishness not only to the diaspora, but also to the inhabitants of the actual island.

The praise for *Rambles in Eirinn* illustrates that the book resonated not only with Irish exiles, but also with activists in Ireland. As representatives of the various branches of Irish

nationalism, Griffith, Davitt and Hyde approved of the book's treatment of the terrain. They recognised Bulfin's efforts to carve out a space for Irishness that was discrete from the British and imperial claims on the land. By constructing this narrative of the contours and features of the landscape from an Irish orientation, *Rambles in Eirinn* reclaimed the island's topography for the Irish people.

Twenty years after its appearance, this topographic aspiration of *Rambles in Eirinn* was realised through the establishment of the Irish Free State. Amongst the architects of this independence campaign, successfully returning the Irish landscape to the jurisdiction of its inhabitants, were some of the most avid fans of *Rambles in Eirinn*.

Rebecca Geraghty and Patrick Geraghty

Notes

1 Rebecca Geraghty is a recent graduate of New York University, and this article was a section of her senior honours thesis in History. Patrick Geraghty is an aerospace industry executive and a lifelong history enthusiast. This father-daughter team has enjoyed pursuing William Bulfin's records in Argentina, Ireland and the United States over the past year.

2 After contributing sporadic articles throughout the early 1890s, William Bulfin bought *The Southern Cross* and became the full-time editor in 1898. In the introduction to the Literature of Latin America edition of *Tales of the Pampas*, Susan Wilkinson provides the dates of his initial emigration, tenure on *The Southern Cross*, and return to Ireland drawn from her interviews with descendents of the Bulfin family. See: Bulfin, William, *Tales of the Pampas* (Buenos Aires: Literature of Latin America, 1997), p. 8.

3 *Tales of the Pampas* was originally published in collected book form by Fisher & Unwin in 1900.

4 Bulfin's choice to tour the country by bicycle reflected a trend that was in vogue amongst literary enthusiasts at the time. Gaining popularity after the 1890s, many writers traveled by bicycle and wrote 'road books' about their travels. See Oddy: 95.

5 Bulfin 'To the Reader' section, not numbered.

6 Maureen Murphy claims that Bulfin took the opposite route from that which had been featured in past travel guides. She explains that, whereas most other writers adhered to a traditional journey from Dublin to Limerick with a stop in Killarney, Bulfin deliberately decided upon an unusual route (Murphy 57). He traveled specifically to the Midlands, a location that had been conventionally omitted from other travel surveys, and delighted in the natural wonders offered by places such as Westmeath (Bulfin, 63). Since the Midlands was the birthplace of many Irish Argentines, Bulfin appears to have intended for his rambles to celebrate the landscape in these oft-forgotten sections of the island (See Murphy, Maureen, 'The Cultural Nationalist of William Bulfin' in Londraville, Richard (ed.) John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from His Library, (Connecticut: Locust Hill Press, 2001.)

7 The familiar presentation of ‘orientalism’ derives from Edward Said’s 1978 exploration into colonial perceptions of the colonised as exotic and distanced ‘Others’. Said focused on Western representations of the Middle East, but this reasoning has also been applied to the Irish colonial situation. Scholars such as Joe Cleary have incorporated the methodological paradigms set out in Said’s *Orientalism* in works like *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2002). For Said’s work see: *Orientalism* (United Kingdom: Vintage Books: 1979).

8 In this passage, Bulfin is referring to the deforestation that occurred under British colonial rule. Prior to colonisation, Ireland had been a heavily-forested island. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, many trees were cut down and exported for use in construction. This historical episode outraged Irish nationalists, and was criticised in many cultural nationalist writings during the late nineteenth century as an exhibition of the British administration’s brutality. Christopher Burlinson gives a brief overview of the deforestation and literature that explores this topic in *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (England: DS Brewer, 2006) p. 194.

9 Bulfin ‘To the Reader’ section, no numbering.

10 This letter is undated, but its description of the paper as a ‘Daily’ suggests that it may be from the 1909-1910 period when Griffith issued the *Sinn Féin* paper on a daily basis in the United States. Maureen Murphy claims that Griffith dispatched Bulfin to the United States in an attempt to salvage the failing daily immediately before the latter’s death in 1909. She cites Bulfin as travelling back and forth from Ireland with *The O’Rahilly*. Her claim appears to be correct, since the Bulfin Papers do contain correspondence between Bulfin and ‘Ua Rathghaille,’ although the handwriting of these letters is extremely difficult to decipher. One letter between them from 5 January 1910 makes reference to Arthur Griffith, saying, ‘Griffith told me about your typewritten report.’ (William Bulfin to Ua Rathghaille, 5 January 1910, MS 13810, Folder 26, Bulfin Papers, Manuscripts Department, National Library of Ireland). Since they mention Griffith, this interchange between Bulfin and *The O’Rahilly* appears to support Murphy’s claim that they partnered up to support the *Sinn Féin* daily. As a result, it is likely that the letter in which Griffith gave Bulfin’s authority to act on his behalf in the United States came from the 1909-1910 period. See: Murphy, Maureen, “The Cultural Nationalism of William Bulfin” in Londraville, Richard (ed.), *John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from His Library* (Connecticut: Locust Hill Press, 2001).

11 For the text of the essay see: Reid, Gerard (ed.), *Great Irish Voices: Over 400 Years of Irish Oratory* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). For background on Hyde’s cultural nationalism, see: Lysaght, Patricia, ‘Review of Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland, by Janet Egleson Dunlevy and Gareth W. Dunlevy’ in *Folklore*, vol. 103: ii, (1992): 242-3.

12 For the text of the essay see: Reid, Gerard (ed.), *Great Irish Voices: Over 400 Years of Irish Oratory* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). For background on Hyde’s cultural nationalism, see: Lysaght, Patricia, ‘Review of Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland, by Janet Egleson Dunlevy and Gareth W. Dunlevy’ in *Folklore*, vol. 103: ii, (1992): 242-3.

Interpreting history in Eduardo Cormick's *Entre gringos y criollos*

By Andrés Romera (1)

Translated by Ita Dagger, Grace Marron and Rachel Waters (2)

The Argentine writer Eduardo Cormick was born in Junín (province of Buenos Aires) in 1956. His family roots go back to a long line of Irish migrants, mainly from Co. Westmeath and Longford, who emigrated to Argentina throughout the nineteenth-century. He has received various awards for his novels and short stories, most of which explore the subject of the Irish diaspora in Argentina. In this article I will discuss the short story *El Padre Víctor da batalla* – which belongs to the collection *Entre Gringos y Criollos* (2006) – taking into account the historical, cultural, and linguistic background in which the story is set, and paying particular attention to the social customs of the Irish diaspora. For example I will focus around themes such as the linguistic peculiarities of River Plate Spanish; farm labour (mainly on estancias) in the Buenos Aires; cultural aspects related to food and drink; and the interface between the Irish diaspora and the Argentine gaucho. The term transculturation will remain central to my discussion.

El Padre Víctor da batalla narrates the series of events that take place during the visit of an Irish priest to a family of Irish migrants who live in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. The social and religious role of Irish Roman Catholic priests consisted of regular visits to the 'estancias' or 'chacras' to attend their parishioners scattered throughout inland Argentina.

In the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (3), the word *gringo* is defined as: 'Extranjero, especialmente de habla inglesa, y en general hablante de una lengua que no sea la española./Persona rubia y de tez blanca; (Foreigner, especially one who speaks English, and generally a speaker of a language that is not Spanish/ · a fair-haired person with a white complexion). The term *criollo* is defined as: 'Dicho de una persona nacida en un país hispanoamericano, para resaltar que posee las

cualidades estimadas como características de aquel país./Auctóctono, propio, distintivo de un país hispanoamericano./Peculiar, propio de Hispanoamérica'; (Person born in a Hispano-American country, someone who possesses the qualities considered as characteristics of that country/ Indigenous, typical, distinctive of a Hispano-American country/ Peculiar to or typical of Hispano-America).

Cormick uses the title of his book *Entre Gringos y Criollos* with a double meaning. On the one hand it reflects the definitions of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* in that Cormick writes stories where the protagonists are either gringos (of Irish descent) or criollos (native people). On the other hand, his title also conveys a mixture of both terms thus bringing into mind the concept of transculturation. For Cormick, Irish immigrants maintained their own traditions and public image (religion, food, family conventions and physical appearance), which identified them as gringos, but at the same time they adopted traditions and customs of the country where they lived, mainly those of the gauchos (such as dress, horse riding, the ability to work a type of terrain that was different to those of their native land), which in a way certainly converted them into criollos. As Mary Louise Pratt writes, 'in a way unimaginable in Europe, the arbiters of culture in the emergent Argentine metropolis seized on gaucho culture as the source of authenticity' (Pratt 1992: p. 187). In this light, there is even the possibility that the title *Entre gringos y criollos*, could have been changed to two different titles depending on the two possible options.

1. *Stories of gringos and criollos that live in Argentina.*
2. *Stories of Argentineans who are part gringo and part criollo.*

In the prologue of the book *Entre gringos y criollos*, Cormick writes:

'The family stories combine with the general story of the cities, they grow, they get distorted and when they are told, they are still not the general story, nor the truth, but they are versions of the truth' (4) (Cormick 2006: p. 7) (5)

El padre Victor de batalla is Cormick's own version of a story that is repeatedly told in different places, with slight changes depending on the storyteller. This narrative shows the role and the importance of the Irish priests in various situations, including the situations of confrontation between good and evil, such as this case with Father Victor O Carrollan.

The priests constituted a strong religious institution for all the Irish immigrants dotted along the countryside, in villages or small cities, on farms both large and small, all across the Pampas. These priests travelled to help their parish, celebrate Sunday mass, give the sacrament of the Holy Communion, baptise, marry, and bless land-holdings (6). Generally these celebrations occurred at periods when work with livestock was lighter. On a few occasions they had to carry out another type of duty, as it happened in this story, where Father Víctor had to perform an exorcism.

Patrick McKenna writes that: 'The first to organize the Irish were the merchants. They were joined by the middle of the century by the wealthy migrants. These groups exercised strict control over the poorer migrants to ensure an adequate supply of reliable labour. The Irish Catholic Church was to play a central role in the process [...] the Irish were allowed to retain their own chaplain [...] in the beginning the chaplain remained in the city and confined his work to spiritual duties' (McKenna 1997: 188-9). McKenna continues showing us the importance that the Irish priests had in the Irish diaspora:

When Fr Anthony Fahy arrived in Argentina as chaplain to the Irish emigrants [...] he set about organizing the community in such a way that they were to remain a separate Irish colony, isolated socially and culturally from the rest of the population [...] Fahy saw his duty as "protecting" his congregation from the influence of the "natives", whose way of life did not conform to the Irish

Catholic ethos of the nineteenth century. To maintain this isolation [...] the cultural and ethnic difference was emphasized to the point of racism. The maintenance of English [...] was a central element in preventing assimilation [...] the majority of the migrants, by mid-century, learned little if any Spanish, and they certainly could not read it' (7) (McKenna 1997: p. 188-9).

The use of English as we can read in McKenna's transcription was used to maintain the separation of the Irish community from other groups of immigrants or natives, to keep them marginalised and in a certain way, controlled. The majority of the Irish Immigrants and their descendents in the middle of the nineteenth-century knew very little or no Castilian (8), and they certainly could not read it. For Tim Pat Coogan, father Fahy created ghettos of the mind, '[I] thought they were on the pampas, their mind-set was that of a ghetto, they tended not to have their children taught Spanish, but strove to maintain their Irish identity' (Coogan 2000: p. 630).

We can see examples of this in the story *El Padre Victor da batalla*, when we read that Father Víctor 'greeted the family with "God bless all!" in English' (Cormick 2006: p. 15) (9): and also when the family members are mentioned, they all bear English Christian names: Pat, Maggie, Mary, Ruth, Micky and Billyn (10).

Here it is worth mentioning the difference in the way the priest addresses himself to the foreman Manuel Costa, 'in Castilian, with a *criollo* accent' (Cormick 2006: p. 15) (11), and also the confirmation that 'everyone spoke English, except Manuel Costa' (Cormick 2006: p. 19) (12).

Another reflection of both cultures is found when the drinks that are consumed are mentioned in this story. (13) Throughout the story, we see that the drink that is most consumed at home is tea in this case reflecting the gringo culture, but Cormick mentions the consumption of various other drinks such as *mate* or *caña* (14). In this way, a certain type of transculturation occurs when the Irish immigrants or their descendents begin to drink or eat produce typical of the land where they

now live, such as *mate*, *caña* or *asados*, products mainly consumed by the *gauchos*. This type of hybrid behaviour which amalgamates both *gringo* and *criollo* cultural habits takes us back to Ortiz's definition of transculturation. According to Spitta:

Ortiz created the neologism "transculturation" to undermine the homogenizing impact implicit in the term "acculturation" [...]. Instead, Ortiz insisted on understanding intercultural dynamics as a two-way toma y daca (give and take) [...] Ortiz defined transculturation in Cuba as a three-fold process: the partial loss of culture by each immigrant group [...], the concomitant assimilation of elements from other cultures (European, African and Asian), and finally, the creation of a new Cuban culture [...] As Ortiz explains, the child always inherits something from both parents, but is also always different from each one of them (Spitta 2006, p. 4).

At this point I would like to make a reference to the way in which some of the Irish immigrants adapted to a new way of cattle rising, and to the work carried out in these types of ranches called "estancias". For Piaras MacEinri the Irish who emigrated to Argentina were 'a group of midlands farmers and skilled and semi-skilled trades people' (McKenna 2000: 7).

In the story of 'El Padre de batalla' we read that 'It's the third time that Father Víctor has come to the house. The first [...] was to accompany Pat, who was kept busy as a shepherd in that corner of the estancia' (Cormick 2006: 16) (15). An *estancia* (16) is something similar to an American ranch, with sufficient land for cultivation and also for the livestock to graze, while a *chacra* (17), a word of Quechuan origin, denotes a much more modest farm.

The typical model of a shepherd on an *estancia* is explained by Patrick McKenna (18), who argues that shepherds were helping the *estancia* owners in two ways, they 'could provide a buffer between the indigenous population and the Creole-owned *estancias*, as well as supplying those goods which the *estancieros* were unwilling to become directly involved in themselves' (McKenna 2000: 198-9). McKenna

writes that 'in fact the *estancieros* promoted such settlements to the extent that they were willing to finance the stock purchase necessary to graze the new "camps" while allowing the settler to earn equity in the stock by contributing his labour' (McKenna 2000: 198-9). This is wonderfully illustrated in the following example:

An estanciero would provide a flock of about 2,000 sheep, while the immigrant was responsible for looking after the sheep, including the provision of grazing (over a period of four to five years). At the end of the contract the shepherd and the owner would divide the flock, the owner getting back his original 2,000 sheep plus the agreed percentage of the increase (usually 50%) as well as his share of the price for the wool clip for the contract period (McKenna 2000: 198-9).

Indeed, the central role played by Irish migrants in the Argentine woollen industry is highlighted by Coogan: 'Irish ranchers were responsible for almost half of Argentina's wool exports in the 1870's' (Coogan 2000: 627). Consequently, many of the Irish immigrants came from the same region in Ireland (Longford and Westmeath) and the shepherd usually was successful in contacting relatives, neighbours or acquaintances from his Irish locality and persuaded them to emigrate to Argentina.

Tim Pat Coogan (19) writes that the Irish immigrants mainly arrived to Argentina in three different forms: as soldiers from Spain or England, as missionaries, or simply emigrants in search of work and a new life.

In Cormick's story, we see examples of the latter two cases in Father Víctor and the family that receives him, the first is a religious missionary and as Cormick mentions: 'Father Víctor was there for the second time[...] in his evangelistic mission' (Cormick 2006: 16) (20).

From this third category (emigrants), Laura Izarra writes that the 'Irish migrants were received in Buenos Aires by friends or Irish immigrants who introduced them to their community and hosted them in Irish homes and boarding houses till they found a job on various *estancias* and sheep-farms in the pampas which were owned by the Irish who had come

in the early 1840's' (Izarra 2002: 5). This way of getting jobs is reflected when Cormick writes about Manuel Costa [...] 'recommended to Father Víctor by the administrator of the farm, Irish like themselves' (Cormick 2006: 16) (21).

It is necessary to mention that not all of the Irish immigrants went to work in the countryside, such as Eduardo Cormick mentions (22), this way of thinking overlooks the existence of those thousands of Irish people who failed as priests, and had to work as servants or in other jobs, such as accountants, on the railway (like his own family) or in the coal mines. Piaras Mac Einrí mentions that for McKenna 'the Argentinean case represents an alternative model to the individualist "Anglo-American" migration experience, with a strong community based ethos driving the process of migration and a consciously separatist culture maintaining, for better or worse, a sense of diasporic identity' (McKenna 2000: 7). In this sense, it is important to return to James Clifford's definition of the term *diaspora*:

Expatriate minority communities, dispersed from an original centre to a peripheral position, maintaining a memory, vision or myth about their original homeland, that see ancestral home as a place of eventual return, whose consciousness and solidarity as a group are importantly defined by continuing their relationship with homeland, and whose collective identity is defined by this relationship (Clifford 1997: 247).

Many of these characteristics are typical of the Irish community in Argentina as I will now explain. The Irish in Argentina maintained elements of their original culture during generations, such as their food and eating habits, traditional Irish music, storytelling, Gaelic sports such as hurling, parties and accents from their regions of origin. We can see a reflection of Clifford's statement in the following examples:

· *Expatriate minority communities: The Irish in Argentina were a "minority community" when compared to other groups of immigrants such as the Spanish or the Italians, and they were also a minority when compared to other groups of Irish emigrants that went to other countries (for example in comparison to*

the quantity of Irish who went to the United States, to England or to Australia).

· *Dispersed from an original centre to a peripheral position: This situation of periphery gives as much with respect to the normal routes of emigration (living far away from Ireland, and far from English speaking countries) also with respect to the act of being dispersed outside the city of Buenos Aires* (23).

· *Maintaining a memory, vision or myth about their original homeland: we can see an example of the maintenance of memories, visions or myths of the homeland when we read that, 'on the wall of the gallery there are two pictures: St. Patrick, the patron of the house, with his bishop's investiture, banished the snakes from Ireland; McZweeny (sic), the Lord Mayor of Cork looks the world in the face before being martyred by the English'* (Cormick 2006: 18-19) (24).

In the previous text we can read of the Lord Mayor of Cork, McZweeny (sic) who in reality is Terence MacSwiney. As Cormick clarified (25):

MacSwiney was elected Lord Mayor of Cork after the assassination of his predecessor, on the 20th March 1920. On 12th August, MacSwiney was arrested and commenced a hunger strike until his death, on 5th October that same year. This event affected the Irish community in Argentina enormously. Up until a few years ago, there was a picture with his photograph in the headquarters of the Irish Thoroughbred Society in Junin. MacSwiney's hunger strike was a direct antecedent to that led by Bob (sic) Sands and his group from March of 1981 during the English Government of Mrs Thatcher.

By means of writers such as Eduardo Cormick we can rediscover the way of life of the Irish Diaspora in Argentina, mainly in his version of the 'truth', the way in which they actually lived, what they did, and where they worked. In other works, Cormick has developed a form of literature based on real-life people, such as his grandmother 'mamagrande', his father, and other members of the Irish community. Cormick's complex interpretation of the Irish diaphora in Argentina offers a unique insight into the history, culture, and language of a Spanish American country.

Notes

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2 Department of Spanish, National University of Ireland Maynooth

3 See *Diccionario esencial de la lengua española*: Real Academia Española (Espasa Calpe: Madrid, 2006), pp.741-2; 428. All translations from the Spanish belong to Ita Dagger, Grace Marron, and Rachel Waters, unless otherwise stated.

4 'Las historias familiares se mezclan en la historia general de las ciudades, crecen, se distorsionan, y cuando se cuentan, ya no son la historia general, ni son verdad, pero son una versión de la verdad' (Cormick, 2006, p.7).

5 The Spanish original goes thus: 'Las historias familiares se mezclan en la historia general de las ciudades, crecen, se distorsionan, y cuando se cuentan, ya son la historia general, ni son verdad, pero son una versión de la verdad'.

6 Susana Taurozzi writes that 'the religious missions in the estancias for the Irish immigrants were preferable in the time of the year when the sheep labour wasn't at its peak [...] and were also an occasion for social activities'.

7 McKenna, Patrick, *The Irish World Wide*, Volume One, Irish Migration to Argentina, p. 77-79

8 When I refer to the Spanish Language, which is used in the English Language, I prefer to define it as Castilian, as do many Argentinians, in contrast to the word Spanish.

9 'saluda a los presentes con un ¡Dios los bendiga! dicho en inglés'.

10 In this story the pile of names in English are a reflection of the way in which the members of the family are treated in the home or community (although their official names in Argentina were in Castilian).

11 'en castellano, con acento criollo'.

12 'Hablan todos en inglés, excepto Manuel Costa'.

13 We can read that the priest goes to drink mate with Pat and Andy(p.18), that they finish the tea and bring the caña (p.19), that Mary is preparing the tea (p.21), or the priest accepts a cup of tea (p.21).

14 La caña is a typical alcoholic Argentinean drink (mainly during the xix and xx centuries) Various types of caña exist, dry (such as la caña Ombú) or sweet (such as la Legus o Mariposa). Mate is also a typical Argentinean drink.

15 'Es la tercera vez que el padre Victor llega a esta casa. La primera fue para acompañar a Pat, que iba para ocuparse como puestero en ese rincón de la estancia'.

16 ESTANCIA (D.R.A.E): f.Am. Mer y Hond, A piece of land dedicated to cultivation, and more specifically to raising livestock.

17 CHACRA (D.R.A.E) (From Quechua, previously chacra, modified to chajra). 1.f.Am. Mer, Farmhouse (a working house with agricultural properties) o farm.

18 Mc Kenna, Patrick, *The Irish Diaspora*, edited by Andy Bielenberg, Irish Emigration to Argentina: A Different Model, pages 198-199.

19 Coogan, Tim Pat, *wherever Green is Worn*, The Story of the Irish Diaspora, Arrow books, 2002, ISBN 0-09-995850-3: 'It can be said with some certainty that the Irish came to Latin America principally in three ways: via the armed services of England and Spain [...], as missionaries or –mainly in the case of Argentina– as emigrants' (p.602)

20 'El padre Víctor estuvo por acá una segunda vez [...] en su misión evangelizadora', the second Irish emigrants'. We can read an example of the emigration of a soldier in the essay Cormick wrote about

the singer and poet Buenaventura Luna, who was of Irish ancestry, descendant from an Irish soldier John Dougherty. In this essay we read that; ‘one hundred years before he was born, at the time of the English invasion at the Plata river, the soldier John Dougherty arrived as part of a battallion. With the well known result, the English troops were exiled to different provinces of the viceroyalty [...] Almost three hundred of them were sent to San Juan, John Dougherty and his brother William among them, where they arrived by December 1806 [...] In the town of Huacom beside the old mill. Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti shared his childhood with the workmen and labourours who worked for his family, he understood their ambitions and difficulties, and he took it upon himself to give voice to these sentiments, and to fight so that everyone would have a more decent life. To express these ideals, Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti adopted the name of one of the farmhands from his parental home.

21 ‘Manuel Costa, recomendado al padre Víctor por el administrador de la estancia, irlandés como ellos’). The priest, Pat and the administrator were all Irish.

22 In an email that he sent me in the summer of 2008.

23 Cormick writes: ‘after keeping moving for an hour and a half up from the dog-cart (p.15) & ‘the householders enjoyed the latest news that Father Víctor told them, above all what was happening in Buenos Aires and in the towns furthest away’ (p.19), giving us an idea of the distances between the different estancias.

24 ‘en la pared de la galería hay dos cuadros: San Patricio, el patrón de la casa con su investidura de Obispo, echa a las serpientes de irlando; McZweeny, el alcalde de Cork, mira de frente al mundo antes de ser martirizado por los ingleses’.

25 Information obtained from the email that Eduardo Cormick sent me on the 19th of January 2008.

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Henry Sheridan and the beginnings of Argentine art

By Mariano Galazzi (1)

A son of Peter Sheridan, educated in England, has left the finest landscapes of S. America by any artist born in this continent' (Mulhall 1878: p. 420).

Abstract

Irish immigration contributed to Argentine development. It is well known that its members from all social classes helped in the economic progress of this new country through their role in agricultural and commercial undertakings. But references to their part in the cultural field are usually limited to initiatives in school education. In this context, it is important to point out also other aspects, like the place of Henry Sheridan (1833-1860) in the history of local fine arts.

Sheridan was an artist who died when he was still very young; he had a rich personal story and a promising career. The son of a prosperous Irish immigrant, he lived in England since he was a child, and it was in that country that he received his artistic education. His return to the River Plate was due to legal and economic problems, but thanks to this he became an important reference in the history of fine arts in Argentina.(2)

The aim of this article is to contribute to the well-deserved studies on his life and artistic work, which have not always been analysed in depth, perhaps because of his short life and his limited production.

Early years

Henry Sheridan (3) was born on 13 September 1833 in the house his family had in Ranchos, in the province of Buenos Aires. Two months later, on 12 November, he was baptised in St Andrew's Presbyterian City Church, together with his sister Elizabeth, four years older.

His father, Peter Sheridan, was born in Dublin in 1793. After his arrival in Buenos Aires in 1817, he worked as a textile merchant in partnership with his brother James (1787?-1823). In 1820 he went to England to marry Mary Butterworth. Although he had planned to run his part of the business from there, he returned in 1823, after his brother's death.

At least four sons and daughters were born and baptised in Buenos Aires: Mary (1826), Alfred (1827-1834), Elizabeth (1829) and Henry (4). Soon after his return, in 1826, Peter and his partners, John Harratt and Thomas Whitfield, bought the *estancia* that was later called *Los galpones*, in Ranchos. Sheridan was very fortunate in a subsequent division of lands. With another estate he bought later on, the new *estancia* came to be known as *Los sajones*. Apart

from his successful cattle-raising undertaking and ground-breaking innovations in sheep-rearing, Peter Sheridan was an active member in the British community in Buenos Aires.



Landscape - Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Neuquén

In 1835, Mary and four sons and daughters moved to Liverpool so that the children could be educated in England. However, Mary died soon after their arrival, and the children were left with a Mrs Postlethwaite and a Mrs Cartwright (5).

In 1838, Peter brought his nephews, James Peter (1808?-1860) and Hugh Thomas (1810?-1866), from Britain to help him to run his estates. When Peter died on 6 (or on 8) January 1844, the British consulate appointed the two brothers guardians of the property of the two heirs, Elizabeth and Henry, who still lived in England; Hugh resigned in 1847.

It is very likely that Henry had inherited his father's interest in culture. His select library in *Los sajones*, which his brother James might have started, was certainly well-known (6). Also, it was said (although it is not certain) that Peter was related to the Irish playwright and Whig politician, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816). In this family context (and although there is no evidence that his father had seen Henry again after his departure, when he was two years old), Peter must have seen to it that his son received a good education.

It is not surprising, then, that this young man ended up with artistic inclinations. It is possible that, after his father's death, he did not feel very interested in coming back to a distant land, of which he did not keep any memories, and even less to work in the *camp*, of which he had no experience. Likely, the money his cousin regularly sent was enough for him and Elizabeth to live in comfort, as well as enabling him to make some trips to the continent.

On the 1851 census, a seventeen-year old male called 'H. Sheridan' is listed as living as a 'pupil' in the household of Thomas Banner, a curate in Lancashire (7). It seems that before coming back to the River Plate he must have taken his first steps in the local art circles: in 1857, while he lived in Whitehaven, in Cumberland, he exhibited a painting called *The Fall of the Aar, at the Handek* at the Royal Academy of Arts. The title also indicates that he might have travelled on the continent when he was young.

Return to Argentina

In that year, 1857, Henry and Elizabeth decided to return to the River Plate. Their cousin James, manager at *Los sajones*, had convinced them that they had to sell the *estancia* due to financial problems. Strangely, the buyer turned out to be

Richard B. Hughes, brother-in-law of James, who in turn bought it in 1855.

His cousins decided to return to Argentina to fight for their inheritance. Henry and his sister Elizabeth arrived in Buenos Aires on the steam packet *Camilla* on 20 October 1857.

The legal action against their cousin only ended in 1864, after the death of James and Henry. However, the latter's return to the River Plate for economic reasons had a significant effect on his artistic career.

Although it is not known how he and his sister supported themselves, it is possible that Henry continued painting, to while away his time and to try to earn some income. In any case, he could not have been very hopeful.



Belgrano Racecourse (Museo Histórico Nacional, Buenos Aires, inv. 5134.)

The Buenos Aires artistic scene

Nowhere is it easy to earn a living from art, and Buenos Aires in the middle of the nineteenth century was no exception to this rule. After almost half a century of independence, Argentina was still beset by internal conflicts and divisions. Buenos Aires, in control of customs revenues, was independent from the Argentine Confederation. National union would only be achieved after the Battle of Cepeda (1859) and, especially, after the Battle of Pavón (1861).

Nevertheless, in spite of this political instability, there was an increasing number of collectors who invested money in buying paintings or

sculptures. For this reason, it is natural that there were more artists: 'We have here a collection of good and bad artists enough to provide to the needs of the cities of London and Paris together' (8).



Landscape with hills (Private collection. Published in: Cavanagh, Cecilia Rosemary, *Bloqueos al Río de la Plata en tiempos de Juan Manuel de Rosas*. Buenos Aires: Educa, 2008, page 16)

Despite the abundance of artists, there was little possibility of a good artistic education or even a deeply rooted local tradition. Between the Battle of Caseros (1852) and Sheridan's arrival (1857), there is evidence only of drawing lessons at the university; lessons given by a foreign painter passing through Buenos Aires, like Monvoisin; or architecture-orientated lessons. The authorities requested a report from the vice-chancellor of the university on the creation of an artistic education academy, but it never materialised. In those years, a national exhibition was also planned, for which a committee was even appointed; but the political situation led to the project being indefinitely postponed.

In this context, Sheridan is a special case, because he was one of the first to arrive in Buenos Aires with a European artistic education. Prilidiano Pueyrredón (1823-1870) had studied in Paris and Rio de Janeiro; but that was unusual among the River Plate artists. The first students who were able to study art in Europe (with a grant awarded by the Argentine government) were Bernabé Demaría, Martín L. Boneo (1857-1863), Claudio Lastra (1858-1866) and Mariano Agrelo (1858), all of them after Sheridan's arrival, which, for this reason, was a novelty in the local arts scene.

It must be borne in mind, on the other hand, that the short painting tradition in Argentina was centred on portraits and on religious and historic scenes (the latter, especially after the Battle of Pavón). The painting of local customs and manners was on a second level, more-or-less important, but, in general, dealt with by foreign painters with a special perception for exoticism (9). Landscapes, Sheridan's forte, were still an unusual subject matter, perhaps because of the monotonous environment of the pampas.

There was no museum of fine arts (it opened in 1895), and the art galleries were, in fact, stores of varied products where paintings were offered for sale. The best known one was that of the Fusoni brothers, established by Fernando (1821-1892) and his brothers in 1855, located on Cangallo Street. Customers could buy there, among other things, naval products and ironmongery, geodesy instruments and chemical products, mirrors and wallpaper. In one of the rooms, the Fusonis displayed some items of local art. Pueyrredón, Pallière, Manzoni, Blanes, Boneo and Montero showed their work there. Almost every week the artists brought new paintings to Fusoni's.

Sheridan's artistic activity in Buenos Aires

Henry Sheridan also exhibited his works at Fusoni's. In the newspapers, there is news of an oil-painting in June 1858, a picture in September, a landscape in November, another five in December, and an indeterminate number of 'new pictures' in March of the following year. The newspaper reports usually refer to European landscapes; this might imply that Sheridan brought part of his output from Europe, or at least some sketches with which to carry on with his work.

It was in those months that Sheridan met Jean León Pallière (1823-1887). Ten years older than the artist, Pallière had been born in Rio de Janeiro and had studied in France. He visited Buenos Aires in 1848, but settled in the city only in 1855, after travelling around Italy, France, Spain and Morocco. Between March and October 1858, he visited Chile and Bolivia, passing through Cuyo and central and

northwest Argentina. After his return, he showed the fruits of his journey, some exhibited in the window of his house, and the rest he took it to Fusoni's after February 1859.

It seems that the two artists got on well. Perhaps Pallière's age and experience had some influence on the young artist. Sheridan, however, was also in an almost unknown element; he was, in fact, almost a foreigner, and probably did not speak the local language fluently. Possibly, Pallière also felt a foreigner.

In any case, they agreed to organise a joint exhibition in June, apparently the first one of its kind in Buenos Aires. Pallière and Sheridan showed, in all, sixty oil-paintings and watercolours, a huge number for what was usual in those times, and which also speaks about their productiveness.

'Messrs Pallière and Sheridan let the public know that they have opened an exhibition of oil-paintings and watercolours, San Martín Street, 126, next door to the Roma Hotel.

Open every day from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m.

On Sundays from 1 to 4 p. m.

Admission 10 pesos' (10).

The exhibition was well received by the public, and the newspapers praised it:

'In a modest room on San Martín street, next door to the Roma Hotel, sixty pictures by the two artists can be seen, paying ten pesos at the entrance. Among these sixty pictures, there are landscapes representing the sunset in the Alps, Lake Lamond [sic] in Scotland, pictures of customs and costumes, like the *porteños* in Santo Domingo, the *gaucho* in his ranch, and portraits which similarity with people of our society excuses us from mentioning their names.

'The sunset in the Alps, by Sheridan, is full of that deep and melancholic poetry exuding from all this young man's output. For us who know this nature he suffers from, and that suffering spirit, fighting with the former and with other troubles of this world, his painting is not but the portrait of his thought, when, tired out by present-day suffering, he allows his soul to

wander in the world he creates for himself, shaping nature according to his will (...).

'For those who live immersed in the material things of life, whose rushing has not completely destroyed the taste for art, a visit to the room on San Martín street is a sweet, restful moment, when another air can be breathed, when other impressions can be enjoyed and one can have a good time for half an hour' (11).



*Two men on horseback with a herd of three mules in a valley
(Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes - Buenos Aires)*

The success of the exhibition motivated Sheridan to offer painting and drawing lessons:

'With the aim of stimulating the taste for the Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, Mr Enrique [sic] Sheridan intends to establish a school of painting, if he can bring together a big enough number of amateurs, devoting one day to the fair sex. Lessons of oil-painting, watercolour and all kind of pencil drawing will be given in the said school.

Ladies and gentlemen willing to favour this undertaking may speak to Mr Sheridan, who shall give them details, and shall present the inscription list at the exhibition hall, San Martín street, 126' (12).

The following year, after his death, in a note in *La Tribuna*, a 'friend and disciple', commented indirectly on the classes the young artist gave: 'Enrique [sic] Sheridan has been for us more than a teacher; he has been the unselfish, sincere friend who has given to our soul some of the love for art that animated his; many times we have heard his intimate confidences about his artistic ambition and have received

from him treasures of knowledge that we feel unable to exploit' (13).

Sheridan's last year

The next news on the artist was in August of the following year. It is possible that during that long period of silence Sheridan had been travelling.

A trip to Montevideo with Pallière is very likely. We know about several of Pallière's trips around South America, and it would not be strange that his young colleague had gone with him. In the Museo Histórico Municipal of the *Cabildo* of Montevideo there is an oil-painting, *A View of Montevideo from Vilardebó*, attributed to both artists (14).

References to joint works by both artists are certainly frequent. Authors usually mention that Sheridan was Pallière's disciple, but they also mention that in the paintings made in collaboration, they used to divide up the work: Pallière did the figures and Sheridan the landscape, his forte. One example would be the big oil-painting *Line of Carts in the Pampa*, that might have been exhibited in June, which would be the model for the homonymous lithograph.

Some days before Sheridan's death, a reporter from *El Nacional* said that, after a long time during which his works had not been seen, a lithograph was being shown, a 'small, two-colour drawing, representing the English races, that can be seen in the window of Ure and Vignal, which is his first work of this type. Very good composition; the groups skilfully apart from one another, in spite of the confusing character the scene has in itself; easy lines; the horses well drawn; its figures full of movement; all this well deserves to attract attention' (15).

In the twentieth century, Schiaffino commented: 'Its natural composition, the sensation of a crowd the artist has achieved, and the truth and accuracy of the entertainment, they all reveal a master in that young artist who was only twenty-five years old [sic], as this drawing was made in the last year of his very short existence' (Schiaffino 1933: p. 201) (16).



View of Buenos Aires from the South (Complejo Museográfico Provincial "Enrique Udaondo" of Luján, accountable to the Instituto Cultural de la Provincia de Buenos Aires)

Apart from *Races in Belgrano*, there is another lithograph by Sheridan: *View of Buenos Aires from the South*. The statement that a few days before he died the *Races* was 'his first work of this type' makes it hard to say whether the *View* was about to be printed, or if it already existed but was not known.

'It is the rural city, described by Mármol in *Amalia*, so more picturesque than the present one! Only ten years before, under the tyranny, those ravines and the solitary coast, where the darkness of the night used to help the escape of a unitary who escaped to Montevideo, were stained with blood by the Mazorca lying in wait. In the distance, the towers and domes of Santo Domingo and San Francisco' (Schiaffino 1933: p. 200) (17).

Sheridan's death

Death caught him immersed in all this intense activity. He died as a result of a bleeding ulcer, probably on 27 August 1860. Two days later, on 29 August, Rev. John Chubb Ford officiated at his burial at the Victoria Cemetery. Years later his remains were transferred to the British Cemetery at Chacarita.

Pallière had left for the coast and the Northeast in May, and was back by August. He was probably in Buenos Aires when his colleague died. He returned to France in 1866; he died there in 1887.

Soon after Henry's death, on 1 December, his cousin James died at *Los sajones*. Two years later,

on 2 August 1862, Elizabeth married William Whateley Welchman, an Englishman from Warwickshire, at St John's Anglican Church, Buenos Aires. After his death, much of Henry Sheridan's work was sold and taken abroad, and disappeared without trace.

Conclusion

The quality of Sheridan's work has always been acknowledged. 'His truncated work shows he was estimable. He had everything: a sense of form and colour, and a wide view and good taste in the arrangement of the picture' (Pagano 1937: p. 284) (18).

In spite of his small surviving output, he is usually mentioned as one of the references for the first steps of what could be considered as an Argentine artistic school. Apart from some influence of the few classes he might have given, he was one of those who paved the way for other young artists who would return from Europe with artistic knowledge that would enable Argentine fine arts to commence a steady path.

It is, perhaps, difficult to consider Sheridan an *Argentine* painter: although he was born in the

province of Buenos Aires, he lived abroad from when he was two until he was twenty-four and died less than three years after his return. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that he received his education in England, he cannot be classified as a *European* or *English* painter passing through South America: although some of his works are inspired by places in Europe, most of them draw on the American landscape he knew. Henry Sheridan is, then, an example of the variety of facets of the Irish immigrants and their descendants in Argentina. With Irish family roots, his life had a strong British influence in social, cultural and economic aspects, which, in turn, resulted in his contribution to the land where he developed his brilliant, though brief, artistic career.

Going back to Baudelaire's statement that art is about memory, continuation and losses, which poetry is more likely to last? Whose transfiguration of history, whose translation of history will answer the postmodern crises of representation? Maybe the answer is still to be found.

Mariano Galazzi

Notes

1. Mariano Galazzi is a historian and translator. He published the translation and notes of Marion Mulhall's *Los Irlandeses en Sudamérica* (Buenos Aires: Elaleph.com, 2009). He is thankful to the following persons and institutions for their help in the research on Henry Sheridan's life and work: Robert Baxter (Cumbria Record Office and Local Studies Library), Cecilia Cavanagh (Pabellón de las Bellas Artes, Universidad Católica Argentina, Buenos Aires), Raul Chagas (Museo Histórico Municipal, Montevideo), Elizabeth King (Royal Academy Library), Eleonora Waldmann (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires), and Paula Zingoni (Museo Histórico Nacional, Buenos Aires).
2. "Fine arts" are those visual arts that involve the use of materials that can be moulded or modified in some way, such as clay, paint and plaster.
3. In the sources and bibliography, his name appears either as Henry, Enrique or Henrique.
4. A fifth son is sometimes mentioned, but I have found no specific information about him. There is a Sheridan child in the register of the Socorro Protestant cemetery for the year 1832.
5. Apart from Elizabeth, we have found no further references to the other siblings of Henry's that had travelled with him; it is possible that they died soon after their mother.
6. As he left Argentina when he was two years old, it is very unlikely that Henry used these books. Nevertheless, their existence reflects the cultural environment of his family.
7. The birthplace is given as 'Buenos Aires, South America, British subject' (10 107/2260, folio 490, page 20). The census took place on 30 March 1851.

8. 'Hay aquí una reunión de artistas malos y buenos capaz de proveer a las necesidades de la ciudad de Londres y París reunidas'. Letter of Juan Manuel Blanes to Mauricio Blanes, 21 November 1857, AGN (Montevideo), Mauricio Blanes archive. Quoted in Amigo, Roberto, 'Prilidiano Pueyrredón y la formación de una cultura visual en Buenos Aires', in Luna, Félix, et al., *Prilidiano Pueyrredón*. Buenos Aires, Banco Velox, 1999, p. 49.

9. Pictures like *El rodeo* or *Un alto en el camino*, by Pueyrredón, were painted in 1861, one year after Sheridan's death.

10. 'Los Sres. Pallière y Sheridan hacen saber al público que han abierto una exposición de pinturas al óleo y acuarelas, calle San Martín núm. 126 al lado del Hotel de Roma.

Abierta todos los días desde las 10 de la mañana hasta las 4 de la tarde.

Los domingos desde la 1 hasta las 4 de la tarde.

Entrada 10 pesos' ('Exposición de pinturas', in *El Nacional*, 7 June 1859; it appears again several times during the following days).

11. 'En un modesto salón de la calle San Martín, al lado del Hotel de Roma, se pueden visitar sesenta cuadros de los dos autores nombrados, pagando diez pesos a la entrada. Entre esos sesenta cuadros, se encuentran paisajes representando la caída del sol en los Alpes, el Lago de Lamond en Escocia, cuadros de costumbres y trajes, como los porteños en Santo Domingo, el gaucho en el rancho, y retratos cuya semejanza con personas de nuestra sociedad, nos excusa pronunciar sus nombres.

La caída del Sol en los Alpes, obra de Sheridan está impregnada de aquella profunda y melancólica poesía que respiran todas las producciones de este joven. Para nosotros que conocemos esa naturaleza que padece, y ese espíritu que sufre, luchando con aquella y con otros sinsabores de este mundo, su cuadro no es sino el retrato de su pensamiento, cuando fatigado del sufrimiento actual, deja que su alma vague en el mundo que él se crea, formando a su gusto la naturaleza en que querría vivir (...).

Para los que viven envueltos en las cosas materiales de la vida, cuyo trote no ha destruido del todo el gusto por el arte, una visita al salón de la calle San Martín, es un dulce momento, un reposo donde se respira otro aire, donde se gozan otras impresiones y donde se pasa bien, una media hora' ('Exposición de pinturas. Sheridan y Pallière', in *La Tribuna*, 11 June 1859, p. 3).

12. 'Con el objeto de estimular el gusto por las Bellas Artes en Buenos Aires, D. Enrique Sheridan se propone establecer una academia de pintura, si consigue reunir un número bastante de aficionados, destinando un día de la semana para el bello sexo. En dicha academia se darán lecciones de pintura al óleo, acuarela y todo género de dibujo a lápiz.

Los caballeros y señoras que deseen favorecer esta empresa pueden dirigirse al Sr. Sheridan, quien dará los pormenores, y presentará la lista de inscripción en la sala de la exposición, calle San Martín número 126' ('Academia de Bellas Artes', in *El Nacional*, 28 June 1859; it appears again several times in the following days).

13. 'Enrique Sheridan ha sido para nosotros algo más que un maestro; ha sido el amigo desinteresado, sincero que ha dado a nuestra alma, algo del amor al arte que animaba la suya, haciéndonos asistir muchas veces a las confidencias íntimas de su ambición artística y regalándonos tesoros de conocimientos que nos sentimos débiles para explotar' (Gazano, Antonio, 'Enrique Sheridan', in *La Tribuna*, 29 August 1860, p. 3).

14. This work offers striking coincidences with two other paintings: *View of Montevideo*, by Sheridan, and *Landscape of Montevideo*, by Pallière, private collection and Colección Fortabat, respectively, both in Buenos Aires.

15. '...pequeño dibujo a dos colores, representando las carreras inglesas que se ve caído tras de los vidrios de Ure y Vignal, es su primera obra en este género. Su composición bien entendida, sus grupos hábilmente separados unos de otros, a pesar del carácter confuso que la escena tiene en sí misma, sus

líneas fáciles, sus caballos bien dibujados, sus figuras llenas de movimiento, todo esto merece muy bien llamar la atención' ('Sheridan', in *El Nacional*, 26 August 1860). The Race Circus (Circo de las Carreras) in Belgrano had opened in 1857; it was located in a plot of land delimited nowadays by the following streets: La Pampa, Cramer, Mendoza and Melián. It had an oval track 1,500 metres long that was used for English-style races.

16. 'La naturalidad de la composición, la sensación de muchedumbre obtenida por el artista, la verdad y la precisión del espectáculo, revelan un maestro en aquel joven artista que apenas tenía veinticinco [sic] años, dado que este dibujo haya sido ejecutado en el último de su cortísima existencia'.

17. 'Es la ciudad campestre, descrita por Mármol en *Amalia*, ¡cuánto más pintoresca que la actual! Apenas diez años antes, bajo la tiranía, esas barrancas y la costa solitaria, donde la lobreguez de la noche solía amparar la fuga de algún unitario, que embarcaba para Montevideo, eran ensangrentadas por la Mazorca en acecho. En lontananza, las torres y cúpula de Santo Domingo y de San Francisco'.

18. 'Su obra trunca nos lo muestra como un valor. Todo lo poseía: sentido de la forma, sensibilidad cromática, visión amplia del cuadro, gusto en el modo compositivo'.

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Una poca de gracia: Irish Music in Latin America

By Edmundo Murray (*)



*¿A qué cielo de tambores
Y siestas largas se han ido?
Se los ha llevado el tiempo,
El tiempo que es el olvido.*

*Jorge Luis Borges, 'Milonga de los morenos'
(Para las seis cuerdas, 1965)*

Abstract

Why does traditional Irish music not integrate into the cultural world of Latin American and Caribbean countries? With a remote origin in Ireland and a creative flourishing in the United States, traditional Irish music made a late arrival in Latin America in the 1980s, together with the pub business and the marketing-orientated celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. Irish music represented a weak competitor to the luxuriant folkloric genres of the region, which amalgamated African, Amerindian, European and Arabic rhythms, melodies, and instruments. A few Irish-Latin Americans contributed to Latin American music as composers, song-writers, singers and dancers. Furthermore, there are some sources that point to the playing of Irish music in the Argentine pampas in the 1870s. A collection of ballads published by anonymous readers of a rural newspaper in Buenos Aires is an example. However, most traditional Irish music in Latin America is a low-quality imitation and pales with una poca de gracia beside the flourishing Latin American musical landscape.

Introduction

During recent weeks I received various emails recommending an internet video including the ballad *Admiral William Brown* by the Wolfe Tones. I was shocked by the inaccuracies, spelling errors and manipulated anachronisms in the lyrics. Several master works include factual errors or historical blunders, though that is not a detriment to their artistic quality. However, the reason for their success – usually in the following generations – is that they broke a set of aesthetic (and sometimes ethical) paradigms and developed new ways of

perceiving the world through their musical worth among large segments of different societies. The musical quality of *Admiral William Brown* is remarkably poor. From the monotonous signature to each of the chords, every element can be easily predicted and nothing surprises the ear. The song was written by the Wolfe

Tone's leader Derek Warfield, and it was first released on their 1987 album *'The Spirit of Freedom'*. (1) If, as they claim on their website, the Wolfe Tones is 'Ireland's number one folk

and ballad group', judging from this song a poor place is reserved for Irish musicians. (2)

Indeed, Irish music – any music – can be sublime. My problem is with the label. When the genre imposes a superstructure on the artist so that he or she cannot be creative enough to break with the rules of that genre, it is time to break the genre. The objective of this article is not to analyse the music itself, but its role as representation of a culture, such as that of the Irish in Latin America. My hypothesis is that this group of immigrants – in particular those in the Río de la Plata region – or at least their community leaders, were driven by strong ethnic and ideological values that determined and thus limited their capability to shape a new society composed of diverse cultures. Therefore, their musical representations are rigid and generally lack the interchange with other genres that is so typical of Latin America.

There is an inverse relationship between the effort of the migrants to progress socially and economically, and their potential adaptability and capacity to change and to intermix with other social or ethnic groups. When they arrive to their new home, they (usually) can only bring their labour and have no or scanty assets. Therefore, they tend to forget strong identity marks (e.g. language, religion), rapidly build new links with other groups, and develop receptive characteristics for their own group. However, when the migrants and their families develop the economic capacity to possess land or other productive property, their social behaviour changes and they close off the entry of other people to their circle. Of course this is a simplistic perspective and each migrant group has its own complexities. As described below, the Irish in Argentina and Uruguay were exposed to different factors at home and in their destination, and consequently developed different sub-groups.

The Irish who arrived in the Río de la Plata before the 1880s managed to constitute a more-or-less homogenous group, with their own language, institutions, media and social structure. With a relatively low re-migration rate and successful integration into the local economic cycle, some of them managed to own

land and had the income to finance another wave of immigration from Ireland. The economic upper segment integrated into the local bourgeoisie and adopted their cultural and musical tastes, chiefly imported from Spain, France and England with little adaptations to the local rhythms. The middle classes stubbornly adhered to an Irish national identity and developed a preference for Irish melodies with a strong influence from the Irish in the United States. The immigrants who arrived after the 1880s had to adapt to adverse conditions. Access to landownership was not possible for settlers without capital and the labour competition with immigrants from other origins increased the re-migration rate of this group. Those who stayed in the region adapted to indigenous or immigrant groups and in many cases partially or entirely lost their Irish identities. They were attracted to local and immigrant music and some of them even developed artistic careers.

Culture: arts and values

Can music be seen as a representation of social values? Take for example this progression: from Crosby, Stills and Nash to the Rolling Stones, to Red Hot Chili Peppers, to Manu Chao. This is not a chronological selection, not even a sequence of influences; just musicians who expressed values from different societies at different periods. In Crosby, Stills and Nash (eventually with Neil Young), the use of multiple voices was a frequent feature and a reason of their success. Choirs were not only a musical recourse but more than anything the articulation of important values of the period: solidarity, peace, pleasure. In their long-standing career, the Rolling Stones led late 1950s rock towards a new way to express other values: hate of superstructures, break with tradition. There is a discontinuity here; perhaps U2 could fill the gap. In any case, the Red Hot Chili Peppers constituted the perfect image of the young, cool and mobile segments in developed countries. Finally, Manu Chao perfected that image going southwards and globalising his music to France, Spain and Latin America. Apart from the musical qualities of these groups and musicians, all of them had

successful careers and undertook significant (and profitable) marketing strategies. The reason why they represented – rather than created – social values is that a basic marketing request is to adapt the product to the client's needs. Even in the case of some great musicians that I mentioned, in their later careers they had to abandon any wishes to break the rules or musical tastes in order to adapt to their followers.

In music (as in any art but especially in music), the case of artists that go against the mainstream genres, melodic patterns or traditional instruments, is usually the exception rather than the rule. In Irish traditional music such a case becomes paradoxical. Musicians should break the rules and subvert values, and at the same time represent existing values in society. However, a static social structure restricted by powerful moral restrictions and isolated from external cultural influences could hardly inspire innovation among its musicians. 'Traditional' is synonymous with preserving old forms and any threat to 'tradition' is perceived as putting the society in danger.

When musical revolutionaries like Astor Piazzolla in Argentina or Heitor Villa-Lobos in Brazil created new genres from their respective traditional music, they were confronted with strong resistance. Villa-Lobos was accused of europeanising the local music to please the European public. Likewise, when Piazzolla's creations were classified as commercial music, he replied that 'the tango is to be kept like it is: old, boring, always the same, repeated. [...] My music is very *porteña*, from Buenos Aires. I can work over the world, because the public finds a different culture, a new culture. [...] All of the "higher thing" that Piazzolla makes is music; but beneath it you can feel the tango' (Saavedra 1989). Only societies that are on the move, that are ill-defined and are open to external influences, are able to allow radical innovations like those of Villa-Lobos or Piazzolla. They represented in their work the changing values of their societies, and they overcame the resistance of the most reactionary segments, offering a basic musical form based on traditional patterns.

Music and Conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean

When the anthropologist and singer Jorge López Palacio first came across the indigenous music of Colombia, he experienced 'a conflict of tones, conflict of forms, conflict of symbols and tonalities, of meanings and objectives, of social and geographic contexts, of temperatures, of textures, moving conflicts of body and spirit' (López Palacio 2005: 58). Conflict is the best description I can find for the confrontation of so many musical cultures in Latin America and the Caribbean. A harmonious counterpoint of very different melodies playing together is the definition of the Latin American musical ethos.

Instead of offering a necessarily partial catalogue of the music in this region, I prefer to analyse the concept of conflict in greater depth. Take for instance Elis Regina singing Tom Jobim's *Aguas de Março*. Her warm voice covers a generous range in a delightful dialogue with the piano. The metaphors of the lyrics take us to forests in half-dark, heavy skies, beaches with the scattered elements of nature. The steady progression provides an intoxicating rhythm. It would be difficult to see any conflictive element in such a harmonious song. However, there is an increasing tension between the tempo and the scenery displayed in the lyrics. The voice mirrors the human rhythm struggling with a frantic nature. Tension is present even in the singer's melodious happiness, which would dramatically contrast with her tragic death years later.

Conflict is present in Latin American music in many forms. But the most important one is social struggle. The voices of enslaved Africans claiming freedom are present throughout the region's rhythms, from Uruguayan candombe, to Peruvian marinera, to Cuban rumba and guaguancó and many others. The gloomy airs of the Andes point towards the unjust and unfair treatment of the indigenous peoples. Nothing in Latin American culture, let alone its music, can be taken in isolation. The Colombian cumbia is a perfect blend of Andean wind and African percussion instruments. The Cuban punto guajiro has its

origin in Arab Andalusia, and is strongly influenced by African patterns. The Paraguayan polka combines Central European, Guaraní and African elements. These mixes represent the ethnic relations in the region. The original ingredients are not completely blended – sometimes their accents are recognisable in a melody.

In the end, what counts is a well-balanced mix. A harmonious *mélange* is the consequence of identifying and recognising the internal hierarchies among the many elements. However, as happens in language, the relationship is not levelled. There is always a conflict created by the dominant language/musical pattern that imposes its rules on the others: coloniser and colonised music playing in counterpoint. Vicente Rossi rightly points to the conflictive origins of music in the Río de la Plata region. 'The dances in the Río de la Plata have contrasting influences (indigenous and African), transmitters (*gauchos* and rural *criollos*), adapters (*gauchos* and the African-Uruguayans and -Argentines), and innovators (urban *criollos*)' (Rossi 1958: 111).

Musicians, Dancers and Reactionaries

The case of Irish-Argentine music is illustrative of the relationship between one immigrant culture and the values in the receiving society. Even if the creation of this category is perceived as too ambitious and only gathers disparate musical representations, it helps to understand the cultural connection between two social groups.

Gaining entrance into the local landed bourgeoisie was the most important goal of the Irish in Argentina. In a country where land was the most abundant resource, its ownership was traditionally reserved for members of the upper classes. Up to the 1880s, the land-hungry Irish immigrants and their families were able to integrate into a productive economic cycle in the pampas. The wool business attracted shepherds to tend flocks of sheep belonging to local landlords. Sharecropping agreements were made so that in two or three years the immigrants owned their own sheep. This led to the need to rent land. In a context of increasing

wool international prices, more land meant more sheep, and more sheep required more land. By purchasing long-term tenancy contracts with the government of Buenos Aires, some Irish managed to own their land. Most of them were not large landowners (typical holdings were from 1,700 to 2,500 hectares compared with 10,000 to 15,000 hectares owned by other landlords). In order to maintain and increase their properties, they developed a need to join the Argentine landed class, in some cases by marriage, but more commonly by sharing their cultural values and participating in their social milieu.

Among the Irish immigrants and their families, some completely integrated into local societies, thus contributing to different musical cultures. Buenaventura Luna (born Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti Roco) (1906-1955), poet, songwriter, journalist and host of pioneering radio shows, descended from one (named Dougherty) of the 296 soldiers of the British army who stormed Buenos Aires in 1806-1807, were taken prisoners after the defeat in Buenos Aires, and were confined in San Juan (Coghlan 1982: 8). His *zambas* and *chacareras* are about the local *gauchos* and indigenous peoples, and the parched landscapes of his birthplace Huaco, San Juan, near the border with La Rioja. (3) In 1940, Buenaventura Luna started his successful radio shows *El fogón de los arrieros* and later *Seis estampas argentinas*, followed by *Al paso que van los años*, *Entre mate y mate... y otras yerbitas*, and *San Juan y su vida*. He not only made known his own creations but also allowed and encouraged other groups and musicians to play their pieces. He wrote more than 500 songs. No traces of Irish music or themes can be identified in Luna's songs.

Carlos Viván (born Miguel Rice Treacy) (1903-1971), known as *El irlandesito* (The Irish Boy), was a tango singer and songwriter. His first recording is from 1927 and he worked with the orchestras of Juan Maglio, Pedro Maffia, Osvaldo Fresedo and Julio De Caro. He went to work in Brazil and the United States, where he sang tangos and jazz. He had 'a small warm voice, within an alto-tenor range, as was common then, plus a feature that made his

voice unmistakable: his vibrato' (*Todo Tango*). Among his creations are *Cómo se planta la vida* and *Moneda de cobre*, which is about the mulatto daughter of a 'blond, drunk and ruffian father' and an Afro-Argentine woman. This tango represents the tough integration of destitute European immigrants who arrived in Buenos Aires by the end of the nineteenth century and joined the growing marginal classes in the city. The aged prostitute had in her youth been a beautiful woman with blue eyes from her father (*ojos de cielo* – sky eyes) and black curly hair from her mother.



Carlos Viván, El irlandesito (1903-1971)

Moneda de cobre (1942) (4)

Lyrics by Horacio Sanguinetti

Music by Carlos Viván, El irlandesito

*Tu padre era rubio, borracho y malevo,
tu madre era negra con labios malvón;
mulata naciste con ojos de cielo
y mota en el pelo de negro carbón.
Creciste entre el lodo de un barrio muy pobre,
cumpliste veinte años en un cabaret,
y ahora te llaman moneda de cobre,
porque vieja y triste muy poco más valés.*

*Moneda de cobre,
yo sé que ayer fuiste hermosa,*

*yo con tus alas de rosa
te vi volar mariposa
y después te vi caer...
Moneda de fango,
¡qué bien bailabas el tango!
Qué linda estabas entonces,
como una reina de bronce,
allá en el 'Folies Bergère'.*

*Aquel barrio triste de barro y latas
igual que tu vida desapareció...
Pasaron veinte años, querida mulata,
no existen tus padres, no existe el farol.
Quizás en la esquina te quedes perdida
buscando la casa que te vio nacer;
seguí, no te pares, no muestres la herida...
No llores mulata, total, ¡para qué!*

A well-known female tango singer from a later period was Blanca Mooney (1940-1991), who made tours to Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, the United States and Japan. She recorded more than forty times and worked with the orchestra of Osvaldo Fresedo. Her renditions of *Arrabalero*, *Dónde estás*, and *Julián* became very popular. (5)



Blanca Mooney (1940-1991)

After the Falklands/Malvinas War of 1982, and following the internationalisation of aspects of Irish culture, musicians in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and other countries in Latin America were attracted to traditional Irish music. Some started playing fiddles, uilleann

pipes, tin whistles, and bodhráns and interpreting the traditional airs of Ireland. However, most of the production was an imitation of mainstream Irish music, and very few produced innovative creations or experimented with different instruments or time signatures. Among the best-known Irish music groups in Argentina were The Shepherds and more recently, Na Fianna. (6)

Indeed, the most popular Irish-Latin American topic among Irish music songwriters is the San Patricios. The saga of the Irish and other soldiers who deserted from the United States army and formed the Mexican St. Patrick's Battalion in the Mexican-U.S. American War (1846-1848) is the subject of a growing number of songs. This popularity runs parallel to the copious literature about the San Patricios, both academic and in fiction, and the films and documentaries. Among the songs about the San Patricios, there are traditional ballads and rock rhythms; probably the best composition is Charlie O'Brien's *Pa' los del San Patricio*.

As far as I could explore, there are no songs about the San Patricios in Spanish or by Latin American musicians. Seemingly, it is a subject more appealing to the Irish in Ireland or in the United States than to Mexicans or Latin Americans. The main reason for this may have been the traditional hegemony of the U.S. in, and fear from, Latin America, as well as the significant role played by the Irish-U.S. American population in the political and social life of that country.

Musical Resistance to Integration

In 1913, the diehard nationalist Padraig MacManus complained about the Irish in Argentina, 'such *shoneen* families as we now often meet, ashamed of their race, their names and their parents; anxious to be confounded with Calabreses or Cockneys, rather than point out their descent from the oldest white people in Europe – the Gaels' (*Fianna*, 31 July 1913). Although a wealthy *estanciero* himself, MacManus identified better with the Irish urban employees and administrators who stubbornly maintained the customs and cultural patterns of their ancestors. They looked with

suspicion both on the upper class of Irish landowners who mixed with the landed bourgeoisie, and to the proletarian Irish labourers who intermingled with the growing crowd of immigrant workers in the Argentinean and Uruguayan cities. It was among members of this middle class that traditional music was played and danced in social gatherings and celebrations in selected settlements of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe to openly assert their Irish identity.

However, forty years before MacManus there were signals pointing to the fact that Irish music was crossing the Atlantic Ocean from north to south and from east to west. English-language newspapers published in South America – in particular *The Southern Cross*, and occasionally *The Standard* – used to include ballads, folk poems and short verses with traditional Irish topics. Among the Spanish-language media, *El Monitor de la Campaña*, which was the first newspaper in the province of Buenos Aires, published letters, stories, poems and ballads addressed to the local immigrants.

El Monitor de la Campaña was edited by Manuel Cruz in Capilla del Señor, a rural town located eighty kilometres northwest of Buenos Aires, and settled by several Irish families who owned or worked at mid-size sheep-farms and *estancias*. Between 1870 and 1872, a series of Irish ballads appeared in *El Monitor*, written in English and covering topics of interest to the Irish. The six ballads in this series were published anonymously and signed by 'P.C.', 'A Wandering Tip', and 'J. J. M.' There is no indication as to whom those pseudonyms may refer to, though similar texts were published in contemporary English-speaking newspapers by teachers in Scottish and Irish schools, and by Irish Catholic priests.(7)

The first ballad, *Donovan's Mount*, was published on 19 February 1872, and was inspired by the popular 'drinking songs' in Ireland. These songs – similar and possibly related to the seventeenth-century *airs à boire* in Brittany – are folk melodies sung by groups (typically of men) while consuming alcohol. Before the first stanza the author specifies that Donovan's Mount should be sung to the air of *Lanigan's*

Ball, which is a popular Irish drinking song with the lyrics and tempo arranged as a tongue twister. In the Irish song, Jeremy Lanigan is a young man whose father passes away. The son makes the arrangements for the wake, a traditional Irish ritual to honour the dead that has the paradoxical goal of paying the family's and friends' last respects to the person who died, and at the same time celebrating the inheritance.

In the Irish-Argentine version of *Lanigan's Ball* the story is about an Irish teacher (actually a wandering tutor usually with better-than-average education) who is looking for a job on one of the estancias owned by Irish families.

Donovan's Mount

By A Wandering Tip

Air: Lanigan's ball.

*I roved round the camp till I met with an Irishman
Whose houses and lands give appearance of joy,
So I up and I asked if he wanted a pedagogue
As I tipped him the wink that I was the boy.
He made me sit down put my head in my hat
again*

*Then ordered a peon my traps to dismount
And said as he handed around a big bumper full
"You're welcome señor to Donovan's mount."*

*Chorus: Hip, hip, hip hurrah for Donovan
For racing and spreeing I've found out the fount,
And if it should hap that one loses himself again
Let him ask the way to Donovan's mount.
I have travelled afar but never encountered yet.
Another to equal this green spot of camp;
The boys that are on it are full of all devilment .
And dance till sun-rise by the light of a lamp..
And as for the girls these nymphs of the Pampa
wild.*

*Sure he never escapes them the victim they count.,
They always are gay and as bright as the morning
dew.*

These magnetic needles of Donovan's mount..

Chorus: Hip, hip, hip,

*Tho' La Plata boasts not of the steep mountain
towering high.*

Or the vales that abound in far Erin's green isle.,

*Yet sweet are the plains where the red savage
wanders free.*

When lit by the light of a fond girl's smile..

*Then here's a flowing glass to our Irish porteñas
all.*

*May they ne'er have more sorrow than mine to
recount.*

For sorrow and I are like distant relationships.

*Since the first day I stepped into Donovan's
mount..*

Chorus: Hip, hip, hip.,

*(El Monitor de la Campaña N° 35, Capilla del
Señor, 19 February 1872).*

Other ballads published in this paper include themes of homesickness (*The Shepherd and his Cot and Hibernia*), freedom and adventure (*A Jolly Shepherd Boy*), love (*The Pampa's Fairest Child*), and political struggle in Ireland and in Argentina. In general, the voices of their authors hint at people with superior education. Among Irish teachers in contemporary Argentina and Uruguay, a few were convinced Republicans who tried to instruct their audiences in the struggle for Irish independence. Nevertheless, the content of these ballads is eminently local and adapted to the interests of the Irish rural population in the pampas.

Hibernia

By J. J. M.

*Just now two years have pass'd and gone
Though they like centuries appear
Since, sad, forlorn, and alone
I sail'd from Ireland dear
Yet though I ne'er may see it more
Can I forget my childhood's home
My own loved Hibernia's shore.
When standing at my rancho door
Or when riding o'er the pampa plain
I silently long to hear once more
The sweet voices of her labouring Swain
Though the pampas may have fields
As fair and green all o'er
To me there is no soil that yields
Like my own Hibernia's shore.
I long to see my native groves
Where oft I've chased the bounding hare
And snar'd the woodcock and the doves
And listened to the cuckoo's voice so clear
Oh had I but an eagle's wings
Across the Atlantic I would soar*

*Nor would I think of earthly things
Till safe on Hibernia's shore.
Oh could I cope with Bards of lore
I'd proudly write in words sublime
The praises of her fertile shore
While life stands in her youthful prime
For when I'm sinking towards the tomb
And my feeble hand can trace no more
The words I'd like to write of that dear home
My owned loved Hibernia's shore.
Though there are comforts beyond La Plata's
mouth
Where the Indian once did freely roam
Still I'd forsake the pleasures of the South
For those of my own dear native home
Old Erin for thee this heart is weap'd in grief
A heart that's Irish to the core
Still shall I love the Shamrock Leaf
That grows on Hibernia's shore.
(El Monitor de la Campaña N° 43, Capilla del
Señor, 15 April 1872)*

Even if the speaker acknowledges the 'comforts beyond La Plata's mouth' there is a clear inclination for Ireland, and to him 'there is no soil that yields / Like my own Hibernia's shore.' The conceptual development of Ireland as home is symbolically represented by 'the Shamrock Leaf'. It is the emigrant who behaves as exile, and whose attitudes towards Ireland are of continuous longing for 'that dear home'.

Songs and musical elements can also be identified in emigrant letters. Dance followed celebrations and horse races, and basic musical skills were a component of the education in Irish schools on the pampas. However, Irish parents in Argentina were not very enthusiastic about the musical prospects of their children studying in Ireland. In a letter to his brother in Wexford, Patt Murphy of Rojas, Buenos Aires province, notes of his son Johnny that 'as to learning music, unless he is possessed of an ear and good taste for same, I consider [it] perfectly useless' (Patt Murphy to Martin Murphy, 3 August 1879).

Furthermore, the Irish immigrants and their families appreciated the musical skills of the Argentines. During the shearing season, 'they

have what they call "Bailes" or dances ... their favourite instrument is the guitar and almost all of them play a little ... they have great taste for music so for them it is a time of great joy ... people coming out from England are greatly amused at their dances' (Kate A. Murphy to John James Pettit, 12 September 1868, in Murray 2006: 106). This points to the increasing affinity of the Irish with the local cultures, which in three or four generations were completely integrated.

Opening Fields

I would like to expand upon the historical pattern followed in the process of the above-mentioned integration for the last 150 or 200 years but there is no space for it, and I admit to lacking further information from other primary sources. In particular, a careful reading of *The Southern Cross*, *The Standard* and *The Anglo-Brazilian Times* is necessary for this undertaking. The future addition of emigrant letters and family collections to the corpus of research documentation may also include additional records.

There is ample potential for research on the musical aspects of Irish cultural integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. The fascinating formation of the glittering music in this region has undoubtedly received its major influences from the Amerindian, African and Iberian cultures. The role of Irish music in this process, even if a very minor one, may have been underestimated.

I hope that performers of traditional Irish music in Ireland and in Latin America understand that imitating others' experiences only adds *una poca de gracia* to the musical cultures of both artistic communities. Certainly, the rich musical experiences that some artists are developing with the innovative blending of Irish and Latin American musical arrangements may have a lasting effect on future rhythms, melodies and harmonies.

Edmundo Murray

Notes

* Edmundo Murray is an independent researcher and writer based in Geneva, Switzerland, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Zurich. He has been the editor of *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* (www.irlandeses.org), and a frequent contributor to journals and publications related to the study of the Irish Diaspora.

1 Recorded by Inchicore, “The Spirit of Freedom”, by Derek Warfield and The Wolfe Tones.

2 The Wolfe Tones official website (<http://www.wolfetonesofficialsite.com/menu.htm>), accessed 11 May 2009.

3 *Zamba* (known in other South American regions as *zamacueca*, *cueca*, *marinera* and *chilena*) is a dance in 6/8 time originally from Peru and with African influences. The *chacarera* is a fast-tempo dance alternatively in 6/8 and 3/4 time.

4 This tango by Alberto Castillo may be listened to at *Todo Tango* website (http://www.todotango.com/english/las_obras/letra.aspx?idletra=864).

5 Sound file at *Todo Tango* (http://www.todotango.com/english/las_obras/letra.aspx?idletra=652).

6 Na Fianna website (<http://www.nafianna.com.ar/>)

7 I am thankful to Juan José Santos of University of Buenos Aires (Instituto Ravignani), for sending copies of these ballads.

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From Cuyo to the Seaboard: Irish Roots in Popular Argentine Music

By Eduardo Cormick (1)

Translated by Claire Healy

Abstract

The vast territory of the Argentine Republic contains areas with various geographical characteristics where specific musical forms are developed, an expression of the cultures endemic to each place. Because of its character as a metropolis, Buenos Aires was the centre of its music, the tango, and was the sounding board and the platform for the diffusion of regional musical rhythms. In the 1960s, this diffusion was dedicated to the rhythms of the Argentine Northwest, the zamba and the chacarera, and the groups that cultivated them. Before this, it had been the centre of Cuyo music, in the 1940s. 1980 was the high point of coastal music, especially the chamamé. As important representatives of these last two musical trends, Buenaventura Luna and the Sheridan brothers were examples of Argentines of Irish origin who participated actively in the creation and interpretation of the music of their respective regions.

In September 2009, it was twenty years since the traffic accident in Bella Vista in the Province of Corrientes in the Northeast of Argentina. That accident took the lives of Joaquín and Miguel Ángel Sheridan, known as 'Gringo' and 'Michel'. They participated, together with other chamamé musicians, in an artistic tour that they had planned to conclude at a popular music festival in France to which they had been invited.

Joaquín Sheridan and Julio Cáceres had set up the group Los de Imaguará in 1977 in the City of Mercedes, in the centre of the Province of Corrientes. The group also included two guitarists, one of whom, from 1983, was Miguel Ángel Sheridan. During that period they recorded five albums, including *Viajeros de Sueños*, *Chamamecero*, *Nuestro Canto* and *Memoria de la Sangre*.

'Gringo' and 'Michel' Sheridan pulled out of Los de Imaguará in 1986 to set up a new group named Quinteto Reencuentro, together with their brother Santiago, known as 'Bocha', Ricardo 'Tito' Gómez and Orlando Caroso Gutiérrez. Quinteto Reencuentro debuted in June 1986 in the City of Corrientes. At the time of the tragedy, the group had recorded three albums, *Neike chamigo*, *El canto de nuestra gente* and *Por el viejo camino*. The popular resonance that they achieved in such a short time was extraordinary. They broke records in audiences with a musical repertoire that rescued successes

of the 1950s from oblivion. Famous chamamés, such as 'Basilio Magos', a chamamé that was a success for the Santa Ana Quartet, that had been forgotten, recovered their place in Joaquín's bandoneon, 'Michel's voice and his duet with 'Bocha'. Julián Zini, a Catholic priest, provided a strong spiritual impression reciting poems during the group's performances. In the year 1991, "Bocha" Sheridan returned to the group. The results of this new group were the albums *Al fin de cuentas* and *Por este sueño azul*.

The Sheridan brothers, three of a family of seven children of Andrés Aníbal Sheridan and Eva Jesús Ramona Vallejos, dedicated to cattle-raising at the 'Paraje San Salvador', knew how to express emotion in music and in singing. In order to do this, they chose the musical form of chamamé, happy and stimulating, which reached all of the peoples of the Argentine Mesopotamia. Andrés, the father of these musicians, and his five brothers, were sons of Felipe Santiago and grandsons of Philip Sheridan and María Cook. Philip, who had been born in Ireland in 1857, began the life of the Sheridans in the countryside of Corrientes at the beginning of the twentieth century, raising Aberdeen Angus cows and Romey Marsh sheep. Still, in the City of Mercedes, in the centre of the Province of Corrientes, you can see the red stone house that Philip acquired in order to settle there with his family.

On the other side of Argentina, in Huaco in the department of Jáchal in the area before the mountain range in the Province of San Juan, Buenaventura Luna was born on 19 January 1906. He was a journalist at the daily *La Reforma*, the information organ of the Unión Cívica Radical Bloquista, and later at his own newspaper, *La Montaña*, with the motto 'Learn as if you will live forever. Live as if you will die tomorrow.'

After this, he distanced himself from politics, and from the graphic media he moved to radio. On Radio Graffigna, today Radio Colón de San Juan, he produced and directed various programmes during the 1930s ('A.Z. Zafarrancho Oral' and 'Doble Zafarrancho Vocal'), before travelling to Buenos Aires in 1938 with *La tropilla de Huachi Pampa*. From 1940, he directed a programme on Radio El Mundo in Buenos Aires that was called 'El fogón de los arrieros', for which he wrote scripts in verse that were later dramatised as a radio soap opera. To speak of 'El fogón de los arrieros' is to mention the most listened-to programme in radio during those years, with the presence that radio had in city and countryside homes. 'El fogón de los arrieros' was the scene where not only *La tropilla de Huachi Pampa*, but also *Los manseros de Tulum* and *Los pastores de Abra Pampa* found their place.

That was how figures such as Antonio Tormo began to achieve celebrity. He arrived with Buenaventura Luna as part of *La tropilla de Huachi Pampa* and in 1942, he separated from the group in order to start his solo career as 'el cantor de las cosas nuestras', the first great success as a solo artist in Argentine traditional music. From his place on 'El fogón de los arrieros', Buenaventura Luna broadcast Cuyo music to the Argentines, giving the first inspiration for the diffusion of traditional music, through groups that remain in the popular memory, such as *Quilla Huasi*, the last and probably the most remembered of the traditional groups in whose creation Buenaventura Luna was involved.

This programme, as well as '6 estampas argentinas' and 'La voz del hogar', on the same

station; and 'El canto perdido' and 'Al paso que van los años' on Radio Splendid, were the platform that made Buenaventura Luna into an undeniable reference in Argentine radio. He always found space to make reflections of a philosophical or sociological nature, in which he cited José Ortega y Gasset or José Hernández.

At least forty of the poems he wrote were published after his death: in 1962, an analysis of his work and an anthology of twenty poems were released in a publication that it is impossible to find today in public libraries: *Buenaventura Luna, mensaje de tierra adentro*. In 1985, as part of an homage to him by the National Senate thirty years after his death, *Buenaventura Luna, su vida y su canto* was published, which is also difficult to find today. In this work, we can see a fine language, where metaphor and personifications are included, using the sonnet, *alejandrinos*, and the Spanish traditional octosyllabic.

In the field of popular song, he is the author of 'Vallecito', 'Zamba de las toderías', 'Puentecito de mi río' and more than two hundred other songs. He used indigenous terms, archaisms and *criollismos* that were composed according to the meter of bagualas, bailecitos, cifras, cuecas, chacareras, estilos, gatos, milongas, tonadas, triunfos, waltzes and zambas. *Tributo a Buenaventura Luna*, published by the provincial body of the San Juan Tourist Office and *Un homenaje a Buenaventura Luna, su vida y su obra*, produced in 1996 by Meloepa, are two discographic registers that recover a part of the enormous quantity of lyrics to which Buenaventura Luna put music. This allows us to recognise that he was also a musician: in one sense, yes, although he did not know how to play any instrument, nor how to write a score on a pentagram: he whistled the music and dictated it in this way to his companions, who put it to paper and to keyboard. The result was a new song with lyrics by Buenaventura Luna and music by Hermes Vieyra, Eduardo Falú and Oscar Valles.

But what did Buenaventura Luna have to do with Ireland? One hundred years before he was born, during the first of the British Invasions of

the River Plate, the soldier John Dougherty arrived as part of a battalion. The British troops were confined to various provinces of the Viceroyalty. Almost three hundred of them were destined for San Juan, John Dougherty and his brother William among them, and they arrived there in December 1806. John Dougherty married María Mercedes Cabot and went to live with her in Tucumán, where he came to be known as Dojorti. One of the two children of this marriage, Eusebio Dojorti Cabot, settled in San Juan and married Josefa Maso there in 1837. From this marriage, Eusebio Dojorti was born. He exercised the role of sub-delegate of the government in Jáchal and married Josefa Delfina Suárez Tello, the proprietor of a mill in Huaco, a village next to that city. Eusebio and Josefa are the parents of Ricardo Dojorti, the first *intendente* of Jáchal, who married Urbellina Rocco and gave birth to another Eusebio: Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti.

In this village of Huaco, next to the old mill, Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti shared his childhood with workers and peasants that worked for the family, understood their ambitions and difficulties and took upon himself the commitment to give voice to those feelings and to fight for a better life for all. In order to

express those ideals, Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti borrowed the name of one of the workers of his parents' house, Buenaventura Luna, who was in charge of the herding of the animals and responsible for milking, and who passed on to the young poet the first stories by the campfires or on the saddles.

He left Huaco and Jáchal at a very young age, but everyone there still remembers him. They remember him as Buenaventura Luna, but also as 'El Cabezón (Big Head)', in what can also be considered a distinctive characteristic of an Irish person among the *criollos*. Eusebio de Jesús Dojorti, Buenaventura Luna, died in Buenos Aires on 29 July 1955 from cancer of the larynx, which deprived him of his voice as a singer, though not of his love for song.

Because of the origin of their families and their surnames, both Buenaventura Luna and the Sheridan brothers are recognisably Irish, but they are also recognisable for their love for music as an expression of the feelings of the land in which they were born.

Eduardo Cormick

Notes

1 Eduardo Cormick has received literary prizes such as the Iniciación de Novela from the National Secretary of Education for his novel *Almacén y despacho de bebidas El Alba* (1992), the Joven Literatura prize from the Fundación Fortabat (1996), and Edenor - El arte de la novela corta from the Fundación El Libro for his book *Quema su memoria*, which features the character of William Brown in his old age as protagonist (2004). He also published *Entre gringos y criollos* in 2006, comprising narratives about rural and urban life in the province of Buenos Aires.

Beneath the Hieroglyph: Recontextualising the Black Diaries of Roger Casement

By Angus Mitchell (1)

Abstract

The executed revolutionary Roger Casement continues to provoke one of the most enduring controversies in Irish and World history, principally because of the explicitly sexual Black Diaries which determine both his cultural meanings and his relevance to Anglo-Irish relations. His investigations of crimes against humanity in the Congo (1903) and in the Amazon (1910/11) altered the political economy of the tropical Atlantic and inaugurated the modern discourse of human rights. Despite efforts to isolate his achievements and bring closure to the debate over the Black Diaries' authenticity, Casement continues to haunt and barangue from beyond the grave. Ireland, it would seem, has failed Roger Casement. His presence remains officially embarrassing and publicly discomforting. Is it time for Latin American scholars and writers to start to decipher his meaning and to embrace both his history and his myth?

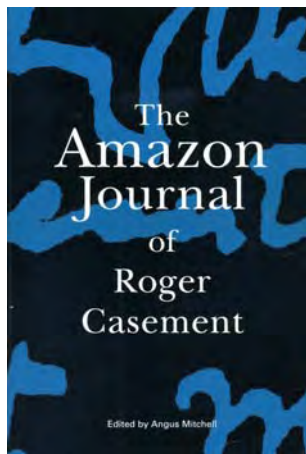
The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset begins his meditation *Man and Crisis* with an essay on 'Galileo and his effect on History'. He invokes the image of the hieroglyph to illustrate the idea of how, in order to see the true meaning in the fact or the document and to reveal its deeper sense, we must look through and beyond the hieroglyph. The fact lies not within the fact itself, but in the indivisible unity of everything surrounding the fact. Facts help maintain and keep secrets, while presenting the illusion that they are some sort of Gnostic answer to the research inquiry. The idea has echoes in the postmodern challenge to truth claims and the objectivity of factual reconstruction. If the thought is extended to Roger Casement's Black Diaries, the researcher is confronted by a series of encrypted hieroglyphs. Each diary is firmly chiselled on the walls of the temple of the state's memory, five bound volumes, held in the National Archives (Kew, London), incontrovertible in their physical presence. (2) But what is revealed beneath their surface? Do they help expose the investigation of crimes against humanity in the Congo and Amazon that they map, or do they encrypt and repackage meanings, emotions, secrets and truths enabling the West to forget its trans-temporal and transnational violations of the global South? What internal and external dynamics are at play within the Black Diaries?

The entangled fetish of rumour and secrecy surrounding these documents has possessed

them with a hypnotic demeaning meaning. Their authenticity is still debated in terms of some rather banal lines of thinking. Yet their implication has now shifted into other contexts, where veracity can be scrutinised in new ways. To question their authenticity is neither a heresy nor synonymous with homophobia or anti-statism. They can no longer be innocently upheld as symbols of sexual emancipation, but must be interrogated for their own internal and external logics. Using tested critical tools to scope their deeper geographies, the documents themselves can be surveillanced in multiple contextual locations, their contradictions tabulated and their dynamics read for political uses and abuses. Part of the reason they remain so frustratingly 'present' is because their interpretation and analysis has been encouraged within an uninformed and officially restricted environment. Thankfully, in the last decade, this has started to change and the dynamic of the documents and the facts they contain has shifted because of various cultural, political and academic actions.

Nevertheless, the Black Diaries endure as the most persistent controversy in Anglo-Irish history in spite of the fact that they belong within the research domains of sub-Saharan Africa and Latin American studies. Casement continues to haunt historical discourse like some archival phantasmagoria, spooking official narratives of world history, subverting certainties and challenging stereotypes. More

than a dozen monographs, biographies and edited volumes of his documents have been published in little over a decade, along with numerous journal articles, press reports and letters to the editor. The controversy over the Black Diaries blunders on like some half-forgotten history war waged on a wild frontier of the past. (3) Those who care, care passionately, but most people are oblivious to either the polemic or its implications.



The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement
(Angus Mitchell - Anaconda Editions - 2000)

The latest phase in the controversy extends from some recent political modifications in different areas of the law in England and Ireland, facilitating alteration in the cultural and intellectual circumstances that had constipated discussion about Casement and his contested Black Diaries since the 1960s. In Britain, the Open Government Initiative and a more transparent approach to questions of state secrecy has precipitated a vast declassification of Casement files, along with a different type of interrogation of the relationship between state secrecy and state documents. In Ireland, the Black Diaries debate was unfastened by the changes in the Sexual Offences Act, and the decriminalisation of homosexuality, which allowed for more open, public discussion on these matters. Equally important was the decision to include Sinn Féin within the democratic process. Disassembling the barriers preventing inter-community understanding has, however, exposed extraordinary contradictions in conflicting historical narratives: the root

cause of much civil conflict and disobedience in the first place.

Despite efforts to work through and reconcile the disagreements and paradoxes exposed in the multiple inscriptions of Casement and his representation, there survive two Roger Casements in the historiography of twentieth-century Anglo-Irish history. On one side, still swinging from the gallows, is the disgraced colonial servant, who was classified as a 'British traitor' and partially silenced as an imperial agent. On the other side, buried in the archive, is the Irish patriot, marginalised within the history of 1916 and yet still uncomfortably subversive, despite efforts to forget him. As there was a duality in Casement's consciousness as a rebel Irishman serving the British Empire, so there survives a divisive duality in his interpretation within conflicting historical traditions. Hardly surprising therefore that the war fought over his place in history reveals less about the man and more about the politics of the historical knowledge determining his reputation.

In a cultural and political deconstruction of the man and his facts, there are three interlinking contextual considerations requiring scrutiny. Context, of course, is essential to all historical representation and is susceptible to its own inclusions, omissions, constructions and epistemologies. The principal point of disharmony in Casement's interpretation is evident within the archive itself. There has been an imaginative failure to interrogate the Black Diaries in terms of their own archival dynamic. Why do some archives command greater power and control over others? How and why do specific archives privilege a narrative evident from specific documents? How does the control of information lead to particular distortions and imbalances in the construal of histories? Similarly, the sexual discourse arising from the diaries has been advantaged above all other narratives. No one can deny Casement's vitality in stimulating sexual discussion, but some straightforward questions about sexual and textual inconsistencies within the Black Diaries are ignored and obscured. Why? A further imperative context is revealed in the

diplomatic politics of Casement's inclusion as a historical protagonist. Casement cuts against the grain of agreed versions of the past, which may help explain why he has been removed and marginalised within narratives where he might rightly feature.

Archival Context

The Casement archive is both vast and fragmented. Considerable collections of letters, papers and correspondence are held in the National Archives (Kew, London), the National Library of Ireland (Dublin), New York Public Library (Special Collections) and the Politisches Archiv in Bonn. Supplementing these collections are dozens of other smaller holdings spread between diverse locations including the Niger Delta, Rio de Janeiro and the palace of Tervuren, on the outskirts of Brussels. They contain correspondence and traces that help to build a picture of a life lived across the Atlantic world at the height of imperial expansion in the thirty years before the outbreak of the First World War.



Roger Casement in the island of Guarijá
(Angus Mitchell - Anaconda Editions - 2000)

Casement was self-conscious of his place in history and the centrality of the written word in producing both visibility and meaning. He became a formidable constructor of history and produced documentation that has kept him close to the discussion on public records. How he challenged the relationship between his versions of truth and the State's version is discernible from the comment made by the

Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, Bill Deedes, in 1953, when answering specific questions on the Black Diaries. He commented on how governments found it 'necessary to allow a passage of time before uncovering the whole truth about political events.' (4) In 1999 Casement files along with those of the infamous Mata Hari were the first secret intelligence files to be officially released into the British public domain. (5) But by that stage his place in history had been largely settled, or so most people thought. (6)

In Britain, the emphasis since the Black Diaries were released in 1959 has been to privilege the documents as the prism through which his life or 'treason' must be viewed and understood. An example of this was made clear in 2000 when an extensive list of Casement papers was circulated by the Public Record Office (now renamed the National Archives): *Roger Casement. Records at the Public Record Office*, which unequivocally defined the diaries as the archival key to unlocking Casement's meaning. (7) Page two of the document stated that in 1959 it was intended that they would remain closed for a hundred years, but 'privileged access' was allowed to 'historians' and 'other responsible persons'. It failed to mention that those who held views contrary to that of the British State had been excluded from seeing the documents as recently as 1990. While there is something luridly intriguing about the Black Diaries, they are vital to unlocking information about Casement's two principal investigations into colonial administration conducted in 1903 in the upper Congo and in 1910/11 in the north-west Amazon.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the power struggle between European empires was primarily dependent upon knowledge: knowledge transfigured into power and, as the scramble for territory continued, the boundaries of knowledge expanded: '[c]olonial knowledge both enabled colonial conquest and was produced by it'. (8) This resulted in a massive challenge of information control. In his study of the imperial archive, Thomas Richards has examined the value of knowledge in the organisation of imperial order and the role of

information in legitimating imperial action. (9) His theory builds on more familiar critiques of how knowledge and power were constituted through cultural hegemony; an argument advanced by Edward Said in terms of literature, Michel Foucault in terms of sexuality and Mary Louise Pratt in terms of travel writing. Richards builds on this analysis and demonstrates how archives became utopian representations of the state and instruments for territorial control.

Yet this knowledge empire produced its own reversals and reactions. Richards also looks at the 'enemy archive': how a counter-archive, challenging imperial matrices, extended from this early example of a knowledge economy. He cites the publication of the invasion novel, *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) by Erskine Childers as a key juncture in the development of the enemy archive. It was Childers, of course, who conspired with Casement in 1914 to run guns into Howth in County Dublin, thereby arming the Irish Volunteers and igniting the history of the troubles. The Casement-Childers collaboration and their jointly hatched 'invasion plan' played into the deepest phobias on imperial defence and started to interfere with the borders separating fiction and fact.

This mirroring of fact by fiction is constantly at play within Casement's life and interpretation. He deliberately constructs his own journeys up river into the 'heart of darkness' – in both Africa and the Amazon – to investigate the dark heart of 'civilisation' and in the trajectory of his life there is something of both Marlow and Kurtz. The author, Arthur Conan Doyle, bases his imperial hero, Lord John Roxton, in his Professor Challenger novel *The Lost World*, on Casement's investigation of the Putumayo atrocities. The borders separating fact from fiction are crossed and re-crossed in the interpretation of Casement's life in a way that threatens to distort and destabilise his facts and the official archive both from within and without. Mario Vargas Llosa's observation (in his interview in this edition of IMSLA) that Casement has 'a character whose natural environment is a very great novel, and not the real world' partly explains why he remains more attractive as a character to those who work with

the imagination. Historians, in contrast, are generally cautious of the Casement story to the point of avoidance, a condition resulting from the unstable and contrary nature of the facts relevant to his story.

However, Casement's invasion plan to overthrow the empire ran far deeper than the plot to train and arm the Irish Volunteers. His lasting act of sabotage lies within the archive itself. His investigation of King Leopold's systemic violence in the Congo Free State and his exposé of the City of London's support for Amazon rubber atrocities and, finally, his condemnation of uncaring administration in the Connemara district of the West of Ireland, converge into a single atrocity across time and space. His archival legacy links up to expose colonial abuse on a worldwide scale and systemic failure at every turn. His archive produces a counter-knowledge or counter-history which destabilises the architecture of imperial knowledge through challenging the racial, sexual and cultural norms underpinning the knowledge legitimising imperial control.

What lies beneath the Black Diaries (the hieroglyph) is a single and vast trans-temporal and trans-historical atrocity committed in the name of 'empires' and 'civilisation'. This is a crime of unspeakable dimensions that, once identified, demands a re-periodisation of the official history of slavery and the nineteenth century anti-slavery movement. Casement was the chronicler of that crime at the moment of its initiation on the Congo and during a particularly destructive cycle of devastation defining the history of Amazon people and their environment. His evidence of that crime is contained in a paper trail of official reports, letters and diaries, which become the indivisible unity of his life leading him through the transformation from imperialist to rebel to revolutionary. The counter-insurgent response from the knowledge/power nexus is the deployment of the Black Diaries, which map the key moments of his investigations into Leopold's Congo and British financial complicity in the local apocalypse ignited by the Amazon rubber industry. The Black Diaries reverse the sense and begin the due process of

distortion, reduction and confusion by inverting Casement and turning him into the object to be investigated: the Edwardian sex tourist preying on the vulnerable. Thereby they break the coherency of his transformation and recondition the facts of his life by imposing an alternative counter-narrative to his counter-archive.

Sexuality Context

Mrinalini Sinha, in her work on *Colonial Masculinity – The ‘manly Englishmen’ and the ‘effeminate Bengali’* in the late nineteenth century, demonstrates how ‘gender was an important axis along which colonial power was constructed’ in Bengal of the 1880s and 1890s. (10) This same axis might be extended into Ireland up until 1916 and studied through a succession of events beginning with the trials of Charles Stewart Parnell and Oscar Wilde, peaking in the series of sexual scandals associated with British administration in Dublin Castle in the Edwardian age and ending with Casement’s trial. (11) As the propaganda war between the British Empire and its Irish critics deepened, so sexuality began to play a more prominent role in how the conflict was represented for public consumption. (12) The power of rumour was also used with great effect as the propaganda engagement became both more sophisticated and more ruthless. In the background to the political drama circulated theories on race, evolution, eugenics and degeneration. The works of Max Nordau, Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis and Richard von Krafft-Ebbing straddle the period and helped shape thinking on and around sexuality. George Bernard Shaw later remembered how Casement’s ‘trial happened at a time when the writings of Sigmund Freud had made psychopathy grotesquely fashionable. Everybody was expected to have a secret history.’ (13) Echoing in the background of his conviction is the humiliation and tragedy of Oscar Wilde. Recently, Wilde and Casement have been coupled as the sexual *enfants terribles* of the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

In the run of recent work analysing the interface between sexuality, empire, race and

gender, the Black Diaries have been treated with some level of caution and circumspection. Casement’s ‘gay’ status has been invoked more often as a symbol of Irish ‘modernity’, or as a means of humiliating intolerant attitudes amongst Irish nationalists, than as a blueprint for ‘gay’ lifestyles. Flimsy consideration has been given to the internal meanings of the diaries as documents and the interpretative shadow they cast over his investigations. Some of the reason may lie in the often tedious style of the daily descriptions, describing a life where mosquitoes are more visible than emotions. To argue, therefore, that the diaries are essentially homophobic may be unfashionable, but it is not unreasonable. They impose various homophobic stereotypes of the ‘diseased mind’ type and situate sexual difference in a marginal and alienated world bereft of either love or sympathy. Equally problematic is the treatment of the willing ‘native’ as silent and willing victim of the diarist’s predatory instincts.

Furthermore, the sense evident from the diaries is wildly contradictory to how Casement made use of sexual imagery in his own activism to build his case against colonial systems and to provoke reaction to the plight of the colonised. What the diaries obscure is the innovative strategy that he adopted to challenge the gender stereotypes of his own time and, most obviously, the hyper-masculinity so prevalent in his era. In 1906, his colleague in the Congo Reform Association, E. D. Morel, made a noteworthy reference to the use of sexual abuse by the coloniser in his exposé of the horrors wrought by the rubber industry. (14) The comment quite probably extends from Morel’s lengthy discussions with Casement: the source for much of his local knowledge on Africa. He wrote how the African had to endure:

violation of the sanctuaries of sex, against the rape of the newly married wife, against bestialities foul and nameless, exotics introduced by the white man’s “civilization” and copied by his servants in the general, purposeful satanic crushing of body, soul and spirit in a people. (15)

In the explicit and vivid language used here, the linguistic fingerprint of Casement is apparent. The general tone of the comment, linking

sexuality and colonial invasion, is later on mirrored in his 1912 report on the Putumayo atrocities describing horrendous abuses against Amazonian women and children where the 'white' coloniser is blamed for destroying healthy sexual lifestyles:

The very conditions of Indian life, open and above board, and every act of every day known to well nigh every neighbour, precluded, I should say, very widespread sexual immorality before the coming of the white man. (16)

Also integral to Casement's subtle subversion and proto-'queering' of imperial gender politics was his experimentation with new types of masculinity, which disrupted the colonial explorer stereotype. This was a masculinity achieved without dominance over the native and the use of the gun. Conrad captured it when he remembered Casement in the Congo 'start[ing] off into an unspeakable wilderness, swinging a crookhandled stick for all weapons, with two bull-dogs: Paddy (white) and Biddy (brindle) at his heels and a Loanda boy carrying a bundle for all company. (17)' Casement's skills at resolving conflicts in highly sensitive situations without recourse to violence and using non-violent and peaceful methods is contrary to his image as 'gun-runner' in 1914. His recruiting speeches make persistent reference to 'manhood' and 'manliness', but idealise and encourage the defensive and the protective use of martial force as opposed to aggressive colonial violence.

Ireland has no blood to give to any land, to any cause but that of Ireland. Our duty as a Christian people is to abstain from bloodshed ... Let Irishmen and Irish boys stay in Ireland. Their duty is clear – before God and before man. We, as a people, have no quarrel with the German people. (18)

Intimately related to this recasting of Irishmen as passive and local, as opposed to active and global, was his progressive position on the place of women in Ireland's move towards independence. Women, more than men, were the enduring influence in his life. The historian and founder of the African Society, Alice Stopford Green, was his predominant

intellectual mentor, closely followed by the poet-activist, Alice Milligan, the public educator, Agnes O'Farrelly, and his cousin Gertrude Bannister. The inclusive Ireland envisaged by Casement was one that gave equal status to all women. In December 1907 he wrote to Agnes O'Farrelly during the debate over the teaching of Irish at the National University:

Why not also try to get some female representation? The Gaelic League is largely inspired and partially directed by women. Women played a great part in Old Ireland in training the youthful mind and chivalry of the Gael. (19)

When he co-drafted the *Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers*, the founding document for the movement, he deliberately inscribed women with a role. (20) During his trial, several newspapers commented on the large number of women in the public gallery. But this progressive and empathetic attitude is reconfigured and silenced within the sexualised narrative.

A further point of academic confusion is apparent from how his utilisation of different gender identities has been misinterpreted. (21) Writing in *Irish Freedom*, he adopts the pseudonym Shan van Vocht 'Poor Old Woman' and in some of his encoded correspondence with the Clan na Gael he signs himself 'Mary'. (22) When he dies, one priest recorded how he went to the gallows with the 'faith & piety of an Irish peasant woman.' (23) Descriptions of Casement often refer to his 'beauty' and his fine features using a language to portray him as if he were a woman. (24) In how he disrupts the colonial stereotypes of gender, there is something of the 'womanly man' about Casement. Richard Kirkland, in a comparison of Casement, Fanon and Gandhi, acknowledged his 'sacrifice' as 'part of a coherent resistance to colonialism' necessary in order to recreate himself as a 'new man.' (25) However, his experimentation with his own gender left him vulnerable to interpretative control. On 17 July 1916, the day of Casement's appeal, the memoranda read to the Coalition War Cabinet, which indelibly placed the diaries on the official record, stated:

of late years he seems to have completed the full cycle of sexual degeneracy and from a pervert has become an invert – a woman or pathic who derives his satisfaction from attracting men and inducing them to use him. (26)

Few official statements better codify the confusion over sexuality that permeated the Coalition War Cabinet in 1916. Casement's treason is constructed not merely as a betrayal of his country and his class but, above all, his gender. If there is a single word which stands out from the transcript of his trial it is the word 'seduce'. Casement's efforts to recruit Irishmen to join his brigade in Germany, or enlist with the Irish volunteers, are not considered as recruitment but condemned as 'seduction'. He is denied the status of 'recruiter' and instead damned as a 'seducer' – a seducer of men from their loyalty to king and empire. Obviously, the word has explicit sexual connotations.

The Cabinet memo of 17 July can be identified as the first queered reading of Casement in a genealogy of queer readings, which reveal different shifts in sexual practice and politics in both Britain and Ireland since 1916. (27) Nevertheless, this first queered reading has required constant renovation, restoration and sexual replastering. In his aptly named *Queer People*, Basil Thomson, the historian-policeman who discovered the diaries, spins forgery, espionage and sexual deviancy into the world where Casement survives as an arch protagonist. (28) The first published edition of the Black Diaries (1959) splices the diaries into the overarching chronicle of the Irish independence movement between 1904 and 1922. (29) The encrypted message implies that Casement's investigation of colonial savagery was a key to achieving Irish independence, and helps explain the presence of a photograph of Casement's prosecutor, the Lord Chancellor, F. E. Smith, as the frontispiece to the volume. More recently, Jeff Dudgeon uses the Black Diaries to update the queer geographies of Ulster and to re-imagine Northern Protestant nationalism as some high camp drama driven by a cabal of queer crusaders. (30) But in each of these re-queerings, the dismissal of the internal politics of the diaries and how they

represent the African, Amerindian, Irish nationalist, Jew or Jamaican as willing victims of the diarist's desire, ignores the supremacist politics implicit in the Black Diaries.

Casement's interrogation of imperial systems helped articulate unspeakable aspects of power and inaugurated the postcolonial negotiation of the relationship between fact and fiction, slave and master, 'civilization' and the 'primitive'. (31) He also exposed systemic deceptions and lies controlling the dominance of the periphery by the metropolitan centre. His archive upturns the embedded racial and gender prejudices inherent within colonial authority and assembles an alternative version of events that radically transforms in the wake of his revolutionary evolution. The defence of Casement's narrative remains integral to postcolonial resistance. Conversely, the repackaging of the Black Diaries is vital to maintaining the integrity of the archive and the historical structures it both produces and protects.

Historian Lynn Hunt has analysed the relationship of eroticism to the body politic during the French revolution and shows how the 'sexualized body of Marie Antoinette can be read for what it reveals about power and the connections between public and private, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary'. (32) If a similar approach is taken to Casement's archival body, then his sexuality serves as an exceptional insight into colonial sexuality. Beyond and beneath the hieroglyph is revealed a new man hell-bent on overthrowing the system on multiple levels. The response to this systemic attack is a rewriting of his narrative in a manner designed to restore sexual normativity and preserve imperial hierarchies while superimposing a counter-narrative of seduction, deviancy, anti-humanism, isolation and tropical disease to thwart accusations of systemic violence, colonial corruption and establishment vice. What the Black Diaries achieved through innuendo in 1916 has been re-asserted through the authority of 'fact' since 1959, revealing a narrative that has succeeded in saving both Ireland and the global South from the revolutionary deviant.

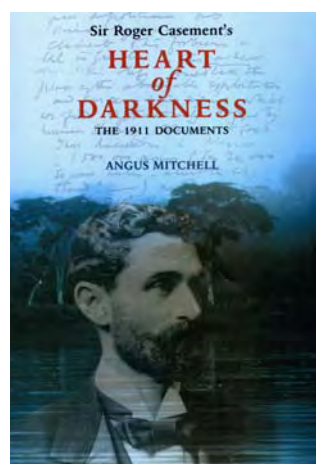
Political Context

In order to understand the 'presence' of the Black Diaries it is important to remember that discussion of foreign policy was always deemed to lie beyond the control of any potentially devolved Irish parliament. Even if Ireland had been granted Home Rule in either 1886 or 1893, foreign affairs would have remained within British parliamentary jurisdiction. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the Irish Parliamentary Party from developing a coherent critical policy towards empire from the 1870s, which had considerable influence on altering the wider discussion on empire and in shaping other nationalist discourses. Irish parliamentarians such as F. H. O'Donnell and Michael Davitt were advocates of an international dimension to the Home Rule discussion. What makes Casement different, however, was his acceptance by and work for the imperial system. He was considered part of the inner circle of the establishment and was recognised for his services in 1911 with a knighthood. Both of his investigations into crimes against humanity contributed enormously to the philanthropic image of the British Empire and to the belief in its self-regulating capabilities.

The complex political nature of those investigations reveals both public and secret aspects of how imperial government operated. The Congo inquiry gave Britain significant diplomatic leverage with Belgium and also helped divert attention away from deepening concerns about British imperial administration in South Africa after the Boer War. In the Amazon, the strategic publication of his reports in July 1912 persuaded investment away from the extractive rubber economy in the Atlantic region to the plantation rubber economy in South-East Asia. The relevance of Casement's 1912 *Blue Book* commands greater interest in South America for how it altered the political economy of the region than for its validity as a document exposing the abuses carried out against Amazonian communities. Recent global events have disclosed once more how humanitarian intention is often the publicly stated reason for motivating intervention, but it

often cloaks wider economic interests. The historian Eric Hobsbawm has identified how 'the abolition of the slave trade was used to justify British naval power, as human rights today are often used to justify US military power.' (33) The idealism of altruism often serves as a mask for aggressive hegemonic expansion.

This partly explains why Casement's official work has been contained within layers of legislation protecting state secrecy and security beginning with the Official Secrets Act of 1911. As part of the inner circle at the Foreign Office, Casement himself was bound by both the restrictions and machinations of secrecy. Partly through that proximity he became a stalwart opponent of 'secret diplomacy', a position expressed forthrightly in his essay, *The Keeper of the Seas*, written in August 1911, at the very moment the Official Secrets Act was passing through the British parliament. (34) His writings published in Germany in 1915 in the *Continental Times* made persistent attacks on the use and abuse of secrecy. Casement became the most vocal and informed critic of the secret negotiations which led to the First World War and which he continued to condemn as undemocratic and criminal until the noose silenced him.



Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness (cover) - Irish Manuscripts Commission

Rumours, secrecy, silence and lies have thrived at the heart of the Casement story and the Black Diaries have both driven and fuelled these dynamics. Rumour was particularly destructive at the time of his trial and helped

confuse the groundswell of support for Ireland which arose in the wake of the execution of the leaders in early May 1916. Aspects of secrecy are clearly at play in the negotiations of the Irish Free State Treaty in 1921, when Casement's solicitor, George Gavan Duffy (the most reluctant signatory of the treaty), faced Casement's prosecutor, F. E. Smith, across the negotiating table. Why Michael Collins was shown the Black Diaries so deliberately by Smith at the House of Lords in early 1922 and why he felt it necessary to make a public statement about their authenticity and to open a file on 'Alleged Casement Diaries' suggests that Casement was a significant factor in the secret diplomatic negotiations between Britain and Ireland. This may also explain why Gavan Duffy refused to comment on the issue later in life, when his word might have tied up so many loose ends in the story. In 1965 Casement's body (or, rather, a few lime-bleached bones) were returned to Ireland at a moment when the public discussion of the Black Diaries had reached boiling point. After the state funeral and reburial ritual in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, the matter was silenced in the corridors of Anglo-Irish diplomacy and was judged at a political, press and academic level to be 'out of bounds'. By situating the story within the confines of secret diplomacy, there is strong evidence to suggest that the Black Diaries are part of 'the agreed lie' binding British and Irish diplomatic histories of the twentieth century.

The critic David Lloyd has written about 'nationalisms against the state' – forms of nationalism which are deemed anti-statist and therefore unacceptable. (35) This is why Casement remains problematic for both Irish and British histories. He understood that Ulster was the intrinsic keystone to Irish unity – without Ulster, Ireland would always be compromised and truncated. His identification with Northern Protestant Republicanism constrains him within an historical location unacceptable to both traditions. While being part of the consciousness of the state, he has not been part of its written history, partly due to the fact that he has not been contiguous with the Irish Republic's vision of itself. Only amongst nationalists in the troubled north of

Ireland does his name still invoke sympathy. Furthermore, the Black Diaries have suited the growth of a divided and modernised Ireland and a resurgent imperial historiography. However, as documents of world history relevant to the Congo and Amazon, they are ignored for their own internal contradictions and prejudices and sustained symbolically as a way of 'discrediting the rising' by intimating 'that its leaders were an odd lot, psychologically unstable, given to Anglophobia and dread homoerotic tendencies.' (36) In Britain, they help filter the trauma and maintain the sanctity of the imperial image and archive.

Luke Gibbons has commented that what the historian has to fear is 'history itself particularly when it is not easily incorporated into the controlling, seamless narratives that allow communities to smooth over, or even to deny, their own pasts.' (37) Certainly, the retrieval of Roger Casement in recent years has exposed prejudices, silences and methodological shortfalls among Irish 'revisionist' historians. Where the diaries once succeeded in closing Casement down to a point of sexual oblivion, the situation is now reversed. They are facilitating a flow of new critical interpretations which conventional history is incapable of stemming. The efforts to settle the matter of the Black Diaries 'conclusively', through the flight of the academy into the safe arms of 'science' and the nature of these scientific conclusions which 'prove unequivocally...', says more about the dilemma in the relationship between politics and history than it reveals anything new about the Black Diaries. (38) The question of Casement's sexuality is no longer at issue. He has an essential 'gay' dimension which will always be part of his own story and the meta-narrative of gay liberation. The question now hinges on textual authenticity which requires us to ask deeper and unsettling questions about the authority of the archive and the role of state secrecy in authorising knowledge. The value of the Black Diaries as propaganda tools in the war against Irish republicanism is over. Academics and public alike are now watching the disintegration of an official secret or agreed lie, which has been carried for too long through the corridors of

diplomatic negotiation. It is now up to historians and scholars from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa to spearhead the next

generation of Casement's interpretation and decipher the hieroglyph in search of their own postcolonial past and present.

Angus Mitchell

Notes

1 Angus Mitchell has lectured on campuses in the US and Ireland and continues to publish on the life and afterlife of Roger Casement. He lives in Limerick.

2 Held in the National Archives (Kew, London) as HO 161/1-5, the authenticity of the Black Diaries has been disputed since they were first 'discovered' by the British authorities in 1916. They configure with the daily movement of the British consul Roger Casement as he made his investigation of crimes against humanity in the Congo in 1903 and in the Amazon in 1910 and 1911. For an account of the dispute, see Angus Mitchell (ed.) *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (Dublin & London, 1997) and *Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness: the 1911 Documents* (Dublin, 2003). The diaries were published in a comprehensive (and eccentric) edition by Jeff Dudgeon (ed.), *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries with a study of his background, sexuality and Irish political life* (Belfast, 2002).

3 The most complete bibliography is included in the biography by Seamás Ó Síochain, *Roger Casement: Imperialist Rebel, Revolutionary* (Dublin, 2007) and for a brief introductory biography see Angus Mitchell, *Casement* (London, 2003). The narrative of the Putumayo atrocities is dealt with by Ovidio Lagos, *Arana rey del Caucho: Terror y Atrocidades en el Alto Amazonas* (Buenos Aires, 2005) and Jordan Goodman, *The Devil and Mr Casement* (London, 2009). For proceedings from a Roger Casement conference, held at Royal Irish Academy in May 2000, including contributions by various academics and independent scholars working on different areas of Casement's life, see Mary E. Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin, 2005).

4 Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 3 May 1956 Vol 552 no. 174 col. 749-760. Casement's name was raised again during the course of the second reading of the Public Records Bill (26 June 1967), reducing the period for which public records are closed from fifty to thirty years. An exception was made in the case of papers relating to Ireland. Gerard Fitt (West Belfast) felt it 'of paramount importance that every consideration should be given to the publication of all facts and circumstances relating to the arrest, imprisonment and subsequent execution of Sir Roger Casement.'

5 KV 2/6 – KV 2/10 – are the reference numbers for the largely unrevealing intelligence files declassified in 2000.

6 On issues arising from the release of documents and the Casement debate see Angus Mitchell, 'The Casement 'Black Diaries' debate, the story so far' in *History Ireland*, Summer 2001.

7 On 1 December 2000 a number of academics and archivists concerned with the Casement debate were convened at the Public Record Office in London where this list was circulated. It is an incomplete compilation of files relevant to Roger Casement held at the PRO.

8 Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture* (Michigan, 1992) quoted by Catherine Hall (ed.) 'Thinking the postcolonial, thinking the empire' in *Cultures of Empire* (Manchester, 2000).

9 Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, 1993).

10 Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'manly Englishmen' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late nineteenth century* (Manchester, 1995), p. 11.

11 The most notable of these were the rumours circulating around the involvement of the explorer Ernest Shackleton's brother, Francis, in the theft of the Crown jewels, a celebrated case used by the advanced nationalist press against the Dublin Castle administration. See Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Kerry, 1968), pp. 85-90. A recent popular biography, John Cafferky and Kevin Hannafin, *Scandal and Betrayal: Shackleton and the Irish Crown Jewels* (Dublin, 2001), is another valuable insight.

12 See Philip Hoare, *Wilde's Last Stand: Decadence and conspiracy and the First World War* (London, 1997). Hoare argues that war brought into focus the threat of homosexuality and that British intelligence was populated by men who imagined sexual perverts and German spies going literally hand in hand.

13 *Irish Press*, 11 February 1937.

14 E.D. Morel, *Red Rubber, The story of the rubber slave trade flourishing on the Congo in the year of Grace 1906* (London, 1907), p. 93-4.

15 *Ibid*, p. 94.

16 *Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness: the 1911 documents* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 182-3.

17 C.T. Watts (ed.) *Joseph Conrad's letters to Cunninghame Graham* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 149.

18 *Irish Independent*, 5 October 1914.

19 Roger McHugh Papers, National Library of Ireland MS 31723, Roger Casement to Agnes O'Farrelly. 19 December 1907.

20 Bulmer Hobson, *A Short History of the Irish Volunteers* (Dublin, 1918), p. 23: 'There will also be work for women to do, and there are signs that the women of Ireland, true to their record, are especially enthusiastic for the success of the Irish Volunteers.'

21 See Lucy McDiarmid, 'The Posthumous Life of Roger Casement' in A. Bradley and M. Gialanella Valiulis (eds.) *Gender and Sexuality in modern Ireland* (Amherst, 1997). McDiarmid argues that Casement's 'camp locutions' in his letter of 28 October 1914 might be compared to 'deliberately girlish utterances of a faux-homosexual voice.' The fact that Casement was leading a revolution and was under close surveillance does not strike McDiarmid as a valid alternative explanation for his encoded communications.

22 Reinhard R. Doerries, *Prelude to the Easter Rising: Sir Roger Casement in Imperial Germany* (London, 2000) 49. Casement addresses a letter to Joseph McGarrity 'Dear Sister' and signs it 'Your fond sister, Mary'.

23 Archives of the Irish College, Rome. Papers of Monsignor Michael O'Riordan Box 17. Thomas Casey to O'Riordan, 3 August 1916.

24 Stephen Gwynn, *Experiences of a Literary Man* (London, 1926) 260, refers to Casement's 'personal charm and beauty ... Figure and face, he seemed to me then one of the finest-looking creatures I have ever seen.'

25 Richard Kirkland, 'Frantz Fanon, Roger Casement and Colonial Commitment', in Glenn Hooper & Colin Graham (eds.) *Irish and Postcolonial Writing: History, Theory Practice* (London, 2002).

26 TNA, HO 144/1636/311643/52 and 53

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- 28 Basil Thomson, *Queer People* (London, 1922), p. 91: 'Casement struck me as one of those men who are born with a strong strain of the feminine in their character. He was greedy for approbation, and he had the quick intuition of a woman as to the effect he was making on the people around him.'
- 29 Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias (eds.) *The Black Diaries, An account of Roger Casement's life and times with a collection of his diaries and public writings* (Paris, 1959).
- 30 Jeff Dudgeon (ed.), *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries with a study of his background, sexuality and Irish political life* (Belfast, 2002)
- 31 It is interesting to note that Robert J.C. Young begins his study of *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction* (Oxford, 2001) with Casement emerging from the Amazon in 1910.
- 32 Lynn Hunt (ed.), *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore, 1990).
- 33 Eric Hobsbawm, 'America's imperial delusion', in *The Guardian* 14 June 2003 reprinted from *Le Monde Diplomatique* (June 2003).
- 34 Sir Roger Casement's *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 556-66. Casement's other important essay *The Secret Diplomacy of England*, published posthumously in *The Irishman* (9/3/1918) and reprinted in the Royal Irish Academy, *Roger Casement in Irish and World History* (Dublin, 2000) programme for the symposium. Among recent accounts on secrecy and the British state, see David Vincent, *The Culture of Secrecy – Britain 1832-1998* (Oxford, 1998).
- 35 David Lloyd, *Ireland after History* (Cork, 1999), pp. 19-36.
- 36 Seamus Deane, 'Wherever Green is read' in Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha and Theo Dorgan (eds) *Revising the Rising* (Dublin, 1991), p. 100.
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Reviews

David Lloyd's *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity*

By Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação (1)



Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2008
180 pp. ISBN 978-0-946755-40-0

*"The poet is like that Prince of Clouds, who soars above the/ archer and the hurricane:
Great Auk/ Brought down to earth, his gawky, gorgeous wings impede his walking"*
(*"The Albatross"* Ciaran Carson)

Taking an unflinching look at the ambiguous portrait of a country whose past is rooted in the 'experience of incongruity' typical of postcolonial societies, the cultural critic David Lloyd perspicaciously scrutinises Irish history, producing an unsparing analysis of its antinomies and contradictions. According to the Brazilian Literature professor Roberto Schwarz, this experience comes into being when dependent cultures seek to address their issues according to intellectual mythologies developed somewhere else and whose bases are utterly distinct from the place that they are transplanted to. Thus, this process is one of the features that enable a particular social structure to be reflected in cultural formation as an artistic paradigm. In spite of the fact the author does not seem to be acquainted with Schwarz's theories, the Brazilian author's insightful remarks bear comparison to Lloyd's mainly because the author, grounded in a postcolonial outlook, examines how the residual features of pre-colonial formation are out of joint with modern ideas of cutting-edge advances and

state-of-the-art techniques. In other words, he is referring to the manner in which modernisation has forced its way into post-colonial Ireland and, therefore, forged an incomplete fractured society and industrial system. In his words:

The failure of the modern state to fulfil even its quite limited emancipatory promises: the promise to counter the accumulative greed of capital with some semblance of just distribution of its goods; the promise of that security it offers to private property might in some degree be balanced by the welfare offered to its citizens in the various forms... the promise that it would sustain and respond to a critical and participatory citizenry. (p. 8)

In an acutely critical tone, Lloyd summons his readers to approach discreet points in Irish history when it was actually possible to envision the uncertainties brought about by the modern, especially imperialistic, attitude. According to the author these moments of multiple temporalities are of the utmost importance, since they show how Irish times are

orchestrated by the rhythm of agrarian and industrial capitalism. With the intention of offering his readers a broader view on how utopian promises turned to dust at the height of their project, the author examines key moments: the Irish famine and its victims, James Joyce and medievalism, James Connolly and national Marxism and, finally, Allan de Souza photographs. Through a precise analysis of such motives the critic seems to be 'brushing history against the grain', as Walter Benjamin, one of the most prominent critics of the Frankfurt school of knowledge, would have suggested. Nevertheless, his intentions are likely to go beyond that, for he effectively states that his aim is to do justice to the past in its successes and disappointments. Therefore, the writer wishes to develop a conceptual historical point of view that would open up 'the diverse and divergent human and natural ecologies' (p. 9) that are in abundance in society. One of the features he uses to do that is the notion of ruins and the multitudinous layers of the Irish political scene.

As a running theme throughout the book, and ingeniously exploiting the theme of ruins, David Lloyd makes a pun with the idea of runes - the characters of ancient alphabets that also had the function of foretelling a person's destiny or casting spells. Through this analogy, the author embraces the concept of ruins, as an ancient landmark of a past that is still latent and current in the reality of the present, and by doing so he transforms history, and the memory of a traumatic event that refuses to become the landmark of nostalgia, into a rune that can guide somebody's outlook to a more compensatory future. The main issue the author takes with traditional studies regarding this subject is that anthropologists and historians do not consider the mythical effect as an important factor in the critical potentiality of ruins. However, following Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the scholar comprehends the myth as the return of a past that is still haunting the present - it is the return of spectre-victims to settle unfinished business.

When Lloyd highlights the theoretical legacy of the myth in the light of the *Dialect of Enlightenment*, he also points out what he considers to be its major flaw: the schism between human and natural instances in the emancipatory project of humankind. In the light of such observations, the author proposes the viewpoint that the archaic structures that entailed the harmonious coexistence of nature and humanity - and which were very much present in the ancient world - are of the upmost significance in understanding contemporary post-colonial resistance. As an example, he recalls the culture of the *clachan*, where a collective mode of farming did not entail unfair hierarchy and division of property among huge landowners. Nonetheless, already establishing a line of thought that will be improved upon in the first chapter, the writer mentions that this different form of living was destroyed by what is believed to be the Achilles heel of Irish history: the Great Famine.

In the first chapter of the book Lloyd has the objective of renewing the ordinary use of the notion of trauma in the interpretation of post-colonial sites. To him, it is essential to go beyond a common psychoanalytic use of trauma - the silence of the victim as the desire to forget his or her sorrows. In this sense, it is necessary to 'indicate... what is to be produced of an apprehended loss and its perpetuated damage to a subject whose very condition is a transformation' (p. 25). Thus, while mapping the formation of Western subjectivity from the Romantic philosophy of Schiller to the disenchantment proposed by Baudelaire, the writer believes that it is fundamental, in the interpretation of the Famine, to overcome melancholy, for it is within the fractured post-colonial individual that there is potential for renewal and recovery. Without entering the debate between melancholy and nostalgia, - a division that could have been made by the critic, since Walter Benjamin explains thoroughly that melancholy is the feature that enables subjectivity to make past and present connections - he analyses Sean Crowley's report on the Irish famine, as recorded in the Folklore Commission. Carefully applying the pragmatic parameters mentioned above, he views the

allegory as a central literary device to trace the naturalisation of the tragedy as the will of God. Even though the author sees melancholy as a negative point, what should be accounted for is that Benjamin's Angel of History is melancholic in the sense that it wishes to go back and wake the dead. This is the very same procedure Lloyd puts into practice in the second chapter of the book – even though he denies it vehemently.

Notwithstanding our disagreement with the author in terms of melancholy, the second chapter ought to be recognised as a new ground for post-colonial studies mainly because it turns to the concept of the sublime, as conceived throughout philosophy, in order to demonstrate how the imperial mentality represents and reproduces images of the famine as a catastrophe, or even a necessary evil, that enabled Ireland to reach its cutting-edge economic system based on international capitalism. With regard to scholars who have produced ground-breaking studies on the matter, such as Chris Morash and Margaret Kelleher, the author demonstrates how *clachan* farming was transformed into guilt, as, owing to that, the population received the famine as a form of punishment for their savage acts.

Along these lines, it can be perceived that this was highly convenient for Britain since it facilitated more comprehensive control of the empire and avoided major rebellions. Furthermore, instead of being lost within the feeling of the inexplicability generated by the sublime, the post colonial Irish individual is haunted by a spectre of the dehumanisation of the victim which justifies his or her tragic fortune. Accordingly, between the ghost that 'seeks redress for the injustice of its negation', or the 'ghost of hopes that are the afterlife of lost imaginary futures', the author calls for a ghost that acknowledges the Imperial ideology and displays its prejudices and manipulations, like a widow refusing to mourn and forget. This is less associated with Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) and more with Benjamin (1996), for this is the premise of the philosopher when he wishes to remind us that civilisation is forged at a barbaric expense. All in all, this does not

diminish the brilliance of the chapter, which is followed by another that examines the central theme of James Joyce: the epiphany.

Once more, going against progressive notions of a heroic modernity, Lloyd does not hearken back to the *avant-garde* movements of the beginning of the twentieth century, but to the medieval teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas whose theory helped him to develop the form of his narratives. In order to buttress his claim he associates the rise of capitalism with the end of the Middle Ages and the pursuit of new markets and lands. As a stance that 'designates at once the possibility of development and the failure of that development to occur' (p. 82), the capitalist mentality dissociates itself utterly from medieval society. Nonetheless, the point that the author seeks to address is that those seeds of resistance are actually what feed the failed promises of the modern age. Consequently, the main argument of this specific part of the volume is that Joyce falls back on a special kind of magical aura typical of medieval times in order to expose how they are intertwined with the movements of capital. In short, the writer's plurality has to do with his perception of Irish history as a disjunctive time that constantly disinters buried pasts anew – such as the objects analysed in the epiphanies.

Contrary to the mainstream criticism that dismisses James Connolly's Celtic Marxism as anachronous and out-of-date, the fifth chapter of the book is dedicated to his theoretical insights that are still relevant to the contemporary world. For the most part, Lloyd's analysis on Connolly's treaty are deeply involved with his material and historical examination of Ireland, which refused to correlate aristocracy and nationality – such was the view at that time – and to his reservation as to whether material expropriation was the right path to reproduce Irish stereotypes. In the critic's words Connolly's

Version of national Marxism, far from representing a model outmoded by transnationalism, is embedded in the longer history of colonial capitalism and offers the possibility of alternative histories and alternative futures that

might sidestep the logic of developmental historicism. (p. 126)

To sum up, Lloyd, through the lens proposed by his reading of Walter Benjamin, takes his readers through a quick exhibition of the photographs taken by Allan de Souza and makes a quite definite point about history and culture. His main point is that it is possible, within the frames created by the dialectical image, to conceive a future whose utopian ideals would acknowledge and take on board the popular modes of memory and knowledge. That is to say, after rejecting Benjamin's idea, but recognising the historical period in which he wrote, he reveres his critical oeuvre. Perhaps then, the merit of this final part of the book is to bring to the surface one of the most brilliant texts by the writer that is not widely known: the 'Critique of Violence', which exploits how juridical borders perpetrate a sanctioned violence that, through its different tonalities, becomes a mythical one. The photos are indeed a landmark of the ruins not only of the torn-up landscape of Ireland but of its inhabitants' fragmented subjectivity.

Whether revealing hidden histories of the past or raising the spirits of the famine, the truth of the matter is that Lloyd's *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* comprehends not only culture and memory, but also history, with its shadows and illuminations, losses and gains, and, of undeniable importance, without losing hope that there is still room for improvement and that the emancipatory project of modernity must be radically reviewed in order to offer other alternatives for the present. Indeed, it is high time for post-colonial critics, following the footsteps left by the writer, to look more closely at the body of work left by the Frankfurt critics. Maybe the final words that best summarise Lloyd's intent is Baudelaire's albatross in the voice of the Northern Irish poet Ciaran Carson, although its gawky wings impede him from walking in the land of the living, perhaps in the land of the dead and their memory there is still hope of remedying the near future.

Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação

Notes

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Author's Reply

My thanks to Viviane Carvalho da Annuniação for her rich engagement with *Irish Times*. It is unusual for me to be invited to respond to a reviewer, especially when the review is so generous and comprehensive in its embracing of the book. Yet it does give me an opportunity to clarify a couple of points that were, perhaps, not as well expressed in the book as they might have been and which, therefore, may have given rise to misunderstanding.

Ms. da Annuniação comments that *Irish Times* shows 'how the residual features of pre-colonial formation are out of joint with modern ideas of cutting-edge advances and state-of-the-art techniques. In other words, he is referring to the manner in which modernisation has forced its way into post-colonial Ireland and, therefore, forged an incomplete fractured society and industrial system.' I would like to clarify this issue. My argument throughout *Irish Times*, as in my other recent work, is not that Irish culture is one to which modernisation comes or on which it is in any simple way imposed, but that Irish culture is the laboratory and crucible for certain forms of modernising institutions. In that respect, Irish society - like other colonial societies - is in fact one term in a differential structure of modernity: its subaltern formations are no less an aspect of colonial modernity than are the police force or national schools. Its cultural practices that proved recalcitrant or resistant to colonial projects were

indeed targeted for destruction in part by labelling them as ‘traditional’ or pre-modern. I argue, rather, that they are moments of modernity whose counter-cultural force lives on even in the damage that they register.

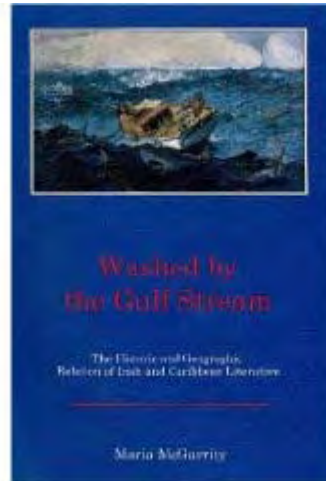
For that reason, it is not the case that I believe ‘that it is fundamental, in the interpretation of the Famine, to overcome melancholy, for it is within the fractured post-colonial individual that there is potential for renewal and recovery.’ Rather, as I argue in several essays, we need to rethink the relationship of mourning and melancholy in the colonial context. Mourning is understood in Freudian terms as a letting go of loss, as a moving on into recovery and reconciliation with the violence of some taking away. Melancholy is usually understood negatively as the process of unreconciled mourning, of a refusal to mourn and let go; melancholy is a form of bad narcissism that clings to unreality or dead relations. But it can also be understood as a refusal to let go of the past, a refusal to reconcile to a violence that has not yet ceased, and a determination to keep open the possible alternatives to colonial capitalism whose outlines live on in those damaged but obstinate forms of counter-culture that persist in colonised societies. To ‘move on’ is to consign the victims of the past to oblivion and even, all too often, blame: they did not survive because they were not worthy of it, or, as Adorno and Horkheimer put it in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, to survive is to be mature. However, within that relationship to the past is an implicit relationship with present violence: it suggests that those cultural formations that today are targeted by accumulation or domination are ‘fit to be destroyed’. The ethical claim of *Irish Times* is that such a reconciliation with past violence spells indifference to the violence of the present, an attitude all too evident in the lately deceased Celtic Tiger.

David Lloyd

Reviews

Maria McGarrity's *Washed By The Gulf Stream. The Historic and Geographic Relation of Irish and Caribbean Literature*

By Mariana Bolfarine (1)



McGarrity, Maria. *Washed by the Gulf Stream. The Historic and Geographic Relation of Irish and Caribbean Literature*. University of Delaware Press, 2008. 196 p. ISBN: 978-0-87413-028-7

Washed by the Gulf Stream is a comparative analysis that tackles modern literary manifestations of Ireland and the Caribbean. The author focuses on three main themes related to Irish and Caribbean cultural experiences: (the impossibility of) sanctuary or refuge, wandering or errantry and (the inevitability of) exile. McGarrity's text can be compared to a kaleidoscope, in which the multi-coloured beads form one whole image once light enters it and reflects off its three mirrors. The image of the 'Gulf Stream' is revealing, and, together with the historic and geographic elements, it creates the beam of light that connects the different facets approached in this study of Irish and Caribbean modern literary works. The novelty presented in her work is the use of a historically contextualised 'geographic imaginary', the island imaginary, which determines both literary traditions.

Although the book is divided into four chapters and a conclusion, McGarrity is able to link the dense literary texts that she profoundly explores, and she manages well the transitions not only from one narrative text to the other,

but also from one chapter to the next. The outcome is a text with a flow that is a metaphor of the warm current of the Gulf Stream, described in mythology as 'a single, distinct, clear current' (p. 113), yet its actual course is dynamic and challenging.

In the Introduction the author warns the reader against what Foster calls 'the common pitfall of comparative postcolonial studies' (p.22) when juxtaposing two islands with different historical backgrounds. Though McGarrity charts with precision the shared experience of colonialism, she highlights the historical and cultural differences between Ireland and the Caribbean. The first chapter depicts the historical presence of the Irish in the Caribbean; the second deals with the common themes of transgressive sexuality and violated maternity in Irish *Big House* and Caribbean *Plantation* novels in Rhys, Somerville and Ross, Banville and Carpentier; the third is about the wandering of Joyce and Walcott in their epic geographies; and the fourth presents the connections between the Irish and the Caribbean *Bildungsroman* tradition (Joyce and Lamming) and the more

contemporary memoirs of diaspora (Kincaid and McCourt). The aim of the present review is to rethink the problematic of space – thoroughly present in McGarrity's work – and how the authors of the selected novels create borders through which the centre is constantly being displaced.

Although space, as an aesthetic element, is recurrent in postcolonial literatures, critics have not taken into consideration how the process of creation is influenced by the locus of a work. As expressed by McGarrity's quoting Benedict Anderson, the geographical space is commonly seen as 'a state imposed grid for imagined communities', and this grid is usually drawn to the benefit of those who have more power - the metropolitan centres in the case of Ireland and the Caribbean. *Washed by the Gulf Stream* subverts this idea of space by stating that, 'Island geographies are imagined in and shape the consciousness of writers and peoples, for whom the Gulf Stream operates as a metaphor of geographic connection. This waterway reveals fundamental aspects of individual identity and collective cultural formation' (23).

The first space that McGarrity explores is the domestic space, represented by the image of the house, in Irish Big House novels, such as *The Big House of Inver* (1925), by Somerville and Ross and *Birchwood* (1973), by Banville, and in Caribbean plantation novels, as *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), by Jean Rhys and *The Kingdom of this World* (1957), by Carpentier. Both forms of construction reveal luxury and ostentation on the outside, with high walls built in the latest European styles, so as to imitate the metropolis.

In "Of Other Spaces" (1967), Foucault expresses the idea of 'heterotopias' that are contrasted to utopias, for they are real places that are formed at the founding of a society. In Plantation and Big House novels, the physical space is represented by the Great House, whose grandiosity on the outside creates an image of strength; however, paradoxically, on the inside, these dwellings do not offer refuge. More specifically, the spaces represented by these houses can be considered, according to Foucault, as 'crisis heterotopias', that is, privileged or sacred places, reserved for

individuals who are in a state of crisis in relation to society, such as the falling of empire and of the aristocracy, in both Ireland and the Caribbean. Thus, the imagery of the Big House constitutes a way of life where the coloniser in the colonies mimics that of the British metropolitan powers, which results in juxtaposed times and places.

In Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1948), the image of the house illustrates how imagination works in the presence of shelter: it can either be a wall made of shadows that offer the illusion of protection, or physical shelter can be itself an illusion, when one doubts the protection provided by the thickest of walls. Therefore, in these literary genres, the walls do not offer refuge, so it becomes impossible to escape the tragic ending, common to the four novels. The monumental houses are literally destroyed by fire in Carpentier, Jean Rhys and Sommerville and Ross; however, in *Birchwood* it is Grandmother Godkin who ignites. According to McGarrity, 'fire becomes an equalizing force, undermining distinctions based on race, class, and religion, rejoining seemingly disparate social groups' (151). Due to the spatial limitations of the island, the novels share a common ending represented by the imagery of flight as the protagonists attempt to escape the decayed environment that encircles them.

Washed by the Gulf Stream also deals with geographical space, since it 'operates in literature as a marker of cultural identity and as a means of association among what Europeans consider the margins, the former colonies themselves' (19). Both Joyce, in *Ulysses* (1922) and Walcott, in *Omeros* (1990) remap their specific geographical sites in order to establish new centres and question the borders that separate land and sea, culture and identity. McGarrity challenges the relations between the centre and the margins, while stating that 'The move to rethink margins and borders is clearly a move away from centralization with its associated concerns of origin, oneness and monumentality (...) as the center becomes a fiction' (58). This implies that the boundaries between time, place and cultures no longer divide; they, instead, express continuity.

Mc Garrity mentions the way that Bhabha, in “How Newness Enters the World”, highlights the necessity to consider the ‘anxiety of the borderlines’ (137), which leads to the understanding of the *Bildungsromane* of Joyce, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Lamming, *In The Castle of My Skin* (1953), and the succeeding memoirs by McCourt, *Angela’s Ashes* (1996) and Kincaid, *My Brother* (1997), all of which symbolise the fragmentation of cultures that arise through exile and emigration. In both genres, the *Bildungsromane* and the memoirs, the displacement of the protagonists is necessary in order to raise their awareness about their geographical surroundings and about the borders between centre and margin that are imposed by the imperial centres. In Joyce and Lamming awareness is raised once the protagonists return to their islands of origins, whereas in Kincaid and McCourt, the only way to escape the limiting island geography is to escape to America, and return becomes impossible.

McGarrity’s comparative analysis, which is based on the interface between fiction and what she calls ‘island imaginary’, provides a different perspective on the study of the aftermath of the demise of imperialism in Ireland and in the Caribbean. This review focuses on how the aesthetic element of space, present in the aforementioned selected postcolonial works, is subverted, as in the Irish Big House and

Caribbean Plantation novels, in which the domestic space no longer offers sanctuary or refuge. Moreover, the present analysis of *Washed by the Gulf Stream* concentrates on the geographic space and the way McGarrity deals with the constant displacement of the borderlines that existed between the centre and the margins, which suggests that, according to Linda Hutcheon, ‘To be ex-centric on the border or margin, inside yet outside is to have a different perspective’ (p 67). There is, therefore, a privileged point of view from both the inside and the outside, once the islands’ geographical limitations are overcome either by a return to the place of origin, or by definite escape from it.

Washed by the Gulf Stream is fundamental for readers who are interested in the cultural and historical relations between Ireland and the Caribbean. It is also aimed at students of postcolonial literatures as a whole and those who grapple with the displacement of borderlines and the problematic of space as an aesthetic element.

Maria McGarrity is an associated professor at Long Island University. She sits on the Editorial Board of the Caribbean journal, *Anthurium* and has previously served as Managing Editor of the *James Joyce Literary Supplement*.

Mariana Bolfarine

Notes

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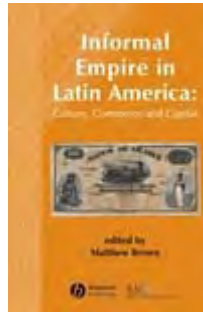
Author's Reply

The author accepts this Review and does not wish to comment further.

Reviews

Matthew Brown's (ed.) *Informal Empire in Latin America. Culture, Commerce and Capital*

By Enrique Alejandro Basabe (1)



Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing and SLAS, 2007
274 pages, ISBN: 9781405179324, US\$40

History has no official records of a 'scramble' for Latin America. However, together with Geography, Economics, and, more recently, Cultural Studies, it has attempted to provide us with both authorised and alternative approaches to disentangling the knot of venturesome ambitions and rational projects which unmistakably linked Great Britain and Latin America in the nineteenth century. Around the mid-twentieth century that intricate connection started to be described as an informal empire. The complex discussion ensuing from the use of such an umbrella phrase constitutes the firm and rigorous core of *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital*.

The title, belonging in a new series recently launched by the *Bulletin of Latin American Research* (BLAR) and following from the conference on informal empire held at the University of Bristol, UK, in January 2007, invites readers to explore the issue through interdisciplinary paths which take them from the study of the real presence of British capital in the Argentine Pampas to the secret representational desires of a masculine Britain over a virginal feminised Brazil, from the awe-inspiring experience of Patagonia to the abandonment of any possibility of empire in Colombia whatsoever. Thus Matthew Brown, the highly accomplished editor of the book, and a cadre of renowned British

and American professors embark on a voyage of rediscovery and redefinition not of Latin America or of the British Empire per se but of the veiled, perhaps even imaginary, details of the twisted relationship between both and of the reasons for the absence of the former in the historiographies of the latter. In other words, they skilfully weave unofficial records and concealed representations in order to produce the fabrics of a fairer description of the roles than culture, commerce, and capital played in the complex bond under scrutiny than the ones already available.

Initiated by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson (1953), the discussion on informal empire, brilliantly conceptualised and succinctly historicised by Brown in the introduction to the volume, acts as the compass that guides readers along the journey of British and Latin American liaisons from the beginning of the Independence Wars around 1810 into the mid-twentieth century. Informal empire, though, is not an uncontested definition. Mary Louise Pratt (1992) argued for the weakness of the concept and suggested that even colonialism was a better term to define the situation of Latin America in the period under scrutiny. Later on, Ann Laura Stoler (2006) sparked renewed interest in informal empire by overtly declaring that it was just another euphemism for blunt imperialism.

The book sets out to explore the differing versions of informal empire as applied in Latin America and to assess the ways in which the already problematic concepts of culture, commerce and capital coalesced to shape the British influence in the region. In response to the convergent thematic interests of British Imperial History and Latin American Studies and drawing on their dissimilar historiographies, this is subsequently carried out on a comparative and interdisciplinary basis and with the aim of 'reformulating "informal empire" with a cultural bent and a postcolonial eye whilst keeping it anchored in its political economy roots' (20). Thus *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* casts off to search for new illuminating havens for the mutual desires and representations of both the British and the Latin American, in Brown's words, well established 'on the ground and in the mind' (21).

Contrary to what may be expected from a glance at the illustration on the cover of the book, a photomontage exploring the convergence of the aboriginal, the black and the British in and around the Caribbean, five out of ten chapters of the work under analysis in fact address the presence of the British in Argentina, further down in the Southern Cone. For the somewhat static system of categories of empire suggested by Alan Knight (23-48), that presence and the long presence of the British in Argentina is explained only by 'the pursuit of profit through plunder' (33), that is, by Britain's interest in 'gold,' the third G in the list encompassing the intentions which drive human beings to empires: God, glory, gold, and geopolitics. In this context, however, informal empire may not be the best analytical tool to elucidate Anglo-Argentine relationships. For Knight, even though the asymmetry of power between the two nations was evident, there existed a 'perceived mutual self interest' (44) which made the collaboration with the metropolis by the local liberals largely consensual and utterly rational.

In a similar vein and after a carefully detailed review of the developments of the historiography of informal empire, David Rock

concludes that informal empire 'remains an ambiguous and elusive category' (76) when applied to the Argentine case, mostly due to the fact that it was only British capital and commerce that comprised empire there. Nevertheless, Rock pursues an extensive, stimulating, and highly valuable postcolonial analysis of the cultural relationships between the British and the Argentines only to find strong evidence that there might have been 'British imperialist aspirations in Argentina rather than a consummated imperialist hegemony' (76), a point very much like the only made by Karen Racine in her appropriate and modest examination of the early interests and procedures of the Foreign Bible Society in Latin America between 1805 and 1830 (78-98). Whereas for Rock the French and the Italians culturally allured the Argentines in far more powerful ways than the British did, for Colin M. Lewis and Fernanda Peñaloza the latter did have a strong social and cultural influence first in the formation of the South American nation and then in its modernising policies and its cosmopolitan aspirations.

Lewis (99-123) articulates a decidedly cogent account of the not only commercial but also cultural 'Anglo-criollo' juncture around railways in Argentina. His pertinent rethinking of the role of the railway companies reveals that there was 'considerable agency on the part of national interests' (120) and that those intentions were attempted to be realised not only by the rich landowners but also by the state and the people as well. Furthermore, the Argentines and their state, according to Peñaloza's rich intertextual exploration (149-186), can be posited to have framed their plan for political and economic expansion in Patagonia based on the travel experiences of prominent Englishmen and their literary representation of the 'unattainable' Argentine landscape usually founded on the aesthetic sublime. Thus Anglo-Argentine relationships cannot be reduced to capital and commerce as is initially suggested. The Argentine social and cultural appropriation of the British railways and of British representations may weaken the hypothesis of informal empire but adds to the establishment of a whole new space for analysis of

imperialistic intentions and tangential contestations.

Ordinary Argentines usually tend to explain their supposedly anti-British feelings by recourse to the rather formulaic reasoning that, in most of the historical events in which they have come together, the British and the Argentine have had to face each other in noticeably antagonistic terms. This appears to be the stance also adopted by Charles Jones in his study of the opposing roles played by the Britishman Robert Thurburn and the Argentinean Vicente Fidel López on the stage of the River Plate by the end of the nineteenth century (124-148). Profuse in historical and biographical detail, the highly stylised description of the divergent ambitions funnelling their actions, however, is far from simplistic, as it dives deeply into the personal interstices of Anglo-Argentine ties. Moreover, Jones even 'regrets' (144) having discarded the possibility of informal empire in his earlier work, a brave move which places him in a position paradoxically conflicting with those of most of the other authors in the volume.

Far from secure binarisms, safely founded on postcolonial and subaltern studies and along trends akin those already settled by Jones and Peñaloza, Jennifer L. French (187-207) plunges into Benito Lynch's *El Inglés de los Güesos* (1924), and offers an innovative reading of the tragic romance not as an allegory for informal empire, but as an 'allegory for thinking about informal empire' (197). Here, the novel is used to show the ways in which Lynch chooses to linguistically and visually destabilise the metropolitan traveller by the incorporation and empowerment of the local voice and the local gaze, which in turn, French proposes, can also be achieved by our experiences of disruptive reading. Literature, then, can be our teacher, but, 'metropolitan sources cannot be the only or the final word on the subject' (207). We, as readers, have the possibility of not falling into the snares of binary opposites, and, like Caliban in the Shakespearean play, steal the books and run off the island.

Then the compass takes us to the North, though never reaching Central America,

Mexico, or the Caribbean. Colombia, the nation invoked in the cover of the book, and Brazil, the country with which Britain set trade and investment bonds not unlike those it established with Argentina, are the other two cases considered in the volume. The former is put forward as an instance in which the British lack of interest and the Colombian lack of significance, both seen mainly in terms of commerce and capital, grew into an absence of informal empire in that Latin American territory. Thus, in a brief essay laden with lengthy quotes from historical sources, Malcolm Deas (173-186) destroys any hypothesis of the Colombian example being one in which the weapons of the weak triumphed over imperialistic advances, as he removes agency from both the British and the Colombians due to their mutual lack of intent.

The opposite seems to be the case with Brazil. Brazil has always had a perturbing influence in British desire and imagination, but what has commonly been emphasised is the active role of the British 'males' over the passive, virginal, 'female' Brazilian, and, by extension, the Latin American realm. This Louise Guenther deems rather restricted, and so she goes on to offer a brilliant playfully deconstructive counter-reading not only of the metaphorically sexualised 'bed' of the market (211) but also of hilarious cultural products like a Brazilian version of an old but still virginal Sherlock Holmes, in both of which the artful seductions of the locals have a powerful position in the overall framework of the Anglo-Brazilian relationship (208-228). But that role, Guenther convincingly argues, has usually been translated by the metropolis into cultural stereotypes that strengthen the initial sense of difference and ironically displace the taboo regions of sex and desire into an external feminised other. This distorted ambiguous version is what eventually becomes one of the most potent motivating factors in the actual enactment of informal empire.

The majority of the scholars contributing to *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* are therefore reluctant to confirm the possibility that informal empire was actually enacted by Great Britain upon Latin

America in the nineteenth century. As Andrew Thompson remarks in his firm final exploration, most of them show a tendency 'to construct informal empire as a *category* (analytically distinct from the formal empire) rather than as a *continuum* (along which regions of both formal and informal rule can be positioned...)' (231), which may also explain the very noticeable drive in most of the essays to either justify or deny the covert agenda of informal empire in Latin America. Read as whole, though, the volume offers a remarkable search for informal empire as a useful interdisciplinary working hypothesis. As such, it works at its best when the roles played by the presence of British capital in Latin America (especially Argentina) are emphasised, and it shows a proclivity to weaken when the cultural and social aspects of Anglo-Latin American relationships are studied. In explanations taking into account the latter issues, the local peoples of the Americas occasionally retain their agency and sometimes share the helm with the British in the voyage of mutual liaisons.

However, in many of the articles these peoples are generally regarded as classes such as the *estancieros* in the text by Rock, and, even when they are examined as subjects, they are usually taken as metonyms for the classes for which they stand. As Peñaloza seriously observes, little is said in the book about 'those groups who did not benefit from the elites' partnership. How do such groups fit within these seemingly balanced dynamics of power?' (151). An answer to this question would entail further exploration, Thompson suggests, into 'the ways in which class relations have been embedded in capitalist structures' (236). Seldom are other regions of Latin America surveyed in which empire seems to have vehemently worked in the nineteenth century. Though such cases have generally involved disputes over actual territory more than over the less tangible matters of capital and commerce, they are worth considering as well. Think, for example, of the *Zona de Reclamación* ascertained by the Venezuelans or the Argentine sovereignty claim over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, both of which took shape around the 1850s. Though of relatively minor relevance, these cases may direct our gaze towards the improvement of our knowledge about the British

who actually settled in the Americas and of the factual relationships they established with the peoples and the places as subjects and agents of their own histories, a proposal also encouraged by Thompson. It may also have helped to have broadened the scope of the book which, for the most part, focuses on Argentina, and for which, therefore, the intention of the title of rethinking informal empire in *Latin America* appears to some extent unattainable.

Furthermore, the propensity to cast off informal empire as a pertinent description of the British presence in Latin America seems to work together with the inclination of some authors to advance the idea that the hypothesis does work to describe US interests in Latin America in the twentieth century. Both Knight and Deas, for instance, finish their papers suggesting such a possibility. This, on the one hand, may be read as persistence in shedding the British from any genuine intent in enacting empire on the Latin American stage. On the other hand, if Latin America has always existed in the shadows of several empires, it would also be worth analysing the ways in which, perhaps not only through capital and commerce, Britain has often had a strong hold on the region even in the twentieth century. Consider, for example, the potent presence of British English Language Teaching (ELT) in Argentina and Brazil, the significant growth of British capital in the circum-Caribbean region, even in embargoed Cuba, or the privileged diplomatic relationships of Great Britain and, say, Chile. In order to avoid unintentionally excusing the powerful from the definite enterprises they embark upon and of involuntarily excluding issues which really cry out to be considered, in times of a growing Knowledge society, the voice of Latin American specialists – noticeably underrepresented in *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* – should also be fostered so that the metropolitan sources do not become the only or the final word on informal empire and so that we do not run the risk of potentially promoting a new concealed type of informal empire.

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Notes

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Author's Reply

I am very grateful to Enrique Alejandro Basabe for such a thorough, balanced and kind review. His article contains many astute and stimulating observations on the wider research agenda of which the book forms part. I agree wholeheartedly that scholarly precision about exactly which type of actions could have constituted imperialism can often degenerate into terminological naval-gazing. I hope that the book avoids this – though a certain degree of historiographical contextualisation was inevitable – in its attempt to uncover and explain the effects of the foreign presence in Latin America in the (very) long nineteenth-century. Basabe observes that the agency of subaltern groups and individuals can sometimes be neglected in the historical chapters that attempt grand analyses. It should be clear from both my Introduction and Andrew Thompson's Afterword that the future research project that we advocate puts this question at the heart of its analysis.

The book does tilt rather towards Argentina and, to a lesser extent, Brazil, as the reviewer observes. As I explain in the Introduction, this was a conscious editorial decision aimed at providing a degree of coherence for a selection of chapters that, as Basabe correctly notes, take very diverse methodological approaches, and often disagree quite sharply on matters of interpretation. Cuba and Mexico, for example, were both discussed at some length at the original conference. I am planning a follow-up conference and volume which will widen the analysis to the regions omitted from *Informal Empire* in Latin America, and onwards into the twentieth century, while maintaining the broad inter-disciplinary approach which I think is one of the book's main strengths.

At the end of the review, Basabe observes that 'the voice of Latin American specialists [is] noticeably underrepresented'. I understand this to mean that there should be more chapters by scholars born in or working in Latin America. There were many such individuals at the Bristol conference who presented excellent papers and who contributed fully to the discussions and dialogues which shaped the published chapters. The choice to include papers in the published volume was taken on editorial grounds in which methodological diversity and thematic coherence were privileged, rather than the origins or affiliations of the authors. The suggestion that such decisions 'run the risk of potentially promoting a new concealed type of informal empire' is interesting and provocative. I make a similar point myself in the Introduction (p.4).

One aspect of the book that Basabe does not mention but which seems relevant to bring up in this forum is the stark absence of the Irish as an analytical category, or even as a group worthy of special mention, throughout *Informal Empire* in Latin America. Though I was aware of this as I edited the book in 2007, the importance of the Irish in the informal empire has become especially clear to me through my current research project on the Battle of El Santuario, which I hope to publish within the next eighteen months. Once again I gratefully acknowledge the SILAS grant which allowed me to

travel to El Santuario in 2007. Was it just a coincidence that so many of the principal figures of British informal empire in Latin America in the nineteenth century were of Irish origin? This is another area where the study of British imperialism in Latin America lags far behind work on, say, Australia or Southern Africa, where scholars have worked to fragment the supposedly homogenous 'British' into the multiple and often internally conflictive national and regional groups serving the empire. In the next stage of this collaborative research project I hope that we will be able to fully bring out the extent to which 'British informal empire' was an umbrella under which many different peoples from across the globe sought opportunities in Latin America, be they Irish, Cornish, German, Indian or Chinese, and to analyse and explain their many as yet untold encounters with the full spectrum of social groups across the region.

Matthew Brown - Asturias 30 April 2009

Reviews

Mícheál de Barra's *Gaeil i dTír na nGauchos* (*Irish People in the Land of the Gauchos*)

By Eoghan Mac Aogáin (1)



Dublin: Coiscéim. 2009

419 pages, €12.50

In the preface to his book *Gaeil i dTír na nGauchos*, Mícheál de Barra, a retired school principal from Kilfenora in County Clare, tells us that when he returned to Ireland in 1975, having lived for some years in Argentina, he found that there was little interest in the historic links between the two countries. This is all changed now, he says, due to two events. The first consisted of two series of television programmes made by Raidió Teilifís Éireann (the Irish national broadcaster) on the topic, the first dating from 1987 and the second from 2004; and the second was the founding of the *Society for Irish Latin American Studies*. He thinks that there is now a certain momentum behind the Irish-Argentine enterprise and predicts that another major scholarly work on the topic will appear – in either English or Spanish – in the next 10 years. In the meantime, he offers this book as an interim solution for readers of Irish.

I found de Barra's book of great interest, and indeed quite absorbing at times. For a start, almost all of the information in it was entirely new to me, and in many instances, not at all

what I expected. In addition, de Barra has done a lot of research – including archive work and face-to-face interviews with some of the people he writes about – and he has a strong attachment to Argentina and its Irish population, past and present. Although he calls it a little book, it has over 400 pages. Its 24 chapters deal with a variety of themes (both Irish and Argentinean), periods, and different aspects of the Irish-Argentinean encounter, taking us from Magellan's Irish altar boys of 1516 down to the present time. The chapters are in broadly chronological order, although some of them require flashbacks to earlier times. Thus Chapter 18, on the involvement of the Irish in education in Argentina, takes us all the way back to the beginning, and on to the end. The book has some of the characteristics of a collection of essays, therefore, but can still be read straight through as a history of the Irish in Argentina. It also has a good collection of pictures, mostly photographs.

Its most striking feature is the steady stream of biographies it contains, some very brief, less

than a page, others much larger, and a few taking up a whole chapter – a very large chapter (40 pages) in the case of the Fr Anthony Fahy, O.P (1805–1872). Because the chapters vary greatly in length, approximately half of the book is contained in six of them, the contents of which I indicate here by the persons they deal most with: Chapters 7 (Admiral William Brown), 10 (John Brabazon and other diarists), 11 (Anthony Fahy), 12 (Thomas Armstrong, the Mulhalls, Dean Dillon, William Bulfin, Eduardo Casey), 16 (The Arts: the Bulfins, the Nevins, Barney Finn) and Chapter 24 – another 40-page chapter – which might be considered as a geographic overview of the entire story. It lists the principal locations in Argentina (over 40 of them) that had a significant Irish settlement, and gives their histories and the principal Irish surnames associated with them – and, as always, the odd biography. The other chapters cover topics such as the gaucho on the cover of the book, and in its title, the Pampas, the colonial period and the war of independence from Spain, British incursions, Juan Manuel de Rosas and the story of Camila O’Gorman, the big influx of Irish in the nineteenth century, the appalling fate of the Irish brought over on the *City of Dresden*, the history of hurling and the Gaelic League in Argentina, the Perón years, the dirty war and ‘the disappeared’ (1976-83), and the Malvinas/Falklands war. On the latter two topics, de Barra has a remarkable amount of anecdotal information.

The book was written for readers of Irish who know little or nothing about Argentina or its Irish population, and I can personally vouch for its suitability for its intended readership. It is a fine introduction to this extraordinary story from the Spanish part of the southern hemisphere for the complete newcomer. It is beautifully written, in professional, journalistic Irish, some of the events are almost unbelievable and a lot of them quite moving and frequently disturbing, and the book leaves a trail of issues for further reading in its wake. Personally, I would have preferred references in the body of the text, and an index, and perhaps a glossary of constantly recurring terms such as *criollo*, *barrio*, *reducción*, and similar words that

which will throw the reader who is skimming or dipping in. On the other hand, I have to admit that on-the-spot references for everything would have conflicted with the author’s wish ‘to tell the story of the Irish in Argentina in a simple way’ (Preface). He does however provide a bibliography and some footnotes.

In trying to cope with the mass of new material, my own strategy was to contrast the Irish experience in Argentina, as best I could imagine it from de Barra’s account, with the experience of the Irish in Québec (Harvey, 1997), where I lived for a time, and the experience of the Irish in North America generally, well-known to me from family connections and from reading. I got a rude awakening. Irish emigration to Argentina was not at all like the mass emigration of Catholics from the south in famine times and later, but was far more similar to earlier and mostly Protestant emigration from the North of Ireland to the US. The Irish who went to Argentina – mostly in the nineteenth century – were generally from urban environments, many of them were professionals or tradesmen, they were leaving voluntarily and with definite ambitions, some of them must have had a significant amount of money, and their surnames suggest that many of them were of English stock. In addition, they came from very specific parts of Ireland, an incredible two-thirds from Longford and Westmeath (Barnwell, 1988). The reason for this seems to be that those who were successful in Argentina often brought over relatives and people from their own areas to work for them.

Reading on, I encountered more surprises. The Irish in Argentina, in the early nineteenth century at any rate, appeared to set up English-speaking communities wherever they could and, as far as I could gather, resisted assimilation into Spanish-speaking Argentina. This is in sharp contrast to the Irish who arrived in Québec in large numbers about the same time. While this was also a mix of two languages and one religion, the Irish in Québec, unlike their counterparts in the southern hemisphere, became indistinguishable from the French-speaking population – except for the surnames – in a very short time, two or at most

three generations at most. Although it is easy to list off the differences between the two groups of emigrants and the radically different situations they arrived into, that would explain the different outcomes, in the end I found it difficult to know whether the life the Irish created for themselves in their new homeland was determined principally by demographic factors, such as geographic isolation, or attitudinal factors, arising from the tight cultural and linguistic identity of the emigrants, much tighter than the term 'Irish' in some general sense would convey.

For example, de Barra has an excellent chapter on Irish educators in Argentina, and several sections detailing the efforts of the Irish in Argentina in the nineteenth century to bring over priests and nuns from Ireland to run their churches and schools. He is quite at home with this material, reflecting no doubt his own experience as an educationalist. But while the account is excellent, he leaves us on our own when it comes to the big question: What exactly was going on? Were these efforts prompted solely by pastoral concerns for a scattered flock? Or were there strong linguistic, cultural, and ideological objectives also, namely to buttress an English-speaking colonial elite against the outside world? Why were the Mercy nuns sent packing? De Barra wryly comments on their plight, docked in Liverpool on what must have been a dreadful journey from Argentina to Australia, with no chance of a quick trip home. The suggestion is that the Argentinean Irish thought they could have done better, but it is only a suggestion. De Barra tells us also of the appearance in Buenos Aires of the remarkable Passionist priest, Fr Fidelis Kent-Stone, former US soldier and diplomat, in Buenos Aires at this time. He appears to have outflanked Fr. Fahy and his supporters rather easily, thus laying the foundations – including blocks of stone – for the Irish Catholic presence in Argentina that survives to the present:

He got the better of the leaders of the Irish community by placing his faith in the poorest classes, in particular the Irish servant girls working in the big houses in Buenos Aires. It was the

subscriptions from these servant girls that funded the building of the Church of the Holy Cross in Buenos Aires and the Passionist Monastery attached to it. (p. 252, my translation)

Religion is not a simple matter, and it would be strange if religious initiatives such as these did not also have linguistic and cultural agendas. Even so, one thing I missed in de Barra's book was some information on which language was being spoken, English or Spanish, by whom, and in which contexts at different points in the book. More generally: what forms of English-Spanish bilingualism developed in the Irish communities, and how did these change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? My guess is that the Irish in Argentina have finally become like the Québec Irish, but only in very recent times, and with great reluctance.

These are things that have to be inferred from de Barra's account. I wondered what more could be done, bearing in mind that many a good book forces us to read a few more to complete the picture. For example, de Barra provides an excellent series of maps of Argentina at the beginning of the book, which I found essential all the way through the book. Is there something that could be done, even in a piecemeal fashion throughout the book, to show us the cultural and linguistic landscape that the Irish were operating in? This would give us some idea of the amount of Spanish that Fr. Fahy spoke in his day's work, about the linguistic 'space' that the Irish arrived into, and how it changed over time. How much Spanish did Fr Fahy speak in the course of a day, compared, say, with Fr Field in earlier times, or Fr Pat Rice in our own time? And if they all had both Spanish and English, on what occasions would they typically switch from one language to the other? Books on minorities tend to draw the reader into a false world. I must confess to watching some street tangos from Buenos Aires on *Youtube* at one point when I was reading de Barra's book – as if I needed to remind myself that we were still all talking about the same place.

Although I am thinking mostly of Spanish-speaking Argentina when I referred to the problem of the 'blurred backdrop' in studies of

minorities, the question of the native people also arises. With the exception of the reference to *La Guira*, in connection with the work of Fr Field (1547–1625) in northern Argentina and Paraguay, the blurring is complete in the case of the indigenous peoples: they appear in the consciousness of the settlers only as *indios* or *salvajes*, and attitudes seem to have hardened during the nineteenth century. This is how things were in North America also, although there were a few notable Irish who identified with the indigenous people (Mooney, 1896/1965). I wondered what a chapter on the Argentinean Irish and the *indios* would look like. De Barra notes that it was as a result of Fr. Field's work with *La Guira* that their language survived, Guaraní. It is now an official language of Paraguay, alongside Spanish. But I suspect that the story of the Irish and the indigenous peoples of Argentina goes downhill from there.

De Barra's book has been my introduction to Argentina and its Irish population. I am grateful to him, and it is a bonus that the book is in Irish, and thus an important contribution to the maintenance of our own indigenous language. We have had books like this before, Aodhán Ó hEadhra's *Na Gaeil i dTalamb an Éisc* (*The Irish in Newfoundland*) (Ó hEadhra, 1998), for

example. It is hard for writers and publishers of books in Irish to find topics that are not already well served in English, but the story of the Irish in Argentina is an excellent choice. I recall too that the Irish translation of Bulfin's *Rambles in Ireland*, undertaken by Eoghan Ó Neachtain and published in 1936 under the name *Cam-chuarta i n Éirinn* (Bulfin, 1936) was a big success, and is still often quoted by Irish scholars because of the quality of Ó Neachtain's Irish. This reminds me that Brabazon's diaries still languish in out-of-print editions from the nineteenth century.

I cannot say where de Barra's book fits into the growing literature on the Irish in Argentina, or how much of it consists of new material, but I doubt if there is a better book-length introduction to the topic. Since de Barra, in his Acknowledgment section, strongly urges those with an interest in the topic of Ireland and Argentina to join the *Society for Irish Latin American Studies*, perhaps the number of new subscriptions from people giving their names in Irish can be taken as a measure of the book's success.

Eoghan Mac Aogáin

Notes

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Author's Reply

I fully accept the points made by Eoghan Mac Aogáin in his review of my book *Gaeil i dTír na nGauchos*. However, I am sure that a tsunami of facts in the book – a fault I have to admit to – sometimes

confuses the reviewer, as when he refers to Fr Fidelis Kent-Stone outflanking Fr Fahy and his supporters. Of course, Fr Fahy was a good many years in his grave by the time Fr Fidelis arrived in Buenos Aires.

Eoghan makes a number of valid suggestions and recommendations in his review which I hope will be taken into account when a definitive, scholarly, erudite book on the Irish in Argentina is written in Spanish or English. I propose that such a work be undertaken for publication by 2019 to celebrate the centenary of Thomas Murray's *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (1919).

Mícheál de Barra

Reviews

James Monaghan's *Colombia Jail Journal*

By Peter Hart



Dingle: Brandon Books, 2007
277 pages, ISBN 978-0-86322-376-1

This is the story of three Irishmen arrested in Colombia in August 2001 and tried in 2002 and 2003 on charges of training FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas and entering the country with false documents. They were acquitted of the former but convicted of the latter in 2004. The Colombian Government appealed the verdict, but they were released on bail in the meantime and escaped to Ireland, where they re-emerged publicly in 2005. The author, James Monaghan, was the leader of this group. He is a veteran of the Irish Republican Army and a former member of the executive of Sinn Féin, the formerly revolutionary Republican party allied to the IRA (Irish Republican Army). The other two men, Martin McCauley and Niall Connolly, were/are self-avowed supporters of Sinn Féin. Connolly was also some sort of Sinn Féin representative in Cuba, although the party denied it at first.

These facts are probably already familiar to many of the readers of this journal but, because of the mystery and controversy surrounding these very public events, much curiosity remains about what really happened and why. Sadly, satisfying such curiosity is not the purpose of this book. In fact, despite the inherently exciting subject, I suspect most unpartisan readers will find it a most unsatisfying story, lacking as it does both a believable beginning and a proper ending.

The book begins with the Colombia Three (as they inevitably became known) being arrested on their way out of the country, after spending a month in FARC-controlled territory. The overriding question of the whole episode is, of course: what were they doing there? They were using fake passports and identities and their cover story was that they were journalists but, once this was blown, they claimed to be merely interested in observing the then-still-operative peace process, apparently on behalf of Coiste na n-Iarchimi, the Irish organisation for Republican ex-prisoners that employed Monaghan. Indeed, according to him, this project was funded by the Irish Government. It was not to be all work, however, as they were also going for what Monaghan called 'a holiday of a lifetime' (9), which apparently explains the length of their stay.

The Colombian Government's version was that they were teaching FARC to make and use home-made mortars, something of an IRA speciality. The British and American governments repeated the same accusations, and Monaghan – formerly a metal worker by trade – was widely described as a senior IRA engineer. For what it is worth, McCauley was both shot and charged as an IRA member in Northern Ireland but never convicted, and denied being one (as of 2003). He did describe himself as rebuilding cars for a living, so presumably he had a skill set related to

Monaghan's. Connolly seems to have been along at least in part as an interpreter. When the evidence was put to trial, however, there was a failure to convict.

Simple denials and denunciations of the prosecution make sense in a courtroom or a press conference, but they are not going to convince many open-minded readers. Apart from anything else, spending the middle of Summer in the backwoods of a very hot country hardly sounds like much of a holiday – especially for Connolly, who was already in Cuba. If it was all about peace and suntans, why travel under false identities? Because, Monaghan says, given their legal and political histories, their real identities might get them barred, or might put them in danger. McCauley had once been illegally ambushed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (former police service) in Northern Ireland, and two of his lawyers had been killed by pro-state paramilitaries (with possible official collusion), so he had little reason to trust governments or policemen. This does not explain why Connolly had to disguise himself, and it also raises the question of where they got such documents, if not from the IRA. Also, Monaghan and Connolly had previously travelled to Nicaragua (which had its own peace process): did they use their real names on this occasion?

An investigative journalist (someone who seems badly needed here) might also connect the prior trip to Nicaragua, and a Sinn Féin representative in Cuba, to possible prior meetings with FARC representatives – although it would seem that accusations of prior visits to Colombia itself did not always stand up to alibi evidence. Monaghan describes their experiences with the rebels with extreme and odd brevity: they were impressed by FARC rule, talked a lot with FARC officials, and explored the forest. If they were not official representatives of Sinn Féin or the IRA, why would these people bother with them? How could they speak with such apparent authority and intimate knowledge of the Irish peace process? Certainly, this book adds nothing to the credibility of their claims.

As for the ending – their release and escape home – it too is notable for its omissions:

We had a long journey home, and needed the help of many good people. The story of that journey cannot be told for many years because that might endanger those people. There are intelligence services who would dearly love to know how it was done, and to punish those who helped us escape from tyranny. (273)

While that is certainly understandable, it again leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Who, if not FARC and the IRA, had the motive and resources to pull this off? Their bail was paid by Gerry Kelly and Caitríona Ruane, both Sinn Féin members of the Northern Ireland Assembly (parliament). Kelly also has a long history as a member of the IRA. Surely they knew about the presumably planned escape? Why would they go to such expense and effort (illegal not just in Colombia but also Ireland, since they had to enter that country – as they presumably had left it – fraudulently) if the Three had no official connection to the Republican movement?

Here, I think, context is all. It is true that that the Northern Ireland peace process involved frequent trips abroad by all parties to investigate South Africa, Bosnia and other hot spots, and to bring news of the Irish miracle. However, as far as I know, these were all carried out legally, and in public. More importantly, at the time of the arrests, Sinn Féin was navigating a great deal of Unionist and British suspicion about what the IRA was up to, including accusations of arms-buying, smuggling, robbery, spying and the occasional killing. A connection with FARC would fit with these activities – especially if money was involved – but any such link, even if it was merely political, would have to be hidden from official eyes to avoid a backlash. This became about a million times more urgent after the 9/11 attacks, when Sinn Féin's invaluable Irish-American supporters would hardly be charmed by tales of their funding recipients living in Cuba or holidaying in the jungle with 'terrorists'. Hence the denials that these men had any connection with Sinn Féin. Hence also the nominally non-party status of the 'Bring

'Them Home' campaign in Ireland and of its leader, Caitríona Ruane, although she became a Sinn Féin politician in the midst of the campaign.

What the book lacks in revelations, it makes up for in the very detailed narrative of what Monaghan and his friends experienced while in jail. They were moved around a lot, met a lot of other inmates, had many visits from lawyers and the ubiquitous Ruane, went through their trial, waited for the verdict, and no doubt spent a lot of time being bored and anxious. However, *Prison Break* it was not. They seem to have been reasonably well housed, fed and clothed, they had access to telephones, TV, lawyers and other visitors, they got along well with FARC and other left-wing political prisoners, and the guards did not mistreat them. The prosecution case might well have been trumped-up but then again they were only convicted on the charge they were clearly guilty of: travelling under false passports. And they were released on bail (set fairly low) when the Government appealed. Much of this may have had to do with their citizenship and the mobilisation of public and political support in Ireland and the United States – advantages unavailable to other prisoners – but this hardly counts as 'tyranny'. In fact, it sounds a lot better than how 'terrorist' suspects get treated in many other parts of the world. Nor do the frequent statements that right-wing enemies were out to get them, that they were in constant danger of assassination, ring true, given that no actual attacks were ever made. Monaghan may be correct in his belief that US and British intelligence agencies and 'securocrats' were behind it all, but condemning imperialism and praising guerrillas does not give us much insight into what is actually happening there.

The book's title echoes John Mitchel's classic *Jail Journal* (1854) and, by extension, the whole long tradition of Irish Republican prison writing. It does not quite belong within that genre, however, as the Three were not self-proclaimed revolutionaries and they did not really suffer. Instead, it recalls (presumably also deliberately) the memoirs of the wrongfully accused or convicted such as the Guildford Four or Birmingham Six. This was a fight for justice and human rights against a politically-motivated prosecution, with Ruane replacing heroic British lawyer Gareth Peirce in the lead role as deliverer. I am sure Ruane did play a large part in helping the Three get through their ordeal but there is also a familiar whiff of spin here on behalf of a political up-and-comer.

Monaghan is a sincere admirer of the Colombian revolution and has gone on to help publish a memoir by one of the guerrillas he met while in prison. Unfortunately, his own prose is incapable of bringing such people to life for us, to tell their stories or give much of a sense of them as individuals or as a movement. We do not really get to know the rest of the Three either. So the story ultimately lacks both drama and characters. The bottom line is that this is a matter-of-fact description of what happened to the Colombia Three from when they were arrested to when they were released, written presumably in order to give their side of the story while very carefully not saying anything that might conceivably embarrass Sinn Féin. As such, it is rather uninteresting and adds almost nothing to public knowledge of the events concerned.

Peter Hart

Author's Reply

The book *Colombia Jail Journal* is an account of the time I spent in prison in Colombia, with minimal reference to what happened before and after. The reader should be aware that there was (and still is) a very serious political situation in Ireland and that the book could have been used to damage the Irish Republican position by its enemies. Many Republicans would have preferred that the book was never written because of that danger.

The reason why it was written is that the uncontested written word soon becomes the official history of what happened. Most of what was written and said in news media was 'spin' by pro-British journalists. Modern guerrilla warfare is largely about winning 'hearts and minds' and such propaganda is a key part of it.

Nations who have lived under colonialism have had their history written by the colonisers, because anyone who resisted the conquest of their people was criminalised - the occupying power makes the laws. Irish history is by and large researched from British sources. Many of the things the reviewer finds lacking in the book are not there because it would be a criminal offense to admit to them, such as membership of the IRA.

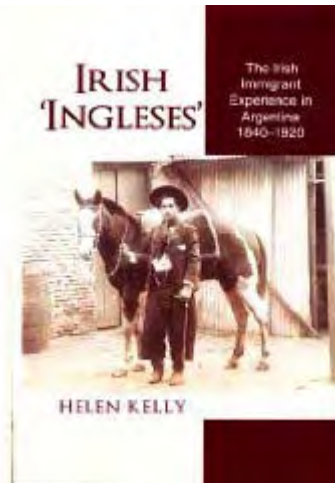
There is a cosy world inhabited by many authors in which they can write without fear of the consequences - I do not live in that world.

Jim Monaghan

Reviews

**Helen Kelly's *Irish 'Ingleses'*.
*The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina 1840-1920***

By Claire Healy (1)



Dublin, Irish Academic Press Ltd., 2009
252 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7165-3008-4

Why did Irish immigrants, on migrating from Ireland to Buenos Aires in the nineteenth century, become 'ingleses' (English) for the local residents, and indeed often in identifying themselves? This crucial question is the central concern of the first major publication by the Dublin-based scholar Helen Kelly. The book *Irish Ingleses: The Irish Immigrant Experience in Argentina, 1840-1920* is based on the author's doctoral dissertation on that subject. She clearly states that the 'separation of Irish from *Inglés*' is [...] the central aim of this study' (xviii). Throughout the book, she charts her difficult task of examining the experience of Irish immigrants who were classified within a broader group of 'English' immigrants in Buenos Aires. This overlooks the necessity to pinpoint differences in identity *within* the Irish community in Buenos Aires, who were Catholic and Anglican, rural and urban, merchant and farmer, men and women (xv-xvi; xviii-xix). Yet the question itself is fascinating, and Kelly's book does justice to the significance of the issue, teasing out its implications in full.

The Introduction provides a useful literature review on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Argentine history, focusing on immigration, and on Irish emigration historiography, pointing up the regionalism of Irish history. A review is also provided of the – albeit scant – literature in existence on Irish immigrants in Argentina. The author rightly points out that work in this area has been too often character-driven and not focused on the community as a whole. The Introduction focuses on the pitfalls and difficulties of the use of the term 'inglés' and the need for 'ethnic' distinctions in the historiography.

In the first chapter, Kelly provides an analysis of Irish nineteenth-century demography, focusing on counties Westmeath, Longford and Wexford, and showing the disparities between them. Kelly stresses the difference between the impoverished Western seaboard counties and the three Leinster counties that sent most emigrants to Argentina. It is commendable that the regional nature of migration chains from three Leinster counties is highlighted, and the

general history of the famine and mass emigration is not used as the paradigm within which to analyse migration to Argentina, as is too often the case in the literature on the Irish in Argentina (1). Economic and psychological models of international migration are examined, showing that population pressure, as a traditional 'push' factor, worked in tandem with other significant factors in precipitating the emigration decision, such as levels of emotional attachment to a community and culture. Emigration is also portrayed as a family rather than an individual decision and a comparison is made between the somewhat hackneyed perception of "emigration as exile" and a perception of "emigration as opportunity" (13). The chapter then analyses the attraction of Argentina as a migration destination, balancing out the lure of South America in general to people from the British Isles as an 'El Dorado', with the distance and strangeness of the location. The letters and accounts analysed here do not provide evidence for "emigration as exile" in the case of the Irish in Argentina.

The second chapter deals with European immigration to Argentina in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, providing a backdrop for the more specific chapters that follow. This chapter also looks at the 'ingleses' and more specifically the Irish as component groups of European immigration during different periods of Argentine history. British informal imperialism in Argentina is highlighted as a relevant factor for Irish immigration and the principal political and economic developments in nineteenth-century Argentina are outlined. Curiously, though perhaps reflecting trends in mainstream Argentine historiography, there is no mention whatsoever in the book of the indigenous history of Argentina, even when referring to Julio A. Roca who engaged in the genocidal 'campana al desierto' against the indigenous people in 1879, apart from a brief mention of the "final offensive against the native Indian population, led by General Julio A. Roca in 1879–80, [which] crucially secured territorial expansion on which the success of an agricultural economy was based." Regrettably, the book slips into using the contemporary vernacular of referring to indigenous-settler

conflicts as the "Indian assault" (67); "the Indian threat" (70); and "defeat of the Indian" (74). Kelly further refers to the 'campana al desierto' as "Roca's successful Indian campaign" (69).

The different approaches of the various Argentine administrations to European immigration, from Rivadavia and Rosas to Juárez Celman and Hipólito Yrigoyen, are examined in detail. The unprecedented impact of mass immigration to Argentina is highlighted, with a startling figure of 58% of the 1914 population of the country as first or second-generation immigrant, with 29.9% foreign-born (31; 33). Here the author again returns to the prickly issue of the classification of all British citizens as 'inglés'. (32; 43–45), and the need to extricate the Irish sub-group from this categorisation. The issue of quantifying the migration is grappled with throughout the book. It is stated that 32,501 'inglés' immigrants arrived in Buenos Aires during the period 1857–1897, but it is unclear as to how many of these were Irish. Contemporary sources point to the majority of the 'inglés' community as being composed of people from Ireland. Kelly relies heavily on Eduardo A. Coghlan's data, though many migrants were not included by Coghlan as they did not have recognisably Irish names.

Census data and analysis on people classified as 'inglés' are provided (34–35). This does not, however, provide the full picture of the Irish community, as my own research at a local level in San Antonio de Areco revealed that in that parish, all of those classified in the 1869 census as "Other Europeans", as well as some of those classified as "inglés", were in fact Irish-born. Therefore restricting the analysis to those classified as "inglés", and not including "Other Europeans" does not provide an accurate statistical representation of the Irish community. Kelly bases her research on statistics drawn only from within the "inglés" category.

An interesting comparative perspective is provided by an analysis of Italian and German immigration to Argentina during the same period. Some of the results of the statistical analysis presented here point to a high level of

return migration among the ‘inglés’ immigrants, though the level of returns among Irish immigrants cannot be satisfactorily established. Statistics on religious denominations of immigrants between 1880 and 1930 reveal increasing proportions of non-Catholic Irish immigrants, becoming the majority as the decades progressed (58).

An overview is provided of the development of the rural economy from the late colonial period to the early twentieth century, explaining the persistent hegemony of the landed elite and describing the difficulties for European farmers in breaking into this oligarchy, both economically and socially. As the century progressed, tenant farming increased, with few social or economic advantages. It would have been interesting to examine whether this contributed to the decline in Irish immigration post-1870s; as the land situation in Ireland gradually improved for tenant farmers, land ownership was becoming increasingly difficult in Argentina.

Kelly establishes that while the general ‘inglés’ population were concentrated in urban pursuits, the Irish immigrants were rurally based and engaged predominantly in sheep farming. Though the perception of a rapid ascent to wealth through sheep-farming by Irish immigrants is seen to be exaggerated, the proportion of landowners among the community did increase over time. The author reveals that among the larger landowners, Argentine practices of buying and selling land as a commercial interest were adopted, rather than the traditional portrayal of “land-hungry” emigrants holding on to their land, and therefore “transactions were driven by economics rather than ethnicity” (83-4).

Attention is drawn to the issue of Irish Catholicism in Argentina, comparing the relatively isolated condition of the River Plate region to the more centrally governed Peru and Mexico. The ideological divisions between Church and state and between *unitarios* and *federalistas* are analysed in this chapter. The anticlerical thrust of the early Argentine governments was at odds with the sentiments of the broader population, a factor which may

have contributed to support for the *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas (92). The fortunes of the Argentine Catholic Church in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are also charted. The 1853 Constitution set out the basis for a liberal and pluralist society, essential if the dream of contemporary politicians of a European immigrant nation was to be realised.

Kelly then moves on to describe the relatively autonomous development of an Irish Catholic Church infrastructure in the Argentine *camp*, and the establishment of the Irish chaplaincies. These were to wane in significance towards the close of the century, becoming subsumed into the mainstream Catholic Church (98). Compared to other Irish immigrant destinations, Buenos Aires did not represent an atmosphere of bigotry or religious intolerance, leading the Irish ‘ingleses’ to be easily accommodated within the composite Catholic and Anglican ‘inglés’ identity.

A fresh examination is provided of the renowned Irish chaplain Anthony Fahey and his “social and religious autocracy” in the face of a weak native Catholic infrastructure (101). He politicised the Irish Catholic “mission” in Buenos Aires (103), which rested heavily on an Irish Catholic education system that included teaching “native” (Argentine) pupils. An analysis of the relationship between Fahey and the dictator Rosas is also enlightening, based on novel use of unpublished correspondence between Fahey in Buenos Aires and his superiors in Dublin, and on an article critical of Rosas that was published in the *Dublin Review*. This is the result of the author’s excellent research of primary sources in the Dublin diocesan archives and All Hallows College. Kelly describes the Irish people as “the epitome of model immigrants” from the Argentine government’s perspective (110), a standing that benefited Fahey in his endeavours to promote the Irish Catholic community in Buenos Aires.

This represents an excellent analysis of the significance of Irish Catholic infrastructures and their interaction with the Argentine counterpart. Regrettably, however, this fails to address the fact that a significant proportion of Irish migrants to Argentina in the nineteenth

and early twentieth century were Anglican. This is evident in statements such as: “Within an ostensibly wholly Irish-Argentine context, therefore, an increasingly inward-looking ethnic group was formed” (120), which can only apply to the section of the Irish-Argentine community who explicitly identified themselves as Catholic and identified with their fellow Irish Catholics. Therefore the study would have been enriched by a complementary examination of developments in the Irish and British Anglican community.

An interesting choice is made in the focus of the fifth chapter which examines the “myth of Irish social deviancy” and provides a refreshing counterpoint to traditional analyses of the Irish community as homogenously law-abiding and pious. Kelly sees deviancy as the opposite to integration and thus seeks to measure integration accordingly. This is an interesting methodology, as the main focus of the analysis of deviancy is on drunkenness, with reference to studies on public drinking among the Irish in other immigrant destinations. She thereby equates “the discussion of Irish immigrant alcoholism” with “the assessment of Irish assimilation” (131) and uses “the measurement of deviancy as an indicator of immigrant settlement and assimilation” (144). This approach seems decidedly facile in addressing the multifaceted issue of integration or assimilation. Furthermore, mental illness is also considered as an “indicator of Irish assimilation” (133).

This section provides interesting insights into the self-perception of the community through its newspapers, which emphasised a lack of crime perpetrated by the ‘ingleses’ in the *camp*, and even argued that when incarcerated, English-speakers made for better behaved prisoners! The Irish community are seen to lack solidarity in relation to defending fellow Irish people accused of crimes, who may or may not have been innocent (152). Irish immigrants in particular were considered susceptible to “alcohol related insanities” and “religious melancholy” (155). On the basis of lack of recorded incidents of drunkenness and disorderly behaviour among the Irish, Kelly

concludes that “rates of integration were largely higher than rates of deviancy” (156). In sum, therefore, this chapter provides a well-executed and well-written examination of deviancy among the Irish community in Buenos Aires and elsewhere, yet the central argument of the chapter – that this is a measure of integration – is somewhat difficult to digest. Again only the “inglés” category in the census is included in the statistics, while the category of “Other European”, which included the Irish to a certain extent, as explained above, was omitted. I therefore found it to be a weak chapter within an otherwise eloquent and well-argued study.

Irish ‘Ingleses’ also examines the shift that occurred in Irish immigrant identity in Buenos Aires towards the close of the nineteenth century, due to increasing Irish nationalism in the homeland, combined with an increase in Argentine nationalism, which led to a fracturing of the hitherto easy definition of the Irish as ‘ingleses’. This provides an insightful analysis of the impact of the native elite’s increasing discomfort with mass immigration, a theme that is pertinent both to the historical context and to contemporary responses to immigration in Europe and the Americas. Low levels of naturalisation among all immigrant groups are cited as reason for concern as to the allegiances of immigrants in Argentina (164), together with the prevalence of European languages other than Spanish, particularly in relation to Italian immigrants (167). An overview is provided of Italian, German and Spanish immigrant newspapers and mutual aid societies. ‘Ingleses’ associative activity was initially concentrated on sports clubs, and the first English-language newspaper, *The British Packet and Argentine News*.

There follows a discussion on the divergent standpoints of the Irish community offered by *The Standard* and *The Southern Cross*, soundly based on a content analysis of the two newspapers, particularly editorials and letters. *The Standard* represented the “Anglo-Celtic” community, and symbolised the unity that reigned among the ‘ingleses’ in the 1860s and 1870s. It is strange here that Kelly neglects to mention that the Mulhall brothers who founded and owned *The Standard* were

Anglican, as this is very relevant to the argument offered. (2) This unity was to be put in question with the establishment of a specifically Irish Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross*. In contrast to *The Standard*, which was targeted at an urban and wealthy audience (Kelly's analysis is based on the advertisements in the two papers), *The Southern Cross* had a decidedly urban readership (175). Kelly describes the increasing levels of posturing on the part of the two publications, concluding that "[b]oth newspapers ultimately and predictably failed in their original intent to adhere to a harmonious and inclusive editorial position."

In the pages of *The Southern Cross* it becomes evident that linguistic issues were a concern, both in relation to the use of the Spanish vernacular, and the use of English instead of Irish, by Irish immigrants (177-8). The nationalist thrust asserted itself most obviously under the editorship of William Bulfin from 1896 and an account of his editorial treatment of the Boer War is provided, bringing *The Southern Cross* directly into conflict with *The Standard* (180). The relative support for, and loyalty to, the two newspapers among the various members of the Irish community in Argentina is, Kelly admits, difficult to establish (184). However, it is clear from this chapter that some Irish and Irish Argentines did become more nationalist and distance themselves from the collective 'inglés' identity, while assuming a hybrid Irish-Argentine identity. Nevertheless, nationalist support remained superficial.

'Irish Ingleses' makes for an entertaining and highly informative read, while at the same time being based on robust statistics and empirical analysis, with frequent recourse to primary sources. The book regularly provides a comparative perspective with other immigrants in Buenos Aires, or with Irish immigrant

communities elsewhere in the world, in order to enrich our understanding of the Irish immigrant experience in Argentina. The work is accompanied by a broad-based bilingual bibliography, divided according to specific themes, which is of great use to the researcher. This goes some way towards bridging the divide between Spanish- and English-language interpretations of the phenomenon of Irish migration to Argentina. The title is somewhat misleading in referring to the experience "in Argentina", as the settlement of the migrants, and therefore the information analysed in the book, is concentrated on the province of Buenos Aires, rather than the whole country. While Kelly regionally defines the emigration as concentrated in three Leinster counties, the concentration of immigration within Buenos Aires Province, and to a lesser extent, neighbouring provinces, is not specified.

As an aside, and as is common in this field, the monograph would have benefited from further copy-editing by an Argentine to avoid a number of orthographical errors relating to Argentine personal names, place names and other Spanish words, but this does not detract from the overall high standard of editing of '*Irish Ingleses*'. The point about the Irish immigrants' 'inglés' identity is somewhat laboured. While it is a prominent feature of the Irish experience in Argentina, it did not apply at all times to all Irish people. However, '*Irish Ingleses*' represents an excellent study of the Irish experience in Buenos Aires – the first English-language monograph on the topic in over ninety years -, and as such it is indispensable in the ever-growing historiography on the Irish diaspora, and on nineteenth-century international migration.

Claire Healy

Notes

1 Healy, Claire. "Migration from Ireland to Buenos Aires, 1776-1890." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, NUI, Galway (November 2005), p226.

2 However, Edward Thomas Mulhall's Anglican family converted to Catholicism in San Antonio de Areco in 1859-61. Healy (2005), p. 227.

