INTIMATE CARTOGRAPHIES:
IRISH AND DIASPORIC EXPLORATIONS OF GENDERED SPACE

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D in the Department of English and Comparative Literature in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Chapel Hill
2017

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ABSTRACT

Christin M. Mulligan: *Intimate Cartographies: Irish and Diasporic Explorations of Gendered Space*
(under the direction of Pamela A. Cooper)

Juxtaposing different chronological periods and genres from the ninth century to the present, *Intimate Cartographies* contends that contemporary Irish and diasporic artists employ an "ecologistical," anthropocenic aesthetics in an effort to re-territorialize geopolitical, sociocultural, and "psychic space." Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Nora Roberts, Nuala O'Faolain, and Tana French, among others, explore the gendered body politic of the Irish State and of individuals in various *milieux*. My dissertation contextualizes their work with regard to events in Irish and diasporic history and considers these authors in relation to other more established counterparts from W.B. Yeats, P.H. Pearse, and James Joyce to John Ford and Francis Bacon. Poised at the intersection of postcolonial cultural geography, transnational feminisms, and various theologies in engagement with various media from international archives, *Intimate Cartographies* demonstrates the ways in which contemporary authors and filmmakers cross borders literally (in terms of location), ideologically (in terms of syncretive politics and faiths), figuratively (in terms of conventions and canonicity), and linguistically to develop an epistemological "Fifth Space" of cultural actualization beyond borders. Through radical awareness of embeddedness in their respective environments, these writers/filmmaker-cartographers reshape Ireland both as real landscape and fantasy island, traversed in order to negotiate place in terms of terrain and subjectivity both within and outside of history

in the realm of desire. I chart mutual fascinations and engagements with the biopolitics of transformative (re)production in spatial, communal, and intimate mis-en-scènes in addition to the dearth of comparative work concerning Irish-language, Anglo-Irish, and diasporic cultural production across forms necessitates such a uniquely geofeminist, bilingual study of these neglected artists. Ireland in these terms is charted through places on the map which address and redress past imaginings of both sovereignty and gender as they continue to be palimpsestically refigured in the present.

An rud a scríobhann an púca, léann sé féin é—
The thing the púca writes, he himself can read.

-- Irish Proverb

They laughed at one I loved -
The triangular hill that hung
Under the Big Forth. They said
That I was bounded by the whitethorn hedges
Of the little farm and did not know the world.
But I knew that love's doorway to life
Is the same doorway everywhere.

Ashamed of what I loved
I flung her from me and called her a ditch
Although she was smiling at me with violets.

But now I am back in her briary arms;
The dew of an Indian Summer morning lies
On bleached potato-stalks -
What age am I?

I do not know what age I am,
I am no mortal age;
I know nothing of women,
Nothing of cities,
I cannot die
Unless I walk outside these whitethorn hedges.

-- Patrick Kavanagh, “Innocence”

Do gach ceann de mo mhuintir, go háirithe mo mháthair, le grá: anois agus go deo-na-ndeor.—

For every one of my people, especially my mother, with love: now and forever-ever.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/*BUÍOCHAS*

This work has at least as many intellectual and personal debts as there are footnotes. It is the culmination of thirty years of being told stories, watching films, and later, reading and writing, or the entirety of my life thusfar. It is borne out of the integral relations amongst faith, space or place, family, community, and identity in Irish-American culture at large and in my home in particular. The scholarship in it bears the trace in the true Derridean sense of innumerable influences; what I owe to specific works and critics will emerge in the citations of the individual chapters. But more than that, as a girl and later, a woman reading and writing about other women's experience as I was living my own, who has been doing so for as long as she can remember, my work has been shaped by the support of numerous generous and gifted educators and advisors, most especially those in my own homeplace and homeplaces-away-from-home.

In the early years, thanks to Tracy Marinaro and Barbara Groff, for telling me I could and should be a writer; Edward Gaffin, Jacqueline Pepperes Gioia, Susan Englett Howard, Mary Macconi, who made me a better writer, encouraged me to devour any and every text I could get my hands on and taught me how to compound the hell out a sentence with style; Susan Sperduto-Bobjak, Donna Martin, Fran Fahsel—my Pennsville cheering squad; James Davis, who often let me read, psychoanalyze, and finish the crossword when I was supposed to be singing; Jayelaurel Davis, whose approach, I realize in retrospect taught how to respond to my own students by contrast and how to take any criticism as impetus to improve;

and most especially, Cynthia Campbell Webb and Irene Sicoutris Dickey, supreme champions of my formative work, who, though they may have imagined one day reading my Great American Novel, will have to settle for this instead, at least for the time being.

From all of these teachers, I discovered a passion for literature that was only increased and deepened by four years of rigorous and invigorating undergraduate education at Bryn Mawr College and environs, including the privilege to meet and have conversations about the writer's life with Zadie Smith, Margaret Drabble, and the astounding Mary Karr. I also received special attention from Julia Gaisser in Classics, the late Paul Grobstein in Biology, Gail Hemmeter and Nimisha Ladva in the Writing Center, and where almost the entire remainder of the English Department trained me to read widely, critically, and voraciously, encouraged my overeager questions about books and the profession, and generally supported any wild idea I might've had both academically and financially during my editorship of *Nimbus: The Bryn Mawr College Literary Magazine*, through various departmental prizes and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Hanna Holborn Gray Fellowship for Thesis Research, from which this dissertation has its genesis. Thanks to Michelle Mancini and the late Ricki Behrend in the Dean's Office particularly, who is greatly missed. Most especially, a core group of faculty became my bedrock, my nexus of encouragement and humor, which has carried me through the various trials and tribulations of undergraduate education and continues to sustain me today: Peter Briggs and Katherine Rowe (now at Smith), who both told me I was ready for a career in academia and encouraged me to pursue it; Karl Kirchwey and Susan Benston of Haverford who each pushed me in the earliest days from being a young woman who loved books to a critic with their kind

guidance, genuine erudition, and belief in my instincts about writing about my life (which I had yet to truly understand at eighteen or nineteen) and of course, T.S. Eliot, Lorrie Moore, and Dorothy Parker; Anne Dalke and Steve Finley of Haverford, who have each spent a so much time teaching me and discussing faith, the import of space and place, the contentious debates surrounding the practices of feminism(s), and disability in all kinds of literature, most especially Biblical literature, time which I will always cherish; Jamie Taylor, who introduced me to much of the theoretical framework that appears throughout these chapters, taught me to write my way to and through anything, and has been a fount of knowledge and sage advice on all matters professional; Kate Thomas, who motivates me with her own brilliance to always question my assumptions and close read within an inch of my (and the text's) life; the one and only, THE Joe Kramer, to whom I will always defer on all matters literary, and I still consider it the greatest privilege of my intellectual life to have experienced the astounding depth and amazing breadth of his infinite knowledge on a daily basis at 8:30 every morning for the best and worst year of my life—sometimes weeping, always laughing— and on many lovely days since, in acknowledgment of his generosity, his genius, *his* embodiment of the *genus loci* of the Mawr, *and* his certainty that this project can and would be finished, and that I was the girl to do it, before there even was a project, before I ever knew I was a scholar and a teacher because no one else had ever suggested that I could be one before him. So much so, that if he hadn't retired, you might well be reading exclusively about Shakespeare; and of course, the incomparable Jane Hedley, who has been the inspiration for all my work on women's poetry by her own sterling

example, indefatigable intellect, compassionate concern, and also, just as everyone else mentioned above did, by treating me as a friend and colleague well before (if ever) I deserved such an honor. Whatever success may follow, I shall always be proudest to forever be a Bryn Mawr girl in the E.B. White sense.

The sense of academic community I experienced as an undergraduate was further fostered in often unexpected ways by my graduate studies at the University of North Carolina. First and foremost, I will always be grateful to Pamela Cooper, who kept me smiling throughout with her wit and warmth, and gave me *carte blanche* to read extensively and write boldly as I saw fit, while providing the priceless benefits of her always-incisive perspective and boundless encouragement; Ruth Salvaggio, who gives new meaning each day to the generous feminist principles she teaches and practices, and who has given me every opportunity to do what I do best as I saw best from the moment we met, offering the most remarkable guidance along the way; Patrick Ó Néill, peerless provider of both the cultural and the historical perspective this project demanded, whose own dedication, perspicacity, and magnanimity offer a model to be emulated in the hopes that what appears here is "*Gaeilge go maith*": historically sensitive, nuanced, graceful, and informed by an understanding of Irish culture and idiom that one can only grasp from living it; Nicholas Allen now of UGA, who may not have always been physically present but never left me or my project here in Chapel Hill, and for his continued support of my work as valuable, I will always be grateful; Erin Carlston now of the University of Auckland, a Modernist *par excellence* who took me and this project seriously from my very first year. They

each generously helped and wisely advised me, especially on occasions when adrift, bereft, and somewhat astray myself, I needed them the most.

Immense thanks are also owed to Elizabeth Grosz at Duke, for making inter-institutional study both a privilege and a joy, and insights incalculable both within and beyond the classroom, as well as the larger Irish studies community, most especially Vicki Mahaffey, Tim Martin, Anne Fogarty, Luca Crispi, Irene Gilseanin Nordin, Charles Ivan Armstrong, Marian Eide, Sean Latham, Damon Franke, Seán Kennedy, Mary Power, Sara Crangle, Luke Gibbons, Derek Attridge, Vincent Cheng, Maud Ellmann, Wim Van Mierlo, Scarlett Baron, Michael Valdez Moses, and especially Ruth Frehner and Fritz Senn and the other curators at the James Joyce Foundation in Zurich. I will also always be perpetually indebted to Roslyn Blyn-LaDrew for being my introduction to and abiding resource for all things *as Gaeilge*, and the generous support of other faculty at Carolina: Minrose Gwin, Connie Eble, Beverly Taylor, Heidi Kim, Matthew Taylor, Megan Matchinske, Weldon Thorton and George Lensing—now putting the merit in Emeritus, and once a Mawrter, always a Mawrter—Jessica Wolfe.

I owe the remaining vestiges of my sanity (however tattered) to my friends and family, near but mostly far, who helped me by listening to the various stages of agonied sweat, tears, and carpal tunnel that were my writing process and providing support (frequently in the form of a good, swift kick) to me as an individual and as a author while the at times "terrible beauty" of this project was being born amidst so many years of hard intellectual labor. I am also tremendously fortunate to be surrounded by a coterie of peers whose brilliance and alacrity continues to enrich my own: Katherine Ebury, Shanna Early, Chrissie Lees Van Mierlo, Sarah

Marsh, Alison Lacivita, Tara Harney-Mahajan, Sarah Davison, Maggie Greaves Ozgur, Rhys Tratner, Vaclav Paris, Benjamin Madden, Jonathan McCreedy, and Tamara Radak.

Here at Carolina, two women in particular helped shaped the core of the work that is presented here in our commitment to supporting each other, feminist practice, community building, and Literatures of Britain and Its Colonies, Lauren Cameron (now of Penn State) and April Munroe. The three of us as Pam says, "though [we] be but little/[we are] fierce" and always will be, as far as I'm concerned. My work and life have been shaped in many important ways by all of my other colleagues, especially Bethany Lam, Ashley Reed, Jennifer Park, Kelly Bezio, Rebecca Pomeroy Shores, Jameela Dallis, Doreen Thierauf, Allison Bigelow, Ilouise Bradford, Danielle Johnson, the twins: Daryl Cameron and Bryce Johnson, Kevin Kritsch, Chelsea Redeker Milbourne, Helen Lee, Adair Rispoli, Melissa Pojasek, Christy Webb Clemmons, Ricky Werner, Meredith Farmer, and Krista Turner, may she rest in peace; Erin Branch, Meredith Malburne-Wade, Robert Erle Barham, Vaughn Stewart, Susan Thananopavarn, Gale Greenlee, Gene Melton, Lauren Garrett, Erin Lodeesen, Suzanna Geiser, Ashley Hall, "The Adams" Engel and Forrest-McCune; Brittany Spruill, L. Lamar Wilson, Rebecca Nesvet, Meagan Blair, Jane Lim, Robin Smith, Jamie Jones, Meredith Ringel-Ensley, and Laurel Foote-Hudson. Also offering critical assistance on both the administrative and professional fronts were: the staff in the English Department, particularly: Linda Horne, Jodie Turnbull, Karen Sardi, Anita Braxton, Mark Richardson, Ginger Tompkins, Sharon Brinson, and Erin Kalbarcyzk; Laura Rowe Lane at University Career Services; Suchi Mohanty, Sarah Bankston, Tommy Nixon, Emily Kader, and all of the librarians of UNC Special Collections. I am also

grateful to each student in any of my courses at UNC for their amazing insights in conversation and on the page, especially those in my ENGL 124 and 291sectons, and every single soul in my ENGL 101, 102, and 105 courses, including Emily Tinsley, Sam Peterson, Karina Javalkar, Madelyn Usher, Kevin Overby, Thomas Ferguson, Thomas Wood, Rory O'Brien, Aisha Anwar, Adam Jefferson, Sarah Leonard, Jimmy Jordan, Laura Alder, Walker Knopp, Caley Edlington, Samuel Silverstein, Adeola Keku, Jackson Bloom, Emily McKinney, William Tingen, Alexander Magee, Daniel Pureco, and the women of my reading group: Selena Garber, Caroline Tobin, and Julie D'Amico. Each of you helped me raise both my game and the bar.

The outstanding members of the UNC Newman parish have been a continual blessing: all the graduate, undergraduate students, and the staff, just a few but no means all: Ann Atienza, Lynne Manchester and Kristen White Christine Dragonette, Claire Clement, Maggie Fitch (all of whom are elsewhere now but present in my heart), ,Jeannie Rogers, Dave Dunson**,** Cathy McCurry, my whole Graduate Group, and most especially Pat Detitta, Barbara Pegg, Sr. Evelyn Craig, and Msgr. John Wall.

Three other astoundingly gifted readers and writers in particular were my sounding-boards throughout many drafts and incessant rewrites; their opinions and honesty profoundly shaped the trajectory of the work: endless thanks to Dr. Elaine Wood, my colleague, Joycean soul sister, and future legal counsel; Perrin Braun, supreme expert on matters gustatory, grammatical, spiritual, art historical, and of course, psychoanalytical; and Christine "'Wom" Lipuma Einloth of "Don't diss the diss—just bang it out!" fame and source of so much more economic, political, and critical knowledge coupled with infinite forbearance and humor.

I have great love and appreciation for many additional dear friends who are like family for scrumptious prune-free meals and conversations about the world beyond rather than strictly between the fly-leaves, many of whom crossed oceans to support me in every way: Becky Vicars Bentley, Dave Bentley, and the adorable Eric and Claire Bentley; Connie Moore Vicars and Mike Vicars; Melissa Weber Hill, Jay Hill, and my godson, JJ and his little brother Asher; Tom and Jayne Weber, Chris and Ken Holtgreve; my beloved Shelley Nash and Mark Shvets and their precious girls, Alice and Emily; my source for stolen designer bags, cheesy pretzels, and many laughs: Felixander Negron and Sara Ottinger; Meghan Shelden, Annie Nichols, Vickie Reed, Liz DePalma, and Crissy Dolbow, Itéa C. Bell, the ever-thoughtful Wendy Smolen Lias and Nicholas Lias, Tara Anderson and Jen Lake, who great distances, notwithstanding, were never far from my mind; the best roommates I ever had in my time on the Hill: Randall Elmo Bacon and Kevin Bacon, the hilarious Arianna Vogt, Ralph Stoddard, and Christen Gore; and a number of other Bryn Mawr women, many of whom were doing the MD/DDS/MA/Ph.D/MFA/JD/ MPH/MPP/MLS/etc. graduate-madness right alongside me, even though we were often many miles apart: Jillian Brown, Elizabeth Catanese, Orah Minder, Gilda Rodriguez, Anne Guarnera, Lu Mei Miller, Laura Brennankane, Claire Davy, Lauren Sweeney, Muska Nassery, Marie Turner, Sarah Caldwell, Megan Finn Senseney, Lawral Wornek, Rebekah Baglini, Kathy Fazekas, Vanessa Poggioli, Steph Masiello, Eileen Talone, Chloe Barnett, Marissa Litman, Georgia Griffin, Kate Sann, Jennifer Dodwell, Marissa Patterson, Katie Kronbergs, Whitney Graham, Whitney Weston, Tiffany Shumate, Lauren Zimmerman, Bhumika Patel, Carleen Morris Bowers, Piyali Bhattacharya, Rachel Friedensen, Katie Rutledge, Laura Sockol, Jaimie

Krems, Laura Severance, Elizabeth Newbury, Bethany Keffala; Adrienne Wallace, forever my sister in fighting the capital-P Patriarchy and Pocahontas; Kiira Amundsen and her Faulkner Dance; Rachel Goddard, my "cousin" and my friend; Jenny Roth, my co-editor in crime; Olivia Spradlin, Kathleen Myers, Norma Altshuler, Kate Stein, and my (former and forever) froshlings: Sophia Wolfenden, Kelsey McMillen, Kim Lunsford, Megan Roberts, Grace Kung, and almost any other Mawrter I know, as well as the next generation of BMWs, including Maria Aghazarian.

Other encouragement has come from: the late Violet Baldini (one of my guardian angels) and Theresa Baldini Press, who continues to make sure, if nothing else, my hair was and is fashionable; Maceray Sesay, Emily Seltzer, Tomeka Brooks Kamwani, the late Erica Summiel, Dawn Marie and Donna Powers Pelura, Collen Torpey and Phyllis Kopec, Leah Wearing and Mrs. Waring, Olivia Nnadi, Folashade Patrick, Amanda Shook, Brittany Marie Willis-Chafin, Sandy Ann Huff, Ali Pratta and her parents, Peggy Haines, of course The KGFFC: Emily England Syvertson (and Lizzie England, Melanie England Poli and Devon Poli), Carly Golt, Elizabeth Beaulieu, Laura Chard, and Melissa Durr, Roberta Sassi Barber, and Khamar Newton.

I am at a loss to express the boundless depths of my gratitude to Christian G. Kohler, Racquel Gur, and my entire spectacular family—who are too numerous to name individually lest I forget someone—just a few, but by no means all: Dad and Patty, Devon, David, and Steven—whose love and laughter often carried me through the ebbs and flows; my grandfather, James—a "stately, plump" prince among Mulligans, who demonstrated for me the meaning of *agape* by being a living exemplar of it well before and ever since he taught me the word; Aunt Betty and

Uncle Ed Haggerty—who put the great in great-relations and whose family is an extension of my own in the most profound way: Sean and Meg, Jen and Greg, Alexis, Jackie, Liam, Connor, Violet—the best cousins a girl could ask for; The Lisa Mulligan Crew for keeping me laughing, traveling, and in Nutella, despite various injuries; the amazing Cheryl Abhau; Betty Brown McMann and Joe McMann (may they rest in peace), Aunt Daphne, Lauren, Charlie, and Uncle Chuck Miller, Stacy, Bruce, Josh, and Jackie Sherman (Pszwaro), Marie Cioci aka Aunt Sissy and Uncle Joe Cioci (may he rest in peace), Aunt Eileen (may she rest in peace), and of course, Pop-Pop Parky, for believing it would get done; Uncle Michael M. Mulligan, who has taught me many an important lesson about integrity, tolerance, and that time is how we spend our talents and love, including the correct pronunciation of Goethe and Achebe at age ten; Aunt Marjie Mulligan Elliott and Uncle Mark Elliott and your astounding now-grown-up children—for always opening your home and your hearts to me; Aunt Katie Mulligan and Uncle Trac Huynh and your beautiful girls—who always gave me faith when I had almost none, and most especially my mother, Patty, who both gave me life and saved my life in ways large and small each and every day, who always already believed from the moment I was born weighing 2 lbs. and "resembling a chicken" that I could be, do, and survive anything—no matter what—because I am the woman each of these people, she in particular, raised me to be. Mom was certain that I had the will to finish this endeavor even when I thought it impossible and long before I actually did so, and for that and so much more, I will forever remain grateful beyond words. As much as this dissertation shows the inspirations derived from sisterhood of all kinds, I have always learned the most from witnessing shining beacons of motherhood, most notably my own.

Finally, I must pause and acknowledge the influence and impact of some of my first and greatest teachers: my great-grandmother, "Nan," Ivy Denelsbeck, my paternal Grammy, Joann Liable Denelsbeck, and of course, my maternal Grammy, Katherine Grace Knapp Mulligan, who each taught me every day to have confidence in myself and in a God who makes all things possible, who share this with me even though they are no longer here physically, and whose humor, love, and wisdom I continue to miss with every beat of my heart.

The research, study, travel, and language-immersion necessary to complete this dissertation have been made possible by financial support from scholarships to the James Joyce Summer School in Dublin, the Werner Freidrich Fellowship from the UNC Graduate School of Arts and Sciences that enabled me to spend time at the James Joyce Foundation in Zurich, a Fulbright-Hays Federal Language Area Studies Scholarship (FLAS) for minority-language study from the U.S. Dept. of Education and the UNC Center for European Studies, which enabled me to spend six weeks of a summer during which I was writing in the *Gaeltachtaí* intensively learning, reading, and speaking Irish amongst *an uachtar,* including but not limited to Yvonne Ní Fhlathara, Fintan Moore, Éadaoin Ó Sullivan, Kate McNern and her family, Laura Simmons, Eugene Ó Néill, Rosemary Munroe, Ashley Davis, Elaine Byrne and her family, Veronica Troy, Tara Haveling, Lucas Miller, "Garth" Ó Luain, Jenna Hartigan, Vanessa Thacker, Emily Ransom, and *ar ndoigh*, *mo "*roomie" *iontach* , Ruth Archbold, and so many other learners, teachers, and speakers in both Donegal and Connemara through the immersion programs Oideas Gael in Gleann Cholm Cille and the NUI Galway program in An Cheathrú Rua, and the Richardson Dissertation Fellowship from the Dept. of English and Comparative Literature. An

early portion of Chapter 1 appeared in *Hypermedia Joyce Studies* and an early portion of Chapter 2 appeared in *Literature Interpretation Theory.*

The final lines of this project are a linguistic cartography, because this work on cultural and (auto)bio(geo)graphy was itself a deeply personal journey bounded by location and time (in both senses, i.e. experience). It represents an otherwise uncharted territory of topographical wanderings and intellectual wonderings, that examines through "a commodious vicus of recirculation" the borderlands between the aesthetic, the actual, and the affective, made manifest in words that are themselves maps of every significant place, both geographical and emotional, in which I have ever been.

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A Prefatory "Postscript"

And some time make the time
To drive out west
Into County Clare along the Flaggy Shore
In September or October when the wind
And the light are working off each other
So that the ocean on one side is wild
With foam and glitter and inland among stones
The surface of a slate-grey lake is lit
By the earthed lightning of a flock of swans,
Their feathers ruffed and ruffling, white on white,
Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads
Tucked or cresting or busy underwater.
Useless to think you'll park and capture it
More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,
A hurry through which known and strange things pass
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open. (Heaney, *Opened Ground* 411)

It is my privilege and presumption, despite the observations of Fr. Peter Lonergan, played by Ward Bond in John Ford's *The Quiet Man,* that one should "begin at the beginning," and rather start with the end or more aptly, one ending that was also a beginning. A debt of gratitude is owed to Prof. Katherine Rowe, who first introduced me to Seamus Heaney's "Postscript" by reading it at the celebration to commemorate the completion of undergraduate honors theses by majors in the Bryn Mawr College English Department in 2007. I have been teaching it ever since. It was in teaching Seamus Heaney's "Postscript" to my first and second-year composition students that I began to consider a succinct version of the correlative phenomenon between mapping and subjectivity that so interests me in Irish and Irish-American writers and filmmakers of all periods in Irish, English, and Hiberno-English. This slip of a poem ends both *The Spirit Level* (1997) and *Selected Poems 1966-1996*. The former is Heaney's first collection after

winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, whose title refers to both Irish slang for the carpenter's level and the tipping point of the physical, the metaphysical, the ethical, and the desirable—all of which coalesce in "Postscript", while the latter collection that surveys the poet's entire career up prior to that point. There is an emphasis on political geography as personal geography, on time and space tentatively moored to a fragmentary being in flux. The poem represents a breath caught, a crystallization or distillation, as well as a transcendence of chronological time or what Elizabeth Freeman might consider a resistance to "chrono-normativity". Temporality and spatiality in "Postscript" leave both speaker and reader suspended in the magical interregnum betwixt and between moments of consciousness, which can and do "catch the heart off guard and blow it open." The lyric figures Ireland both as real place and fantasy space, traversed by the poet-cartographer who is (re)claiming psychic territory both within and outside of history in the realm of imagination.

We are functioning in a particular sort of hetero-temporal double time, at once *Kairotic* or Divine, mythopoetic, and quotidian, as evinced by the journey "out west" by car and the names of specific regional locations—but pivotally, not too specific —which portray the "neither here nor there" feeling necessary to limn both a particular and a universal Éire. "Postscript" further invokes chronological and linguistic play through the flight of the swans,[1] whose feathers

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A debt is also owed to particularly sensitive close readings subsequently written by my students, especially Thomas H. Ferguson and Thomas Wood, in my first-ever ENGL 101 class in 2008 at Carolina, whose careful attention to diction, imagery, and detail in the poem, continues to inform my own approach.

[1] They are also related to the swans across Yeats's *oeuvre*, including the famous one of "Coole [Park] and Ballylee, 1931": "So arrogantly pure/a child might think/It can be murdered with a spot of ink" (ll 23-24. *CP* 243-244). Like Yeats, Heaney is not murdering the swans with his *homage* to them in ink but instead endeavoring to capture the magic of their flight. Vicki Mahaffey notes that:

> the swan is also a re-embodied image of the Celtic Twilight with its symbolic meaning as an intermediary between two worlds. The swan who rapes Leda [in Greek mythology] exemplifies such doubleness in its powerful conflation of the divine and the bestial. In addition, the swan serves as an image of old age, a

are "ruffled and ruffling" the border between these two times, as legendary emblems of the Children of Lír, who exiled spirits of the nation. They are transformed by their wicked stepmother, Aoife into birds, accursed to wander the Sea of Moyle for a thousand years, subject of Thomas Moore's famous ballads, and an enduring metaphor of colonial occupation, whose "Gaelic tounge[s] remain" as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill elsewhere reminds us, but not their human voices (trans. Ní Chuilleanáin, "Fionnuala" ll 28 *TWH)*. In the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus allies this legend with the profound grief of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, another narrative of displacement and loss, through a further linguistic displacement with the inclusion some Italian. His reference to "*Cordoglio*"—"deep sorrow" or "condolence" addresses Cordelia's execution by hanging: "Cordelia. *Cordoglio.* Lír's loneliest daughter" (*U* 9.314). Cordelia, despite the fact that her father repudiates and banishes her for refusing to offer proof of her devotion to him, is also Lear's favorite child—her name widely considered to be derived from and evocative of the Latin "*cordis*" or "heart". She is condemned to death as a result of her sisters' desire to control or occupy Lear's kingdom, another tragic colonial parallel. The Children of Lír are also the subject of an iconic sculpture in Dublin's Memorial Garden.

As far as each of these chapters is concerned, I will be tracing the struggle for each of the authors and filmmakers to find their voices and tongues (Gaelic, Shakespearean, or otherwise) amidst this complex history filled with lacunae created by oppression from various authoritarian and misogynist institutions. Silence of all kinds will be charted, including those in the manner of

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> state that mediates between life and the afterlife in poems like "The Tower" in which Yeats imagines himself singing a swan song while floating on the stream toward death. (*States* 131)

This wealth of associations is pertinent to my reading of the emblem in Heaney and subsequently in Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. For strong readings of elements of Heaney's *oeuvre* in the context of landscape studies, see Frawley, who compares him with his feminist contemporary, Eavan Boland, and Potts who reads him alongside a number of other contemporaries, including Ní Dhomhnaill. For a more recent reading that further adds the important aspect of "critical regionalism" as defined by Cheryl Herr and addresses the essential, spiritual dimension in Heaney's poetics, prose, and drama, see Richard Rankin Russell's comprehensive and nuanced *Seamus Heaney's Regions* (2014).

Cordelia's contention, "Love, and be silent" (*Lear* I.i.68), which demonstrate that to a certain extent language always already fails to account for mass deaths, mass immigrations, massive disease outbreaks as a result of *An Drochshaol* through to the austerity of a postcolonial state after the Celtic Tiger economic boom. However, language is also the means to express the *samhás*/*jouissance* one can experience despite this history, and sometimes, surprisingly in response to it— whether in Irish, English, Hiberno-English—or all of the above concerning all of the above, at the same time.

Seamus Heaney, as Nobel Laureate English-medium poet and eminent "translator" of both the Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf,* and the Irish epic, *Buile Suibhne* or in his translation, *Sweeney Astray* (as opposed to the more literal and accurate *Frenzy [or Madness] of Sweeney*), clearly has little trouble finding his own voice when mediating between the competing demands of bi- (or multi-)linguality amidst this tangled past. Although granted, "Postscript" does grapple with the poet's anxiety and affirm the ability to find just the right words in the moment, whatever language and context one is writing in. Heaney describe the fleeting nature of beauty, and the fluctuating nature of mapped subjectivity articulated in terms of the medium and particularities of place, though it may indeed be "useless to think you'll park and capture it/more thoroughly." The poet, here, seems to have wandered astray himself, albeit temporarily and supposedly unexpectedly, if not shrewdly and perspicaciously, into the magical-real relation that Ireland occupies among as well as in-between history, fantasy, and geopolitics.

The autonomous nation of the Free State or as Declan Kiberd famously quips in *Inventing Ireland*, the "Not-So-Free State" exists as biogeographical, psychoaffective, sociopolitical, sexual, and cultural construct—as what Marx would term an "allegorical state" or more aptly, an "allegorical sovereignty" since the Early Irish Period—well before notions of national and ethnic

identity were articulated in the terms I have just used. In "Postscript," Heaney's grasp of that concept permits the fast, loose, and unhurried—his contentions otherwise notwithstanding—interplay of ideas related to time, space, and place. He expresses of an ideology that is simultaneously bound to Ireland's cathected history and deliberately set apart from it, in which "known and strange things pass." It is not only the wind and the light that are "working off one another."

Like the swans, rich emblem of Irish history, Heaney too is "busy underwater" at the spirit level—under the psychic waters of history and myth that are as deep, as primary, as foundational as the ocean itself, which surrounds Ireland the island on every side—with which all the writers and artists I examine must contend. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, too, uses a variation of this exact metaphor in the mermaid poems throughout her *oeuvre*, particularly *The Fifty Minute Mermaid* (2007) and *Cead Aignis/The Astrakhan*[2] *Cloak*. Heaney may call it "A Postscript," suggesting a casually-dashed-off afterthought, but it truly represents his approach to the *genus loci* of Ireland, or the state of the State, as the source, the root of all the troubles and the unexpected thrills, which come from engaging with the past contained in the "earthed lightening" of words, words, words above all.

Thus, while acknowledging the seeming difficulties of "capturing it more thoroughly," *Intimate Cartographies* demonstrates that contemporary Irish and Irish-American women artists deliberately and repeatedly cross borders, literally (in terms of topography), ideologically (in terms of politics and faith), figuratively (in terms of conventions and canonicity), and linguistically. They are radically aware of their biogeography, often responding to a particular

[2] Literally, "Saying my Say" or in Muldoon's version, a little multilingual pun that comments on his status as creator of *aistriúcháin*, translations and his task of revealing but also "cloak[ing]" in English, as Astrakhan is a type of heavy lambswool used in outerwear.

philosophy (Irish nationalism, British colonialism, and/or Catholicism), ethnic identity (Irish/Irish diasporic), sexual identity (male/female), a particular tongue (Irish, English, and/or Hiberno-English), as well as historical and cultural events, locations, and materials. Juxtaposing different chronological periods and genres, *Intimate Cartographies* examines the ways in which their symbolic landscapes respond to centuries-old literary traditions and seek to resituate "occupied territory". These chapters address the nature of both the accordant and discordant discourses of theology, the gendered body, as well as critical environmental and biogeographical terms such as the Anthropocene and "The Green Atlantic," not merely using it as a measure of local or diasporic modernity but in terms of human impact or contact "borderzones" in the material and texual worlds encountered in both English and Irish, as a necessary acknowledgment of the reciprocality of these worlds' and languages' impact on the human.

Chapter one, " '*Saor an tSeanbhean Bocht*!": Moving from *Cailleach to Spéirbhean"*, explores the development of Irish-language *aisling* poems in the Jacobite period and their nineteenth- and early twentieth-century translations by nationalists James Clarence Mangan and Pádraic Pearse, who invoke this tradition of *dea ex machina* women from "vision-quest" lyrics to refute colonial stereotypes as well as hierarchical notions of time, history, and space. I then consider the poems' later satirical revisions by James Joyce, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Seamus Heaney, Paul Muldoon, and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, who further the interrelation of power, desire, and place in Irish national discourse. By presenting the termagant crone's spiritual and physical transmutation into the resplendent sky-queen as an ironic commentary on the geography and gender of Ireland, these authors critique and in some ways, reinforce, conservative sexual politics as well as imperialist, nationalist, and religious sexisms.

While many critics of Ní Dhomhnaill have recognized that she stages Irish women's

subjectivity through cartographic metaphors, chapter two on her "Traumatic/Erotic Mapping" argues that she also uses them to consider the positive potentiality of the historically abjected aspects of the feminine erotic. I demonstrate how mapping can thereby both mark scenes of violence and create new spaces outside of clergical, colonial, nationalist, and masculinist atlases. The female speakers in Ní Dhomhnaill's poems find *jouissance/samhás* by engaging with the difficult but fascinating history of women's marginalization while simultaneously embracing embodiment, locatedness, and folk belief as a means of surpassing it.

In the third chapter, "Sexing the Changeling: Magic Realism and Queer Geography," I continue to chart the relations among political and bodily maps by reading Tana French's murder thrillers *In the Woods* and *The Likeness* alongside the magic-realist tendencies of W.B. Yeats's *oeuvre*. His poetry and drama conflate the physical and psychoanalytical topography of Sligo, his "homeplace," with figures of Woman-as-nation to address the horrific, alienating violence of the Great War, the War for Independence, and the Irish Civil War. Yeats's frequent retreats into the Otherworld, enabled by his socioeconomic and gender privilege, is questioned by both the revisionist mythology of French's novels and the historical case of Bridget Cleary, who was burned as a "changeling" by her family during a home exorcism in 1895. In French's work and Cleary's life, I demonstrate that the Otherworld ceases to be a contented, safe place, becoming instead the locus of death for women who dare to violate the borders enforced by patriarchal culture.

Exploring the sentimental nostalgia of filmmakers and authors, my fourth chapter, "50,000 Shades of Green," studies the ways in which John Ford's iconic film *The Quiet Man* joyously reconfigures stereotypes of "stage Irishness" as well as English- and Irish-language proverbs. Like its Shakespearean and Celtic Revival predecessors, I show that the film also

becomes a translatable touchstone for later pastoral romances that examine the complex desires of Irish-Americans who discover a sacred "homeplace" in Ireland. Through an analysis of the gendered and genre conventions of tourist fantasies as a means of hailing and validation, I argue that, contra Yeats's use of the Otherworld, the conflation of the desire for "space" (both topographical and emotional) with the desiring or longing body of the beloved, these films and novels are not simply vehicles of patriarchy and denial but sites in which both men and women can moor and sustain themselves through the fulfillments and pleasures of place.

Whereas the works in my fourth chapter express delight in the Irish environment, the texts and images of my fifth chapter plumb the depths of the nation's dread and despair. "Potato Drills: P(h)antomiming the *Faminized Body* in *An Drochshaol*" addresses how twentieth-century retellings of the nineteenth-century Potato Blights disrupt the border between memoir and fiction by linking traumas of land to systemic crises of body and spirit in An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire/Fr. Peter O'Leary's *Mo Scéal Féin/My Own Story*, Flann O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht*/*The Poor Mouth*, John Banville's *Birchwood*, and Nuala O'Faolain's *My Dream of You.* The chapter situates these texts alongside Irish Famine orature and the Modernist art of Francis Bacon to indicate that despite the seeming disruption of *perichoresis* or the unity of soul and body through starvation, cultural deprivation, and doubt, laughter and finding humanity in animality are the means by which one can endure and reinstantiate subjectivity in the face of otherwise abject physical and emotional turmoil. Furthermore, by engaging with the historical scandal of the Talbot divorce case featured in O'Faolain's novel as well the fictional dispossessions in Banville's, which occur in conjunction with the historical decline and resurgence of Irish-language that O'Brien parodies from O'Leary's memoir, I consider the lingering impact of *An Gorta Mór* not only on the Irish landscape but also on linguistic and legal

"grounds" for ownership, citizenship, and self-determination.

My work makes use of both physical and digital archival materials in addition to postcolonial and feminist lenses to locate canonical and contemporary Irish and Irish-American literature, film, folklore, music, and visual art within the framework of geofeminism, the conjunction of critical geography and transnational feminist thought. This context and a bilingual approach allow me to reconsider the role of politico-historical, sociojuridical, and symbolo-somatic cartographies not only for men and women artists but spiritual practice. I limn the mapping of personal and erotic landscapes throughout Irish and diasporic *mis-en-scénes* that engage with ecological and sociopolitical *mis-en-place*. These writers/filmmaker-cartographers figure Ireland as both a geopolitical and a psychic location, traversed in order to (re)cover terrain both through and beyond of history in the realm of imagination and desire.

Ireland in these terms is charted through the most intimate of cartographies that engages with historical and cultural representations of sovereignty or the nation-state—prior to their existence as a political reality—and representations of femininity—as it refigures them. I argue that the intersection of feminism and spatial theory should not simply inform debates about literal space and place, but also psychoanalytic territory and the positionality of women's bodies and persons in the public, private, and religious spheres, in addition to orature, writing, visual art, cinema, and music. Such a contextualized geofeminism offers both a compelling critical apparatus to begin reckoning with these aporia and nuanced interpretations of the specific political, sociocultural, and even mythological Irish historical contexts in which these representations and ideologies proliferated, as well as a consideration of how and why they have continued to flourish throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, Terry Eagleton claims that "Irish literary landscapes are often enough decipherable texts rather than aesthetic objects, places made precious or melancholic by the resonance of the human. It is the inscription of historical or contemporary meaning within their material appearance which tends to engage the poet" (6). Eagleton seems to fundamentally miss the point that any assumption of a location's *a priori* aesthetic value for its own sake is always already a product of specific historical and cultural conditions. Much in the way that recent discussions of charting geological time through human impact on the natural world or "the Anthropocene" often overlook the simultaneous influence of the vicissitudes of natural world on the sociocultural field and the bodies that exist within both, they also largely neglect artists' capacities to develop a flexible and multiplicitous Anthropocenic aesthetics of engagement.

Such arguments establish a false dichotomy that I will argue all of these works deconstruct by their very existence. Moreover, I link these artistic productions to theologies and feminist conceptions of the body, such as those of Irigaray and Kristeva, as well as the spatialized engagements of Foucault, Deleuze, and de Certeau, amongst others, to examine dis-, re-. and emplacement and engage with forms of "ecologistical" or "translocutory" (trans)location, with regard to particular geographical or imaginative sites and the formation and maintenance of specific subject positions within them via geological, historical, as well as theological time. These are the grounds from and through which these artists speak, write, create, and exist. In fact, it is the union of the the topographic and the human in tandem—the very accretion of layers of cultural signification like the rich layers of the soil itself—enables these spaces and places to continue to resonate for various artists. The topographic and the

human together permit one to see both the forest and the trees simultaneously, and this dual perspective is exactly the point at which we should and I do become interested.

"*Saor an tSeanbhean Bhocht!*": Moving from *Cailleach* to *Spéirbhean*[1]

I. En-"Vision"-ing a Goddess of Sovereignty in a "State" of Conflict

Representations of Ireland as the "mother country" through the figures of *an tseanbhean bhocht* (the poor old woman) or *an cailleach* (the hag), and their counterpart, *an spéirbhean* (the sky-queen) are by now a customary topic in the field of Irish studies. Nevertheless, many critics have neglected to account for the ways in which this feminized discourse of the "allegorical state" or rather, the "allegorical sovereignty" of Ireland—often not-yet politically autonomous—is inherently allied to issues surrounding "the language question" and the role of Irish (or lack thereof) throughout public and religious as well as aesthetic discourses. Many Irish-language and/or women writers have explicitly linked the marginalization of the language with the dispossession of women embodied through these paradigmatic emblems of sovereignty, not in terms of bourgeois individualism, but instead as a direct challenge of and in contradistinction to "Woman" as a typology in imperial, nationalist, and spiritual ideologies.[2] This chapter endeavors first to historicize that iconography from Early Irish literature and the *aisling* or "vision(-quest)" Irish lyrics of the Jacobite period through to Revivalist translations in the late

[1] Literally, "Free the Poor Old Woman!" i.e. Ireland. This stock phrase has long been deployed as part of nationalist rhetoric, and often came into use post-Independence and -Partition to refer specifically to the six counties of Northern Ireland, across various media, especially graffiti, websites, memes, and Irish-language social networking, as a slogan to advocate for reunification. "*Cailleach*" is another generally interchangeable term for the "hag" aspect of this dichotomy, while the "*spéirbhean*" refers to the transmogrified, beautiful and glorious "sky-queen".

[2] See Eavan Boland's *Object Lessons* and Ní Dhomhnaill's *Selected Essays*, as just two examples.

nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by James Clarence Mangan and Pádraic Pearse, then address their ironic adaptation by James Joyce, and ultimately, chart how the turn to satire shapes the balance of the mythic and the real in later Irish writing in Irish and English by Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Seamus Heaney, Paul Muldoon, and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. While acknowledging the seeming rigidity of these emblems, I also strive to expose the ways in which their deployment constitutes a subversion from *within* and flexibility or fluidity *between* familiar national archetypes that does not merely dismiss the sociohistorical and linguistic background from which these images develop. Instead, such iconography can often serve as a recuperative adjustment to those contexts and traditions, making it all the more relevant for its engagement with these legacies as opposed to an outright repudiation of them. "Vision" in this instance, is critically joined not only with revisionary but simultaneously provisional approaches, as a foundational means of situating and qualifying concerns of textual and cultural analysis, translation, gender, and biogeography as epistemological modes of that recur throughout this project.

From its natural association with and its dissemination alongside *aislingí*, "Róisín Dubh" in particular provides a historical context for and a rich tradition of polysemous reflection on the relationship between the aesthetic, the erotic, the topographic, and the political that served to inspire subsequent Irish writers in both languages. Across history, "[r]ather than constituting a point of general agreement and certainty, the common practice of representing Ireland as a woman forms an important site of ambivalence and conflict in Irish national discourses" (Howes, *Yeats's Nations* 45).[3] For Joyce and other later writers, the earlier genre's playful (and dangerous) transgression of sexual and ethno-political boundaries discreetly couched in an

[3] See also C.L. Innes's incredibly nuanced study, *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society, 1880-1935* (1993).

ostensible love lyric provides a basis for their respective querying, mocking, and critiquing the relations of power, desire, and place (i.e. both location and status) and the terms of gender and national identity.

Noted French linguist and scholar of Celtic studies, Marie-Louise Sjoestedt's *Celtic Gods and Heroes* (1940) explains that the mother goddess in all her various manifestations (sexual, maternal, agrarian, and/or war-like) was an essential trope of Celtic mythos from the earliest period of Irish history. This naturally includes Ériu/Éire, Anu/Ana/Anann/Anad, Danu/Dana, the Macha, and of course, Brighid, ameliorated into Christianity as *Naomh* or St. Bríd, known as "Mary of the Gaels." Her feast was once known as Imbolc (February 1), quarter-mark of the pre-Christian Irish calendar and the first day of Spring. Bríd frequently appears with sunlight and flames to mark the vernal equinox as well as to mark the spark of her holy wisdom and evangelizing fervor. Devotion to these female figures and the inclusion of their holy wells, shrines, and other sacred spaces in Early Christian practice helped further establish the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Such figures are "personifications of the power of nature, earthy forces, which man must conquer [in both martial and erotic terms, except in the case of Bríd, a nun] in order to make them serve him" (Sjoestedt 31). One of the foremost scholars of Celtic culture in the twentieth century, as well as an advocate for the continued protection of the Irish language, Prionsias MacCana further explains that imagery of symbolic, erotic, and geopolitical union has been an integral feature of Irish culture since its first recorded (and remembered, with regard to orature and music) iterations:

> …each king of Tara (or Ireland) on attaining the kingship was espoused to the goddess Ériu, and the lesser kings were similarly espoused to local goddesses….It is well to keep in mind the simple fact that Irish poets down through the ages have persisted in identifying the rightful king as the lawful husband of the territorial goddess….When we

> consider the Mór Muman and Dub Ruis tales, as well as the many other known instances of the king and the goddess theme and the numerous minor allusions to it, it emerges as a self-evident fact that this theme was an integral element of the historical and political consciousness of the early Irish—or the class who interested themselves in such matters as history and politics, and of course, literature. (60-61, 77-78)

A prime example of this is "Róisín Dubh", a lyric for which the author and approximate date of composition are a subject of much scholarly debate. It has been attributed variously to Antoine Ó Raifteirí, last of the wandering Bards, though it almost certainly predates him, as well as Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird/Owen Roe MacWard**,** a poet of sixteenth century Tirconellian chieftan, Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill/Hugh Roe O'Donnell/Red Hugh O'Donnell (Hoagland). British folklorist, H. Halliday Sparling, in *Irish Minstrelsy: A Selection of Irish Songs, Lyrics, and Ballads* (1888), claims that "Róisín Dubh" "purports to be an allegorical address from Hugh to Ireland, on the subject of his love and struggles for her, and his resolve to raise her again to the glorious position she held as a nation before the irruption of the Saxon and Norman spoilers" (124). The continuation of the themes Sjoestedt and MacCana, respectively, identify in Early Irish orature and literature were eventually passed down through well-known songs like "Róisín Dubh," which definitely precedes other Jacobite *aislingí* but nonetheless became similarly hyper-politicized during the period when "finally in the eighteenth century the exiled Stuarts came to be regarded as the rightful spouses of Éire instead of those foreigners who held her in thrall" (MacCana 78), through the struggle to enthrone them and later in the proliferation of multiple enormously popular translations of it during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century Celtic Revival.[4]

[4] "Róisín Dubh" remains a vital part of Irish popular culture. Contemporary translations include Kinsella and Ó Tuama's in *An Duanaire—An Irish Anthology 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed* and musical versions, including those by Sinead O'Connor, Black 47, and Flogging Molly, as well as a famous traditional music venue in Galway named in its honor which, according to Una Mullally, formerly of *The Sunday Tribune*, when that paper was still in circulation in 2008, serves as "the heart of live music in the city," for which The Róisín Dubh won an Irish Music Rights Organization regional award in both 2008 and 2009. According to Nial Conlon of Delorentos in *The*

More recently, feminist scholars such as Edna Longley and Elizabeth Butler Cullingford amongst others, have vociferously decried the promulgation of a politicized mythology in Ireland, particularly addressing tensions in the North and a long history of oppressing women through what they claim extends to supposedly State-sponsored Catholic iconographies, hagiographies, and devotionals, such as Mariology and worship of female saints—all of which have functioned and continue to hinder freedom and the reinforce limitations placed on reproductive, marital, and maternal rights in the Free State and later the Republic. I will acknowledge the validity of Butler Cullingford's argument about the ways in which such a representational system of "gender polarities" and misinformed, essentializing mythical, religious, and political dichotomies could do a disservice to the Irish population at large, particularly in a twentieth-century context ("Thinking" 2), as suggested by the figure of Molly Lappin in Ó Cadhain's "*Aisling agus Aisling Eile*" (1969) and her lack of autonomy in her marriage. However, Ní Dhomhnaill repeatedly undermines this history throughout her *oeuvre*, in addition to "*Cailleach*/Hag" and "*Primavera*," the two poems I address in this chapter. Indeed, Butler Cullingford's complete dismissal out of hand of the centuries of history and culture underlying these belief systems is effectively useless as a means of achieving parity, much less peace. *Amhráin* and *aislingí*, in this case, remain relevant because one cannot simply declaim from the heights of a soapbox, however well-intentioned, that a whole artistic tradition has been rendered irrelevant, to say nothing of trying to immediately cease the astounding influence—both positive and negative—that the theology of Catholicism in Ireland continues to exert on disciples—whether they be practicing or lapsed— in addition to the church's continued and much contested involvement in Irish education and public discourse.

Irish Times, it is one of the best venues in all of Ireland and a steadfast supporter of unsigned musicians. (http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/ontherecord/2008/07/08/on-the-road-delorentos-in-cork-and-galway/)

In reference to similarly repressive hegemonies for black women in America and throughout the world, feminist critic and poet Audre Lorde notably declared in the eponymously-titled 1984 essay, "The Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's house." The statement belies her passionate argument for an understanding of cultural, racial, and sexual-preference differences within feminism or what would eventually become known as intersectional feminist discourse. As Lorde herself insisted, "Interdependency between women is the way to a freedom which allows the I to be, not in order to be used, but in order to be creative. This is a difference between the passive be and the active being" (110). In fact, it is only through co-option and subversion, the deliberate modification of the Master's tools and thereby the Master's house that we can create new alliances, new art, and new opportunities for shared growth while choosing to recognize and reorient rather than willfully and reductively ignore the dominant system of representation or oppression, in the vain hope that that any meaningful understanding will be thus be achieved through a totalizing rejection.

Placing this theory in an Irish context, one cannot just deny over two thousand of years of Irish history, imagery, orature, music, and literature, tossing it into the bog a whim with the intent to start again from scratch. That is tantamount to throwing the baby out with the bath-water and ending up soaking wet because, if you'll forgive the obvious simile, like Ireland, all the arts are islands, touched by the ebbs and flows of culture: these islands that cannot completely implode, erode, or simply disappear because one (e.g. Butler Cullingford) finds Seamus Heaney's "bog betrothal" and simultaneous need to wed and possess the land particularly distasteful. More to the point, I do not dispute her criticism. "Punishment" from *North* (1975), for example, is a particularly chilling conflation of desire and violence, with its emphasis that the poet's pleasure is completely derived from the dead woman's fetishized

exposure and the imagined pain of the paternalistically termed "my poor scapegoat" and "little adulteress" (ll 28, 23). The admitted "artful voyeur" figures her shaming and violent degradation as an ideological and lyrical exercise while insisting, "I almost love you" (ll 29)—the temerity of that line is unfathomable and practically deserving of some particular "tribal, intimate revenge" or at least rebuttal of its own (ll 32, 44). Indeed, as Butler Cullingford later points out over a decade later in *Ireland's Others* (2001), Ní Dhomhnaill does refute this image in her 1985 poem "*Gaineamh Shúraic*/Quicksand" (*Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta* 84-85*)*, which directly references the be-noosed, drowned bog girl of Heaney's "Punishment." However, the bog itself not as idealized earthen mate, but serves as a representation of essentialist (clap)traps or an inescapable void, especially for a woman poet.[5] In a way, as Ní Dhomhnaill's allusion implies, Heaney becomes knowingly complicit in the girl's humiliation and death because he finds it necessary to (porno)graphically detail the "numbered bones" of her corpse as part of his corpus, as object of study and desire (ln 36). My prior invocation of the otherwise clichéd "bath-" (or even more aptly,) "bog-water" is informed by Butler Cullingford's own engagement with the analogy to paradoxically maintain in opposition to her prior claim, at least regarding Mariology, that Irish artists as diverse as Heaney, Sinéad O'Connor, Neil Jordan, and Margo Harkin "do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater" (*Ireland's Others* 257), which seems to be a rather pellucid attempt on Butler Cullingford's part at having it both ways, under the auspices of "critical nationalism". To avoid such a misprision, I return to Lorde's essays closing quotations from Simone de Beauvoir: "It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting," and the words of Caliban from Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest* (1969)*:*

[5] For summary of earlier trenchant feminist critiques of Heaney both within the academy and amongst women other poets, see Butler Cullingford's *Ireland's Others* 235.

Prospero, you are the master of illusion.
Lying is your trademark.
And you have lied so much to me
(Lied about the world, lied about me)
That you have ended by imposing on me An image of myself.
Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,
That s the way you have forced me to see myself
I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!
But now I know you, you old cancer,
And I know myself as well. (qtd. Lorde 114)

Lorde insists we must know Shakespeare's version and its history as part of the work to be "active beings" capable, aware, and conversant enough with diction, style, and form to strategically reconsider both Shakespeare and Cesaire's respective points of view, just as we in Irish studies must acknowledge W.B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney's integral impacts on the field, including their Nobel Laurels, in order to question and effectively unsettle the status quo that permits their privilege. The consequence of the freedom to be and to create is that although we may not always appreciate or even abide the art of another, we should see it with eyes open and understand it within its own context so that our efforts to challenge and critique it will be as informed and intelligent as they can be. Therefore, I will argue that language, particularly minority languages; and imagery, particularly subversive images; and (re-), (dis-), and (mis-) appropriation thereof are the keys to the Master's toolbox that enable artists to disrupt the dominant symbolic order and radically destabilize delimiting conventions, tropes, and visual or verbal representations.

To do so effectively concerning "Róisín Dubh" specifically, I insist that we must first understand the conditions in which it rose (pun intended) to prominence as a cultural and touchstone. Until a profusion of translations in the nineteenth century, "Róisín Dubh" remained exclusively performed in Irish as a kind of *samizdat* to further conceal its seditious political critique against the British presence in Ireland. At the time, these translations, particularly

those by James Clarence Mangan and Pádraic Pearse, were composed with the aim of making such critiques explicit and overt. As Judith Butler has theorized regarding the singing of the American national anthem in Spanish by undocumented residents/workers or "illegal aliens": "ideas of a common language are forfeited in favor of a collectivity that comes to exercise its freedom in a language or set of languages for which difference and translation are irreducible" (Butler and Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?* 62). Music and singing thus function as a form of insurgency that necessarily involve

> …rethinking certain ideas of sensate democracy [or depending on the chronology in this case, statehood], of aesthetic articulation within the political sphere, and the relationship between song and what is called 'the public'. Surely, such singing takes place on the street, but the street is also exposed as place where those who are not free to amass [or in the case of the Irish, those whose citizenship and freedoms are restricted by colonial occupation], freely do so….At this point, the song can be understood not only as the expression of the freedom or longing for enfranchisement—though it is, clearly, both those things—but also as restaging the street, enacting freedom of assembly precisely where it is prohibited by law. (Ibid 62-63).

Though Sparling contends that Mangan "always maintained that it was in reality a love-song with an infusion, but no more, of allegorical meaning" (124), song and demonstration still operate as what Butler follows Hannah Arendt in calling the "right to rights," elaborated through social conditions of "performative politics" or the "state of the social that takes form in discourse" (Butler and Spivak, 63-65) . Mere "infusion" or not, in order to examine Joyce, Ó Cadhain, and Ní Dhomhnaill's subsequent satiric deconstructions and subversions of British colonialism, Irish nationalism, Catholicism, and patriarchy, it is necessary to first examine the famous lyric as an illustrative, translatable ür-template in the Irish conception of tribal infighting amongst the Celts ensued by resistance to British monarchical/colonial rule, that in these terms enacts or envisages freedom or "positing what is not yet there…[in an effort to] se[e] that gap [between freedom's utterance or exercise and its political realization], so that the gap can

mobilize" (Ibid 68-69).

The evolving natures and intents of these "[micro-]mobilizations of the gap" then, come to the fore within a hybridized linguistic context. Since the extent of Joyce's reading or speaking/singing fluency in Irish is debatable, despite his claim having both Irish and English on the 1901 Irish National Census. He did study Irish briefly with Pearse, but gave the lessons up because, according to Richard Ellmann, Pearse "…found it necessary to exalt Irish by denigrating English, and in particular denounced the word 'Thunder' – a favorite of Joyce's – as an example of verbal inadequacy" (*James Joyce* 61). Though Joyce may have preferred the initial and more-widely popular Mangan version,[6] he would have at least been aware of the more literal one by Pearse—whatever his objections to the author—since it was also widely disseminated amongst Revivalists at the time. Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen" (1846) is described in the table of contents of his collected *Poems* quite generously as "more or less free"—and I would clearly place the emphasis on the former.[7]

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[6] Unlike many other of his nationalist predecessors, Joyce clearly admired Mangan, using his surname with regard to beloved of the boy protagonist in "Araby" and lauding him in his first published essay, "James Clarence Mangan". As Joyce would observe of Mangan's wide-ranging *oeuvre* in that essay,

> East and West meet in that [imaginative] personality…images interweave there like soft, luminous scarves and words ring like brilliant mail, and whether the song is of Ireland or of Istambol it has the same refrain, a prayer that peace may come again to her who has lost peace, the moonwhite pearl of his soul, Ameen. (*Occasional, Critical, Political Writings* 52).

Mangan is for Joyce an imaginative internal or spiritual exile with whom he can identify and also a consciously and conspicuously transnationalized poet whose work can be situated in a global context beyond Irish nationalism or Celtic Revivalism, which is what Joyce endeavors to model in his own work. For more on an evolving dialectical as opposed to strictly oppositional approach to the Irish Revival and Irish Modernism, see Rónán McDonald's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism.*

[7] In *The Life and Writings of James Clarence Mangan* (1898), D.J. O'Donoghue points out that at first Mangan had only "the merest smattering of Irish" and "learned [the language] in a *more or less* desultory way," not undertaking serious study until 1846 and working from scholars' "*literal prose versions*" from which "he [often] followed not originals but his phantasy, and he deviated widely from the former whenever he chose to do so—which was pretty often. They are rather voluntaries on Irish themes than translations" (168, 171, emphasis mine; Ibid, emphasis original; 168). Prior to this in an 1841 edition of *The Irish Penny Journal*, Mangan published a version of "Kathaleen-ny-Houlahan" or "Caitlín Ní hUallacháin," a song traditionally (perhaps mis-)attributed to eighteenth-

As my three primary concerns are textual and historical accuracy as well as lyricism, not the latter at the expense of the other two, I will use the Pearse translation alongside the original Irish text, supplemented by my own interlinear translations and Mangan's throughout my analysis to offer a fuller grasp of the original Irish idiom which was theoretically available to Joyce, a native Dubliner; Seamus Heaney, a native of Castledown in Derry; and Paul Muldoon, who hails from just outside The Moy in Armagh, near the border of Tyrone, the latter two of whom also both claim competency in Irish—albeit as "more or less free" translators themselves—and are amongst the many Anglophone poets who have written their own respective *aislingí*. This idiom is also available to those modernizing and adapting the genre in Irish, including in the prose of Máirtín Ó Cadhain, a native speaker from Cois Fharraige, Galway, and the poetry of Ní Dhomhnaill, a British-born native speaker raised in Ventry in Kerry. "Dark Rosaleen," like many of Mangan's "translations," operates "in the inchoate space between languages, foregrounding its anxieties and reluctant to press its case too confidently, so that when it takes liberties it does so in a hyperbolic and even absurdist way" (Wheatley, *Essays on James Clarence Mangan* 45). Mangan's investment in the freeness or fluidity of the lyric's language represents a rhetorical strategy that Joyce would likewise adopt in his approach to Irish (as well as all other types of) source material throughout *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Conceptual and verbal play are inherent in both Mangan's translation and Joyce's adaptation that service the ideological agendas of each. Mangan's politics as romance and Joyce's politics as perversion can only be fully comprehended when encountering the source material not merely as flexible framework subject to the translator or author's whims and flights

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century Tipperary bard Liam Dall Ó hIfearnáin [William Heffernan the Blind]. For a further discussion of how history and iconography influenced Yeats's *Kathleen Ní Houlihan* and Maud Gonne's uncanny and covertly erotic portrayal of The Poor Old Woman, see Bernadette's Quinn's "Cathleen Ní Houlihan Writes Back: Maud Gonne and the Irish National Theater" in *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* 44-47.

of fancy, but necessarily as a text with a specific ideological agenda of its own that exists within a particular historical context in which one attends to it as (to explicitly borrow my language from the early Irish orature provided by MacCana) a "marriage", rather than "divorcing" these hermeneutical endeavors and texts.

It is paramount to note that in the original "Róisín Dubh", unlike later contemporary revisions, the voice of Róisín or Éire never speaks to her beloved,[8] who vows her salvation will soon arrive:

> *A Róisín ná bíodh brón ort fár éirigh dhuit:*
> *Tá na bráithre 'teacht thar sáile 's iad ag triall ar muir,*
> *Tiocfaidh do phárdún ón bPápa is ón Róimh anoir*
> *'S ní spárálfar fíon Spáinneach ar mo Róisín Dubh.*
> (Kinsella, *An Dúnaire* 308-311, ll 1-4)
>
> Little Rose, be not sad for all that hath behapped thee:
> The friars are coming across the sea, they march on the main.
> From the Pope shall come thy pardon, and from Rome, from the East-
> And stint not Spanish wine to my Little Dark Rose.
> (Pearse, *Collected Works: Songs of the Irish Rebels* etc. 25-27, ll 1-4*)*

The first line's exhortation, "*A Róisín ná bíodh brón ort,*" literally, "Róisín, let not sorrow be (up)on you" serves to fully embody the spirit of Éire as a woman and the pronoun structure in Irish instantiates the emotional weight of the nation's grief "*fár éirigh dhuit*"—for all that has happened to "you" in regards to both body and soul, by means of intimate address. The verb choice also suggests a certain feminine passivity for it is not an active phrase like "*rinne dhuit*"[9] in which Róisín/the nation would decidedly be an agent of or actor in her own fate. Rather, it indicates that she is perhaps a victim of circumstances beyond her control, which is supported by

[8] If one would argue that the "*ceol téad*" is emblematically Róisín's voice, then it is nonetheless articulated in a nonverbal manner, or what the Greeks refer to as *sémainon*.

[9] Which, granted, wouldn't maintain the stress pattern.

the third line's veiled reference to a hypothetical Papal Bull[10] in favor of Irish independence via a Spanish invasion, carefully couched by describing it as a "*phárdun*" or "pardon", which would be granted to individuals for personal sins as opposed to an explicit directive regarding the status of nation-states. "*Na bráithre*" is also equally deliberately ambiguous because in Old Irish it could refer to biological "brothers," as well, not solely to male members of a religious order. Especially to those untutored in the ways of allegory, this first stanza carefully comingles the personal and the political to avoid outright treason. Indeed, the subsequent pouring out of "*fion Spáinneach*" or "Spanish wine" suggests courtly decadence and revelry but also implicitly, that the Spanish royalty will spare no expense in pouring out the military retinue over the seas to liberate Éire from British oppression.

Mangan's version uses repetition and the image of an "ocean green" that simultaneously redoubles as the landscape of Ireland itself to offer benediction and to largely gloss over transnational tensions by making the first stanza's interventions strictly religious by pairing "royal Pope" and repeating "hope" (ln 5; ll 7, 10, 11). Yet, his speaker does promise that "Spanish ale" will fortify and "[s]hall glad your heart, shall give you hope,/Shall give you health, and help, and hope" (ln 7; ll 10-11). Though the priests are indeed approaching in both versions, Mangan's implies the toasts of a wedding feast as opposed to the posturing of a political foray. While some critics would argue that such an omission is precisely the point, the first stanza is indicative of Mangan's overall disregard throughout the poem of both the explicitly erotic and the explicitly ethical quagmires that the original and the Pearse translation address directly. Following the terms elucidated in Walter Benjamin's seminal discussion of translation, David

[10] This hypothetical Bull would contradict Adrian IV's infamous "Laudabiliter" of 1155 that supposedly gave Henry II dominion over Ireland. For a further discussion of this in Irish folklore, see Brian Earls's "Bulls, Blunders and Bloothers: An Examination of the Irish Bull".

Wheatley observes, "Fidelity, freedom, and flux are a combination intimately familiar to the Mangan reader. To read his translations is to realize anew the polyglot energies dormant in any language willing to swap the illusions of sovereign primacy for the vagaries of self-estrangement" (*Essays on JCM* 49). Thus, even the co-option of "Dark Rosaleen" into a central text of Irish national(ist) belonging retains the specter of uncertainty, plays on the allegoricalness of statehood and what Wheatley calls the "Babelian birthright" of poet-translator (Ibid). Mangan's translations, which his contemporary John O'Donovan referred to as "the shadow of a shade" of the original Irish (qtd. *Essays on JCM* 73), are both haunted or inflected by the past and cast that past forward into the otherwise unknown future, much like Joyce will in the figures of the "Plum Hags". A sweeping panorama is traversed by Mangan's speaker and largely overshadows a Rosaleen who remains almost purely topographical with "hills", "dales", and "sands" (ln 13; ln 49), but distinctly disembodied—save her "holy delicate white hands" and "bright face" with its "beamy smile" (ln 51; 39; 65)—and thus effectively desexualized, other than brief mention of her "emerald bowers" (ln 53), because the mapping of place onto a personified nation-state is circumvented. The fragmentation of Rosaleen's body in this way does not facilitate a smooth, untempered endorsement of a national ethos but leaves Ireland as an ambiguous phantom of national sovereignty. Whereas in the original and the Pearse translation the unity of the sensual and erotic, the geopolitical and geographical (with its emphasis on Ireland as an island to be reached "'*teacht thar sáile*"—"coming over the sea" and "*ag triall ar muir*"—"traveling by the sea"—joins the material body of an Irish woman to the bio-topographical Irish body politic in a more deliberate sense that pervades throughout the original lyric.

The harmonious interplay of all these aspects is continued in the second stanza, which

further surveys the landscape:

> *Is fada an réim a lig mé léi ó inné 'dtí inniu,*
> *Trasna sléibhte go ndeachas léi, faoi sheolta ar muir;*
> *An Éirne is chaith mé 'léim í, cé gur mór é an sruth; '*
> *Is mar ceol téad ar gach taobh díom is mo Róisín Dubh.* (Kinsella ll 5-8)
>
> Long the journey that I made with her from yesterday till today,
> Over mountains did I go with her, under the sails upon the sea,
> The Erne[11] I passed by leaping, though wide the flood,
> And there was string music on each side of me and my Little Dark Rose!
> (Pearse ll 5-8)

The speaker's contention "*Is fada an réim*" or literally, "long is the course" he has travelled, coupled with the invocation of "*inné 'dtí inniu*"—"from yesterday until today," shows the lover's devotion and constancy to the cause. He has been consistently wooing and pursuing his beloved and her best interests "*trasna sléibhte*"—"across mountains"—and "*faoi sheolta ar muir*"—"by sailing the sea." This line serves to span the breadth and length of Ireland, from the coast to the mountains. It highlights the wandering nature of the speaker, whose only fixed abode is beside his Róisín. Her link to the Erne further connects the figure to the goddess Ériu/Éire, who as embodiment of the nation from which Ireland takes its name, exists (without paradox) on "*gach taobh*"—"every side" of the river, which—empowered by want of Róisín's affections—the speaker can leap in a single, stupendous, miraculous and otherwise physically impossible bound, as as the Erne is approximately 50 meters or 165 feet wide. The stress on "*léi*"—"with her"— in

[11] For more on the etymological and mythological resonances of the River Erne and its eponymous lakes as connected to the goddess Ériu, see William Fredrick Wakeman's *Lough Erne, Enniskillen, Belleek, Ballyshannon, and Bundoran* (1870), T.F. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), and William J. Rouston's essay in *Fermanagh: History and Society* (2004). In the ancient texts of the *Cath Maighe Tuireadh*/*Battle(s) of Moytura*, Lough Erne is cited as one of twelve chief *lochs* of Ireland. *Cath Maighe Tuireadh* was also loosely translated into "Kiltartanese" by Lady Augusta Gregory in her work *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904). "Kiltartanese" refers to Lady Gregory's particular version of Hiberno-English—supposedly achieved by writing mythic Irish tales in French, translating them into English, then having the English translated into Irish, and ultimately, translating the Irish back into English—used throughout her various folklore "collections". Gregory's convoluted language is ridiculed and heavily parodied in the "Scylla and Charybdis" and the "Cyclops" episodes of *Ulysses*, which is set in 1904 at the height of the Celtic Revival during which she produced most of her works.

the fourth and fifth lines as well as the stress on sound alike "*'léim*"—links the lover's leap euphonically as well as visually with its cause, Róisín**,** as the words are only a single letter apart. The Erne draws us to a specific location, this case in Ulster, to underscore the significance of particular geography in the poem. The stunning topography of natural vistas entices and inspires. Róisín remains on the air like "ceol téad" or "stringed music" and like a harpsong, beckons the speaker to her.

While Mangan and his Rosaleen have no music other than the poem's iambic pentameter, MacCana notes that in earlier tales like *Mis and Dub Ruis*, harpsong plays an integral part in soothing savage Mis/Éire who has gone raving and turned wild and violent at the death of her father, King Dáire Dóidgheal, and the sanity of Mis is only restored upon sexual union with Dub Ruis, the rightful heir who brings the princess back to her humanity with his music, food, and comfort (370-381). This is the exact legend Ní Dhomhnaill cites in her *Selected Essays* as of integral import to her poetic project of communing with her mutable hag muse. Her re-telling emphasizes Dub[h]'s musical "playing" as a sexual metaphor that is combined with the implicit masturbatory "playing" through exposition of his genitalia (80-82). The alliance of body as instrument and essence as sound once again emphasizes Róisín's feminine passivity, implying that she awaits being "played" by the appropriate musician. It subtly alludes to the import of rightful sexual union that is figured more explicitly later in the poem.

But as one would expect from the tempting lure of any siren song, there are troublesome consequences:

> *Mhairbh tú mé, a bhradóg, is nárbh fhearrde dhuit,*
> *Is go bhfuil m'anam istigh i ngean ort 's ní inné ná inniu;*
> *D'fhág tú lag anbhfann mé i ngné is i gcruth-*
> *Ná feall orm is mé i ngean ort, a Róisín Dubh.* (Kinsella ll 9-12)

> Thou hast slain me, O my bride, and may it serve thee no whit,
> For the soul within me loveth thee, not since yesterday nor today,
> Thou has left me weak and broken in mien and in shape,
> Betray me not who love thee, my Little Dark Rose! (Pearse ll 9-12)

The insulting address "*a bhradóg*," which Dinneen translates very primly as a "pert young girl" but is generally used as the equivalent of, in modern parlance, "uppity bitch", implies that Róisín is wily and willful, fickle and fey, manipulative and malicious for possibly spurning or at least teasing and testing the speaker. This is a far cry from Pearse's "bride," which is not only a good euphonic substitution but a little in-joke for those who have enough Irish to know the difference. Mangan elides this point almost completely by calling "Rosaleen," "my Queen," "my life of life," and "saint of saints" to emphasize her inviolate sanctity (ll 30-31) . A hard word is not spoken against his speaker's beloved—or at least remains untranslated as such. Furthermore, Mangan's translations only have loose correspondence with the standard version of the original Irish text. Thus, his translation fully supports Halladay's contention that there was only a passing "infusion" of allegory in the original because the political turmoil becomes almost completely subsumed and even obliterated by his efforts to maintain his A-B-A-B etc. rhyme scheme and keep the passionate fervor at maximum pitch while letting fidelity—at least as it pertains to the text itself—become almost irrelevant.

With his assertion, "*Mhairbh tú mé*"— "You have driven me mad or murdered me," the original poet acknowledges yet again, that the course of true love is winding, like the course of the Erne itself from the mountains of Sliabh gCleath in Cavan through the lakes of Fermanagh to the sea in Donegal, though the speaker's very soul has pined for her "*ní inné ná inniu*"—"not yesterday nor today" but for always. This assertion alludes to the difficulties of maintaining allegiance in the face of repeated defeats and continuing political turmoil. R.A. Breatnach poetically provides historical context of the period by insisting that the genre offers aspirational

verses that dream of liberation by either the Old or Young Pretender, depending on their date of composition: "In the darkness of that century, the only light that flickered in Gaelic Ireland was the forlorn hope that the Catholic House of Stuart would be restored, as one of the later poets put it, 'to the stewardship [arguably the play on "Stuart-ship" is intended] of the Three Kingdoms" (321). Indeed, the speaker appears enraptured by Róisín since time immemorial. The repetition of "*inné*" and "*inniu*" once again underscores the constancy of his regard for her and the speaker's willingness to go to any lengths to win and win victory for his beloved.

His eternal passion is further affirmed in the next stanza, when the speaker insists:

Shiúlfainn féin an drúcht leat is fásaigh ghoirt,
Mar shúil go bhfaighinn rún uait nó páirt dem thoil.
A chraoibhín chumhra, gheallais domhsa go raibh grá agat dom -
'S gurb í plúrscoth na Mumhan í, mo Róisín Dubh. (Kinsella ll 13-16)

I would walk the dew with thee and the meadowy wastes,
In hope of getting love from thee, or part of my will,
Fragrant branch, thou didst promise me that thou hadst for me love-
And sure the flower of all Munster is Little Dark Rose! (Pearse ll 13-16)

"*Shiúlfainn féin an drúcht leat is fásaigh ghoirt*"—"I would walk the dew with you and the brackish wastes." The almost-but-not-quite pair of homophones "*shiúlfainn*"—walk— and "*shúil*"—literally "eye," but idiomatically "hope," provides a euphonic context as both are stressed for the linkage of the auditory (hence stress), the ambulatory or experiential, the visual, and the potential or dreamed of vision of Ireland. In my reading, the *aislingí* or "vision(-quest)" poems as a genre are illustrative of what Susan Stewart describes in her book as poetry that is inextricably linked to "*the Fate of the Senses*" (2005). Daniel Corkery's perhaps overblown and romantic descriptions of *savant* wandering poets and auto-didact peasant geriatrics amid "smoke-

filled cabin[s]" may be essentializing and fanciful idealizations (136),[12] but his hyperbole in *The Hidden Ireland* portrays a milieu that better enables us to appreciate the richness and the materiality of the language with its multiple meanings and its wealth of images.

The speaker's perception of place in "Róisín Dubh" is both sensual and imaginative, with the latter entirely dependent upon the former. I would argue that the topographic particularities of the nation, of specific and intimate spaces, provide the foundational context upon which the speaker bases his affections. "Róisín Dubh" is a love lyric to the mutable and contrary landscape of Ireland itself in all its variety, a landscape which, despite disputes over tribal superiority and later imperial occupation or "ownership," nevertheless[13] fundamentally belongs—with an emphasis on the *longing* in this case—to the people who inhabit it. Through thick or thin, dewy paradise or barren wilderness, the speaker remains faithful, despite the fact that "*d'fhág [Róisín] lag anbhann [sé] i ngné is i gcruth*"—"[Róisín] abandoned [him], weak and dismayed in aspect and appearance." The commonplace "*i ngné is i gcruth*" implies both the physical expression of

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[12] In this vein, Brian Friel's play, *Translations* (1980), charts the complications of British officials endeavoring to accurately map, Anglicize, and essentially rename *Baile Beag*/Ballybeg [literally in Irish, "Small Townland or Village"], a fictional Donegal village, based on the real one of Glenties, and its surrounding areas during the Ordinance Survey of the mid-nineteenth century, offering a fittingly Corkerian commentary on the great linguistic variety and abundant wealth of associations in Irish-language place-names. Hugh, the hedgerow schoolmaster, explains Irish as: "…A rich language. A rich literature. You'll find, sir, that certain cultures expend on their vocabularies and syntax acquisitive energies and ostentations entirely lacking in their material lives. I suppose you could call us a spiritual people" (50). Declan Kiberd later reiterates this concept and its consequences in the context of Richard Ellmann's positivist positions on *Ulysses*, "Ellmann was shrewd enough to notice the contrast, pervasive in Irish literature, between the richness of a person's private thoughts and the actual poverty of the social setting: and he knew the act of compensation for what it was, an attempt to find spaciousness impossible in the world. But it never seems to have occurred to him that such a richness comes at an awesome cost" (*The Irish Writer and the World* 239). The cost is equally dear in Friel's play, with the possibility of individual violence against the mysteriously-vanished Lt. Yolland that engenders the threat of far-reaching recriminations including cattle slaughter and evictions by the British Army, as well as a counter-attack against the lame Manus who is widely considered to be the perpetrator as he witnessed a forbidden kiss between Máire, his beloved, and Yolland. For an interesting discussion of *Finnegans Wake* and *Translations* in the context of imaginative (post)colonial cartographies, see Christy Burns's essay in *Joyce, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism.*

[13] And perhaps all the more so because of the infamous Penal Laws that banned the owning of property by non-Anglicans throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century until the Catholic Relief Acts of 1771, 1778, and 1793 and anger over the slow pace of reform lead to the failed 1798 Rebellion.

displeasure and an emotional spirit of discontent.

Mangan, meanwhile, is fixated on floods of feeling of "woe and pain, pain and woe" (ln 37) to rival the literal floods and assurances of Rosaleen/Éire's regal position upon a burnished "golden throne" from which she will "reign alone", none of which appear in the Irish version. The commodification of Rosaleen further divests her of a body, and the geographical and physical resonances in Mangan's translation function as a lyrical land survey that robs Ireland of her authority even as it ostensibly seeks to instantiate it.[14] By vacillating between the speaker's own emotional reactions and sensory responses and depicting a fantastic, phantomized land of "emerald bowers" as opposed to the visceral progression charted in the original and in the Pearse translation (ln 53), Mangan fashions an ephemeral and airy Éire whose lack of a concrete presence contributes to the speaker's "unrest" (ln 25), as well as implying a state of political ambiguity that will become central to Joyce's later understanding of the state of the soon-to-be Free State.

Furthermore, despite the fact that Mangan's speaker does get in a line about "ploughing the high hills" (ln 62), it is of course, prefaced by the conditional "could" and the speaker's anxious variation between the modal auxiliaries comparing the possible "could" of his actions in the future (as in possessing the capability but not committing to act) with the certain "would" that indicate the ostensibly certain results of Rosaleen's actions. Unlike Pearse's repeated use of "would" (as in the implied optative sense, "I would if I could") throughout his translation, the irresolute nature of Mangan's speaker's devotion beyond merely the visionary context that qualifies the unreal conditional of the original text. In reifying the nation only as an imaginative

[14] This is in sharp contrast to the "natural treasures" and "organic wealth" of the male lover in Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Oileán*/Island" discussed in Chapter 2.

or allegorical construct, Mangan figures Rosaleen as an ideal that although she will neither "fade" nor "die" until "The Judgment Hour is nigh", remains unattainable in life (ll 82-83). While all the versions and translations of "Róisín Dubh" did in fact serve as rallying cry for thousands of Irish nationalists, Pearse included, to sacrifice themselves on the altar of their imagined country with "gun-peal and slogan-cry" (ln 77), for Mangan, at least, Ireland's autonomy is always already the dream deferred.

In the original and the Pearse translation, despite his feelings of abandonment, the geographical realities of the countryside contribute to the speaker's abiding love for Róisín and thus, it is only through traversing that countryside that the speaker can fully figure the depth of his desire. It melts his defenses and soothes his fleeting disappointment. He compares Róisín to its features by calling her a "*a chraoibhín chumhra*" (little perfumed branch), and she, as in the earlier comparison to "stringed music" seems to linger as a sweet, delicate fragrance in the very air of Éire. The scent seduces and befuddles and may also be an allusion to the idiom "*ag dul le craobhacha*"—to go wild or mad. Trees, also used historically in the casting of lots and the divining of fates, are evidently heady stuff—in a symbolo-somatic synecdoche,[15] the branches could be her lithe and elegant limbs and the trunk her torso. "Little Sweet Branch"[16] is the same appellation Joyce will mock repeatedly throughout the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses* with its society column crammed full of floral and arboreal weddings as well as its lengthy mock epic pastoral. Furthermore, the pub's stand in-for the wandering bard is Garryowen or Owen Garry, a

[15] My use of the term here is informed by de Certeau's theories of synecdochal versus asyndentonical spatial representations in *The Practice of Every Day Life.*

[16] This is no doubt a translated play on *Craoibhín Aoibhinn*/The Delightful Little Branch, which is the *nom de plume* of the enormously popular cultural nationalist, Douglas Hyde: Revivalist, scholar, and author, founder of *Conradh na Gaeilge*/The Gaelic League, which was founded for the promotion of the Irish language and culture. Hyde was an acquaintance of Pearse, the Yeats circle, as well as many other Irish artists, and eventually the first President of the Republic of Ireland in 1937.

snappish setter, who nips at the heels of pontificating drunken nationalists and a decidedly unwelcome Leopold Bloom, also known as Henry Flower—in spite of both his surname and his *nom de plume* being suitable to these recurrent dendrophilic motifs. For someone who countless scholars would argue had little to no Irish whatsoever, Joyce certainly knew at least enough as a result of the culture of the Revival to undertake what I can only describe at the least as "fake it until you make it" passable imitation of the verb-heavy and adjective-laden descriptions found in many of the Fenian tales.

Pearse's translation of "Róisín Dubh" extends this tree/floral comparison even further by insisting his beloved is, "*plúrscoth na Mumhan*"—the choicest flour—which he renders as "flower"—of Munster, another pun on her name and the Rose as a symbol of Ireland. Munster, the southernmost of the Irish provinces, when combined with the previous reference to Ulster, the northernmost province, shows that the speaker is endeavoring to portray Ireland *in toto* from "*suas*"—"top" to "*síos*"—"bottom." The movement reflects the speaker's progression down Róisín's metaphorical body from stem to stern, an exhaustive and according to the subsequent stanza, evidently exhausting traversal. "*Plúr*" originally invokes the other kind of "flour," which could depict her ivory complexion and relate Róisín to the nourishing staple sustenance of the simple Irish diet: bread.

Fr. Dinneen also translates "*plúr*" as "manna," which would suggest she provides spiritual succor as well, which prefigures Róisín's supplantation of the Gospel in the following stanza:

> *Dá mbeadh seisreach agam threabhfainn in aghaidh na gcnoc,*
> *is dhéanfainn soiscéal i lár an aifrinn do mo Róisín Dubh,*
> *bhéarfainn póg don chailín óg a bhéarfadh a hóighe dhom,*
> *is dhéanfainn cleas ar chúl an leasa le mo Róisín Dubh.* (Kinsella ll 17-20)

> Had I a yoke of horses I would plough against the hills,
> In middle-Mass I'd make a gospel of my Little Dark Rose,
> I'd give a kiss to the young girl that would give her mouth to me,
> And behind the lios would lie embracing my Little Dark Rose! (Pearse ll 17-20)

The speaker, using an unreal conditional "*dá*" as opposed to "*má*" in order to highlight the improbable status of the fantasy, imagines the Herculean effort of plowing against the hills, but also perhaps provides a metaphor for arduous sexual conquest in keeping with the character of the rest of the verses, which represents the climax (pun intended) of the union of the erotic and the political. Love for Róisín supplants the Word of God in the Mass. She stands in for the center of the ceremony, and if one agrees with a Dinneenian translation of the prior stanza's "*plúrscoth*," possibly the latent sacrament itself. On the surface, erotic ecstasy heretically trumps religious ecstasy, but for the purposes of allegory, patriotic fervor trumps or rather, subsumes them both.

The physicality of the speaker's proleptic sexual connection with the chaste and pure spirit of the nation prefigures the sexual/political dynamic in the later works of Joyce and the contemporary writers. The speaker's focus on virginity emphasizes the inviolate status of Ireland despite her domination by Britain. Joyce will later mock this by making the Plum Hags not "*cailini óga*" (young women) but ancient "vestals" in the manner of other figures Yeats also essentially co-opted from the Jacobite *aislingí*, including *Kathleen Ní Houlihan* (sic, 1902), and the young and beautiful heroine of *The Countess Kathleen* (sic, 1890, 1895, 1899, 1907, 1912), who is more clearly aligned with a Great-Famine-era version of the *spéirbhean*.[17] However,

[17] There was considerable condemnation by Catholics and a minor public incident at the first performance of Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* (1899) because its eponymous heroine heretically sells her soul to the Devil to save Irish peasants during a period of famine and then ascends to heaven upon her death as a reward for her altruism. The furor is featured in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) which, since its protagonist is Stephen Dedalus, is similarly preoccupied with Catholicism, nationalism, British imperialism, the nature and intentions of Revivalism with regard to Irish history as well as culture, and the occasional benefits and preponderance of detriments regarding each of these overlapping, oft-conflicting ideologies, all of which remains of great concern to

Joyce's Hags are perhaps not so pure after all.

Daniel Corkery contends that the poverty of the eighteenth century lead to an emphasis on "more intimate arts, such as poetry and music":

> …when material conditions are harder, when life is bitter, starved and harassed with care, when the opportunity of outside development is withheld, then the spirit is forced back upon itself, and its external need of happiness drives it to other outlets: its expression of beauty is changed, and takes a less external character, and it seeks refuge in the more intimate arts, such as poetry and music. (127)

The operative word in reference to "Róisín Dubh" and to this stanza in particular is "intimate"—in terms of staging a monologue to one's nation as a deeply personal communiqué to and fantasy of the beloved and transforming the external world into the emotional nexus and individual erotic tableau of that encounter with the object of the speaker's desire, a desire given human but also specifically topographic form. Like many *aislingí,*[18] "Róisín Dubh" uses sexual congress to validate masculine authority to rule and to establish a rightful heir in Éire. Breatnach emphasizes the sacredness and implicit divinity of the espousement from medieval annals through the politicization of these poems in the Jacobite period:

Dedalus in *Ulysses*. The later editions of *The Countess Cathleen* standardize the alliterative spelling of its heroine's name, and Yeats would make many significant revisions over time, including eventually excising the song/poem, "Who Goes with Fergus?", which is chanted by Buck Mulligan in the "Telemachus" episode and recalled by Stephen in "Proteus" and "Circe". Joyce collaborated with Nicolò Vidacovich on an unpublished Italian translation of *The Countess Cathleen* while in Trieste, but Yeats refused to authorize it because they chose to adapt an earlier version of the play, instead of the 1912 edition. *The Countess Cathleen* was dedicated to Maud Gonne, who also originated the starring role of The Poor Old Woman in *Kathleen Ní Houlihan.*

[18] Compare "Róisín Dubh" with Aodhgán Ó Rathaille's *aisling* "*Gile na Gile*/Brigher than Bright" where the fair maiden/spirit of Éire is not united with her rightful Stuart mate but instead seized "*ag adharcach foireann dubh mioscaiseach coirbeach buí*" (Kinsella 150 ll 34)—"by that horned, black, malicious, hump-backed orange band. The *buí* here could mean "yellow" as in cowardly, but particularly in light of its linkage with "adharcach" or horned (with a further connotation of both the horns of the devil and the horns of the cuckolded King George I) suggests that she has been unwillingly enthralled by the Orangemen, emblems of John Bull or Seán Buí. The spirit of Éire then cannot exist autonomously on her own but must be part of a fated coupling that will either destroy or restore her. In this instance, it is clearly rape as opposed to willing and joyful union in "Róisín Dubh". James Clarence Mangan published perhaps the most famous translation of "*Gile na Gile*", but other versions include Brendan Kennelly's "Brightness of Brightness" in *The Penguin Book of Irish Verse*, Michael Hartnett's "Silver of Silver", and Seamus Heaney translation as "The Glamoring" in Vol. 4 of the *Field Day Anthology* and as "The Glamoured" in the September 1998 *Index on Censorship*.

> We cannot know to what extent they appreciated it, but it is not going too far to suggest that they were dimly conscious of the enactment in their presence [at the *bainnis* or metaphorical depiction of said *bainnis*] of a rite hallowed by immemorial tradition: the mystical wedding of a king to his territory….Just as the *spéirbhean* is an idealized female abstraction symbolizing Ireland, so the Stuart, her mate, is no more [or no less] than the symbol of her deliverance: the '*spéir-fhear,*' the *deus ex machina*, the Hero, who like his counterpart in the fairy-tale shall with his kiss awaken her from her enchanted sleep of misery. (328, 322)

Both the king and the lady or goddess in Breatnach's terms, the duality of male and female, are necessary for righteous concupiscence. The female-perspective as counterpoint to a Jacobite lyric of longing like "Rósín Dubh" would be the equally enduringly popular macaronic song, "Siúil a Rún" with its Irish choruses in which a woman beseeches her beloved—"*Siúil, siúil, siúil a rún/Siúil go socair agus siúil go ciúin/Siúil go doras agus éalaigh liom/Is go dté tú mo mhúirnín slán*"—"Go, go, go my dear/Go quietly and peacefully/Go to the door and flee with me/And may you go safely my dear"—just as several variations of its English verses champion his inevitable return from exile in France with Breatnach's "*spéir-fhear"*—the rightful king, i.e. Bonnie Prince Charlie.

If the poetry in Corkery's estimation, offers a psychological refuge, "Róisín Dubh" itself depicts that refuge in material terms by directing us to "*an leasa,*" a genitive of *lios*,[19] which refers to a walled enclosure to protect cattle but also possibly a fairy raft. Ní Dhomhnaill herself has spoken extensively on the *lios* as a form of deep psycho-geography:

> My attitude is that the *lios* is not there at all. It's within, part of the subconscious, which generally you can't get into, and poetry is bringing stuff from the other world into this world. Anything that comes from there will be imbued with an extraordinary charge, a luminous quality that will make it jump off the page.
> (qtd. Haberstroh 193)

[19] MacCana points out that that the *lios* also features prominently in *Mór Muman ocus Aided Cuabach meic Ailchine*, a medieval kingship allegory and I would argue, cultural precursor of the *aislingí*. The difference being that it is Mór/Éire and not her lover who wildly leaps (78-90).

Thus, the liminal space figures and affords reflection and privacy, hinting at once at mythic magic as well as additional erotic innuendo beneath the surface, with the double entendre of *cleas* or "trick," which Joyce will fully exploit in the "Aeolus" episode.

And in the supreme trick of the lyric's progression within a psycho-geographical or visionary context, the mood abruptly shifts from one of pleasurable play to apprehensive (and theoretically deadly) premonition:

> *Beidh an Éirne 'na tuiltibh tréana is réabfar cnoic,*
> *Beidh an fharraige 'na tonnta dearga is doirtfear fuil,*
> *Beidh gach gleann sléibhe ar fud éireann is móinte ar crith,*
> *Lá éigin sul a n-éagfaidh mo Róisín Dubh.* (Kinsella ll 21-24)
>
> The Erne shall rise in rude torrents, hills shall be rent,
> The sea shall roll in red waves, and blood be poured out,
> Every mountain glen in Ireland, and the bogs shall quake.
> Some day ere shall perish my Little Dark Rose! (Pearse ll 21-24)

In the final stanza, the tense shifts from the purely hypothetical, irreal conditional to the prophetic future tense with the repetition of "*Beidh*." The speaker predicts that the cherished topography of the hills, the rivers, and the sea shall be violently transfigured to an infernal hellscape. "*Tonnta dearga*," describes waves that are not only literally red and but also metaphorically, "red with [divine] anger" and upheaval as the Earth itself trembles from glen to bog.

The ambiguous close to the lyric may suggest that Apocalypse will come before Róisín perishes, meaning that she endures in spite of all the trials and tribulations of conquest and liberation—an interpretation favored by both the Ó Tuama/Kinsella and the above Pearse translations— or alternatively and more pessimistically, that the Apocalypse itself will be a presage and a consequence of the perhaps futile but necessary struggle for national independence when the sky and the sea will run red with the blood of Irish martyrs. As Declan Kiberd

suggests, Pearse and the other revolutionaries "were not nostalgists...but seekers of an alternative form of modernisation—what Ashis Nandy, the Indian social psychologist would now call 'critical traditionalists'" (*The Life and After-Lives of P.H. Pearse* 79). Kiberd considers Pearse's repeated use of figures such as Cúchulainn, St. Colmcille, Robert Emmet—and I would obviously add to them the feminine figure of Róisín Dubh—function as "known vessels into which the future might be poured" (Ibid), thus reiterating the significance of bilingual education as well as syncretic Christianity in Pearse's own *oeuvre*, pedagogical practices, and revolutionary activities. The veiled and thus all the more compelling, eschatological call to arms in "Róisín Dubh" made it a natural feature of Irish nationalist propaganda in both verse and song throughout Irish history.

Róisín Higgins also notes that Pearse's sacrifice as part of the Rising took on a mythic power that largely transcends his personal life, and "could easily be translated into epic grandeur using the cultural markers of Celtic mythology and Christian tradition. He became a figure who embodied the nation and its culture: a figure who died so these things might live" (*The Life and After-Lives of P.H. Pearse* 129), which further situates his translations of Early Irish material in the development of his iconic legacy within Irish history and state-building, also evident in the Proclamation of the Republic, a position that has not gone unchallenged within political, academic, and aesthetic discourse in the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In the tradition of the work of Joe Cleary, Róisín Ní Ghairbhí insists that Pearse's own works recognize "an inherent tension between political economy [i.e. capitalist modernity] and the alternative worldview of native Gaelic culture [that] provided the main challenge for those seeking a revival of Gaelic culture" (*The Life and After-Lives of P.H. Pearse* 158). Ní Ghairbhí emphasizes that Pearse's *oeuvre* employs earlier literature and mythemes in a way that "avoid[s]

pastiche" (Ibid 160) and establishes the import of texts like "Róisín Dubh" and other works often drawn from the traditions of orature and music from Pearse's mother's family and his engagement with what Ní Ghairbhí accurately characterizes as the largely marginalized and "subaltern" Irish-speaking community. Pearse's works were not merely in service of expanding the Irish-language canon but the Anglo-Irish one through translation. Translation and adaptation thus become revolutionary acts of indigenous modernity, acts that would be repurposed, echoed, and subverted throughout the works of the later writers I address. Inasmuch as they may be influenced by Pearse, Joyce and the other authors, to a certain extent, share the ambivalence of Mangan in writing works that may equivocate or refute the "known" nature of the various ideological "vessels" of indigenous modernity by adopting a glib, dubious, maudlin, if not openly contemptuous approach with regard to their cultural and political efficaciousness in an uncertain future. Therefore, exploring the textual, iconographic, linguistic, and spatial signifiers that serve as markers or vessels of Irish indigenous (or diasporic) modernity—including contentions of the hollowness or radical insufficiency of those vessels alongside individual artists' respective endeavors to refill, reshape, adapt, or imbue them with different intents and intensities—is paramount not only throughout this chapter, but the work as a whole.

II. No "Land of Milk and Money": Laughingly Lascivious Re-"Visions"

"Róisín Dubh" offers a foundational map of Éire, which further hearkens back to an even earlier Irish tradition, in response to which later writers would chart their own literary cartographies; its doom and gloom—or at the least ominously foreboding—conclusion was ripe

for riposte,[20] in the fashion of poet Brian Merriman undertook in his *tromluí*[21] or nightmare version of an *aisling*, the bawdy and uproarious masterpiece of Irish-language comedic orature, *Cúirt An Mheán Oíche/The Midnight Court* (1780). A recent trend in postcolonial scholarship has been to replace a close reading of aesthetics in favor of the application of politics and economics. I argue in this case that one cannot be achieved without the other. In addition to the historical conditions of production, a careful attention to and analysis of Joyce's deliberate deployment of specific rhetorical strategies, innovative language that crosses borders, and particular symbolic motifs opens up emerging signs of colony and resistance in *Ulysses* (1922). Of course, for the reading of Joyce, the very concept of a "post-"colonial Ireland is inherently problematic, because Ireland had not yet achieved independence at the time he was writing the

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[20] Ciarán Carson also explicitly plays on the revolutionary status of "Róisín Dubh" or "Dark Rosaleen" in noting that "Black Rose" is now a name for particularly potent strain of cross-bred cannabis,

> And I entertained the notion, or it entertained me, that Mangan's Dark Rosaleen might not only be a dream embodiment of Ireland, the famous *spéirbhean* or Skywoman, the Evening Star—a version of Astarte, goddess of fertility, sexuality, and war—but a code-name for the *aisling*-enabling drug that was opium….*aisling* [functions] as a liminal zone between worlds and between languages, a place of exchange, translation, alterity and revolution. I made up a fanciful etymology for *aisling*: from *ais*, a verge, side or back, the zone at one's back, the back of the mind, a personal hinterland; and *ling*, to leap or to spring; hence *aisling*, the *ais* that is sprung on one [in the form of a vision] or into which one springs; a fount of inspiration. (*Essays on JCM* 222)

[21] Literally "an oppressive lay", and I mean it not only in terms of somnolence but sexuality. *Cúirt An Mheán Oíche/The Midnight Court*, stages a terrific (in both the sense of grand, thrilling spectacle and profound fear) dream-dispute of the sexes argued in the manner of a tripartite Brehon law debate. The mortal Irish women of the poet's vision are all desperate, wanton harridans who wish to successfully persecute—or rather, prosecute— single men over the age of twenty-one who refuse to marry them, with corporal punishment. They proceed as per the judgment of Aoibheal, Queen of the *Sídhe*, who has taken it upon herself to redress the corruption caused Anglo-Irish landlords and their unjust laws. After many and varied ad hominem attacks about the sluttish behavior of women and the dissatisfaction of men with marriage as an outmoded institution. The men instead propose that marriage be abolished in favor of free love, so as to prevent their so-called inability to satisfy their wives, and the poet himself is eventually exposed as a thirty-year-old bachelor by his frustrated would-be intended. The poet's not-quite fiancée then incites a monstrous regiment of women to flog him accordingly, until mercifully, he awakens relieved to discover it was only a nightmare. The *Cumann Merriman* was founded in 1967 to promote the poet's work and traditional Irish culture and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill studied at their annual Winter School. The trustees also run an annual Summer School.

novel nor during its initial partial serial publication in *The Little Review* from 1918 to 1921.[22]

Thus, the remainder of this chapter endeavors to examine Joyce and the later authors' manipulation of the stock figures of "*an cailleach"* or "*an tseanbhean bhocht*" and their counterpart "*an spéirbhean,*" in order to critique the imagers' historical role as emblems of Ireland established by both Early Irish literature and orature as well as the *aisling* genre. As I have shown, the pairing of the hag and the sky-woman have both been integral cultural emblems of Irish sovereignty pre-dating the Jacobite period, pervasive throughout song, verse, stage, and iconography. These images can also serve to limn feminine subjectivity and represent resistance to oppression—be it colonial, nationalist, Catholic, masculinist or any combination of thereof—in a decolonizing Ireland—an Ireland I would insist is still very much *in medias res* in terms of psychologically decolonizing today as evidenced by this continued, pervasive obsession with these particular icons and their at times unsettled history.

In the introduction to their appositely-titled essay collection, *Semicolonial Joyce*, Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes discuss the various issues regarding the historical ambiguity precariousness concerning an precise chronology for the terms "colonial", "imperial", "postcolonial" in relation to Ireland. For my, and I would argue Joyce's ends, as Attridge and Howes suggest, the exact time of the commencement of colonialism (or imperialism—whether internal or archipelagic or not) is not as relevant as the fact that the culture of imperial rule had been the norm in Ireland for at minimum five centuries by the time Joyce was writing. The end of the socioeconomic and

[22] *Ulysses* was written between 1914 and 1921 and it first appeared in *The Little Review* in New York during a time which includes with regard to Irish history the Easter Rising of 1916, the establishment of the secessionist *Sinn Féin Dáil* in 1918, the "guerilla" Irish War of Independence from 1919-1921. The editors of *The Little Review,* Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap were convicted of circulating obscene materials at trial, compelled to pay a $100 fine, and ordered to cease publication of the novel. (*The Little Review* version of *Ulysses* ends with the Nausicaa episode.) *Ulysses* was published as a whole by Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare & Co. in Paris in 1922, one month prior to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty that officially marked Ireland's status as a Free State. *Ulysses* was also first pirated in America, in Samuel Roth's *Two Worlds Monthly* from July 1926 to September 1927.

cultural effects resulting from the continuing the specter of occupation—especially at the time of *Ulysses'* composition—is debatable. The end of imperialism in Britain and Ireland is debatable even and especially now in light of the lingering and renewed Troubles in the North as well as the current failed movement for Scottish independence.

Furthermore, it is essential to address another *post*-term, the postmodern and its relationship to modernism. Rather than get bogged down in a superfluous terminological debate, I will simply concur with Vicki Mahaffey's assessment that the erroneous concept of a single, "ideologically unified Modernism" with-a-capital-"M" often neglects to consider what Mahaffey recognizes as the various forms of disenfranchisement experienced by writers in colonial as well as other contexts and the variety of subaltern sexual and political identities of those who struggled with and supported "men with aristocratic, fascist, or misogynist leanings to envision possible new orders that might be assembled from the shards of cultural collapse" ("Heirs of Yeats" 102).[23] She insists that we remember what Eavan Boland has elsewhere called the "wounded history" of political violence that is still ongoing at the moment and the diverse variety of traumatized perspectives and "volatile responses such a history provokes" (Ibid). As such, I am interested in multiplicitous historically and culturally sensitive (post)modernisms—much like the intersectional feminist discourses espoused by Lorde and others—specifically how later writers like Ó Cadhain, Heaney, Muldoon, and Ní Dhomhnaill are all writing both within and against Irish conventions of the hag and the sky-woman. For the sake of expediency, I will continue to use both terms, despite their ambiguities, since in my reading of the "Aeolus" episode, Joyce and Stephen Dedalus are using the Plum Hags aspirationally and comedically to

[23] For an interesting reading of Irish modernism in relation to the emergence of global "world" literatures, see Michael Valdez Moses's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* (2015).

imagine Dublin as a postmodern postcolonial metropole, or at least endeavoring to negotiate it as a supposedly-modern urban space, while simultaneously acknowledging its problematic status as a *semicolonial* backwater.

What Stephen Dedalus temporarily recognizes in the "two Dublin vestals" of his *Parable of the Plums* is their unexpected, overripe, fecund wisdom, which challenges the social order and endeavors to topple the phallic column of Nelson and his colonial oppression (Joyce *U* 7.923). Joyce's hidden pun is that these are figurative "prunes" eating plums. The latent term is doubly allusive to both the proverbial "dried up, old prunes" that these women have become and Early Modern slang for testicle, and as such, traditional emblem of the lusty bawd. In the Renaissance, a dish of stewed prunes was believed to be a cure for syphilis and thus commonly kept in the windows of houses of ill-repute during the period, referenced in dramas such as Lodge's *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madnesse,* and Shakespeare's comedies, *Measure for Measure* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Thomas, "Prunes"). The caustic, laxative prune, later vilified by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1928), insinuates these bold seed-spitters are not quite as virginal as Stephen's initial description suggests. In either respect, there would presumably be frustrated conception. In the first sense, the crone women would be well beyond child-bearing, and in the second—sex with a whore, however old—there is the implication of prophylactics like the French letter in Leopold Bloom's possession throughout 16 June 1904 and its use—whether real or imagined—with definite prostitutes—whether real or imagined— Bella/Bello Cohen, Zoe, and Florry in the "Circe" episode. The Plum Hags own potential status as prostitutes is further confirmed when Myles Crawford refers to them as "two old trickies" and Stephen describes their immodest habit of "pull[ing] up their skirts," so that theoretically any spectator beneath the pillar could get a full view of their undergarments or even more scandalously, their

genitals (Joyce, *U* 7.1009*; U* 7.1013).

Johanna Garvey insists that Stephen is ultimately disdainful of the women's subversive and covert erotic power and effectively ends their "plummy" narrative, ripe though it may be with sexual possibility, with his laugh:

> Spitting out plum seeds as they look up at the "onehandled adulterer,"[24] the old women enact their own "conning," on one level a laughing at the spectacle of the city as if spitting pits from the high rows of a theater, just as they seem to mock the colonizer and imagine his pillar toppling. Their seed-spitting also might serve as a form of fertilization, a usurping of power from the male. In this manner, Stephen's story could offer a subversion of traditional roles, in a carnivalesque dialogue involving gender and creativity. From a different angle, however, the story offers a vision of creation-as-insemination, silencing "those slightly rambunctious females," just as he is the one who has given momentary voice to the marginalized women. (119)

I would argue that this choice is entirely intentional on Joyce's part to indicate that the ladies cunningly outwit Nelson and his imperial machinery by refusing to participate in the profligate propagation of colonial babies and thus ideologies. Granted, Nelson himself had but one eye and one arm, which suggests he hardly qualifies to produce an imperial super-race. Nevertheless, David Weir has convincingly argued that the women's actions in the parable can be read as a description of oral sex, which would not, of course, result in conception.

> After saying that the two women have gotten a "crick in their necks" (*U* 7.1023) from "peering up at the onehandled adulterer" (*U*7.1017-18), Stephen ends his story with the women "wiping off with their handkerchiefs the plumjuice that dribbles out of their mouths and spitting the plumstones out slowly between the railings" (*U* 7.1025-1027). Stephen's vulgar irony suggests that these two "Dublin vestals…elderly and pious" (*U* 7.923) are in the submissive posture of fellatio, the plum-juice dribbling from their mouths and the seed-spitting suggesting the expectoration of semen. (657-8)

In my view, Anne and Flo's seed-spitting is a conscious act of refusing what Garvey keenly

[24] Gifford points out that "Nelson lost an arm in an unsuccessful assault on Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands (1797). In 1798, Nelson formed a liaison with Emma Hamilton (c. 1765-1815), the wife of Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803), the British minister in Naples. The liaison was widely published and became one of the 'great scandals' of the period" (152).

describes as "insemination," either by colonial philosophies or phalluses. Nelson's pillar itself is obviously an icon of a massive erection, and the proverbial plum*stones* are figurative testes to be manipulated and their caustic juice or semen expectorated during erotic gratification by women who may be elderly but are hardly pious. In Christian art, the plum represents both fidelity and independence (Gifford 153). Joyce, lover of a fine paradox, craftily combines the two by making the hags faithful only to their own autonomy above all else. Like their predecessor, "Róisín Dubh," the women flout the prohibitions against the cardinal sin of lust demanded by the Catholic churches they look down upon.

The Catholic Encyclopedia (1914) elucidates transgressions involving "Lust" thusly:

> The inordinate craving for, or indulgence of, the carnal pleasure which is experienced in the human organs of generation.
>
> The wrongfulness of lust is reducible to this: that venereal satisfaction is sought for either outside wedlock or, at any rate, in a manner which is contrary to the laws that govern marital intercourse. Every such criminal indulgence is a mortal sin, provided of course, it be voluntary in itself and fully deliberate. This is the testimony of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, v. 19:
>
> "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, . . . Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God."
>
> ("Lust" http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09438a.htm)

The Plum Hags are "guilty" of immodesty at the least and perhaps shameless, willful fornication. The genius of their (sinful) creativity, in fact, lies in refusing to create any offspring, and, rather, Stephen and Joyce's choosing to create a carefully-controlled narrative of religious, imperial, and nationalist defiance, masquerading as a joke.

The Plum Hag's outing is presented to us by Stephen as a parable and serves as his subtly

lascivious mockery of Christ's didacticism in thirty-odd[25] stories like the parable of "The Sower and The Seed" (*Matthew* 13:3-9), "The Wise and Foolish Virgins" (*Matthew* 25:1-13), and the parable of "The Barren Fig Tree" (*Luke* 13:6-9), significantly tamer than Mulligan's later blasphemous "Ballad of Joking Jesus." But much like Christ before him, Stephen's *Parable of the Plums* also delivers a(n) (a)moral message that endeavors to imagine a possible strategy of anticolonial resistance in Dublin. Much like the anti-mercantile[26] and anti-English sentiments of the young male narrator of "Araby" in *Dubliners*, which also reminds us that England is geographically east of Ireland, here Joyce adopts a different motif from Middle Eastern culture for similar purposes. Nelson's pillar likewise stood less than a mile to the east of the the famed Franciscan Church of the Immaculate Conception—also known as Adam and Eve's—thus suggesting that the women's view of this emblem of the force of Western Catholicism is facilitated only in terms of the physical and the power structures provided or developed by English empire. Furthermore, English Pope Adrian IV's "Laudabiliter" of 1155 also theoretically sanctioned King Henry II's initial invasion and conversion of Ireland to explicitly Romanized Catholicism during the Norman conquest. Unpacking this particular parable any further would necessitate a treasonous, sacrilegious, and dangerously direct indictment of the entire imperial project. Instead, the Hags' parable allows the hidden seeds of rebellion to fall from atop the pillar onto "good ground" and "bring forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold"—not to those "who hath ears to hear"—but rather, to those who have eyes that read between the lines (*Matthew* 13:9). I believe that what Enda Duffy aptly describes as the

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[25] *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914) claims, "There are no parables in St. John's Gospel. In the Synoptics ... we reckon thirty-three in all; but some have raised the number even to sixty, by including proverbial expressions" ("Parables" http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11460a.htm).

[26] If one reads the boy's final disdain and anxiety regarding commerce, acquisition, or if you will, *getting* Mangan's sister a gift from the bazaar as a comparable substitute for his own burgeoning, frustrated desire to be *begetting*. Thanks to Nicholas Allen for suggesting the link between the two tales.

women's "murkily allegorical tale" must end with a snicker just where it does and be kept ostensibly in the realm of fable (170): a harmless old-lady-joke on the surface, with hidden political and allegorical depths that beg to be *plumbed* by the savvy reader. The women's sight of the dome of Adam and Eve's is a reminder that knowledge, specifically carnal knowledge of the naked body, is the "Original Sin," according to Christian dogma. Under the presumption that Eve tempted Adam and is therefore responsible for human transgression, it is women, like Eve, who must "suffer the curse" of femininity from menstruation and the initial pain of intercourse to pregnancy and labor. Anne and Flo, I argue, demonstrate that the most immaculate of conceptions is none at all, not metaphysical, but at once literal *and* metaphorical, a pure idea and an idea of (ethno-political) purity attained through what was considered defilement. The miraculous Virgin birth is substituted for the miraculous birth of technical virginity as a mode of defiance.

The Parable of the Plums represents Joyce's complex adaptation of a common Biblical trope; whereas Jesus is concerned with the growth of faith in the wild, tangled gardens of the human heart, Joyce is interested in invoking both barrenness and its counterpart over-ripeness as subtle parabolic metaphors to engender doubt and cast aspersions on Britain's systematic domination of the Irish people. As Weir suggests,

> Stephen's narrative has to be set against [Prof. MacHugh's] earlier recitation of John F. Taylor's speech concerning the [Irish] language movement, which plays upon the comparison of the Irish to the Israelites and of the British to the Egyptians and hence concerns the larger issue of Irish political and cultural independence. (659)

The Plum Hags engage in a covertly rebellious feminine opposition to religious, colonial, and nationalist erotic and ideological tyranny with a*plum*b, in which Irish women cannily refuse to reproduce more subjects of the empire and indoctrinate these hypothetical children with ideas of

their own inferiority.

Such ribald images are Joyce's comic response to what historian Kathleen Wilson identifies as anti-Irish sentiments that pervaded among colonists since the Early Modern period, concerning

> the allegedly backward character of native Irish gender relations: the women were "brazen" and lascivious, partial to strong drink, and wielded too much power over their husbands; Irish men were lazy, tyrannical, and lacking proper ties to property, (indicated by their serial use of common lands for pasturage). Early modern English writers[27] asserted that the Irish were non-Europeans, descended from Scythians, and sharing customs with the Tartars. The so-called "Celtic fringe" thereby provided models of 'primitive peoples' who both required and benefitted from English civility and rule. (24)

This passive strategy also represents Joyce's profound ambivalence towards the current colonial conditions, just as when Fr. John Conmee, figure of religious authority, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, figure of colonial authority, travel around the city in "Wandering Rocks" as largely oblivious contrapuntal signifiers of their institutions, while the truly significant action occurs all around them, typically as much above as it is beneath their respective notice. Whereas his critique of Irish nationalism is more overt and scathing in episodes like "Cyclops," which features another troublesome one-eyed giant, his critique of colonialism in Stephen's parable is discreetly couched in layers of symbolism[28] and is ultimately enacted by two fictitious, lonely,

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[27] Cf. Edmund Spenser's *A View on the Present State of Ireland* (1596), which argues for scorched earth tactics and the total destruction of the Irish people and their culture to achieve colonial submission by any means necessary (aka genocide through both cultural and literal famine), as well as Book V of *The Faerie Queene* (ironically "The Book of Justice"), which allegorizes the Irish as a howling horde of barbarians, and Ania Loomba's discussion of John Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis* (1650), which portrays monstrous hypersexualized Irish peasant women.

[28] To grasp the subtlety of the prune metaphor the reader would have to be familiar with the history of it as an icon of the bawd in plays like Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Measure for Measure*, and as a tool for overly zealous "proper" pronunciation as in novels like Dickens' *Little Dorrit* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (Thomas). Leopold Bloom even jokes about that history as advice he would give Gerty MacDowell in "Nausicaa": "Say prunes and prisms forty times every morning, cure for fat lips" (Joyce *U*13.901-902). In the same episode, Bloom uses plums as a metaphor for his cuckolded status regarding Molly and her affair with Boylan, "He gets the plums, and I the plumstones" (*U* 13.1098-99). *Plum*tree's Potted Meat is also the preferred snack during Boylan and Molly's illicit rendezvous, a discarded can discovered by Bloom in "Ithaca" and as such, is the subject of Bloom's disdain for the company's ill-placed obituary ad in "Lotus Eaters" and "Lestrygonians" (*U* 17.597-605,

and elderly women atop a pillar, hardly enough to inspire any serious anti-colonial dissent. Whereas in Early Irish orature, literature, the *aislingí,* and across the Irish Revival, J.C. Mangan, P.H. Pearse, and W.B. Yeats romanticized, spiritualized, and sexualized Ireland through figures such as "Róisín Dubh", or in Yeats's case "the Rose" of his early corpus history[29] and used the young, vibrant, and beautiful image and her counterpart the sainted crone as "a nationalist clarion call" (Mahaffey, "Heirs" 106). Joyce, meanwhile, is interested in jeeringly exaggerating the imagined crows' feet of the nation, all her little wrinkles and licentious imperfections, to the point of humorous monstrosity and sterility by choice.

In her discussion of Joyce's relation to postcolonial history, Emer Nolan points out that "the appropriate subjects of a postcolonial history are neither the emerging self-conscious citizens of the modern nation, nor the working class,"

> but the "people-nation," which [Partha] Chatterjee (optimistically enough) believes still subsists in the margins of the nation, as a site of potential excess over the official nation-state, "struggling in an inchoate, undirected and wholly unequal battle against forces that have sought to dominate it." ….a genuinely emancipatory politics must supersede the old politics of the nation-state. (Nolan 79)

I would insist that the Plum Hags are just such subaltern[30] subjects on the margin, spinsters with

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2123-25; cf. Molly's ref. in *U* 18.131; *U* 5.143-147 and *U* 8.137-139, 742-45) This blatantly phallic doubled double entendre of plums (testes) and "potted meat" (a penis) is thus what Bloom references in his brief flirtation with Josie Breen in "Circe" (*U* 15.495-496). David Weir also points out Boylan's beverage before his encounter with Molly is "'sloegin' (*U* 11.350*),* a drink made from plumjuice" (658). In all these cases, as in "Aeolus," plums are the fruit of choice to imply a scandalous sexual liaison. Molly even thinks of herself and Bloom as "such a mixture of plum and apple" in "Penelope" (*U* 18.1535). Bloom is also insulted by being described by the unnamed narrator of "Cyclops" as having "old plumeyes" (*U* 12.1416).

[29] Mahaffey notes, "It is important not to simplify Yeats's own changing attitudes in the process [of crafting the image of Ireland]. I agree with Boland when, in "A Kind of Scar," she remarks that the later Yeats is a 'rare exception' to the tendency among male Irish poets to feminize the national and to nationalize the feminine" ("Heirs" 116). For more on Yeats and the feminized State, see Chapter 3.

[30] Whereas traditionally in postcolonial studies, the figure of the subaltern, particularly the subaltern woman—especially in the case of Gayatri Spivak's foundational example of the *sati* in "Can the Subaltern Speak?—is a displaced figure of trauma and grief, silenced by the triune oppression of imperial, nationalist, and masculinist ideologies and "doubly effaced" for both her gender and her status as colonial Other (82). While they not only use

only enough means to afford a small bag of plums and spend the afternoon at a free kitschy tourist locale. In fact, they are so marginal they are entirely hypothetical, mere figments of Stephen Dedalus' imagination. Moreover, the hags' lack of liquid capital paves the way for their hypothetical exchange of what I will term their "[bodily] fluid assets," the only means resources available to them to achieve their project of opposition to the delimiting influences of these interconnected religious, colonial, and nationalist patriarchies.[31] Indeed, "if *Ulysses* accords with the paradigm of subaltern history, it already illustrates the irony of such a history—in announcing that articulation has been denied to some, we necessarily articulate their case on their behalf" (Nolan 90).

Joyce's *Parable of the Plums* represents just such a mock subaltern history and this is underscored by its light, humorous tone and the fact that he manufactures dialogue for these "two old Dublin women" in the form of a hilarious headline: "SOME COLUMN!—THAT'S WHAT WADDLER ONE SAID" (*U* 7.1004-1007). Nolan goes on to emphasize that subjects in postcolonial history must not supplant one form of ideological oppression with another and concurs with David Lloyd that Joyce's "critique of nationalism is inseparable from a critique of post-colonial domination" (qtd. Nolan 79). What Nolan terms "genuinely emancipatory politics" would instead focus on the expanding the rights and liberties of the individual in lieu of a nation-state-centered model. Is there a right more fundamental than to reproduce or not?

Thus, for Joyce, temporary abstinence followed by strategic oral sex represent the

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their bodies to (temporarily) elaborate their insurgency but also in answer to Spivak's query, can speak, through the text's headlines, the subaltern Plum Hags remain for Joyce and Stephen parodic rather than tragic subjects.

[31] For more on these issues, albeit a fully consenting, joyous, serious perspective, see Luce Irigaray's "The Mechanics of Fluids" in *The Sex Which is Not One* and my comic discussion of "The Peeler and the Goat" in Chapter 4.

intimate *via medias*[32] between begetting more future-Unionists in favor of repressive colonialism and more future members of the Fenian Brotherhood in favor of repressive nationalism. It opts for neither of these problematic extremes as only a riposte can. In her study of the complicity of patriarchal domination and heterosexual *Intercourse* (1987), Andrea Dworkin maintains, "…women are unspeakably vulnerable in intercourse because of the nature of the act—entry, penetration, occupation;...in a society of male power, women were unspeakably exploited in intercourse" (169). The Hags, however, are neither vaginally penetrated nor silent.[33] They refuse the pains of intercourse as well as the pains of birth, retaining control of the imagined pleasure and refuse to be, in Dworkin's terms, either "vulnerable" or "occupied." The women retain their agency and await rescue by no one. An appreciation of the nuances of the aesthetic and rhetorical is thus necessary to understand how Stephen and Joyce grasp the political. The uproarious and tawdry political allegory of the Plum Hags is vibrantly inseparable from language and the "trickies" it can perform.[34] Joyce's strategy is not the aforementioned Yeatsian "clarion call" to political action but instead implies a general *malaise* regarding any genuinely satisfactory resolution of the Irish situation outside of the realm of parable, and this distancing is part of the colonial masking or deformation that occurs to both real women and the figure of woman under such regimes.

Although typically in nationalist discourse, "women are represented as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition (inert, backward-looking, and natural), embodying

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[32] As Joyce remarked in a 1906 letter to his brother, Stanislaus: "For either Sinn Féin or Imperialism will conquer the present Ireland. If the Irish programme did not insist on the Irish language, I suppose I could call myself as a nationalist. As it is, I am content to recognize myself as an exile, and prophetically, a repudiated one" (qtd. in Murphy 256, Note 4). These comments further emphasize Joyce's ambivalence about Ireland's geopolitical status.

[33] See also Sue Best's discussion of penetration and feminized cityscapes in her essay on "Sexualizing Space" in *Sexy Bodies*.

[34] Thanks to Pamela Cooper for pointing this out to me.

nationalism's conservative principle of continuity" (McClintock 359), Joyce perverts this notion by making the nation a pair of free-thinking and bold, precipice-gazing (potential) whores. Granted, the Plum Hags are frightened by the scope and height of their view of the city, but they perhaps deserve some credit for staring down at Dublin and contending with its uncertain future from atop the pillar, also located not far from its infamous brothel quarter. Stephen's "....feminizing of space seems to suggest, on the one hand, the production of a safe, clearly defined entity, which, because it is female, should be appropriately docile or able to be dominated. But, on the other hand, this very same production also underscores an anxiety about this 'entity' and the precariousness of its boundedness" (Best, *Sexy Bodies* 183). The women's fear represents Stephen's anxiety over whether a new, postcolonial metropolis will ever exist, emerge, or be born beyond the conceptual, as embodied by their turning back reticently towards Nelson, and his tumescent emblem of the British Empire.

In fact, as the final headline shows, even the Hags themselves cannot stick to the plan: "DIMINISHED DIGITS[35] PROVE TOO TITILLATING FOR FRISKY FRUMPS. ANNE WIMBLES, FLO WANGLES—YET CAN YOU BLAME THEM?" (Joyce *U* 7.1069-1071). David Weir extends this logic even further and insists, "…Stephen's parable suggests that the English experience 'gratification' at the expense of the Irish, who far from resisting their rulers, submissively participate in their own exploitation" (659). In my assement, the Hags do deserve some approbation for *attempting* to resist the imperial domination implied in the sexual contact, and that particular contact is is a form of deliberate resistance in itself. Besides, the parable remains, at heart, a dirty joke between men. The utter absurdity of such a sexless scheme in reality shows that Stephen (and I would argue Joyce) see(s) no end in sight to Ireland's

[35] E.G. Nelson.

(post)colonial troubles and any supposed-solutions are in themselves the insubstantial stuff of jokes, much like Dr. Swift's notorious and riotous *A Modest Proposal* (1729).

Indeed, the joke itself offers a solution: gratification without reproduction. The women's very failure to resist the infamous "one-handled adulterer" serves as protest in itself. As I mentioned earlier, Weir interprets the their actions with the plums as covert fellatio, which, of course, would not beget children. Though Anne and Flo may indeed be caricatures of the midwives Stephen assumes he saw earlier on Sandymount strand in "Proteus," he makes a pivotal revision of their function in his parable. The "frisky frumps" may "wimble" and "wangle" but absolutely do not facilitate the delivery of a postcolonial Ireland; they do not give birth to anything at all, beyond an idea of independence from the strict mores of Christianity, mores that have been traditionally used by both sides of the Irish question to control women and their sexuality. Contra *Genesis*, the Plum Hags are truly fruit(-)ful(l) but will never multiply.

Prof. MacHugh references Christ's parable of "The Wise and Foolish Virgins" directly when he dubs the women "wise virgins" and they do indeed remain technically-virginal—well before that specific idiom rose to prominence in the era of Monica Lewinsky. (Joyce *U* 7.937), Like the narrative of their Biblical namesakes that heralds wakefulness, watchfulness, and preparedness for a post-Apocalyptic Judgment Day when Jesus himself will return, *The Parable of the Plums* seems to exist suspended in the flux of its own perhaps quasi-eschatological interregnum, embodied by Stephen's alternate title: *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine* (Joyce *U* 7.1056). From one perspective, if it became popular among the masses, the Hags' initial strategy of abstinence and then only oral sexual contact could in fact result in the end of the Irish world as

we know it. This title implies that like Moses[36] before them, the Irish audience, once more compared to the wandering Israelites, may glimpse the holy land of a liberated *Éire* but only at a distance and are unable to enter it. Furthermore, Stephen refuses MacHugh's title for the tale, "*Deus nobis haec otia fecit,"* a quotation from Virgil's *Eclogues* (Gifford 153), [37] suggesting Ireland is not a locale of divinely-ordained pastoral pleasure as it is in the initial verses of "Róisín Dubh," but rather a space of anxious metropolitan unrest. Whereas David Weir contends that "Nelson's pillar affords no view of the promised land: the two women see only church roofs, and then turn out of fright to the statue of the British conqueror" (659), I would argue that *The Parable of the Plums* allows us to dream with Stephen and Joyce, hopeful—but not without doubts, doubts that both subsequent history and literature have encouraged—that there will ever be a time when Ireland will truly be "the promised land": decolonizing, independent, and free at last of the shackles of Catholic, nationalist, masculinist, and/or imperial psychosexual subjugation (Joyce *U* 7.1061).[38] The faulty machinery of publication in the newspaper office and Bloom's failure to get the ad also echo a frustrated conception of ideas that fail to come to full fruition in the "Aeolus" episode.

And although we may mourn the Plum Hags' all-too brief cameo appearance in the episode, their parable's oblique allusion to a time of reckoning and liberation is underpinned by the dark potentiality of brutality suggested when the motif of the crone and all her power recurs with force in the form of Old Gummy Granny in "Circe." As Sue Best suggests following Irigaray, feminine "[b]ody-matter is thus an active signifying substance, it is not simply the

[36] See *Exodus* 12:25.

[37] Latin: "God has made this peace [leisure/comfort] for us." From *Eclogues* 1:6.

[38] If such a place and time can be said to exist. See Attridge and Howes.

passive recipient of social constructions....rather than containing and delimiting woman and/or space, [such an understanding] actually opens the boundaries of both by intertwining them from the very beginning" (*Sexy Bodies* 190-1). The sovereign crone of Ireland, a sexy but ultimately harmless, frothy fantasy in "Aeolus," is as mutable as the style of *Ulysses* itself and undergoes a harrowing and vicious transformation in Stephen's "Remember, Erin" jeremiad in "Oxen of the Sun" and Granny's exhortations to violence in "Circe" as a result of his intoxication. Anne and Flo, foremothers of "the Lewinsky exception" get bitten by a vengeful Green Fairy.

Prior to the appearance of Old Gummy Granny per se, Stephen links all the novel's crone images to each other and to Ireland in one of his rambling, drunken pastiche of invective in "Oxen of the Sun":

> Remember, Erin, thy generations and thy days of old, how thou settedst little by me and by my word and broughtedst in a stranger to my gates to commit fornication in my sight and to wax fat and kick like Jeshurum. Therefore hast thou sinned against my light and hast made me, thy lord, to be the slave of servants. Return, return, Clan Milly: forget me not, O Milesian....Look forth now, my people, upon the land of behest, even from Horeb and from Nebo and from Pisgah and from the Horns of Hatten unto a land flowing with milk and money. But thou hast suckled me with a bitter milk: my moon and my sun thou hast quenched for ever. And thou hast left me alone for ever in the dark ways of my bitterness: and with a kiss of ashes hast thou kissed my mouth. (Joyce *U* 14.367-380)

Stephen conflates Thomas Moore's ballad "Let Erin Remember the Days of Old," which catalogues the history of the betrayal of Ireland during the eleventh-century struggle to dislodge Scandinavian invaders, with Moses' injunctions to the Jewish people against forsaking Yahweh in subservience to Egypt in *Deuteronomy* also relevant with regard to Rome in the New Testament (Gifford 59; 418-9). I would concur with Gifford that "it is tempting here to make the Roman-English, Jewish-Irish links established in 'Aeolus' " and read 'the stranger' as a reference to later British invaders (419), particulary—I would add—in light of the historical Roman Catholic Church's "Laudabiliter" from an English pope. Stephen's fears of British-Irish

miscegenation as well as the direct reference to Pisgah, anxiously revisit his earlier *Parable of the Plums* and figure Ireland as a desolate *materna dolores*, like the Milk Woman of the "Telemachus" episode, who "hast suckled me with a bitter milk: my moon and my sun thou hast quenched for ever. And thou hast left me alone for ever in the dark ways of my bitterness: and with a kiss of ashes hast thou kissed my mouth."[39] The sense of abandonment Stephen expresses and the barren "kiss of ashes" also replicate his earlier reflections on Mrs. Dedalus, who has committed the ultimate betrayal by dying, leaving him bereft, and demanding that he pray to a God he no longer believes in while she does so (Cf. Joyce *U* 1.100-110, *U* 1.249-280, *U* 15.4157-4245). According to Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather* (1995), women in nationalist discourse function as national emblems without any direct agency, symbols that bear blame but lack control of their own destiny: "[Elleke] Boehmer notes that the male role in the nationalist scenario is typically 'metonymic'; that is men are contiguous with each other and the national whole. Women, by contrast, appear 'in a metaphoric or symbolic role'" (qtd. 354-5). Stephen metonymically interprets his own personal loss as the primary loss all Irishmen feel in relation to their motherland, which is decidedly not an idealized locale of "milk and money."

[39] The humble Milk Woman appears in "Telemachus" to bring Stephen Dedalus, Haines, and Buck Mulligan their breakfast beverage of choice at the Martello Tower in Sandycove (Joyce *U* 1.3891-43513). Stephen is disturbed by her "old shrunken paps" and "her unclean woman's loins, of man's flesh not made in God's likeness, the serpent's prey," fearing her as a "witch on her toadstool," which is exactly how Old Gummy Granny appears to him later (Joyce *U* 1.398-401; *U* 1.420-222). With his reference to Satan-as-serpent tempting Adam and primarily Eve in Eden, Stephen's reaction betrays a deep-seated misogynist Catholic anxiety over the threatening wiles of the sacred feminine, which he seems to grapple with successfully in his *Parable of the Plums* in "Aeolus," only to have this anxiety resurface with a liquored-up vengeance in "Oxen" and "Circe." It also ties the woman to another crone who is haunting Stephen, his dead mother (Cf. Joyce *U* 1.100-110, *U* 1.249-280, *U* 15.4157-4245). The unnamed "wandering old crone" can also be considered a comic depiction of nationalist idealizations of the Irish peasantry because she cannot even recognize the supposedly-native tongue when it is spoken to her by of all people, Haines, the Englishman (Joyce *U* 1.4042). This moment is often read as Joyce's ironic commentary on the "grand" status of Irish in Ireland when Mulligan describes the language to her as "wonderful entirely" when it is evident he does not speak more than the proverbial *cúpla focal*—few words—if that (*U* 1.435*13).* Enda Duffy's contention that Haines' Irish accent is too poor to be recognized is definitely plausible, but his assertion that "Irish is a language with a number of dialects, each almost incomprehensible to speakers of the other" is utterly ridiculous absurd (50). There are only three main dialects of Irish: Connacht, Munster, and Ulster, and they are distinctive but share many common features, especially if one imagines that Haines was offering a typical greeting to initiate their conversation.

Furthermore, his sense of national "unity" is not valorizing and validating, but rather, predicated on discontinuity, betrayal, desertion, isolation, and decay.

The image of Old Gummy Granny, then, simultaneously indicates the apogee of Stephen's semicolonial angst and the nadir of his nationalism. She is the psychosexual, hallucinogenic manifestation all of his conflicted feelings about the history of Ireland and women given an almost-tangible form and a very threatening voice. Granny, "*in sugarloaf hat appears seated on a toadstool, the deathflower of the potato blight on her breast*" (Joyce *U* 15.4577-80). In the aptly titled essay, "The Sow That Eats Her Farrow: Gender and Politics," Jeanne A. Flood reminds us that such crone figures "though Joyce's obsession,…[they are] not [solely] his creation", citing the work of Yeats, J.M. Synge, and Pearse, and explaining that "she appears in historical reality at a moment of crisis in Irish life, a crisis centered on boundaries, specifically the boundary between Ireland and England" (70). As I have shown, there is a much more fraught lineage concerning the significance of hags as a "historical reality" in terms of precedents from Early Irish texts and the *aislingí*. It is because of that lineage that these figures remain so fundamental and recurrent in Irish discourses of territory and liminality, not merely political borders, but bodily and psychic ones.

Granny is dangerous and deadly, a reminder of the history of millions of Irish deaths during *An Gorta Mór,*[40] a remnant of the violent nationalist rhetoric those deaths inspired,[41] which Joyce critiques throughout the novel. Britain's emerging national narrative gendered time by figuring women, like the colonized and the working class, "as inherently atavistic—the

[40] See Chapter 5.

[41] For an interesting discussion of real Irish women's propaganda and activism during the movement for Irish Independence, see Flood 71-74.

conservative repository of the national archaic. Women are not seen as inhabiting history proper, but like colonized peoples, in a permanently anterior time within the modern nation" (McClintock 359). Joyce recognizes that the same deleterious figuring of women occurs in Irish nationalism. Indeed, Old Gummy Granny is doubly atavistic (from the imperial perspective as both Irish and a woman), as evidenced by her speech, manner, and dress, which firmly situate her within the traumatic past that must be (from the nationalist perspective,) preserved in the collective memory of the Irish national consciousness:

> **Stephen:** Aha! I know you, gammer! Hamlet, revenge! The old sow that eats her farrow.
>
> **Old Gummy Granny:** (rocking to and fro) Ireland's sweetheart, the king of Spain's daughter, alanna[42]. Strangers in my house, bad manners to them! (she keens with banshee woe) Ochone! Ochone![43] Silk of the kine! (she wails) You met poor old Ireland and how does she stand?
>
> **Stephen:** How do I stand you? The hat trick! Where's the third person of the Blessed Trinity? Soggarth Aroon? The reverend Carrion Crow.
> (Joyce *U* 15.4581-4590)

Granny speaks in riddles that refer to British invaders, the cursed "strangers" in her "house." Stephen feels tormented and unable to escape from the manipulations of the gnarled crone that now embodies the State and its Church's oppression. Don Gifford points out that "Soggarth Aroon"[44] references John Banim's nineteenth-century ballad: "Am I slave they say, Soggarth

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[42] From the Irish: "*a leanabh*" or "my child/darling."

[43] From the Irish "*Óchón*," wail of the *bean-sidhe* and the woman *ag caoineadh* in grief, equivalent to "Woe is me!" performed with as much gnashing of teeth, tearing of hair and/or clothes, and beating of breasts as possible, as if sorrow at a burial were a contest—because it was—the professional mourners in Irish communities were available for hire, and the more that were present at your funeral, the greater your import in the community. For more on the ironically vital significance of status to the dead in the *Gaeltachtaí* or at least in Connemara, see Máirtín Ó Cadhain's *Cré na Cille* (1949), widely considered to be the greatest and most difficult work of literature in the Irish language, much like *Ulysses* is in English, with Ó Cadhain often being considered the "Irish Joyce," despite their radically different views on Irish politics and the Irish language. The lament "*Óchón*!" is also mockingly considered to be the unofficial motto of *Peig,* Peig Sayers's autobiography of life on the Blaskets, according to many traumatized generations of Irish schoolchildren.

[44] From the Irish: "*Sagart a rún*" or "my beloved priest."

aroon?/Since you did show the way, Soggarth aroon,/Their slave no more to be,/While they would work with me,/Old Ireland's slavery, Soggarth aroon" (524). While the song ostensibly extols the virtues of nationalist patriotism, Stephen uses it to express his concern over being beholden to a colonial Ireland, still-dominated by Britain, and the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore, instead of the symbolic dove, which symbolically bears the olive branch of peace in a cleansed and transformed world post-Flood in *Genesis*, he instead figures the third person of the Blessed Trinity as a carrion crow, harbinger of death and desolation.

Like her predecessors, the Milk Woman and the Plum Hags, Granny is presented as being overripe, but it is in that very excess that her strength lies. In her shriveled and fallow state, Old Gummy Granny is ripe with possibility that has now condensed and concentrated—possibility perhaps even more powerful because in the process of ripening it has soured—possibility densely wrought by the displaced and unfulfilled desire of a nation untransformed, doomed to remain eternally a *cailleach*.[45] Granny, like the flower of the Potato Blight she wears on her breast, has effectively spoiled, moldering on the vine well-before an appropriate Savior could appear. However, the sweet naïveté of the morning's Milk Woman is transfigured by Stephen's intoxication, tainted by his night of revelry and debauchery. She is bitten by the fang of the Absinthe-induced Green Fairy and her cordiality and warmth sharpen into adamantine bloodlust and rage, an unquenchable thirst for revenge against the British soldiers:

> **Old Gummy Granny:** (thrusts a dagger towards Stephen's hand) Remove him, acushla.[46] At 8:35 a.m. you will be in heaven and Ireland will be free. (she prays) O good God, take him! (Joyce *U* 15.4736-39)

[45] Thanks to Sarah Caldwell for reading an early outline and sharing this idea in conjunction with a discussion of the fruit, frustrated fertility, and the feminine in Christina Rosetti's *Goblin Market* (1862).

[46] From the Irish: "*a chuisle*" or "vein", a term of endearment associated with the pulse of one's heart, but also in this case, perhaps, suicide-by-soldier-attack.

Old Gummy Granny, despite (or perhaps evidenced by) the fact that she has gained fluency in Irish[47] shows how a figure of Ireland that was largely benevolent and harmless in the reality of the morning has continued to rot in the Stephen's mind into an icon of cruel and fierce aggression by day's end, at which point the phantasm leads to Stephen being knocked unconscious by imperial forces.

For as Maureen Murphy notes, history has not been kind to *An Cailleach*, neither this hag nor this day have aged well:

> By the nineteenth century, the restoration of the old woman [embodying Ireland] was not accomplished 'through union with her rightful mate,' but through the sacrifice of young men. The historical realities of the failures of the '98 and 1803 [rebellions] helped create a mystique of blood sacrifice, a motivating force behind the Irish republicanism of the twentieth century. (254)

However, like passive Róisín Dubh before her, this poor old woman cannot be the agent of her own salvation and instead commands Stephen to act on her behalf. As such, for Joyce it is imperative that Stephen regains his self-control and ultimately rejects Old Gummy Granny's offer of violence, however "free[ing]" she promises it would be, because he realizes that unnecessary bloodshed is not the key to liberation. It becomes pivotal to remember (and this is what the work of Ní Dhomhnaill in particular demonstrates) that the crone is merely the first stage of the progression, and for all her acerbic power, she must ultimately metamorphose and be transmuted into the *spéirbhean*. Though Murphy attests that Joyce moves beyond a paradigm of erotic union as a means of salvation, for both he and Ní Dhomhnaill, the key impetus to the glorious transformation as in the Early literature, orature, and the *aislingí* before them is not brutality but rather the introduction of sexual desire and loving affection.

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[47] The Irish language itself has been "dying" in the linguistic sense or at least "marginalized" since the mass deaths and exodus of the majority of its speakers in the mid-nineteenth century. The novel occurs in the early stages of the Revival.

Particularly for an Irish-language writer like Ní Dhomhnaill, this logical and magical progression has been a central theme or "parable" of Irish literature "since time immemorial":

> …the idea of a loathly hag or *cailleach,* a *puella senilis* signifying the tribal land (or sometimes the whole island). The *cailleach*, however when united with the rightful king in the conjugal act is transformed into her rightful form as *spéirbhean,* woman of great beauty or goddess. Such a tradition lies at the heart of the *aisling* genre, of Merriman's *Midnight Court*, and was even recycled with great aplomb by W.B. Yeats, encapsulating neatly the emotional nexus of turn-of-the-century Nationalism:
> 'Did you see an old woman go down the path?'
> 'No, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen.'[48]
> ("Mis and Dubh Ruis" 82)

To transform from a *cailleach* to a *spéirbhean*, the central feminine image must first be transposed from the mind of Stephen Dedalus, who is still haunted by the ghost of his dead mother, another crone, to Leopold Bloom and his beloved wife, Mrs. Marion "Molly" Bloom.

This transposition occurs in "Ithaca" after Stephen retells the *Parable*, and Bloom, missing the joke, ponders printing it as an educational "publication of certified circulation and solvency" for grade-schoolers (Joyce *U* 17.651). Bloom's thoughts then, perhaps prompted by Stephen's recapitulation of Anne and Flo as "slightly rambunctious females" (Joyce *U* 7.1014), immediately turn to Molly, another slightly rambunctious female,[49] when Bloom wonders "what to do with our wives" (Joyce *U* 17.659). While the crone embodied Ireland in the *aisling* tradition and the nationalist mythos, Leopold will instead recast his wife, a vibrant woman in her sexual prime, as his country later in the episode, affecting the change from nagging hag to

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[48] Ní Dhomhnaill slightly misquotes Patrick Gillane's closing lines in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan.* He actually says, "I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen." The difference is minimal, except that Yeats imitates a more Irish structure of repeating the verb phrase of the previous question as opposed to the more Anglicized use of "no" or "yes."

[49] And like the Hags, Molly is erotically open-minded to fellatio, considering her fantasy about either the statue or Stephen (the pronouns are indeterminate), where she dreams of kissing "him all over also his lovely young cock there so simple I wouldnt mind taking him in my mouth if nobody was looking as if it was asking you to suck it so clean and white" (*Joyce U*18.1352-1354), as well as sexually liberated, considering her affair with Boylan and possible affairs with her list of supposed-lovers.

domestic goddess with a little more well-placed spittle,[50] in a paradigmatic reversal of the seeds and the fluids that were previously strategically (r)ejected by the Hags:

> In what final satisfaction did these antagonistic sentiments and reflections [about Molly's affair with her manager, Blazes Boylan], reduced to their simplest forms, converge?
>
> Satisfaction at the ubiquity in eastern and western terrestrial hemispheres, in all habitable lands and islands explored or unexplored (the land of the midnight sun, the islands of the blessed, the isles of Greece, the land of promise), of adipose anterior and posterior female hemispheres, redolent of milk and honey and of excretory sanguine and seminal warmth, reminiscent of secular families of curves of amplitude, insusceptible of moods of impression or of contrarieties of expression, expressive of mute immutable mature animality.
>
> […]
>
> Then?
>
> He kissed the plump mellow yellow smellow melons of her rump, on each plump melonous hemisphere, in their mellow yellow furrow, with obscure prolonged provocative melonsmellonous osculation. (Joyce *U* 17.2227-2243)

Bloom's claim of Molly as his nation is realized when he figures her figure in explicitly geographical terms, as if her body is a map for him to explore and conquer. But at first unlike the imperial trope of mapping as domination and reification, his is seemingly a loving occupation born out of "sanguine and seminal warmth," presented not as a singular statement of her signification, but as an on-going haptic engagement with her physical and emotional being.

Nonetheless, it is still a conquest, and however ostensibly affectionate the terms, Mrs. Bloom remains the passive object to be subjugated, penetrated, and salivated upon for their

[50] My reading here of the importance of saliva as fluid agent of transmogrification is indebted to Sara Crangle's marvelous paper "On Spit," presented at the International Joyce Symposium in Prague in 2010, while also adding the seemingly paradoxical connotations of cleaning, purifying, or polishing something (e.g. leather shoes) or someone via "spitting on it" or the vigorous buffings of a "spit-shine," which has a long tradition in military circles that would certainly be familiar to Molly herself if she had ever seen her father or any other soldier prepare to present himself in formal regimental attire. "Spit-shine" is a mode of mixing saliva into or onto another substance (or in this case, another being), also well-known as amongst the nattily attired in general. The military force applying the necessary spit-shine to occupy Molly's "hemispheres" is admittedly, in this instance, an army of one: Bloom himself.

mutual (but pivotally, his own) pleasure. Enda Duffy calls attention to the fact that *Ulysses* is filled with images of "doubly abject women (oppressed first because they are women, and second because they are colonial 'natives') [and] it evidences the continuing sexism of the largely masculinist narrative of postcolonial 'freedom' " (3-4). Though I am not suggesting that Molly is as oppressed or abject as Zoe, Florry, Bella/Bello Cohen, or even the Plum Hags, if they are in fact whores, Leopold's vision of Molly does ultimately rely on a relation of domination. And later, perhaps, Molly's vision of herself does as well, depending upon how one views her string of "lovers," the terms of the marriage contract between the Blooms, and her contentment with it.

Molly is for Poldy "the land of milk and honey" that Stephen fears Ireland could never be for anyone, and it precisely because she is *not* bound to the desolate, oppressive colonial history of Ireland, but rather born and raised in foreign Gibraltar that this can be so.[51] The language of the passage itself, overripe with the sounds of puckering and kissing consonants ("smellow" and "prolonged provocative melonsmellonous"), aurally and orally mimics Leo's affectionate gesture toward Molly's posterior. For Bloom, Molly is no longer comparable to a plum, not only because the proportion would be wrong, but because Bloom already identified the plum as an emblem of her adulterous relationship with Boylan in "Nausicaa". Leopold must rename his wife's rear-end as a "plump melonous hemisphere," in an effort to re-establish Molly as *his* territory. Her image shifts from one of over-ripe illicitness to the perfectly-ripe deliciousness, a

[51] Gibraltar has a colonial history of its own as a military pivot point between Europe and North Africa, of course, in which Molly is imbricated the possibly implicitly ethnically-mixed, sensuously budding, and dreadfully bored daughter of "Major" Tweedy, a colonial officer in the British Army, though there has been much debate about his rank. Leopold Bloom's beloved "Flower of the mountain" recalls the visit of "the prince of Wales own or the lancers O the lancers or the Dublins that won Tugela" (Joyce *U* 18.1603, 18.401-403). See Susan's Bazargan's. "Mapping Gibraltar: Colonialism, Time, and Narrative in 'Penelope'". *Molly Blooms: A Polylogue on "Penelope" and Cultural Studies* (1994): 119-138 and Richard Brown's "Molly's Gibraltar: The Other Location in Joyce's *Ulysses*". *A Companion to James Joyce* (2008): 157-73.

lush and exotic fruit-woman meant to be enjoyed.

The change to *spéirbhean*, which is arguably achieved through her husband's ass-kissing, is fully realized when we enter the mind of Molly Bloom herself in "Penelope," and the scope of her vision seems to not only encompass Ireland but the entire world in a borderless, practically unpunctuated mélange of eight rapturous and rapacious sentences. Molly's menstruation is the confirmation of this transformation from crone to *spéirbhean*: from fallow femininity to (the potential of eventual) fecundity that prefigures her famous novel-ending soliloquy. We span her entire history and almost all of the Earth from the shores of Howth and back-ending, if you will, into the Moorish Wall in Gibraltar:

> I love flowers Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses God of heaven theres nothing like nature the wild mountains then the sea and the waves rushing then the beautiful country with the fields of oats and wheat and all kinds of things and all the fine cattle going about that would do your heart good to see rivers and lakes and flowers all sorts of shapes and smells and colours springing up even out of the ditches primroses and violets nature it is as for them saying theres no God I wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning why dont they go and create something… so there you are they might as well try to stop the sun from rising tomorrow the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes… so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldnt answer first only looked out over the sea and the sky I was thinking of so many things he didnt know… and the auctions in the morning the Greeks and the jews and the Arabs and the devil knows who else from all the ends of Europe … and the wineshops half open at night and the castanets and the night we missed the boat at Algeciras the watchman going about serene with his lamp and O that awful deepdown torrent O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and the pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes

I said yes I will Yes. (Joyce *U*18.1557-1609)

She also describes the melting pot atmosphere in Gibraltar as a *bricolage* where there are "Greeks and the jews and the Arabs and the devil knows what else from all ends of Europe" (ln 1587-8), as well as Molly herself, who is possibly a hybrid Irish-Spanish Catholic, who is now married to a former Jew who converted to Anglicanism. This passage offers not only a large sampling of the geographical and specifically British Imperial world,[52] but also a number of its different belief systems. Joyce also emphasizes both God's natural creative productions in the abundance of crops, profusion of blooms (pun surely intended), such as flowers and fruits, as well as the glory of the sea and its bounty. These repeated emblems of lushness are linked by Poldy and subsequently Molly herself to "all a woman[']s body" (ln 1566). After expressing her fundamental optimism about natural and implicitly feminine renewal by reflecting on "all sorts of shapes and smells and colours springing up out even of ditches primroses and violets" (ll 1561-1562), she follows this by vehemently insisting that intellectuals or poets should "go and create something" (ln 1565), never considering for a moment as Mahaffey does that Molly herself is a word-weaver who conflates the material and the intellectual like her foremother, Penelope (*Reauthorizing Joyce,* 206-12). Furthermore, Molly also fails to realize that her singing is an art involving interpretation and creation through performance, particularly of both "The Young May Moon" and "Love's Old Sweet Song" and the elongated syllables in the text to indicate she is singing either aloud or in her head.[53]

In this way, Joyce's portrayal of Molly's interiority inadvertently extends the Yeatsian

[52] Enda Duffy believes these details make her "a wholly interpellated subject, an ideal colonial native…[such] that she may be compared to Kimball O'Hara, the 'Kim' of Kipling's novel of the same title (183). I think this is a gross overstatement of Molly's "abject" colonial status.

[53] Thanks to Patrick Ó Néill for pointing this out to me.

gender essentialism he previously eschewed in his portrayal of the novel's Plum Hags because Yeats's "*Éire* is neither real nor individual, [and] although she represents the conditions of speech, she herself never speaks but is spoken through" (Mahaffey, "Heirs" 108); the same can be said of Molly Bloom herself, whose supposed "realness" and "individuality" are undermined by her panoramic perspective as a *Gaea-Tellus*[54] figure, who according to Stuart Gilbert is

> …'timeless' and 'artless'….[Molly] begins small, a very ordinary woman, the *petite bourgeoisie* of Eccles Street, a humbler Madame Bovary, to end as the Great Mother of the gods, giants and mankind, a personification of the infinite variety of Nature as she has developed by gradual differentiation from the formless plasma of her beginning. (403)

Therein lies the rub! Just as I have argued there can be no single modernism, postcolonialism, feminism, or canon, such totalizing, supposedly-universal portrayals of "Woman" represent an equally flawed—however multifaceted and well-meaning—fallacy/phallusy. There is a deeply problematic generalization belying Joyce's depiction of Molly as "mute immutable mature animality," as if women are solely carnal[55] creatures of the body, entirely sensuous. Molly has little interest in the long-term implications of her actions or the particularities of spelling and punctuation that would otherwise interrupt and order the "pure" stream of her thoughts. In fact, Duffy suggests that Molly's "speech is a palimpsest of middle class clichés ('sure you cant get on in this world without style' [*U* 18.467-68]), so that her voice never sounds less than directly derived from that of others ('of course hed never find another woman like me to put up with him the way I do' *[U* 18.232-233*])"* (183). Or in Emer Nolan's words, "[Molly Bloom and Anna

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[54] The Greek and Roman goddess of the Earth.

[55] Mahaffey also catalogues the misogynist (although she demurs from describing it is as such) critical tradition of Robert Martin Adams who calls Molly "a slut" and Darcy O'Brien who claims she is "at heart a thirty-shilling whore" (qtd. in *Reauthorizing Joyce* 138-40). Mahaffey goes on to argue that "the final irony of *Ulysses* is the realization that Molly, so frequently regarded as a 'great-lust-lump'" preoccupied with exclusively material concerns, uses the material world to live out a private poetry, trying to keep faith with her memory of a dream" (179). Cf. also Phillip Herring's "The Bedsteadfastness of Molly Bloom*" in Modern Fiction Studies* 15.1 (1969): 57-61 and Bonnie Kime Scott's *Joyce and Feminism,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. 156-61.

Livia Plurabelle] are at least in part avatars of a national community conventionally symbolized by a woman (Mother Ireland), the narratives (especially in The *Wake*) ultimately yield to these Olympian 'feminine' perspectives on the inevitability of historical recurrence and on the endless capacity of human civilization to renew itself" (*The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* 103-4). Nolan avoids directly characterizing such portrayals as inherently essentialist or offering a blatant qualifying proviso, but instead permits the deliberate "scare"- quotation-marks she uses in the passage to stand for themselves. And even though Molly supposedly talks back to her creator with the exclamation, "O Jamesy let me out of this," marking the beginning of her menstruation (Joyce *U* 18.1128-29**)**, her supposed-voice remains only a product of Joyce's phallic pen and fertile imagination. As a well-regarded tenor himself, it is deeply ironic that Joyce's presentation of the interiority of the character who is arguably the novel's most accomplished performer, particularly as she is a successful professional, as opposed to other characters like Simon Dedalus, who is at best inebriated hobbyist, neither Molly, nor anyone else, acknowledges her own talents as contributing to and arising from a larger artistic tradition.

Katherine Mullin argues that Joyce responds to and incorporates medical, cultural, and folkloric beliefs and lifeways related to menses in *Ulysses* in order to critique discourses about femininity at the time. While her discussion of sociohistoric conceptions related to a woman's "monthlies" is compelling, it over-reaches to suggest that Joyce completely transcends the misogynistic attitudes that Mullin notes he was apparently fond of frequently espousing to his brother, Stanislaus. Molly menstruation and Molly herself are indeed much more than a dirty joke, but her deliberate alliance with Gaea-Tellus and images of natural fecundity, though certainly more direct and earnest (and consequently more provocative) than most prevailing and generally-conflicting conceptions about women's gynecological experiences in late-nineteenth

and early-twentieth centuries, hardly represent Joyce's attempt to dissociate her from classical and cultural presentations of woman-as-body, Earth mother, as she remains (over)determined as a "flower of the mountain" in bloom. Indeed, Joyce seems to be suggesting that menarche underwrites a transhistorical, "timeless and artless" (per Stuart Gilbert) notion signifying Woman, who— contra (dis)courses of the (time) period—may not be effectively disabled by her "roses"—feeling irritated by those "courses" on a personal level, notwithstanding— yet remains symbolo-somatically defined by them. The entire episode of "Penelope" is a recurrent cycle, after all. Menses and the possibility of parturition become the essence of Woman, both in Leopold's mind when considering Martha Clifford, Gerty Macdowell, and his wife, as well as in Molly's own monologue, though as Mullin points out, Derek Attridge astutely notes that Joyce himself objected to the term "flow" ("Menstruation in *Ulysses*" 505). Whatever Molly's quibbles with her "dry old stick" (*U* 18.1153) of a gynecologist and however much the medical wisdom of the era lacked in consensus, as both Mullin and Vike Martina Plock respectively illustrate in their work on medical cultures and femininity in Joyce, he actually does little to distinguish Molly or the majority of female characters Bloom and Stephen encounter in *Ulysses* from biologically-conscripted and thus socially-prescribed gender roles. Presenting a compendium of information does not in itself suggest that one disputes it.

Despite what Joseph Valente has argued in *James Joyce and the Problem of Justice* (2009), Molly can never be a fully-articulated Deleuzian or rather, Artaudian Body-Without-Organs (BwO), for though she can articulate at great length, Molly is not ever for a moment separated from the sexually-specified articulation of her material body. Despite perhaps being portrayed more roundly and sympathetically than limping Gerty and maudlin Martha, a kinder, gentler essentialist does not a male protofeminist revolutionary make (at least, arguably, not until

Joyce completely transforms the expression of "individual" bodies and consciousnesses in *Finnegans Wake*). Valente's invocation of the BwO paradigm does not undo or erase the fundamental essentialism of Molly's representation, which is in fact quite a problem of justice when addressing issues of gendered and colonial difference—to borrow from his title. Both Valente's attempt at fathoming Molly's depths and Joyce's means of achieving them effectively dehumanize the character and render her as little more than narrative experiment as opposed to sexually-experimenting human woman. For in Joyce's depiction she has at least one organ—a vagina—and at least one other, a mouth, and those two parts will forever work in tandem to delimit her capabilities and prospects. In addition to being fertile, we discover that Molly is not "mute" at all when she's conscious, but quite a mental chatterbox, "lack[ing]…analytical self-consciousness" (Mahaffey, *Reauthorizing Joyce* 9), with no claim to Stephen's Enlightenment intellectual tradition, no claim—other than "the wish to God" that men go create something—without the slightest conception or compunction, that as a musician, she has already done and could continue do the same.

Furthermore, one could argue that Molly ultimately reinforces the patriarchal *pater familias* domination logic because the zenith of her life, the novel's conclusion is her affirmation of Leopold's marriage proposal with the reiterative "Yes"-es, Molly consents to be chattel. When she describes herself and Bloom as "such a mixture of plum and apple," she simultaneously recuperates the one fruit by characterizing her husband as a juicy prize while problematically comparing herself to both Helen's Apple of Discord and the fruit of Eve's temptation and Fall (*U* 18.1535). For Molly, in the prevailing reading most advanced by Richard Ellmann, yielding to the bonds of marriage represents a truly *Felix Culpa*—Happy Fall, but we as readers need not be as blindly content nor blithely take this plunge along with her and fall in

line with a patriarchal order of life that relies entirely on heteronormative cliché. More to the point, on the prior evening, Mrs. Marion Bloom had a backside too, according to her husband, at least. And this morning, she has hands and feet that enable her to get up and make his breakfast. Sex or the withholding of sex—whether manual, oral, vaginal, or anal—along with the purchase, delivery, and preparation of food or the withholding thereof are her only powers. For where is a reformed adulterer's place but the kitchen?— barefoot or perhaps even shod, albeit not pregnant, at least not yet. Kiberd extends this notion even further by reading the "Yes"-es as a "Dublin 'no'" and as a necessary masturbatory zenith to compensate for "yet another 'silent marriage'" *(The Irish Writer and the World* 238-9). Thus, the past serves as Molly's only source of pleasure, a pleasure she must entirely provide herself, complete with a musical soundtrack to set the mood.

Nevertheless, the converses of my position have also been passionately argued,[56] and Vicki Mahaffey in particular has convincingly contended that in Joyce, any oppositions or traditional binaries such as writer/reader or man/woman (and I would add in the Bhabhian spirit colonizer/colonized) are not actually polar but dialectical, "truly equal and self-reversing" (*Reauthorizing Joyce* 4). The inverse, then, is always already true and false too. *Ulysses*

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[56] See Mahaffey's *Reauthorizing Joyce* 174-181; 206-212. Heidi Scott also catalogues a broad sampling of more recent critical responses to Mrs. Marion Bloom in "'Such Prohibitions Bind Us Not': Molly Bloom Looking Back on the Garden" (2009), while adding to the pantheon herself a comparison to Milton's Eve:

> Bonnie Kime Scott promotes the quality of Molly's multifarious place among literature's females, claiming that her "ability to play so many roles, and to range in attitude from conventional matron to liberal feminist makes her a useful representative of the spectrum of female types" (162). Annette Shandler Levitt finds affinities between Molly and the *écriture feminine* of Luce Irigaray's essays…..Lisa Sternlieb suggests that Molly provides a "textual performance of Penelope's backstage activity of weaving in order to unweave…that Penelope's four year ruse is reflected in the *artifice* of both the language and structure of Molly's narrative" (758). John Lammers locates a common feminine archetype in Molly and Chaucer's Wife of Bath, both of whom are "powerfully and obsessively sexual" (489), see "sexual experience and nature as their philosophical bases of power" (490), "realize that as women they are doomed to defeat" (493), and "do what they have to do with their sexuality in order to survive in male-governed societies that define morality to benefit men" (496).

engages us through its frequently contradictory "both/and" as well as "neither/nor" dynamic founded on principles of overabundance and aporia. And I fully agree with Mahaffey's most salient point that:

> If as St. John asserted, God is the Word, that word is double: it is both abstract and material, transcendent and immanent, authorized from without by an individual author and from within by the multiple crisscrossing of the sights and sounds of words as they weave and unweave the material texture of language. (*Reauthorizing Joyce* 19)

The Joycean Word is all of these things. Its transubstantiality (in terms of multiple and oft "contradictory" meanings) and materiality (both in terms of its use of polyglot languages, myriad registers, various tones, its combination of slangs, numerous styles, tons of puns, etc.), as well as its awareness of the long history preceding and directly following the chronology presented in *Ulysses* itself,[57] which contributed to that materiality and its interpretation, must be addressed by the authors who write after it and the critics who write about it, which is what I have endeavored to do.[58] Considering the context of when it was composed and the real sociocultural options available to women during the early twentieth century, "*Ulysses*…is not a manifesto for postcolonial freedom, but rather a representation of the discourses and regimes of colonial power being attacked by counterhegemonic strategies that were either modeled on the oppressor's discourses or were only beginning to be enunciated in other forms" (Duffy 21).

In his essay that appears in the volume *Joyce, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism* (2008),

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[57] This includes *Ulysses'* exalted status as the center or "starred text," as Enda Duffy puts it, of the modern Irish canon (2). I am not adopting the largely intransigent position scholars like Harold Bloom, and there are, of course, or should be, broader conceptualizations of what constitute the canons of Irish literature (particularly frameworks that also consider the novel with regard to Irish diasporic and Anglophone (post)colonial literatures), but I would agree that Joyce deserves a place in most of them.

[58] For more on how style and idiom express "the impossible desire to find or forge an autonomous language of art" that compensates for the lack of or tries to ameliorate the Irish language in English throughout the work of Anglophone Irish modernists or even the hybridized Irish or idiolect registers of Ó Cadhain or Seán Ó Ríordáin, see Barry McCrea's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism,* although McCrea also represents the generally reductivist approach regarding Irish itself as an almost-impossibly niche spoken and written language advanced by most Anglophone critics. For an essential counterbalance to this prevailing trend, see Louis De Paor's essay on Irish-Language Modernisms in the same volume.

Michael Tratner convincingly maintains that hybridity in *Ulysses* (and in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*) eschew(s) both political action or material change in favor of the pleasures of the intellectual and the aesthetic. While this is a noble and notable lament about the limitations of a theoretical construct, it is perhaps a bridge too far, as Duffy's statement illustrate above, to imply that *Ulysses,* especially in the particular context in which it was written with the shadow of Home Rule still looming large over Ireland as well as still utterly dominant during the period in which the novel is set, should anticipate the complications of the contemporary globalized world with regard to postcolonial "class tourism" and education, and endeavor to resolve them (*Joyce, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism* 125), as it is not a visionary political tract but a literary text that in no way purports to be otherwise. This is further instantiated by what Tratner himself rightly identifies as a conclusion of unequivocal "impotence" (Ibid 113), concerning Bloom himself, sexually, and his repeated failures of communication with Stephen Dedalus amongst others.

I would further suggest that if Molly Bloom's perspective is meant to mitigate those frustrations, she only does so by operating at yet another remove by temporarily dislocating the novel temporally and spatially through memories of her youth in Gibraltar and ultimately remaining still backward chronologically with her marriage proposal rather than looking forward to the future in an endorsement of a (false) narrative of progress. If one reads *Ulysses* in accord with Ernest Bloch's paradigm of great art's "ideological surplus"[59] in a context in which art can and does transcend beyond the time, place, and conditions of production— which is essentially what Tratner critiques in his essay as a failure of hybridity in political terms without citing or alluding to Bloch in any way—who's to say that what I would follow Bloch in describing as the

[59] See Kiberd's essay *The Life and After-Lives of P.H. Pearse* 66.

novel's "surplus", needs must function within Tratner's own given terms of idealized futurity? Nicholas Allen observes that the "dissident" in Irish literature and culture of the 1920s and '30s emerged and was "articulated in moments of challenge, the borders of social action not set, Ireland indefinitely a democracy, dominion, republic, or state" (6). Uncertain art was aptly created for an uncertain future. Moreover, regarding Tratner's contentions, the temporal and spatial remove by Molly to Spain and back to Dublin again is arguably a "surplus" extension of the novel as part of a globalized (post)imperial network. The great "ideological surplus" of *Ulysses* could actually be that it offers yet another Joycean deferral, recurrence, or default to the past that directs readers back to conditions that contribute to what were then and are now largely stagnant (post)imperial economies in Ireland, Spain, and throughout imperial centers in the European Union and many of their former colonies—much like the largely "impotent" and frustrated conclusion of the promising encounter between Bloom and Dedalus.

Placing "ideological surplus" over time thus leads me to advocate for what Elizabeth Freeman would describe as a recursive, "non-chrononormative" approach to Joyce. Many critics still prefer to draw a strict dividing line and mark a progression in the women of the prose of "early Joyce" like the oblivious aunts in "The Sisters," the titular protagonist of "Eveline" and her long-suffering mother, the manipulative mother and daughter duo in "A Boarding House" who have driven Bob Doran to decrepit and debilitating alcoholism by the time he reappears *Ulysses*, mocked spinster Maria in "Clay," the tease neighbor-girl, Mangan's unnamed sister in "Araby"; all the women of "The Dead"—subject to the sexist, linguistically-biased, pompous whims and the ultimately unfulfilled visions of Gabriel Conroy—Mrs. Dedalus, the Dedalus girls, the unnamed bird-girl, the unnamed prostitutes, and the barely-named "EC" or Emma Cleary of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; and the less realist women of later Joyce like

Martha, Molly, Milly, Gerty, Florry, Zoe, Bella/Bello Cohen, who is transgender, or Anna Livia Plurabelle, the washer-women, and Issy in *Finnegans Wake*. As far as I'm concerned, Molly herself and all of the women of *Ulysses*, each fittingly occupy some space in the hinterland between these two chronological classifications and that much like the Joycean Word, which is double, the many words said both about them and by them create a debouched dimensional continuum on which we continually move, not within a reductive binary in which one can only adopt a simplified dialectical trajectory towards an endpoint of unquestionable and affirmational synchronic "development" that does not permit any moments of recrudescence. The ideologies of gender and of time itself espoused in these texts, for instance, are so much more nuanced and fluid—interlocking, compounded, folded— than this common critical trajectory would allow.

Here I am referring to Gilles Deleuze's sense of the "fold" as means of engaging with sites of knowledge/power throughout his own work and his interpretation of the work of Foucault, particularly in that eponymously-titled volume (1986; trans. 1988). Both of their approaches, in this regard, are deliberately sensitive to the accretive potentialities, what Foucault thinks of as the the interrelation of power, discursive, and non-discursive practices, or what Deleuze refers to as a "diagram":

> …every diagram is intersocial and constantly evolving. It never functions in order to represent a persisting world but produces a new kind of reality, a new model of truth. It is neither the subject of history, nor does it survey history. It makes history by unmasking preceding realities and significations, constituting hundreds of points of emergence or creativity, unexpected conjunctions or improbable continuums. It doubles history with a sense of continual evolution. (*Foucault* 35)

Diagrams are in essence an extension of "strata" or historical "empiricities", what Deleuze elucidates in the manner of Louis Hjelmslev as "sedimentnary beds…made from things and words", or for my purposes, multilayered, multipunctal maps (Ibid 47). Proclaiming in the

chapter titles that Foucault is "a new cartographer," Deleuze emphasizes Foucault's understanding of culture through both "archaeological" and "genealogical" modes made explicitly spatial. I contend such an understanding is articulated throughout the Irish texts of these chapters in similar terms: topographical and metaphorical or if one prefers, "diagrammatic" and "stratified" cartographies of power, place, and art, which are further juxtaposed with shifting geographies or lineages of the body within or as that both tangible and flexible space. Joyce and other authors' (perhaps unintentional) reiterations of the terms and experiences of colonial and patriarchal forces in these ways— even and most especially as they purportedly endeavor to move beyond them—continue to be a principal (and principled) issue for contemporary Irish women writers struggling engage with those representational histories and hierarchies or as Deleuze would have it "points of emergence" or "lines of flight". Such strata and points of emergence are inherently allied both to specifically local Irish contexts, such as the *aisling* genre and the Irish language, and broader international considerations of a variety of epistemes as well as the aforementioned "ideological surpluses" of numerous syncretic discursive and non-discursive forms.

III. "Reclaiming Psychic Land": Ní Dhomhnaill's Feminist Pro-"Vis(i)o(n)"

Therefore, as Ní Dhomhnaill herself has insisted, in slightly less abstract terms, we return to the *cailleach/spéirbhean* dynamic:

> …the only way forward is to somehow break out of the dominant patriarchal ethos of the age. For all of us, inwardly, the king must die. Then, as the work of Mary Daly would suggest, the Hag energy must erupt. The too-long repressed Feminine comes into its own, and, as we learn to come to terms with what is dark and frightening in ourselves we can release others from the burden of carrying our resentment in one way or another. The new form of male energy asserts itself in the unconscious, and, challenging the hag,

> uniting with her, brings forth the conscious reality of the Goddess, as *spéirbhean.* ("Mis and Dubh Ruis" 87)

Her *spéir-mhná* speakers go even further in rejecting traditional gender paradigms. Although "[i]t is not controversial to claim that the Irish have long occupied what we would now call the female subject position…the implications of occupying such a position for *real* women, are complex and interesting" (Mahaffey, "Heirs" 104). By examining two of Ní Dhomhnaill's poems, "*Cailleach*/Hag" and "*Primavera*," I will now explore a contemporary perspective on the crone/sky-woman images and their significance for this particular Irish woman poet in the wake not only of Joyce, but Heaney and Muldoon's (who also serve in other contexts as her translators) own *aislingí* in English and Ó Cadhain's deliberately de-mythologizing prose. Notable for its use of the distant third-person, Heaney associates *Éire* with Diana and the classical tradition, questioning if the poem's male subject is Actaeon, meant to perish in the process of seeking her (*North* 42*)*. Muldoon extends such allusions further by using the first-person to mockingly invoke the goddess of his "*Aisling*" as Aurora, Flora, Artemidora, Venus, and even Anorexia, further suggesting she is gin-soaked because it is a "sloe-year" (ln 4)—as I noted above this is the fermented berry-drink of choice for Molly Bloom's lover, Blazes Boylan—and that he goddess' mouth bespeaks "a year haws" or sharp thorns, i.e. bitterness (ln 4). Finally, his speaker dramatically allies her overwhelming and disorienting "…much of a muchness" (ln 10), with hunger-striking republican prisoners in Belfast (*Quoof* 39).[60]

[60] For a compelling activist's history of Northern Irish hunger strikes and the ongoing "dirty", "no-wash", or "blanket" protests during confinements at Long Kesh, Armagh, and Maghaberry, and how the Irish language itself has formed a conscious mode of counter-narrative and community-building amongst republican political prisoners throughout the conflict for Irish independence in the colony/Free State/Republic and especially the Troubles in Northern Ireland, see Feargal Mac Ionnractaigh's *Language, Resistance, and Revival* (2013). Mac Ionnractaigh also notes the import of social movements and linguistic activism beyond the prison, such as the grassroots resistance of "Hidden Ulster" with regard to the struggle for state recognition of the Irish language in the North. Higgins also cites the importance of Pádraic Pearse and the Proclamation of the Republic to hunger strikers as an early emblem and model of protest and solidarity (*The Life and After-Lives of P.H. Pearse* 133-4).

Ó Cadhain had earlier shifted the register of *ailingí* in Irish to contemporary social contexts, specifically the issues raised through its stratified but still somewhat static iconography for and of women Irish-speakers, illustrated the short story, "*Aisling agus Aisling Eile*" ("An *Aisling* and Another *Aisling*") from *An tSraith Dha Thógáil* (1970). *An tSraith dhá Thógáil* directly translates as *The Stacking of the Sheaves*, [i.e. rows, strips, or spreading- ground] or layers, referring to both a topographical (or representational and symbolic) fields of grain, but also to endless strands, series, or motifs and reams of paper, published posthumously with his earlier collections *An tSraith an Lár* [The Center Sheaves] (1969) and *An tSraith Tógtha* [The Bound Sheaves] (1970), all three posthumously collected as *Sraitheanna* [Sheaves] in 1987. The collection as a whole shows that Ó Cadhain, like Deleuze's reading of Foucault after him, is also preoccupied by strata as both a material construct and a mode of writing, reading, and interpretation. "*Aisling agus Aisling Eile*" is a narrative constructed around addressing the oppressive marriage and the resultingly constrained and delimited personal freedoms of the wife, Molly Lappin, particularly embodied in her perspective on the suffocating-roteness of intercourse with her physically (and emotionally) crippled husband and her exhaustion from raising their children and running their hotel. Mrs. Lappin's unresolved *ennui* and longings abide, much like those of Molly Bloom, as she fantasizes of another life with a hotel guest who is a scholar and a poet. He is initially interested in her, but only as displaced cipher of a "feminized" language or "mother-tongue" and as she relates to finishing his book on Middle Irish poetry and impressing his doctoral supervisor, referred to throughout only as "*An Fear Mór*"—lit. "The Big Man", but in this sense, "The Man in Charge".

What the scholar views as the Rabelaisian filth of Lappin's Hotel and the grubby Lappin family, as well as Molly's directness about intercourse and power dynamics in relationships

reflects Ó Cadhain's critique of women's lack of sociopolitical autonomy not only with respect to their own bodies in terms of "wifely duty" and continual pregnancy (with no access to contraceptives), but also to financial and educational resources. Molly Lappin, for all intents and purposes, embodies the aforementioned image of the doubled "fold" through which Deleuze interprets Foucault, serving both as a frustrated visionary of a life of luxury far away with her hotel-guest and a disgustingly disappointing vision to the visiting poet/scholar himself. He is repulsed by finding her name and address scrawled on a stray sheaf aptly folded and left in his overcoat pocket. The misguided and pitiless linguistic tourist obviously still believes that "*gur mhó an páisiún dán deibhí ná bean ar bith*"—"the passion of a poem in *deibhí* [meter] exceeds that of any woman" (*SDT* 99).[61] From the moment he stumbles upon the Lappins' hotel, the idealized *Gaeltacht* the scholar imagined and hopes to inhabit based on his flat map collapses and dissolves, but it nonetheless remains infinitely more desirable to him than either the living Irish language or the multidimensional, complex conditions in which it exists and is spoken in the real world.

While I read Joyce's portrayal of Molly Bloom as middle-class housewife made *Gaea-Tellus* as ultimately essentializing in its celebration, equally obtuse is the perspective of the unnamed scholar that Molly Lappin is pathetic and grotesque for being "nothing more" than a *petite bourgeoisie* and lacking any pretensions of standing in as *Gaea-Tellus* or rather, a *spéirbhean*, a pure symbol who would be untainted by exhaustion, frustration, anxiety, or any other mortal cares. She is evidently meant to inspire and fulfill his own fantasies of Irish-

[61] *Deibhí* or in "*deibhidhe*" in Middle/Classical Irish, is considered the preferred meter of most classical Irish syllabic or stressed poetry known as "*dán díreach*" employed by the early bards. *Deibhí* is a form of interlocking rhyme that joins the half-stanzas of four seven syllable lines with the second rhyme word being a syllable longer than the first. This is commonly known as "*rinn agus airdrinn*". This verse is notable for its complex prosody and an uneven, asymmetrical rhythm or pulse, which accounts for its musicality.

speaking Ireland—but Ó Cadhain, however, uses the distance of third person omniscience as opposed to Joyce's use of the first-person immediacy of Molly Bloom in "Penelope" to present the absurdity of failing to appreciate Molly Lappin as a real woman of flesh and blood with longings of her own, and the inherent hypocrisy of the scholar in seeking to define her like the *Gaeltacht* itself in terms of a fixed boundary on the flat, one-track map of his mind and his implicit dissatisfaction that he can't speak for and through her. For the scholar, Molly Lappin fails as an emblem, a vessel into which, if you will, he can pour his future and through which he can envision it. In his preference for pristine representations over sympathetic realities, it is evident that the scholar himself is the cipher, not lonely, day-dreaming Mrs. Lappin. In writing her name and address for the scholar, Molly locates herself, claims her position, and her willingness to be seen, sought, found, and perhaps moved (both physically and emotionally). In discarding the scrap, the scholar is not merely dismissing her as a individual but the coordinates of the Irish language as a vital, local discourse tied to a specific place in his current historical moment, relegating it instead solely to the ancient rhymes found only in the flyleaves of his books.

Ní Dhomhnaill's hag vision in the "*Cailleach*/Hag," on the other hand, manages to strike a more fitting balance between the ordinary and the extraordinary, as well as written and oral traditions. Though it is not jubilant but portentous, the poem explicitly folds and redoubles the mythic and the real not by endeavoring toward universality. Instead, the poet consciously blends earlier particular mythemes with the realism and forthrightness of Ó Cadhain in order to explore the liminality between the quotidian biogeographical world and the psychic Otherworld to which she believes the real *Gaeltacht* and the Irish grant her access because the language itself maintains and permits a dual discourse that joins the two realms together. Ní Dhomhnaill

dreams of herself occupying the entirety of Ventry parish and the map that her form becomes is so overwhelming that this vision encroaches on the borders of her reality:

> *Taibhríodh dom gur mé an talamh*
> *gur me paróiste Fionntrá*
> *ar a fhaid is ar a leithead,*
> *soir, siar, faoi mar a shíneann sí.*
> *Gurbh é grua na Maoilinne grua*
> *mo chinn agus Slíabh an Iolair*
> *mo chliathán aniar;*
> *gurb iad leaca na gcnoc*
> *mo loirgne is slat*
> *mo dhroma is go raibh an fharraige*
> *ag líric mo dhá throigh*
> *ag dhá charraig sin na Páirce,*
> *Rinn Dá Bhárc na Fiannaíochta.*
>
> *Bhí an taibhreamh chomh beo*
> *nuair a dhúisíos ar maidin*
> *gur fhéachas síos féachaint an raibh,*
> *de sheans, mo dhá chois fliuch.*
>
> Once I dreamt I was the earth,
> the parish of Ventry its length and breadth,
> east and west, as far as it runs,
> that the brow of the Maoileann
> was my forehead, Mount Eagle
> the swell of my flank,
> the side of the mountain
> my shanks and my backbone,
> that the sea was lapping
> the twin rocks of my feet,
> the twin rocks of Parkmore
> from the old Fenian tales.
>
> That dream was so real
> that when I woke the next morning
> I glanced down to see if, perchance,
> my feet were still wet.
> (Ní Dhomhnaill, trans. Montague, "*Cailleach*/Hag" ll 1-14 *PD*)

This specific geography is pivotal because it is not the world in *toto* but a location that has precise personal and mytho-historical resonances for the poet. Sjoestedt explains that in local

lore, "Munster owes its fertility to Anu, goddess of prosperity, and she is adored there: the 'Two Paps of Anu' [*Dá Chích Anann]* are called after her" (24). It is not a strategic traversal of all of Ireland, but rather, an intimate cartography that sets itself in opposition to that history in order to establish a progressive dialectic to question portrayals of women. As Maryna Romanets describes, "Her vista blends natural and human shapes, place names and parts of her body. Ní Dhomhnaill's somnambulist cartographer charts her parish-of-Ventry-of-her-childhood-as-body map, sinking into predictive visions of dream quests and searches for omens from legend" ("Cartographers" 328). This blending is clearly ruptured by the line breaks that separate and isolate individual parts of the body, as if it is a disjointed collection of parts or landmarks rather than a contiguous, integrated whole.

Indeed, her progression becomes totally de-personalized as there are a "forehead," a "flank," "shanks," a "backbone," and "the twin rocks of my feet." These parts are a dis-individuated, fragmented Frankenstein's creature litany, not a cohesive embodiment that suggests a unified subjectivity, a complete person. Montague's translation of terms like "flank" and "shanks" adds a similar half-rhyme that is present in the asymmetrical phrasing of the original Irish, though his is in reference to body instead of location ("...Sliabh an Iolair/mo chliathán aniar"), and the use of words that would describe the anatomy of cattle as opposed to more humanistic anatomical terms like "belly" or "thigh" also captures the speaker's sense of alienation from her own, massive, monstrous corpus. When the speaker of "*Cailleach*/Hag" first describes herself, she is not an individual at all but a cartography, and it is only later that her body takes on any distinctive sexualized attributes.[62]

[62] Compare this to the anatomy presented in poems like "*Oileán*/Island" from Chapter 2, in which the speaker catalogues her male lover/muse in stark contrast to the fragmentation of the sonneteering tradition.

As far as the legendary foundations of such an image, there are a wide variety from the Early Irish orature and literature, plus the *aisling* tradition, all previously co-opted by Mangan, Pearse, Yeats, and Joyce, among others. Specifically, images from the Early Irish sources include:

> the *Cailleach Bherri* [sic], Hag of Berre, shaper and guardian of the earth, a giantess performing the geotectonic function. Then come ambivalent, multifaceted hags who undergo a metamorphosis like a hideous hag from the origin-myth about Níall, where she is transformed into a beautiful woman who declares she is Sovereignty. (Romanets, "Cartographers" 329)

Ambivalence, much like Joyce's approach to the Plum Hags, is evident in the poem. The speaker's initial presentation and emotional separation from the asexualized map/body belies an uncertainty about its function and the image's intent. The vision is inspirational but also distinctly threatening. As Sarah Broom argues, her "identification with the land is for the [speaker] a fantasy of power" (335). Ní Dhomhnaill herself has maintained that

> [w]hat women find when they go [into the deeper levels of the psyche] is very different from what men have written about. That's the really exciting thing. Lots of women's poetry has so much to reclaim: there's so much psychic land, a whole continent, a whole Atlantis under the water to reclaim. It's like this island, again in Irish folklore, which surfaces from under the water every seven years, and if somebody can go out to it and light a fire or do something, it will stay up forever. (qtd. in Keen 28-29)

While Paul Keen has maintained that "in using these images Ní Dhomhnaill reinforces rather than re-imagines the stereotypes about gender that she elsewhere attempts to unsettle" (29), it is evident from her poetry that the topography of this psychic island, its wrenching precipices and mournful valleys, is iterated in complex and oft disturbing terms that purposefully question the nationalist tradition of Ireland as exultant postcolonial nation of "milk and honey" or in Joyce's biting critique, "milk and money." As Keen's own reading of the *Immram*/Voyage sequence would in fact suggest, what she refers to as "the Atlantis" island when found, is clearly not an ideal; it is an ephemeral, heterogeneous, mysterious, conflicted, heteroglossic, and sometimes

dangerous place requiring an arduous emotional journey, as is the mountainous expanse in "*Cailleach/*Hag." For although the hag/land is definitely large and in charge, we are left uncertain as to whether or not that energy is benevolent.

Ní Dhomhnaill has explained this "hag energy" of the so-called Tooth Mother in interviews as something "that destroys you, creates psychic dismemberment literally, sends teeth and hands and legs flying all over the place" (qtd. in Romanets "Cartographers" 329). The corollary of the swirling chaos embodied in what Romanets describes as an "invariably ugly female spirit" are also the generative creative forces that drive Ní Dhomhnaill's poetic process (Ibid). This is clear when the hag-vision crosses the liminal borderland between dream and reality, when the speaker wonders "if, perchance,/my feet were still wet" (trans. Montague ll 13-14).

The importance of the Otherworld as an occasional source of psychic terror but also chthonic inspiration and feminine power is only confirmed in the poem's final stanza when the vision recurs but is explicitly gendered for Ní Dhomhnaill's daughter:

> *…'Ó, a Mhaim, táim sceimhlithe.*
> *Tuigeadh dom go raibh na conic ag bogadaíl,*
> *gur fathach mná a bhí ag luascadh a cíocha,*
> *is go n-éireodh sí aniar agus mise d'iosfaidh.'*
>
> …'O, Mam, I'm scared stiff,
> I thought I saw the mountains heaving
> like a giantess, with her breasts swaying
> about to loom over and gobble me up.' (trans. Montague ll 30-33)

Therein, the mythic vision of "hag energy" is passed down from mother to daughter and shared by them both in all its terrible magnificence as it is yet again subtly inscribed onto a specific landscape in the latter's frightened concern over the *Dá Chích Anann* or Two Paps of Anu. These

two mountains near Killarney are widely purported to be the goddess' embodiment in the topography of Munster, each topped by an ancient stone cairn, often considered to represent nipples, cairns that archaeologist Frank Coyne believes may be small "passage graves" or contain "burial cists" (21-24), and a line of stones known—as in Ní Dhomhnaill's aforementioned reference to "hag energy"—as *Na Fiacla*/The Teeth, which form the metaphorical *mammae* or *ubera dentata* of the poem. The Teeth are believed to indicate a processional route marking the two hills as a sacred prehistorical site associated with the nearby *Cathair Crobh Dearg* known as "The City", a circular stone enclosure to the northeast that includes what may be the ruins of a megalithic tomb, an earthen mound, an ogham stone, a holy well, and a stone altar inscribed with a cross (Ibid 46).

Like "*Cailleach*/Hag," these sites themselves seemingly chart the progression from birth to death and rebirth, marked in their case by the feast of *Lá Bealtaine* (Ibid 50), now Christianized as May Day, which marks the beginning of summer. In *In the Shadow of the Paps of Anu,* local folklorist Dan Cronin claims that long-held pre-Christian celebrations, prayers, and rituals of purification at *Cathair Crobh Dearg* on this date were ameliorated in 1925 by the first celebration of a Mass. During which, the priest is said to have proclaimed in his homily, "The pagan danger is now past. Paganism is dead, or rather, all the best elements have been absorbed into Christianity" (48-49). The annual Masses continue; a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, herself arguably a slightly revised counterpart to the early Mother Goddess, now stands at the site; and the music and dancing that ended after World War II have now been reintroduced.

This oblique reference to *Dá Chich Annan* and environs extends the local reach of the poem slightly to the nearby *Sliabh Luachra* region, considered by Corkery to be the cultural and "literary capital" of Ireland, home to numerous traditional musicians and performers, including

eminent masters of the *aisling,* Aodhgán Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, and contemporary poet Bernard O'Donoghue, as well as birthplace of the "father" of modern Irish, Patrick S. Dinneen. S.J., of dictionary fame. The connection also personalizes the work in the sense of humanizing or further anthropomorphizing the geography, applying an explicitly Irish-language cultural context, as well as syncretizing both pre-Christian and Catholic traditions.[63]

In other poems throughout her *oeuvre*, such as "*An tSeanbhean Bhocht*/The Shan Van Vocht," Ní Dhomhnaill has continued to engage with the long and haunting tradition of representations of Ireland as a termagant crone, portraying her as senile, malicious, and repugnant, describing her own task as "…saying/Anything, every old cliché in the book, anything at all/to get this old bitch to shut the fuck up" (trans. Fallon, *PD* 131). She complains about the insouciance of "*Caitlín*/Cathleen" in *The Astrakhan Cloak (*1999): "For you'd think to listen to her she'd never heard/that discretion is the better part, that our names are writ/in water, that the greenest stick will wizen" (trans. Muldoon, 39), and the speaker of"*Mo Theaglach*/[My] Household" insists that this figure is the Irish equivalent of the raving madwoman kept in her attic, "Nobody pays any notice, especially not/When she screams she's Caitlín Ní hUallacháin./I met her one time on one of her good days/And she told me her real name was Grace Poole" (trans. Ní Chuilleanáin, *PD* 153). All three translators in turn invoke clichés in their versions to achieve the effect that in the original verse Ní Dhomhnaill is desperately struggling to come to terms with these pervasive and pernicious visual, textual, musical, dramatic, and memorialized tropes surrounding the *cailleach*.

In *Inventing Ireland,* Declan Kiberd appears to dismiss Ní Dhomhnaill's endeavors as mere, knee-jerk "programmatic assaults on the Shan Van Vocht," but I would argue they are

[63] For more on these issues in Ní Dhomhnaill, see Chapter 2.

necessary ones for many Irish women poets, as Eavan Boland demonstrates throughout her own *oeuvre* as well as in the accounts in *Object Lessons* (1995), and the range of women's poetry Ní Dhomhnaill herself included as editor of the fourth volume of the *Field Day* anthology on women's poetry (1995). They are a crucial and painful as well as a humorous acknowledgment of the troubling representations of women, their bodies, their voices, and their conflation with the State, a tradition Kiberd himself makes much of for 836 pages, and a tradition that women writers must too address, admittedly in slightly briefer terms. For what can one do with the weight of such a past, a past of such tremendous suffering, silence, as well as rhetorical, linguistic, and actual violence?—except either weep or laugh at it—or rather, both together as Samuel Beckett's titular *Molloy* (1951) would perhaps reflect, since "Tears and laughter, [are] so much Gaelic to [him]" (37), lest they become so for us.[64] It is evident that since "*Cailleach*/Hag" and other poems exist, Ní Dhomhnaill is able to effectively marshal the forces of her emotions and the dangerous crone of inspiration to transmute the otherwise unspeakable into text, yet again reclaiming what Kristeva and Oliver call "psychic space". While this same iconography has enabled numerous male writers to project the speech of Irish women and thus the Irish nation, Ní Dhomhnaill, pivotally, opts to speak for herself.

The glorious transformation implied in the *cailleach/spéirbhean* transmogrification is detailed in Ní Dhomhnaill's own translation of the poem "*Primavera*" that appears following the aforementioned essay "Mis and Dubh Ruis: A Parable of Psychic Transformation" in *Selected Essays* in which she catalogues her generative encounter with a transfigured and resplendent

[64] Beckett's protagonists emphasize through their own muteness and the recursiveness of their failing memories, visions (in both senses), and physiognomies, as well as physical and emotional debilities that Irish history should not and must never be forgotten; for then, like the waiting of *Godot*, the paralysis of *Endgame*, and the erasure of *Krapp's Last Tape*, not to mention the dark comedies of *Murphy, Watt*, and the other two novels of the Trilogy, there is little pleasure or closure at all, as the same problematic actions are destined to be repeated on and on *ad nauseam, ad infinitum*, without any hope of relief for either the characters, the author, or his audience or readership.

Muse:

> *D'athraigh gach aon ní nuair a ghaibh sí féin thar bráid.*
> *Bhainfeadh sí deora áthais as na clocha glasa, deirim leat.*
> *Na héanlaithe beaga a bhí go dti seo faoi smálm*
> *d'osclaíodar a scornach is thosnaigh ag píopáil*
> *ar chuma feadóige stain í láimh gheocaigh, amhail*
> *is gur chuma leo diabhal an raibh nó nach raibh nóta acu,*
> *Bláthanna fiáine a bhí chomh cúttgail, chomh humhal*
> *ag lorg bheith istigh go faichilleach ar chiumhaiseanna*
> *na gceapach mbláth, táid anois go rábach féach an falcaire fiain*
> *ag baint radharc na súl díom go hobann lena réiltíní craorag.*
>
> Everything changed as soon as her nibs passed this way,
> she'd bring tears of joy to the very stones, I'm telling you.
> The little birds who were up to now in disgrace
> have opened their throats and started piping out
> for all the world like a tinwhistle in the hands
> of a teenage boy, as if they don't care a damn
> whether they have or haven't a note in them.
> The wild flowers, once so shy and servile,
> begging permission to lodge on the edges of the flowerbeds,
> are now unrestrained, look at the pimpernel
> blinding my eyes with its sudden profusion of scarlet flowers.
> ("*Primavera*" ll 1-11; "Mis" 88)

The Hiberno-English slang "her nibs" for the person in question, could also be translated as a definite "herself" or in the McGuckian translation "her ladyship,"[65] which all connote the importance and emphasis of the original Irish "*sí féin*" to suggest that the woman is entirely self-possessed and set apart from the crowd (ll 1). The Muse's frenetic, lively energy invigorates inanimate stone, causes the birds to burst forth in song, and emboldens the otherwise "shy and servile" garden of blooms, which refuse to be limited by set boundaries and willingly as well as willfully cross borders of all kinds.

The flowers and the birdsong, I would argue, are metaphors for Ní Dhomhnaill's use of

[65] See *The Water-Horse*. Winston-Salem: Wake Forest UP, 2000. 93.

Irish. The liveliness she sees in the world is an echo of the liveliness she finds in the language, specifically in the harmonious music of her poetry, which twitters and jangles afresh like the song of the poem's birds, perhaps as a natural representation of the title's allusion to the famous movement of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Accordingly, for Ní Dhomhnaill,

> Irish in the Irish context is the language of Mothers, because everything that has been done to women has been done to Irish. It has been marginalized, its status has been taken from it, it has been reduced to the language of small farmers and fisherman, and yet it has survived and survived in extraordinary richness. (qtd. Keen 30)

That "extraordinary richness" or as I will follow Ní Dhomhnaill in describing it further as "elasticity…depth and scope" in Chapter 2, enables a complementary rich allusiveness in her work. The poem's title "*Primavera*" or Italian for "Spring," is also a reference to the famous Sandro Botticelli painting traditionally given the same name that heralds the rebirth of the Earth in that season and depicts the goddess of love, Venus, and goddess of Spring, Flora, as well as the three Graces in similarly exuberant action in the trees and foliage, amidst a flutter of petals, joining Ní Dhomhnaill's personal divine Muse to another mythic history. The world outside the speaker's door is now abuzz with possibility, humming with joy, exploding in a riot of rich hues, "a sudden profusion of scarlet flowers" that also match the pop of red color in the painting's garments, and represent the transformation of the nymph, Chloris, into the goddess Flora after she has been ravished by the west wind, Zephyr, as the image progresses from right to left.[66] Flowers and greenery stream from Chloris' mouth and then cover and spill from Flora's gown in red and pink, until they become the ornate embroidery of the red, blue, and gold sash adorning the obviously fecund Venus, who is clad in blue and enshrined in a bower of trees that form a

[66] Cf. image of the Botticelli's *Primavera* (c. 1478) at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primavera_(painting)#/media/File:Botticelli-primavera.jpg

small grotto or archway in the painting's center. The three figures' clothing becomes increasingly less transparent, the hair less disheveled and more intricately styled, and their bellies growing slightly more pronounced, as a pregnant woman's does. The triad also progresses from being barefoot to being shod in vine-like sandals.

Arguably in typical Renaissance symbology, Botticelli not only conflates pagan iconography with Christian but also traces the shift from one to the other, or shows how Flora, with the rose motif detail on her skirt and the floral crown, and Venus, enshrined in her grotto, in particular, could easily stand in for or be transposed into the Virgin Mary, whose statue is also traditionally crowned with flowers in Spring during ceremonies in May, the month dedicated to Our Lady in the Catholic liturgical calendar. Christ himself, is often represented along with his mother as a rose (from which Catholics also derive the practice of the Rosary) throughout Medieval and Early Modern typology. Moreover, in the painting, blossoms replace words (in addition to perhaps transforming into the Word incarnate) and vice-versa in the poem as well, linking natural and verbal production through the poet's ekphrastic reference and connecting pre-Christian and Christian spiritual modes.[67]

Although Ní Dhomhnaill claims, "I have not yet personally met the *spéirbhean,*" there nevertheless, "does seem to be a way forward, and I live in hope" ("Mis and Dubh Ruis" 87). Despite his incredibly pejorative phrasing, Paul Keen is accurate when he explains that "Ní Dhomhnaill's sense of her muse is not without its own feminist logic." It is reassuring to know that even a feminist can somehow, in his opinion, evidently still manage to possess some logic, however flawed he believes her intentions "…to reverse the projection of male creators of their

[67] For more on this, see Chapter 2.

'inner woman' onto women, revealing a displaced history of the [female or] male muses of women writers that echoes the subordinate history of women writers" (28). The poet's moving and motivating change, the endeavor to recover that muffled history by listening and singing out herself, is achieved in the final stanza of "*Primavera*":

> *Bhíos-sa, leis ag caoi go ciúin ar ghéag,*
> *i bhfolach faoi dhuilleog fige, éalaithe i mo dhú dara,*
> *ag cur suas stailce, púic orm chun an tsaoil.*
> *Thógfadh sé i bhfad níos mó ná meangadh gáire*
> *ó aon spéirbhean chun mé a mhealladh as mo shliogán,*[68]
> *bhí an méid sin fógartha thall is abhus agam roimh ré.*
> *Ach do dhein sí é, le haon searradh amháin dá taobh,*
> *le haon sméideadh meidhreach, caithiseach, thar a gualainn*
> *do chorraigh sí na rútaí ionam, is d'fhág le míobhán*
> *im' cheann, gan cos ná láimh fum, ach mé corrathónach, guagach.*
>
> I too was quietly weeping, far out on a limb,
> gone to ground under a fig-leaf, become a grumpy old thing,
> in fits of sulks, vexed generally with life.
> I had announced beforehand, far and wide,
> that it would take a lot more than a winsome smile
> from a fair damsel to coax me out of my shell.
> But she did it, with one shake of a milky thigh,
> with a laughing, lascivious beam out over her shoulder
> she wrenched up my roots, and left me addled, high and dry
> footless, footloose, fanciful and fretful. (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 12-21)

Once again, the use of various clichéd idiomatic expressions in inventive ways and in vivid combinations ("far out on a limb," "far and wide," "gone to ground under a fig-leaf," "grumpy old thing," "out of my shell," "a fair damsel"—though technically Ní Dhomhnaill directly uses *spéirbhean*—"sky-queen" in Irish) throughout this final stanza mimetically recuperate the poetic

[68] "*As mo shliogán*"—"From my shell" is an obvious reference to Botticelli's other masterwork, *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1486) also at the Uffizi in which the goddess rises forth from the seafoam from a half-shell scallop. In this image, Venus is further adapted into the Catholic vision by functioning both as a new or pure Eve and the motif of the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Stella Maris*/Star of the Sea (a simultaneous play on her name and Venus itself as a celestial body in relation to *Polaris* or the lodestar, serving as a metaphorical guiding light to Christians, especially sailors and travelers), as in Our Lady's frequent depiction in statues housed within shell-like grottos of white and blue for veneration. A shell is also visually suggestive of the vulva and thus, the intellectual birthing process of creating a poem.

struggle for innovation as well as the Irish linguistic tendency to cling to tried and true maxims or familiar, colloquial and traditional patterns of speech or commonplaces from both Early orature and literature that span generations:

> When a writer overtly takes up a narrative or image pattern which has been used and re-used over centuries, and re-creates it in a new style, form and context, she or he is effectively acknowledging the extent to which creativity is founded on a re-working of existing writings or narratives. The oral tradition of storytelling has been even more subversive in this respect, as originality in storytelling is based on the *manner* in which familiar narratives are recounted and embellished. The stories are seen as shared heritage or store of tradition—*seanchas*, in Ireland. (Broom 326)

Thus, Ní Dhomhnaill's simultaneous immersion in Irish culture and use of syncretic allusions or "[*ag corraigh] na rútaí [inti]*"— the "wrenching of her roots" indicate the value of both native tradition and the postmodern appropriation of varied and cosmopolitan mythic imagery to her poetic strategies. Whereas the speaker/poet was definitely alienated from the map-body of the Muse and thus her own body in "*Cailleach*/Hag," the Muse in "*Primavera*" is a complete and nourishing feminine being (or at least intriguing as opposed to terrifying and masculine as in "*Stigmata*" or "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis", the latter is discussed in Chapter 2), whose figure and gaze entice and enrapture. The sky-queen muse also exists in an Edenic imaginative space that reconfigures the household garden as mythohistorical site of pleasure but also creative tension. There remain vestiges of the hectic composition process ("left me addled, high and dry") and some insecurity and concern ("footless" and "fretful") regarding the finished text, but I would insist that despite this, what remains is that which Ní Dhomhnaill herself has cautiously identified as "hope".

Amidst the chaos and uncertainty in a still deeply conflicted modern Ireland and in the face of an always unsettling past of silence and repression of nearly every imaginable form, a history in which men from the Celtic bards and the Jacobite polemicists to the Revivalist

translators and Joyce and Yeats to Heaney and Muldoon presume to speak for Irish women while at the beckon and "clarion" call of their own Muses—there remains beauty in the world that can stun, befuddle, and awe, that can energize and inspire, that enables Ní Dhomhnaill to "replac[e] the roseate chamber with a profusion of wilder blooms" (Mahaffey, "Heirs" 116). Both "*Cailleach*/Hag" and "*Primavera*" represent the poet's laden and intricate hymns to Éire that offer tribute but also critique of "*an tseanbhean bhocht*" and a fresh perspective on "*an spéirbhean*," mapping the images anew to keep them relevant and moving (in both senses) for Ní Dhomhnaill and her readers, not as fixed words appended to a flat diagram of a single, monolithic *Gaeltacht*, but multidimensional "folded" borderzones that are local but also continually shifting, intersected, and inflected by various other forms, modes, and languages.

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's Traumatic/Erotic Map: Transubstantiating the Body of Ireland

In the collections *Pharaoh's Daughter* (1990) and *The Water Horse* (2000), poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill further considers the implications of (post)colonial cartography, which I addressed in Chapter 1, by reconstructing individual bodies as figurative atlases of the Irish landscape. By using strategies of direct address and by questioning both the dominance of English and traditional gender dynamics in her poems, Ni Dhomhnaill explicitly interrogates the practices of literal, rhetorical, and spiritual map-making in Ireland and their uses as tools for the marginalization of women. She encourages her readers to reconsider Catholic, Celtic, and sexual rituals as *modus operandi* that can in fact be separated from the repressive institution of the post-Famine Catholic Church in Ireland as well as from the forces of imperial, nationalist, and poetic patriarchies, serving as a necessary endeavor to claim and chart newly liberated territory.

Historian Stephen Howe believes that "to make a map of a landscape is always not only to simplify it, but to impose one's meaning on it and even, at the extreme, to do violence to it and its inhabitants" (6),[1] while eminent cartographer and English immigrant to the West of Ireland Tim Robinson disputes throughout his writings and his own maps of the region. Robibson contends naming and mapping are part of the process or "mode of dwelling in a place" (*Setting Foot* 164). It is essential that my understanding of Robinson's use of "dwelling" involves only in

[1] See also Joe Cleary's incisive, albeit brief critique of the inherent contradictions of Howe's claims regarding Ireland's supposedly "exceptional" colonial status in *Outrageous Fortune* (15, Note 16) .

the sense of (in)habitation but also intellectual and biogeographical reflection or engagement; he concomitantly attests that his maps themselves are always already incomplete, evolving and inherently relational, dependent not only on the landscape or environment but its interplay with the human element or what I would term "sociolocal" history and lore. In his reading, much like Howe, Gerald Smyth is largely and somewhat gauchely trivializing of the important and complex roles of affect, memory, and the entanglement of particular or sustained encounter(s) as part(s) of lived experience within geospatial critique: "Everyone should be the mapper/namer of his own environment' may be [Robinson's] intended message; 'Come to the West of Ireland and save your soul' may be how the work is actually interpreted" (54).

Ní Dhomhnaill, clearly not as unnecessarily dismissive and more aligned with the Robinsonian spirit of "geophany" or "the showing forth of the Earth" (*Setting Foot* 164), endeavors to indicate how mapping and gendering space, as well as naming *in a particular language*, i.e. the largely marginalized language of Irish, in fact adds dimensionality by addressing and redressing the long history of political, religious, and linguistic violence done to the Irish people. She does so by imagining Ireland as a disturbed female in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/ Miraculous Grass" and "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" and as a sexualized male in "*Oileán*/Island." While many critics[2] of Ní Dhomhnaill have recognized her staging of Irish female sexual subjectivity through cartographic metaphors, it is my argument that Ní Dhomhnaill also uses them to consider the abject underside of the erotic. This is not as Howe or Smyth contends, a simplification, but rather the poet's choice is to consciously demarcate an arena for her work both within and outside of prior dominant systems of feminine representation, such as the *aislingí* I discussed in Chapter 1, a deliberate "folding" of these discourses and

[2] See the Haberstroh, Broom, Romanets, inter al.

spaces back upon themselves. Ní Dhomhnaill thus hopes to alter both the cultural and political boundaries and the social and linguistic networks of a largely Anglicized, historically Catholic postcolonial state like Ireland, particularly the metaphorical maps that attend to the territories of the psyche, the soul, and the body. Mapping then is not always necessarily violent but can instead function as a deliberate subversion of the contested spaces, disputed places, and a thoughtful recuperation of the fraught individuals touched by many centuries of clergical, colonial, nationalist, and masculinist cartographies. The bodily-spatial turn in Ní Dhomhnaill's verse (in)forms the politico-feminist linguistic turn and vice-versa—mapping serves as the ideal metaphor in service of charting these ideologies and discourses together, a necessary way of situating the speakers and reterritorializing space in the Deleuzian sense.[3] The close readings of the poems themselves are as such necessarily aligned with my ongoing discussion of representations of women in Ireland as well the cultural politics of language and the lyric.

To effectively undertake this re-territorialization, Ní Dhomhnaill complements traditional Irish Catholic perspectives on the body and spiritual identity with a focus on contemporary feminist theories. By bringing these seemingly disparate ideological modes together, Ní Dhomhnaill is able to reconfigure and re-imagine the terms through which her speakers fashion their identities. In a joint-interview with fellow Irish woman poet Medbh McGuckian in *Southern Review,* Ní Dhomhnaill describes Julia Kristeva's theories of abjection and desire as central to her poetic discourse:

> I've been reading Julia Kristeva, recently, and she's very good on how Western discourse has been predicated on the *logos*, the inscribing of meaning. And what we [Medbh McGuckian and I] do is not the inscribing of male meaning, it is the inscribing of something else, whether it is female erotic desire or what, I don't know,

[3] For a discussion of the various elements and epistemologies (e.g. philosophy, ecocriticism, postmodern geography, inter alia) of the resurgence and re-emergence of a "spatial turn" in contemporary Irish studies, see Gerald Smyth's *Space and the Irish Cultural Imaginary* (2001).

> but it is something else….Our *logos* is based on women's experience, our lives, rather than on Platonic discourse. (McGuckian and Ní Dhomhnaill 596-597)

Ní Dhomhnaill's personal commitment to French feminist thought is plainly evident in the three poems I discuss, and as such, my argument will be supplemented by feminist theorists of the (abject) body who likewise engage with these thinkers, such as Hélène Cixous, Kelly Oliver, Judith Butler, and of course, Kristeva herself. Ní Dhomhnaill's syncretic approach to Catholicism, her use of the Irish language, her translations—both in the literal and metaphorical (in terms of "translating" or adapting traditional beliefs) sense—and her use of cartography, which was so central to centuries of sociopolitical and religious ways of framing Ireland and its people—respond to these theories and ground them (pun intended) in a particularly Irish context, imbuing them with a spirituality that recuperates the old, thus making the new mode even more resonant for her speakers.

In "Approaching Abjection," Kristeva describes the experience of abjection as "immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it." The abject "beseeches" what Kristeva calls a "discharge, a convulsion, a crying out" that illustrates the limits of our bodies and subjectivities, representing "a weight of meaningless about which there is nothing insignificant…that if I acknowledge it, annihilates me" (230-32). Bodily fluids and refuse show us our abjection, indicating the permeable border between life and death where one's insides meet the outside. Abjection thus violates one's borders and creates psychic ambiguity. For Kristeva and Ní Dhomhnaill, abjection provides a theoretical context to address and ultimately challenge physical, social, and emotional trauma and oppression—a challenge that the poet takes up explicitly through her verse.

Ní Dhomhnaill's poetic discourse permits her speakers to confront their self-alienation, attempt to narrativize it and come to terms with their abjection in the hope of achieving its polar correlative, *jouissance*, which can only be attained if one recognizes the fractured, heterogeneous flux of our egos and our bodies. The poet understands that abjection demands body-consciousness, but not in a delimited way; this body-consciousness is the problematic consequence but also the celebration of writing "bisexual" or "androgynous" discourse (Cixous 421; Woolf, *Room* 97-101). When one recognizes her abjection, she is also able to engage with seemingly conflicted aspects of her desire, personality, or gender, without suppression or abstention. For a writer to effectively create what Hélène Cixous refers to as "carnal and passionate body words" in her famous "white ink" of *jouissance* (423, 419), Kristeva would likewise demand that previously taboo bodily functions, fluids, and feelings must not only be tacitly acknowledged but embraced. Ní Dhomhnaill's poems demonstrate the liminality of both our subjectivities and our bodies, illustrating that joining what Kristeva calls "the symbolic" (i.e. repressive, dominant) and "the semiotic" (i.e. subversive, imaginative) realms of language is a necessary condition in order to manage one's abjection.

The abject corresponds to a mappable frontier, in which we must stage what Kelly Oliver and Kristeva identify as "intimate revolts," such as "art, religion, and literature," that must be used to name our desire, interpret it, and thereby cathartically reclaim our "psychic space":

> For Kristeva, we can learn to live with the specter of abjection by elaborating the processes through which we become subjects….By *cathartic* Kristeva means to displace or dissolve what she calls semiotic forces associated with repression, while interpretation or analysis names them. Interpretation with its naming operations performs several transformative functions. (Oliver 71)

As I will show, Ní Dhomhnaill's verse clearly ascribes to this Kristevan model in which naming and creating are necessary in tandem; her speakers' sublimation of their seemingly defiled bodies

and their speaking out despite their at-first silenced voices, enable them to reach the *jouisser* embodied "sublime" on the other side of the abject (Kristeva 236). This dual perspective allows Ní Dhomhnaill to explore both traumatic and erotic postcolonial Irish bodies and subjectivities by subverting and carefully manipulating traditions from the Irish- and the English-language literary canons and thereby examining the structures of Catholic, imperialist, nationalist, and poetic patriarchies. The poet is only able to do so with a focus on both topographical and anatomical cartography that permits her speakers to locate themselves in response to historical discourses about both Ireland and women's bodies in both Anglophone and Hibernophone literatures and cultures. Since prior scholarship has concentrated on the gratifying aspects of these atlases, this chapter will investigate both the pleasurable and the painful possibilities of the poems' sexual encounters but emphasize her speakers' struggles with the latter.

Essential to reading the "maps" of Ireland depicted in each of the poems is that even in the face of trauma or repression, the Irish individuals, whether they be male or female, manage to retain their agency. A full grasp of Ní Dhomhnaill's project is only possible with an understanding of particularly Irish idioms and customs that are inscribed on the body by the Catholic Church and patriarchal culture. Her speakers construct their identities through anatomizations that are aware of these conventions even as they resist them. They use specifically geographical metaphors that enable them to effectively chart their own course *as Ghaeilge*,[4] achieving personal and sexual fulfillment through conscious acts of verbal and written self-actualization.

[4] Literally "from the Irish." In addition to the famous article from *The New York Times Book Review*, "Why I Choose to Write in Irish: The Corpse that Sits Up and Talks Back," Ní Dhomhnaill has further discussed both the political and personal importance of the language in "*Cé Leis Tú*?" in *My Self, My Muse: Irish Women Poets Reflect on Life and Art*.

The body-consciousness of Ní Dhomhnaill's figurative maps is always already united with her concerns regarding the nature of poetic voice, specifically her commitment to writing in Irish.[5] Irish is a language long-repressed as a result of colonial oppression and the death or immigration of the majority of its speakers during *An Gorta Mór*/The Great Hunger throughout the 1840s and then Revived and "revitalized" during the heyday of Irish nationalism at the turn of the last century.[6] Although John Stuart Mill, Northrop Frye, and Jonathan Culler famously claim that "lyric is radically turned away from any actual hearer and is preoccupied instead with the poet's own efforts to sound like a poet" (Waters 3), I would insist that for Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, an Irish-language woman poet, awareness of one's audience is absolutely essential to gain readership in Irish and in translation through the publication of multiple dual-language editions.[7] Most importantly, she uses these editions to verbalize the abject cartographies drawn on the bodies of Irish women and challenge the conflation of them with the Irish State. I agree with William Waters's assessment that address is integral to the project of the lyric poet and "every coherent utterance aligns itself to, is coherent with respect to, some conception of its intelligibility, and intelligibility means uptake, receivability" (5). Or in

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[5] See especially the final poem in *Pharaoh's Daughter*: "*Ceist na Teangan*/The Language Issue," which also appeared alongside her aforementioned article in the *NYT Book Review.*

[6] There were several key organizations involved in the Nationalist revival of the Irish language and Irish culture. *Conradh na Gaeilge*/The Gaelic League with its famous motto—"*Sinn féin /Sinn féin amháin*!—Ourselves, ourselves alone!—was founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893 to focus on teaching and encouraging people to speak the Irish language; *Cumann Lúthchleas Gael*/The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded by Michael Cusack (notoriously satirized as The Citizen in Joyce's *Ulysses*) in 1884 to promote traditional Irish sports like hurling, camogie, and Gaelic football, as well as the Irish language, Irish dance, and traditional music; lastly, Celtic Revivalists promoted the use of traditional themes from Irish mythology and history in literature, art, and drama, for which W.B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory founded the Abbey Theatre in 1904. For more on early Revivalists like Pearse and Mangan, see Chapter 1. For more on Yeats, see Chapter 3. For more on *An Gorta Mór*, see Chapter 5.

[7] See *Rogha Dánta: Selected Poems* (1986), *Pharaoh's Daughter* (1990), *The Astrakhan Cloak* (1992), *The Water Horse* (2000), and *The Fifty Minute Mermaid* (2007).

Judith Butler's terms, "speaking is already a kind of doing, a form of action, one that is already a moral practice and a way of life" (*Giving an Account of Oneself* 126).

Lyric address in these terms is valorizing and transformative. The vocative apostrophe concretizes and authenticates one's own subjectivity as well as another's. It reaches out and pleads for the reader's attentions. It individualizes but also unites. Like the Biblical prophets, marginalized postcolonial women poets in particular cry out in the wilderness in the hopes of engendering a response and spurring their readers on to action. Particularly for minority-language poets, despite Mill, Frye, and Culler's respective assertions to the contrary, lyric must be addressed and is decidedly meant to be heard, not merely *overheard*. Using other theorists of the lyric, I will demonstrate that for Ní Dhomhnaill address is a means of placing Irish-language female speakers on the map, of locating them through poetic utterance within the specific contexts of social, political, and religious discourses and histories, of dissolving the painful borders and repressive silences created by Catholicism, British imperialism, Irish nationalism, and/or the Western canonical tradition. Focusing on the cultural constraints placed on both the female and the Irish(-language voice and) body, it is my contention that both in Irish and in translation, Ní Dhomhnaill (and her translators) use(s) the form of the lyric and the transubstantive power of text to stage an alternative, postcolonial feminist geography of Ireland.

Ní Dhomhnaill provides perspective on the traumatized, silent female body reconfigured as a textual map in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass"[8] published originally in the eponymous 1984 collection, which is introduced by a tale from noted West Kerry *scéalaí*, Cáit

[8] Heaney's translation of "*suaithinseach*" as "miraculous" extends beyond the usual semantic range of the Irish, which generally means "remarkable" or "unusual," but I feel the extraordinary remarkableness of the grass in the poem —remarkableness that renders the word itself entirely insufficient—the grass' sheer, transformative "miraculous" power—suits the specific context and intent of the original Irish.

"an Bab" Feiritéar, widely considered "another Peig Sayers"—that anticipates the events of the titular verse.[9] The poem expounds on the traditional lore of a man who tells a local scholar of his daughter, "*an cailín bocht…ana*[10]*-bhreoite*"—a "poor, very ailing girl" on the brink of death, whose illness confounds many. In the tale this girl never directly speaks, and by using the first person Ní Dhomhnaill recounts the girl's confession of the spiritual, emotional, and bodily crisis as a result of her appearance at the communion rail causing the priest to drop the sacrament.[11] The title itself plays with two nearly-identical common Irish words: "féar"—"grass" and, particularly appropriate to the context of the speaker's implicit narrative of heterosexual erotic woe, "fear"—"man". Its first stanza is a potentially scandalous sexualized address to that priest: "*Nuair a bhís do shagart naofa/i lár an Aifrinn, faoi do róbaí corcra/t'fhallaing lín, do stól, do chasal, do chonnaicis m'aighaidhse ins an slua/a bhí ag teacht chun comaoineach chughat/is thit uait an abhlainn bheannaithe*"—"When you were a holy priest/in the middle of the Mass, under your purple robe, your linen mantle, your stole, your chasuble/you saw my face in the crowd/that was coming to you to take communion/and you dropped the blessed host" (Ní Dhomhnaill *PD* 32 ll1-6).[12] Traditionally, during the consecration of the sacrament, the priest is meant to cease

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[9] Seán Ó Ríordáin once remarked of Bab, "*Peig Sayers eile is ea Cáit Bean an Fheirtéaraigh. Tá sí ina claisic cheana féin. Tá gach draíocht, gach réchúis, gach foirfeacht scéaltóireachta bronnta uirthi."—"*Cáit Feiritéar is another Peig Sayers. She is already a classic herself. All the magic, all the coolness, all the perfection has been gifted onto her storytelling." (http://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=1833)

[10] "*Ana-*" being is the Munster dialect form of "*an-*", an intensifier meaning "very".

[11] Since the early Church, defiling the blessed sacrament (considered Christ's body) by permitting it to touch the ground has been considered a grave sin, particularly for a member of the clergy or a devout Catholic. It is a mortal sin for the priest and for the speaker too, since she clearly feels responsible for its fall. In the Westminster Library's manual for Catholic priests and theological students, *Holy Eucharist* (1911), Bishop John Cuthbert Hedley quotes theologian Origen (c. 185-254 AD) on this prohibition, "You that have been accustomed to be present at the Divine mysteries know that when you receive the Body of the Lord, you take care with all caution and veneration, lest any part thereof, however small, should fall, lest any portion of the consecrated gift should be lost" (28). It is only post-Vatican II reforms (1960s), that this ceased to be a mortal sin and that congregants were permitted to receive the host in their hands or retrieve it from the ground when it was dropped.

[12] All translations unless otherwise noted are my own.

to be a mortal and become a symbolic representation of Christ. His material body is thought to be irrelevant; it is merely a placeholder for the sacramental process. In the Tridentine Mass this is evident from the opening prayer of "The Collect" during which the priest proclaims, "*Dominus vobiscum*."—"The Lord be with you." The people or servers respond: "*Et cum spiritu tuo*."—"And with your spirit." It is the spirit of Christ in the priest whom the worshipper is addressing, not the mortal being of the priest himself. Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker, however, makes that mortal being, and specifically his mortal body and all of its ironically elaborate and specifically penitential attire—as purple is the color of choice for Lent and Advent—the focus of her attention initially. The fine *accoutrements* of his holy office are not what hold her interest but implicitly, the possibly lustful gaze of the all-too-mortal man beneath them. Bourke contends that it is the speaker's gaunt appearance, which causes him to drop the sacrament, but it may also be the result of the desire or hunger in her gaze or the desire or hunger in his own. We know nothing about this priest, except that he is clumsy and that the speaker is extremely aware of him as a physical presence. He may be young or old; he may be attractive; he may be using his position of power to oppress, manipulate, and abuse her, or in her naïveté, she might even enjoy and seek out his attentions—whether through counsel regarding her eating disorder or her faith, improper sexual relations, or all of the above. The connections between physical, spiritual, and erotic appetite are paramount in this poem, and this first stanza foreshadows the speaker's focus on the materiality, humanity, and mortality of her own body in the face of her subsequent trauma as a result of these interrelated cravings.

More importantly, the exact historical moment of this particular poem as with the orature it responds to is unclear: is it pre- or post-Famine? This is a central concern, as it raises further issues surrounding the relationship between this individual girl's starvation as a metaphor for *An*

Gorta Mór and the eventual transformation of the Irish Church from a more agrarian, vernacular Catholicism "dominated by calendar custom and inhabiting a numinous landscape of holy wells and pilgrimage sites like Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg…[In it,] central religious events were the rites of passage and communal occasions that included the pattern, wake, and station" to what Kevin Whelan aptly calls the "The Devotional Revolution" post-Famine:

> The trauma of the Famine, the associated decline of vernacular religion and popular culture and the erosion of the Irish language created a cultural vacuum that was filled by the more devotional practices associated with the devotional revolution—the institutionalisation of Mass-going, new devotional practices such as novenas, forty-hour devotions, and the exposition of the host….[In sum,] Irish Catholicism became more public, more assertive, more Roman in character, as the institutional church replaced its vernacular predecessor….Irish Catholicism [and its intense social strictures] became a crucial [pun intended, as far as I'm concerned] bearer of order and identity in a world of unprecedented flux, accelerated by the devastating impact of the Famine and selective immigration…simultaneously obliterat[ing] the demographic base of vernacular Catholicism in the Irish poor and fatally weaken[ing] the older particularistic cultural formations rooted in the Irish language.
> (*The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* 139)

While Whelan insists definitively that these demographics were "obliterated" and the Irish-language-based cultural practices were "fatally weakened," it is my argument that this is not the case in many Irish-language communities that have not only sustained secularized modes by recording, printing, and most importantly, continuing to perform rich, evocative orature of various *seanchais,* as suggested by the poet's inclusion of Feirtéar's tale in the collection, but also deliberately continued many of these "particularistic" pieties.[13] By resisting the marginalization of Irish on both fronts, Ní Dhomhnaill herself is critiquing not only the language's decline in general but also illustrating the ill-effects of the transition to a more standardized and less localized Catholicism through her speaker's narrative in "*Féar*

[13] See my discussion of holy wells in "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" below and Ní Dhomhnaill's own *Selected Essays*, which discusses the annual pattern in her home parish of Ventry in honor of their patron, St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Suaithinseach/Miraculous Grass," whether it occurs in the nineteenth or the twentieth century. For as we know, the Church in Ireland only became progressively more institutionalized and dominant as the years progressed. This "devotional revolution" is most certainly a "crucial" one for the speaker, because the religious shifts that were occurring or had occurred across Ireland are the agonizing and aggravating factors that engender her feelings of shame—whether for causing the priest to drop the sacrament or even greater sins—and further contribute to the excessive, penitential fasting that develops into or serves as a manifestation of *anorexia nervosa*.

The Irish text focuses even more explicitly than either Heaney's or Hartnett's earlier[14] translation on the pernicious physicality of the speaker's complaint: "*Ach fós do luigh sé ar mo chroí/mar dhealg láibe, gur dhein sé slí/dó fhéin istigh im ae is im lár/gur dhóbair go bhfaighinn bás dá bharr*"[15]—"But yet it [the shame] lay in my heart/like a thorn under mud, so that it made a way for itself into my liver and innards/such that it almost happened that I would die because of it" (ll 10-13). The internal, end-rhyme, and last line-rhyme schemes as well as the assonance and then the consonance of "*luigh*," "*chroí*," "*slí*," "*istigh*" ;"*dhein*," "*fhéin*," "*bhfaighinn*"; "*mar*," "*lár/gur dhóbair go bhfaighinn bás dá bharr*" join the individually suffering parts of her body, mind, and spirit into a contiguous map of her whole tormented being. Thus, the use of anatomy enables certain poems to oscillate between the public and private spheres:

> In other words, the medium through which the self knows itself as private is also the medium upon which privacy's opposites—community, sharability, identification—depend. To put this another way, language is both a tool that fractures the self's inviolability and the thing that is fractured; it is both an anatomy and the thing anatomized. (Otten 71)

[14] See *Rogha Dánta: Selected Poems* (1986).

[15] Literally, obtain death.

Such a conscious mediation is central to Ni Dhomhnaill's figuring of the speaker's distress in the second, third, and fourth stanzas. As Angela Bourke notes in her discussion of the poem,

> *[Dealg láibe* frequently] occurs in a triad: a sort of riddle: the three sharpest things in the world, *trí rud is géire ar bith: súil cait, dealg láibe agus focal amadáin*: the eye of a cat, a thorn in mud, and the word of a fool. A thorn in mud—familiar in body memory to people accustomed to going barefoot—carries in verbal memory also the sense of ineffable sharpness, of insidiousness, and placed alongside the telling word of the fool, of truth—perhaps unwelcome truth—blurted out. ("Fairies and Anorexia" 32)

Ostracized and isolated as an invalid, the at-first silenced speaker uses the poem to fulfill the proverb and honestly and forthrightly speak the painful words regarding her shaming illness, her body, and its potentially forbidden yearnings. Ní Dhomhnaill, who studied under famed poet/actress/*sean-nós* performer,[16] Cáitlín Maude, emphasizes the importance of orality in Irish tradition,[17] figuring the speaker's entire body as a field but, pivotally, focusing on her mouth and the centrality of verbal and written communication as a means of processing or digesting[18] the trauma she experiences; hence the complementary emphasis on both her liver and stomach, all of which are the key organs involved in those necessary bodily processes.

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[16] Literally "old-style," referring to a traditional solo, free-rhythmic vocal performance.

[17] See "Why I Choose to Write in Irish: The Corpse that Sits Up and Talks Back."

[18] With no explanation, both the Irish text of "*Féar Suaithinseach*" in *Pharaoh's Daughter* (1990), the Heaney translation, and the earlier Hartnett translation omit the headnote from the first edition from Ní Dhomhnaill's same-titled volume (1984) and the version that appears in *Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta* (1986): "*Fianaise an chailin i ngreim "Anorexia"—"Testimony of a girl in the grip of Anorexia."* For an excellent discussion of the poem, anorexia, and mythology, see Angela Bourke, "Fairies and Anorexia: Nuala Ní Dhomhaill's 'Amazing Grass,'" *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Cambridge (MA): The Dept. of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium (1995): 25-38; and Broom, 329-331. While scholars like Broom and Bourke have made much of this headnote and Ní Dhomhnaill herself has been a staunch advocate regarding young women and body issues, the poem itself, though it certainly emphasizes spiritual, physical, and I would argue, sexual hunger, seems to be more ambiguous regarding the circumstances contributing to and surrounding the speaker's disorder. Furthermore, the immediate attribution to or explanation of *anorexia nervosa* may cause one to overlook the psychosexual, religious, social, and cultural issues that are in my opinion factors in her experience of trauma or interpret them too narrowly, only as they relate to the psychopathology of an eating disorder, perhaps explaining the subsequent omissions of the headnote. It is an eating disorder that I argue arises at least in part as the result of excessive religious devotion. Bourke claims that Ní Dhomhnaill found the headnote "redundant" and felt that "the reader ought to encounter the poem on its own rather than be pointed to a reading of it" (25).

The speaker of "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" clearly distinguishes between guilt, which arises from *action*, and shame, which arises from *being* (Mairs 55). This distinction is stressed in the Irish version, reading: "*Bhí náire orm*" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 17), which literally translates as "Shame was on me."[19] The public humiliation is placed upon the speaker like a weight. Although the possible sources contributing to the increasing emaciation of her body are hidden from the community, particularly if there is more to her shame than merely causing the priest drop the sacrament—though after the "devotional revolution" that would be a sufficient enough sin—the speaker still feels as though her disgrace operates as a brand, a badge, a mark on the body, which as Butler reminds us in her reading of Foucault—is "the surface and the scene of cultural inscription" (*Gender Trouble* 176). So too, the host in Catholic doctrine is more than an emblem of Christ's suffering and redemption; the eucharist is theologically and literally His body. It is a perpetual token of the Word made flesh,[20] and also, simultaneously, bread, the most elemental unit of sustenance. The sacrament therefore serves as the ideal metaphor for the speaker's narrative of psychosomatic suffering not only because it alludes to Christ's Passion and Resurrection, but because Ní Dhomhnaill revises the tradition: her speaker's flesh, the physical embodiment of her suffering, becomes figured as words.

Indeed, the Passion itself, as its name suggests, is both a physical and an emotional agony borne of great love, a story of the rejection and persecution of Christ by his own people, much like what the speaker herself endures on a smaller scale in her own community.

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[19] Such an expression is clearly a major feature of Hiberno-English speech patterns as seen in popular songs, such as Richard Hayward's "The Humour is on Me Now," featured in the wedding scene of *The Quiet Man*. See Chapter 4.

[20] For further discussion of the theological and thus narratological crux of transubstantiating words to flesh in Banville's *Birchwood*, see Chapter 5.

The immense pain of the body is matched by the immense anguish of the spirit. Trauma demonstrates the fragility and sacredness of her being—its limits, its refuse, its abjection—and that affliction is ultimately purifying, enabling both her body and mind to be physically reanimated as well as textually resurrected.

The poem reveals the female speaker's struggle to communicate through her initial inability to openly discuss and thereby properly digest the incident, whether that incident is causing the priest to drop the host, having an affair with him, fasting to excess as penance for those or some other sins, or all of the above. Her desire and appetite to speak out and be heard is illustrated through the topography and the hunger of her body. Maryna Romanets explains that the Irish female form has long been a delimited object of masculinist cartography:

> In the case of Ireland…the female body traversed by relentless mapmakers, converting its curved spaces into flat charts, is allotted to the place both of a body outside discourse and of the site for the production and operation of power. Structuring, channeling, manipulating, and restricting desire by personalizing it in woman and thus territorializing it into sexuality, dominant cultural formations provide a guiding metaphor for males as avatars of desire and conquerors of "virgin territories" instrumental in affirming an ideology of control….[Ní Dhomhnaill] navigates across the grids established by hegemonic cultural cartographies, turning into a free-floating subject who is constantly trying on the voices and masks of the canonic repertoires. The poet undertakes the project of conceptual reterritorialization by exercising the power to redefine borders and expand the limits of existing cultural maps. ("Cartographers of Desire" 322)

The speaker's cartography in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" is just such an intentional "reterritorialization," which, in the use of first-person narration and second-person direct address, enables her to go from being a pariah and object of public scrutiny to an autonomous subject. She consciously crosses the borders established by patriarchal traditions, in this case, the conventions of the Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholic Church. In Catholicism from the Medieval period onward, the self-denial of excessive fasting, such as

that of the speaker, was typically discouraged among the laity and those in religious orders because it was considered "misplaced self-exaltation" and a "burden on the community," since the fasting person was severely weakened and unable to participate in necessary manual labor (Vandereycken 26). Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker's intense spiritual practice, even to the point of unhealthy *extremis,* as suggested by the omitted "redundant" anorexia headnote from the earlier editions, resonates with the poet's own devotion to composing work written in a marginalized tongue that clearly repudiates the dominating colonial presence of English and personally practicing a vernacular, explicitly Irish-language-tradition-based Catholicism[21] as opposed to a more institutionalized faith.

Such choices further ring true regarding other modes of identity-formation for postcolonial women. For example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak claims the speech of subalterns in India, particularly women, cannot be heard, and they must therefore use their bodies as texts: "In the semioses of the social text, elaborations of insurgency stand in the place of 'the utterance'" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 76). Unable to successfully verbalize their own history, women must enact their emotional distress through violence against their physical forms.[22] Psychological pain becomes written on the body when a female speaker feels her speech act would be refused or silenced. In the poem, the speaker's physical starvation mirrors her feelings of being ostracized and starved for attention and affection, serving a symbolic function: "*Mise, ní duirt aon ní ina thaobh…Bhí glas ar mo bhéal./Ach fós do luigh sé ar mo chroí/mar dhealg láibe*"—"I, myself, never said anything about it/my mouth was locked./But yet it [the shame]

[21] See Ní Dhomhnaill's *Selected Essays.*

[22] Borrowing her theoretical term from Italian Marxist political philosopher Antonio Gramsci, Spivak provides the India-specific example of the *sati* or Hindu ritual widow-suicide. After the death of their husbands, these women traditionally would voluntarily immolate themselves on the funeral pyre. Their bodily trauma becomes the signification of their grief. The speaker's hunger strike serves a similar symbolic function.

lay in my heart,/like a thorn under mud" (Ní Dhomhnaill 7, 9-11). The speaker does not feel she has a right to verbally express herself or her shameful troubles and desires, so they become figured in terms of the hazardous landscape of her physiognomy. Spivak claims that female bodies subjugated by colonialism are comparable to palimpsests, texts on which the original writing has been erased and written over by another. For the speaker of "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," her body has been appropriated in the same way and effectively overdetermined by being "written" as sinful according to the mores of a Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholic Church and the conventions of the village, whether that involves inadvertently causing the priest to drop the sacrament, a scandalous affair with him, and/or misguided "self-exaltation" of fasting to excess. For both Spivak and Ní Dhomhnaill, the colonized and oppressed female body is always already a locus of crisis.

After causing the priest to drop the host, a shameful sin in itself according to pre-Vatican-II Catholic practice; even if there was nothing more inappropriately significant implied in the man's gaze or her own, the reliability and sanctity of the speaker's entire person is called into question. She subsequently becomes an invalid: "*Ní fada nó gur thiteas 'on leabaidh*—"It was not long until I fell into bed" (Ní Dhomhnaill ln 14).[23] The speaker then becomes a marvel, a curiosity, a freak show of one: "*oideasaí leighis do triaileadh ina gcéadtaibh/do tháinig chugham dochtúiri, sagairt is bráithre*"—"Consultants of course came in their hundreds,/doctors, priests, and brothers." (ll 14-16). This stanza emphasizes the imperiled mortality of the speaker and the initial uselessness of her supposed saviors: "*Is n'fhéadadar mé a thabhairt chun sláinte/ach thugadar suas/i seilbh bháis*"—"And they were

[23] Much like the fallen sacrament and the post-Lapsarian Eve, but unlike young Molly Tweedy's recollection of her roll in the dunes with Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* the speaker's fall is hardly the giddy "felix culpa" I discussed in Chapter 1, though this poem also has an ostensibly happy ending.

not able to bring me to health/but they gave me up to the possession of death." (ll 15-17). An inversion of the trio of Magi, these supposed three groups of wise men, for all their theological or medical knowledge, have nothing to offer. The third-person plural synthetic verbs in Irish place emphasis on the action (or in this case, the lack of action), and the specifically vague implicit repetition of "they" further emphasizes the basically indistinguishable collectivity of the men's enterprise. They all initially lack the resources necessary to cure the speaker. Her emotional trauma is beyond their ken. Though the speaker is presumably not locked away in an attic, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's famous term is nevertheless completely appropriate to this situation; "patriarchal socialization"—the power of the judgments of a male-dominated community over her—has literally made the woman ill (53). As evidenced by her shame-induced illness, the speaker has internalized the town's (potentially hypocritical, as one of the priests who could supposedly heal her may be a party to her possible sin) religious standards, and her failure to conform to them is disabling; her physical form has not been purified by the sacrament. Death itself effectively subsumes the speaker and temporarily overpowers her in body and spirit.

For a person suffering emotionally, like the speaker in this poem, the agony is not simply, "My legs hurt," a phrase which clearly separates the autonomous self from the epicenter of pain, but rather "I hurt," which acknowledges in the most radically alienating sense, that the epicenter of pain *is* the self.[24] Furthermore, mental anguish causes her to develop or exacerbates her physical illness. As it is suddenly impossible to delineate and isolate the site of suffering, the failure of her mutually-dependent mind and body leaves the

[24] Although I do not cite her directly, my analysis in this section is influenced by Elaine Scarry's foundational work in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*.

speaker unable to maintain a cogent sense of identity. Thus, the inherent inexpressibility of psychosomatic abjection requires reading the corporeal form not merely as a vessel, but rather as—to borrow Spivak's term— a palimpsest on which one's trauma is reinscribed.

Psychological wounds are complicated linguistically by their invisibility. Emotional aches rely entirely on metaphor, and Ní Dhomhnaill's dominant metaphor in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" is landscape, confirming the Irish woman's body as a potential site of occupation. In Heaney's translation of this poem, the speaker's body is transformed into a wasteland: "…cut back the bushes, clear off the rubbish/the sappy growth, the whole straggle and mess/that infests my green unfortunate field" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 23-25). The original Irish text reads "…*glanaíg an luifearnach/an slámais fáis, an brus, an ainnise/a fhás ar thalamh bán mo thubaiste.*"—literally: "clear the weedy,/the untidy growth, the crumbling bits, the misery which grew on the fallow land of my disaster." The key phrase here is "*ar thalamh bán*": grassland or fallow land, ploughed but left uncropped. While the original clearly emphasizes the rack and ruin of her body (cf. ll 22—"R*éabaíg an seanafhothrach*—plunder the ruins") as if the line breaks themselves are plagued by this unbearable, choking overgrowth, "*thalamh bán*" simultaneously suggests that the field which represents the speaker's body—once fresh and verdant—has suddenly been bleached "white"—a literal translation of the word "*bán*." Heaney's translation overlooks the fact that this specifically visual noun implies that all the color and vivacity have been sucked out of the speaker's life. Her haggard body becomes wan and pale[25] like the lost Communion wafer. This neglected field yields no new life and explictly echoes the failure of crops and the former furrows untended throughout the Famine and post-Famine periods. In an earlier

[25] Fatigue and excessive pallor often result from the nutritional depletion caused by *anorexia nervosa*.

stanza, Ní Dhomhnaill also expressly uses the word "*glas*," which means both a "lock" and "green" or "grey." Line nine: "*Bhí glas ar mo bhéal*," could translate as "A lock was on my mouth," or "Green/Grey was on my mouth." The polysemous terms tie the image of the speaker's body as a field to the pervasive silence that accompanies her anguish. Consequently, any attempt to produce a discourse about her pain is initially prevented by the (possibly bleached) foliage gagging her. This is further supported by Feiritéar's tale, which notes the presence of "*sceacha*"—"hawthorns", which typically have white flowers—and "*salachar*[26] *eile*"—other weeds—in the field that is conflated with the girl's body in the poem ("*Réamhrá*/Introduction" to *Féar Suaithinseach)*. Such ambiguity further highlights her mouth, which never received the host, as the "fallow land of disaster." The speaker's mute debilitation and debasement are temporary, however, because the confessional mode of the lyric itself lifts the inexpressible into the realm of the expressible. The comparison to the sacrament emphasizes the need of her body to be transfigured from defilement to holiness by both the act of confession and the fact that the host itself is consecrated from mere bread to Christ's flesh.

Since Heaney's translation cannot convey the color-coded wordplay[27] of images inherent in the original Irish version, it becomes necessary to emphasize the validity of Jonathan Culler's point about the lyric genre and its ties to language:

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[26] The primary meaning of *salachar* is dirt, but in addition to referring here to unidentified, unwanted overgrowth, *salachar* is also significant because it is used to mean moral obscenity or impurity, idiomatically to mean dross (which is a Biblical metaphor for impurity, cf. *Ezekiel* 22:18 and *Proverbs* 25:4 or rubbish in general, including verdigris, notably the green-gray of oxidation; afflictions, such as skin irritations and thrush, a white fungal infection of the throat; and the afterbirth of a cow, which has lead some scholars to speculate about the possibility of the girl's miscarriage.

[27] For more on verdant green made grotesque in historical Irish Famine lore and later visual art, specifically in Francis Bacon's paintings and the verdigris of Edward Delaney's "lost-wax" Famine Memorial bronzes, see Chp. 5.

> If we believe language is the medium for the formation of subjectivity, lyric ought to be crucial [pun intended, for my purposes], as the site where language is linked not only to the structures of identity and displacement before the consolidation of subject positions but especially to rhythm and the bodily experience of temporality, on the one hand, and to the formative dwelling in a particular language, on the other. Narrative structures are translatable, but lyric, in its peculiar structural patterning, figures the givenness, the untranscendability, of a particular language, which seems to its users a condition of experience. ("Why Lyric?" 205)

It is only through a grasp of specific Irish linguistic structures that Ní Dhomhnaill is able to convey the nuances of her speaker's vexed subject position at this point in the poem. Through the latent comparison to the missing eucharist, she indicates that this suffering woman has lost her place in the community, or rather, that her new shame-based place has become not only unsettlingly central as the town invalid but also marginal as an isolated abject object of public interest, cut off from normal social interaction. Thus, it is just as necessary to contextualize "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" in relation to the unique rhetorical forms and structures of the Irish language that Ni Dhomhnaill is writing in, as it is necessary to contextualize the poem in relation to the particular structures of Irish history and culture, the traditional interdependency of health, spirituality, and community in Ireland, and the role of the post-Famine culture and Catholicism in establishing those, in this case at least, detrimental norms.

Both in Irish and in translation, the ability to construct a figure or body is a necessary attempt to create a map of otherwise ineffable trauma. "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" exemplifies the substantive materiality of language itself: "In poetic language, the sign is looked at not through. In other words, instead of being a medium or route crossed on the way to reality, language itself becomes 'stuff,' like sculptor's marble" (Ricoeur 209). The figuring of "*[an] thalamh bán*" within the system of the poem, the creation of a written object through metaphor, makes it concrete. The metaphoric process produces a vivid image that one

can almost touch. This shift from ephemerality to tangibility is exactly what Ní Dhomhnaill achieves by constructing the speaker's body as a visible landscape and focusing the poem's centripetal energy on the sacrament, which oscillates between corporeality and transcendence. The speaker's hunger for the eucharist, an outward sign of an invisible presence, makes manifest the quest to achieve self-reality and authenticity through metaphor.

As Susan Stewart explains in her work on lyric touch, "Once poetry is a written form, it can be opened or closed, hidden or revealed, as a physical object" (161). The scope of the speaker's emotional angst is only expressible in material terms. She requires an image that indicates physical pain, the aforementioned "thorn under mud" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 11). This piercing simile also explicitly ties the speaker to Jesus, whose brow was crowned with thorns prior to his crucifixion. Until the host—which is perhaps the ultimate case of metaphor becoming reality because in Catholicism it is theologically and literally the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ—is found, the speaker informs us: "*ach thugadar suas/i seilbh bháis*"—"They gave me up/to the possession of death." (ll 16-17). Spiritual hunger and failure to receive of the eucharist, implicitly during the sacrament of extreme unction, more commonly known as the last rites, cause her near-fatal collapse.

Since the integrity of her own physical form is in jeopardy, the speaker must externalize and read her own pain as the landscape she demands be cleared:

> *Is téigí amach, a fheara,*
> *tugaíg libh rámhainn is speala*
> *corrain, graféin is sluaiste*
> *Réabaíg an seanafhothrach…*
>
> So out you [must] go, men,
> out with the spades and scythes,

the hooks and shovels and hoes.
Tackle the rubble… (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 19-22; trans. Heaney)

Ní Dhomhnaill's portrayal of the speaker upholds Judith Butler's assertion of the body's fluid borders, "What constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material, but the surface, the skin, is systemically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions; indeed, the boundaries of the body become…the limits of the social *per se*" (*Gender Trouble* 179). Butler believes that the body, particularly the female body, is always marked and marred by the constraints of culture. She maintains that the physical form is a permeable space and the distinctions of "inner" and "outer" create a false duality that must be examined. Society determines what are "acceptable" roles for a particular body to play, and the force of those standards influences the self-identification of the subject who is bound to that specific physical form. "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" examines the permeability, the susceptibility, of the speaker's body to the morals and conventions of her village and her faith. As Butler and Kristeva respectively insist, these conventions regulate, determine, and inscribe that flesh, socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically—its fluids, appetites, and functions. The speaker's direct address implies that the men of the community have created this environment of shame, and it ironically becomes their task to recover the holy eucharist with their various phallic tools, which are explicitly linked by the a-a end rhymes of "*speala*"—"spades" and the direct address to the men—"*a fheara*."

The speaker imagines them clearing the field to discover the host and thus effectively re-sanctifying her body:

Is ins an ionad inar thit
an chomaoine naoife féach go mbeidh

i lár bhiorlamais[28] *istigh*
toirtín d'fhéar suaithinseach.

Tagadh an sagart is lena mhéireanna
beireadh sé go haiclí ar an gcomaoine naofa
is tugtar chugham í, ar mo theanga
leáfaidh sí, is éireod aniar[29] *sa leaba*
chomh slán folláin is a bhíos is mé i mo leanbh.

And in the place where the communion wafer fell
Look and there will be
In the midst of the pointed [or water-] plants inside
A round patch of miraculous grass.

Let the priest come and with his fingers
bear the sacred host dexterously
and bring it to me, on my tongue
it will melt, and I shall rise up in the bed
as hearty and hale as the youngster I used to be. (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 26-34)

Ní Dhomhnaill negotiates the female body in crisis by recognizing it as a cultural text to be (re)interpreted, thereby enabling what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick would term a "universalizing" as opposed to "minoritizing" gaze, which "sees a particularized form of difference…[as a means to] validate experience and consciousness, imagine community, [and] facilitate self-naming" (qtd. in Thomson 282-283). The physical changes in the speaker's body are indicated by the intentionally ambiguous use of "*bhiorlamais*" (ll 28), which can mean both "pointed plants"—another reference to crucifixion or martyrdom—or "water-plants," suggesting that their overgrowth as a result of her emaciation has disrupted the fluid balance of her internal body chemistry as fluid retention is a common side effect of *anorexia nervosa*. These differences created by the speaker's anguish, which initially caused

[28] *Bhiorlamais* can mean both "pointed plants" and "water-plants." Thanks to Patrick Ó Néill for pointing out the lexical ambiguity to me, and thoughtfully suggesting that it may be intentional, much like the polysemous plays on "*glas*", "*thalamh bán*", and "*féar/fear*".

[29] The primary meaning of the adverb *aniar* is "from the West," which in Celtic mythology is the direction the soul transmigrates in death, but even more significantly here, as in Christian doctrine, the speaker rises up [from the recumbent position] like Christ, who also resurrects from the West.

her to be ostracized, ultimately establish the distinctive position from which she narrates. The woman redeems herself through written and implied verbal expression. She writes out of her suffering, attempting to resolve its problematic nature through articulation. The speaker does not narrate in spite of her pain, but *because* of it.

Through the sacrament of confession and the sacrament of the eucharist, both administered as part of extreme unction or last rites, the speaker overcomes the culturally-instilled "anxiety of authorship" suggested by her initial refusal to discuss her supposed-sin(s)[30] and eventually acknowledges her "distinctive female power" as a narrator by creating the poem (Gilbert and Gubar 73, 59). She is fully aware that there is a stigma attached to public demonstrations of pain, and she becomes an anomaly on display,[31] up for examination and figurative dissection by the "hundreds" at her bedside (Ní Dhomhnaill 15). At first, no one is capable of comprehending the speaker's problems because she fears admitting them, lest she face spiritual hellfire and social damnation. After all, we are told: "*Mise, ní duirt aon ní ina thaobh…Bhí glas ar mo bhéal*"—"I, myself, never said anything about it/my mouth was locked" (Ní Dhomhnaill 7, 9). Unlike Spivak's example of the *sati*, who commits an act of self-immolation when her speech act is denied, Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker initially loses the privilege to speak, supplements that loss by invoking her privilege to write deliberately in a language which has been marginalized, and ultimately confesses aloud to all present as a sign of her transfiguration.

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[30] Although the speaker only admits to causing the priest to drop the eucharist, I contend that the first stanza implicitly suggests they may have had an illicit relationship.

[31] Earlier in the twentieth century, another female poet, American Sylvia Plath dealt with similar feminist issues in a different religious, personal, and sociopolitical context through references to The Holocaust in her famous poem "Lady Lazarus" (1962) published posthumously in *Ariel* (1965). This speaker in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" is a resurrecting "Lady Lazarus" of sorts, though granted, a much less acerbic and violent one.

The speaker reappropriates the holy sacraments of the Catholic faith separate from the patriarchal infrastructures of the Church by employing the confessional-esque publicizing of her intimate suffering through the act of writing or speaking the poem not only in the context of the one-on-one sacred privacy of confessional in the first stanza's address to the priest but in her eventual shift in addressing to the whole community that enables her healing to be enacted and observed by the entire village and also the reader. The command, "*féach go mbeidh*"—"look and there will be" in the penultimate stanza functions as performative utterance and clearly invites the reader, even if that implied reader is the priest himself, to participate in her recovery. Furthermore, every Catholic believes that the bounds of the confessional are sacred and during confession, one is speaking his or her sins not to another sinful human being, but directly to the God who will redeem them. He and—in an extraordinarily rare event—the community are her witnesses, in the theological and literal sense. Kelly Oliver terms this a function of witnessing's "response-ability" (91), which thus exemplifies our responsibility to one another.[32] Without the witnesses, both present in actuality and present imaginatively in the case of the reader, the speaker's account would not be possible. Ní Dhomhnaill's collective therapeutic approach also dovetails with Butler's insistence that communal ties and dialoging are what make us human, "…we are constituted in relationality: implicated, beholden, derived, sustained by a social world that is beyond us and before us" (*Giving* 64). Healing catharsis is a function of the lyric genre, "Anatomy [in this case, the speaker's metaphor of her body as a field] becomes a way of explaining how poems open outward and close inward at the same time" (Otten 71). The speaker achieves an autonomous subjectivity, which simultaneously enables her to repent and rejoin her

[32] Cf. Butler and Athanasiou's *Dispossession: Performing the Political* (2013), 66-68; 92-96; 104-126, which I discuss in greater detail in the context of The Great Famine in Chp. 5.

community. This elevation of writing is inherently connected to her refusal to dissociate mind and body, which as a unit, constitute the speaker's state of being.

Ní Dhomhnaill's choice to foreground her speaker's distress because in the original tale the girl is silent and unseen, as well as hint at its potentially unmentionable causes represent what eminent Catholic memoirist of disability Nancy Mairs would describe as a "raising of what was hidden, dark…into the plain light of shared human experience" (58). The silence indicated by an absence of text would signify acceptance of cultural repression, acquiescence in the patriarchal notion that there are certain behaviors, such as sex with a priest and/or a penitentially-induced eating disorder, that a woman should never contemplate, much less discuss, perform, or receive forgiveness.[33] Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker refuses to be limited by the restrictions initially placed on her body and her discourse.

Rather than shy away from social, sexual, spiritual, and bodily anathemas, she openly embraces them. Butler explains the significance of such a cleansing identification and confession in her reading of late Foucault:

> Confession becomes the verbal and bodily scene of its self-demonstration. It speaks itself, but in the speaking it becomes what it is….Moreover, confession does not return a self to an equilibrium it has lost; it reconstitutes the soul on the basis of the act of confession itself….Thus a certain performative production of the subject within established public conventions is required of the confessing subject and constitutes the aim of confession itself. (*Giving* 112-113)

The performative and mutual aspect of penance that Butler and Foucault recognize is reinforced as the Irish idiom in Feiritéar's tale is "*tabhair faoistin do*"—literally "give confession to," but it otherwise ends simply and elliptically:

Sin é mar a bhí.

[33] See the poem's first stanza.

> *Thángadar abhaile. Thug an sagart faoistin thar n-ais don gcailín agus thóg sí an chomaoine agus d'éirigh sí aniar beo beathúch*[34] *faoi mar a bhí sí riamh.*
>
> That's how it was.
> They came home. The priest confessed the girl [i.e. heard her confession] again and she took communion and she rose up alive and well just as she ever was.
> ("*Réamhrá*/Introduction" to *Féar Suaithinseach)*

Whereas in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," the implied verbal and written confessions are detailed because they are the transubstantive act necessary to cleanse and re-animate the speaker's body, repair her psyche, and transfigure her soul. In the poem, she upholds the inextricable link between the sacramental processes of reconciliation and communion in the Catholic tradition, yet she purposefully confesses not to the brothers and priests or even the doctors, but rather to the reader who presumably exists outside that patriarchal triumvirate, as suggested by the movement away from the accusatory direct address "*Nuair a bhís do shagart naofa*" and "*a fheara*"—"men" to the implied universal "you" of the command "*féach*"—"look" in the penultimate stanza. Perhaps at its close the poem itself is broadly addressed to other suffering women. While the dominating male religious figures of the Church repress and possibly exploit[35] the speaker, its non-gendered sacramental processes heal her when they are strategically separated from the authoritarian structures surrounding them. The priest—whatever his own failings and foibles—becomes the symbolic placeholder for Jesus in her confession, as he is during the consecration. His sins and her own fall away, and she is speaking directly to Christ. At the same time, the speaker's account exposes her vulnerability to the assembled community at her bedside, she is speaking

[34] Munster dialect form of "*beathach*".

[35] See the possible implication of a sexual encounter in the poem's first stanza.

on a spiritual level not only to the priest as Christ but to the Christ embodied in those around her bedside.

Furthermore, her confession shows a conscious recognition of the Christ embodied in her own damaged but ultimately reanimated body. Her deliverance is achieved only through accepting, "owning," and repenting her previous transgressions, whatever they may be. This parallels Sedgwick's evaluation of the transformative functions of shame:

> The forms taken by shame are not distinct "toxic" parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised; they are instead integral to and residual in the processes by which identity itself is formed. They are available for the work of metamorphosis, reframing, refiguration, *trans*figuration, affective and symbolic loading and deformation. (617)

The poem takes this secular, theoretical approach to shame and sacramentalizes it through the invocation of both religious confession and theological transubstantiation. "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," is an act of contrition, for which there is great variety amongst the particular formulas or translations used from diocese to diocese and parish to parish, much less from country to country or language to language, so much so that neither the *Missale Romanum/*Roman Missal nor the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*/Handbook of Indulgences contain a standard version, and The Catholic Church does not restrict the term "act of contrition" to any one formula, with the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* mentioning various prayers including *De Profundis,* the psalm *Miserere*, and of course, the "*Confiteor*". The poem itself has many Psalmic and generally Biblical qualities with its conjuring of a landscape that awaits salvation and its themes of suffering, despair, and ultimately sanctification. Here again the play on "*féar*"—grass and "*fear*"—man as in Man as in human as opposed to merely male is pivotal.[36]

[36] Grass as one of the first things God created for man, the animals, and the Earth: Cf. *Genesis* 1:11-12, Deuteronomy 11:15, *Psalms* 104 and 147. Grass is indicative of great turmoil or the fleeting nature of life: Cf.

My own Irish *Leabhar Aifrinn/*Missal and other prayers (which was printed prior to the *Novus Ordo Missae* reforms of 2012) contains three acceptable acts of contrition. I feel the poem also directly resonates with the "*Confiteor*" in particular, which is said during every Mass, since implicitly at least one if not multiple Masses said for the sick woman, whether in Latin or Irish, depending on the ambiguous period in which the poem is set:

> *Admhaím do Dhia uilechumhachtach, agus daoibhse, a bhráithre* [literally my brethren], *gur pheacaigh mé go trom le smaoineamh agus le briathar, le ghíomh agus le faillí, trí mo choir féin, trí mo choir féin, trí mo mhórchoir féin. Ar an ábhar sin, impím ar Naomh Mhuire siorÓgh, ar na haingil agus ar na naoimh, agus oraibhse, a bhráithre, guí ar mo shon chun an Tiarna Dia*.
> (*Clann Dé ag an Aifreann)*
>
> I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers [and sisters], that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; through my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault (while striking the breast). Therefore I ask Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers [and sisters], to pray for me to the Lord, our God.
> (*Missale Romanum* 2012: 3rd Ed.)

The speaker's act of contrition is ultimately healing, placing her in the state of grace required to receive Christ in the form of bread, signifying her return to being fed both

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Psalms 37, 90 and 103, *Isaiah* 15:5-6 and 37:27, *Jeremiah* 14: 5-6; especially *Isaiah 40:6-7 and 1 Peter* 1:24: "All flesh is grass." It also serves as an emblem of doubt and restoration: Cf. *Job* 6:5, *Matthew* 6:30: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"; *2 Samuel* 23:4: "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain," and *Psalms* 129:6**:** "Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up." And of course, grass embodies salvation through Christ: Cf. *Deuteronomy* 32:2: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, *Proverbs* 19:12: "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass," and *Isaiah* 40:8: "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever." For an even more extensive list of Biblical references to "grass" see http://www.bible-topics.com/Grass.html and *The Catholic Encyclopedia Online* (1914). Faith and doubt, God and Fate, Psalmic despair, and their relation to the landscape were also a pivotal throughout the novels of Thomas Hardy, see especially *A Laodicean, The Return of the Native, Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and feature even more prominently in his verse, particularly "Shut Out that Moon," "Neutral Tones," and "Hap": "How arrives it joy lies slain,/And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?/—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,/And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . ./These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown/Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain." "Unblooming" is also especially resonant a term to epitomize in the reversal and upheaval of natural bodily processes as well as the growth or order of the earth as they are used by Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker with regard to her persistent decline and despair. Also notable is the "unhope" of Hardy's "In Tenebris" which uses the supplication of Psalm 102 as its epigram for Pt. I: "*Percussus sum sicut foenum, et aruit cor meum."*—"I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered."

physically and of course, spiritually. Ní Dhomhnaill's language of affliction is powerful, emphasizing embodiment over transcendence. Thought, speech, and action are hinged on the body, which requires adequate nourishment—for the bodies of anorectics who fast for long periods must slowly be reacclimated to solid foods. The corporeal form is not a void, a mere container; at the most basic level, human perception and interaction are inescapably bound to the flesh while simultaneously acknowledging their dependence on a metaphor made substantive—the figuration of the language of the confessional and the transubstantiation of the host itself. The conclusion of the poem reflects that during the Mass, prior to taking holy Communion, Catholics express their humility and unfitness to be graced with the sacrament in this prayer based on *Matthew* 8:8 while again striking their breasts, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." As one might expect, in the original Tridentine Mass, this too is a triad or trinity—spoken only by the priest—three times aloud. Traditionally, in Catholicism, those in a state of grave sin are required to make a confession before taking holy communion. Only the true presence of Christ in the sacrament redeems that abject flesh by enabling the speaker to acknowledge her transgression(s) and "rise up in the bed/as hearty and hale as the youngster I used to be" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 33-34).

The transformation of the weeds that have engulfed the landscape of her body signifies the development of pure, unobstructed, uncensored speech amidst the "untidy growth" of guilt, oppression, and "misery," which previously infested the speaker's person and sealed her lips (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 24). The shift to the jussive mood in the final four stanzas, including the proleptic injunction: "Let the priest come and with his fingers/let him bear the sacred host dexterously" make the end of the poem appositely Biblical (ll 30-31), but the speaker here reconsiders the mortality of both herself and the clergyman, steadying his possibly tainted

hands and consecrating what she and the community view as her tainted body. "*Tá sé le tuiscint gur eispéireas naofa atá san eispéireas collaí agus a mhalairt go cruinn; eacstais mhisteach agus líonrith corpartha, dhá leathcheann nó dhá ghné den eispéireas iomlán chéanna"*—"It is understood that there is sacred experience in sexual experience and vice versa; mystical ecstasy and physical arousal are two counterparts or two aspects of the same overall experience" (P. De Paor 34). Crucially, it is a post-Lapsarian resurrection and salvation of sinful, not sinless individuals. The misnomer title of the poem should not be "Miraculous Man," but rather, "Miraculous Woman".

The eucharist—which the speaker receives and effectively absorbs, at last allowing the love of Christ to "melt" into her as part of herself like her shame, as it erases that shame— has the power to facilitate the growth of "a round patch of miraculous grass" that mimics the host itself, representing the growth of the speaker's discourse and the rehabilitation of her deteriorating bodily landscape (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 29). She essentially writes the text of her own agony and redemption on the palimpsest of her body. The two types of communion (social and sacramental), working in tandem, enable this process. Last rites, in turn, are effectively transformed in a metaphorical echo of First Holy Communion rites, the initial reception of the eucharist as a child after First Penance that mark one's having reached "the age of reason" and understanding regarding sin and repentence, as the speaker has utilized a notably public confession to once again attain the state of grace necessary to receive the sacrament and achieve redemption.

Through "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill forces her readers to consider two seemingly paradoxical truths. Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholicism in Ireland may at first appear to be a stringent ideology which oppresses minds

and bodies, enabling clergymen to manipulate helpless women and inspire acts of debilitating self-mortification and dangerous self-denial; nevertheless, as the poem suggests, its rich tradition of rituals can also be an unexpected agent in recuperating their damaged subjectivities through holy reflection and sacramental deliverance through communion (in both senses) with the Divine. The speaker's anonymity implies that she speaks for many women, not merely *i féin amháin*.[37] Like her foremothers in the Medieval period, ascetic female saints and mystics, such as Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich, and Joan the Meatless,[38] who used fasting as a form of devotional prayer to better connect with God, the speaker's poem-ending vision maps new territory for modern women struggling to practice their faith by honoring some cultural traditions and eschewing others, negotiating bodily and psychic abjection, while through it all, maintaining their autonomy.

Unlike "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," in "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis," the rites and traditions of Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholicism provide no comfort. This poem describes the female speaker's lifelong love affair with the titular figure, while the force of the conventions of the Church, concretized in an intruding nun, interrupts her lustful vision:

> *Taibhríodh dom in aois coinlíochta*
> *i mo leaba chúng sa tsuanlios aíochta*
> *go rabhas i halla mór ag rince*
> *i measc slua mór de mo dhaoine muinteartha,*
> *le prionsa dubh.*
> *Timpeall is timpeall do ghaibh an válsa,*
> *bhí míobhán ar mo cheann le háthas,*
> *…*
> *Ach do plabadh oscailte an doras sa tsuanlios,*
> *do chling soithí níocháin, do lasadh soilse,*

[37] "Herself alone".

[38] See *From Fasting Saints to Anorexic Girls: The History of Self-Starvation*, 17-28.

bhí bean rialta ramhar ag fógairt 'Moladh le hÍosa'
is do shuíos síos i lár an tsúsa is do ghoileas
i ndiaidh mo phrionsa dhuibh.

At puberty I had a dream
in my all-too-single bunk in the school dorm,
of dancing the length of a public room
with the guts of my relatives looking on
in the arms of an ebony Adonis

Round and round whirled the waltz
till my senses spun with joy
…..
Then the dormitory door caved in with a bang,
Lights snapped on and wash-basins rang,
a well-fed sister was singing the praises of Christ,
and myself left amidst the bedclothes bereft
of my ebony Adonis.
(Ní Dhomhnaill *Water Horse* 15, trans. McGuckian ll 1-15)

The holy woman barges in on the speaker's orgasmic dance with the tall, dark and handsome fantasy man. The girl's wry tone implies that there is little more awkward and frustrating than having an intense, erotic dream interrupted by the chipper chanting of some overweight sister.

In this situation, there is no host, no true presence of Christ, to mediate and satiate; there is only a faint verbal echo, and the nun's rote, albeit musical, wake-up call holds no allure for the speaker. Her rote greeting, "'*Moladh le hÍosa*'"—"'Praise be to Jesus'" (ll 13), reminds the speaker that she has little to be thankful for on this particular morning in her decidedly empty bed.[39] The sister's proclamation is ill-timed and hollow, essentially meaningless prattle, leaving the fantasizing girl woefully unfulfilled. The mythic figure is more seductive than the formulaically-referenced Christic one. Ní Dhomhnaill (and Medbh

[39] Thanks to Patrick O'Neill for clarifying for me the function of this clichéd phrase within Irish boarding school communities.

McGuckian, the translator) specifically invoke(s) the language of abandonment and emphasize(s) the void created by the disruption of the dream. While the "well-fed" nun has her food and her God to keep her content, the speaker has nothing but a tangle of sheets. The passion of the prince is gratifying and exciting, but also dangerous and oppressive: "m*o bhuachaill caol in éag do mhill mé,/mo rí, m'impire, mo thiarna,/mo phrionsa dubh.*"—"my boyfriend has devastated me for dead/my king, my emperor, my lord[40]/my dark-haired prince." (ll 18-20).

In the topical edited volume, *Liminal Borderlands in Irish Literature and Culture*, Michaela Schrage-Früh explains that the "tall dark stranger" is an embodiment of the Ní Dhomhnaill's threatening male muse and is "representative of patriarchal attitudes towards women, that, if internalized, might easily thwart a woman's emergence as a poet" (156). However, I dispute the contention that the source of these repressive attitudes must be figured as an explicitly *Irish* fairy muse. Bríona Nic Dhiarmada concurs with Schrage-Früh, "*San dán seo samhlaíonn Ní Dhomhnaill an prionsa dubh - an animus, mar an bás, samhlaoid atá an choitianta sa phearsanú ar an ngné dhiultach den airciptíp se*—In this poem Ní Dhomhnaill imagines the black prince - the *animus*, as Death, an imagining which is very common in the personification of this archetype" (165). I feel these positions are entirely overdetermined by a purely and exclusively *Hiberno* mythological reading. Rather, Ní Dhomhnaill's incarnation of her poetic *animus* here in the threatening specter of "*an prionsa* dubh"[41] is decidedly and specifically "sovereign" and "imperial" (to borrow McGuckian's

[40] This is the also the word for landlord—an implicit reference to British occupation.

[41] Earlier in the twentieth century, in the identically-titled *The Black Prince* (1973), Anglo-Irish novelist Iris Murdoch also explored the dangerous animus of *Eros*, linking contemporary tragic relationships, sexual frustration, suicide and murder, dirty bra straps, tangled sheets, and of course, references to *Hamlet*, in an awkward admixture of scholarly and editorial prefaces and annotations à la Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) and the Humbert-Humbert-esque

translation), such that the poet must, invoke a subversive, resistant, and in my view, a deliberately *hybrid* Irish folkloric context, but do so in order to effectively confront and ultimately expel the perniciously abject history of British colonialism in Ireland. The royal status of the ebony Adonis is confirmed by the title and the Irish text, "*An Prionsa Dubh*" or in English, "The Dark-Haired Prince" (Ní Dhomhnaill, *WH* 14).[42] It may also be a reference to the Black Prince of Wales, Edward of Woodstock, chosen perhaps deliberately because he did not live to be King of England, Ireland, and Wales, but also because his death led to the reign of his son, King Richard II, who brought the largest occupying force to Ireland in the Middle Ages and effectively consolidated colonial rule.

Ní Dhomhnaill's verbal mapping of the tension between desire and distress created by imperialism creates a record, a trace of the violence done to an entire people by expressing the angst of one subjugated woman. The historical resonances of this trauma are indicated by the fact that it is multi-generational: "*is mar a dual máthar di (a chonách orm a thóg í) roghnaíonn/is toghann an prionsa dubh*"—"and, like mother like daughter, you'd know she was mine,/nothing would do her but the ebony Adonis" (trans. McGuckian ll 24-25). As Ní Dhomhnaill herself has claimed, "The image of woman in the national tradition is a very real dragon that every Irish woman poet has to fight every time she opens her door" (qtd. in Boland 184). In the poem, she battles that beast by reconstituting the landscape of Ireland as an atlas of suffering, which allows her to demonstrate that the speaker's map/body is infected

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written confession of his *Lolita* (1955) to those of Murdoch's aging protagonist and chauvinist author Bradley Pearson.

[42] The translation "ebony Adonis" could suggest a racial difference that is not actually present in the Irish text. The idiom to indicate blackness or African ethnicity would require usage of the word "gorm," which literally means "blue." Furthermore, "Adonis," while pithy, falsely implies a whole history and network of classical allusions to the near-perfect but ultimately doomed lover of Venus, slain by a wild boar.

and infested by the scourge of the ever-recurring "an prionsa dubh." As Nic Dhiarmada claims in her discussion of "*Stigmata*," another poem from *The Water-Horse*, "*Níl an animus imithe—ní hé sin a bhí i gceist—ach tá fhios aici cad é is conas déileáil leis*"—"The animus is not gone—that is not what was involved—but she knows what it is and how to deal with it" (165). The speaker ultimately uses her imaginative resources to create a Bhabhian "hybrid" identity that enables her to re-name and temporarily escape or at least effectively manage the Black Prince and the "*fíochmhar*"—"fierce," forbidden yearning which initially consumes, totally confuses, and eventually incapacitates her.

The speaker's first description of the prince depicts him as a commanding figure that is diametrically opposed to the sister and her worship of Jesus. The object of her desire is characterized as the lord and master of her reverie in the language of ruling, of dominance. She effectively supplants God with a sex god: "*A dhreach, a mharc ní dhearmhadfad choíche, /a scáth ard baolach a bhíodh liom sínte*"—"His face and his touch I will never forget/that high-powered shadow that with me slept" (trans. McGuckian ll 16-17). The Black Prince is an all-consuming lover, whose imagined touch is so erotic that it leaves her unsatisfied with any mortal or moral alternative. For this speaker, there is a certain ineffability to both the eucharist, which promises the true presence of or total communion with God, and sexual intercourse, which promises the true presence of or total communion with another person. Neither ultimately delivers. No harmless teen idol, the Black Prince represents a youthful fantasy of freedom, power, cosmopolitan luxury, and instant erotic gratification that, although it at first appears to be liberatory and pleasurable, is ultimately revealed to be repressive, depressing, and painful.

Unfortunately, when reality intercedes, the speaker begins to see that there is a downside to being dominated by one's lust for an amatory powerhouse, who is both a "*dúnmharfóir*"—"a murderer" or in McGuckian's translation a "black belt" and a "*máistir pionsa*,"—"fencing master" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 28). She warns her daughter, who has inherited the Black Prince, that his sexual supremacy is a force that oppresses:

> *Cuirfear faoi ghlas tú i gcás gloine iata,*
> *nó faoi mar a bheadh doras rothlánach ina mbeifeá greamaithe*
> *gan cead isteach nó amach agat ach an suathadh síoraí*
> *soir agus siar tré phóirsí an tsíce*
> *má ligeann tú a cheann leis an bprionsa dubh.*
>
> You'll end up closed in an exhibition case,
> under lock and key, or caught as it were in a revolving doorway,
> unable either to get in or get out for the swish
> back and forth, night and day, through the porches of the psyche
> if you give an inch to the ebony Adonis. (trans. McGuckian, ll 31-35)

The speaker imagines her daughter as a figure on display, trapped in a glass liminal space between her fantasy and actuality. Both women cease to exist in the real world. They are neither "inside" nor "outside," but spinning forever in-between, exposed and vulnerable. The speaker, who previously objectified, is now an object of scrutiny herself. The legitimacy of her subjectivity becomes questionable. Her sense of self has been marginalized by the colonizer who dominates her reflective (in both senses) "psychic space," distorting and refracting his and her own image as well as the aspects of herself reflected in her daughter.

Kristeva's definition of abjection when applied here suggests that the speaker is stranded between her initial erotic dream of desire for the Prince and the unbearable, self-obliterating pain that is its reality. There is no single sign available to communicate the extent of the speaker's distress, so she must construct a variety of figures. After first imagining herself as a museum piece or a circus freak being exhibited, she then presents her

mind as a dwelling place that she can no longer manage to inhabit: "*gan cead isteach nó amach agat ach an suathadh síoraí/soir agus siar tré phóirsí an tsíce*"—"unable either to get in or get out for the swish/back and forth, night and day, through the porches of the psyche" (trans. McGuckian, ll 33-34). As in the opening of "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," this speaker also feels divided, isolated, caught in the portal space, half-outside of herself.

This metaphor of hovering in a doorway provides a visual illustration of Kristevan abjection as a moment in which one's subjectivity is both "sublime and devastated" (230). The ebony Adonis leaves the speaker straddling the abject border between her initial elation and her lingering degradation. Ní Dhomhnaill indicates that this demeaned state is distinguished by the pervasive silence that accompanies her speaker's emotional crisis where the woman is left "g*an neach beo i mo ghaobhar, ná éinne a thuigfeadh*"—"without a creature to speak to or a sympathetic ear" (trans. McGuckian, ll 34). The speaker struggles throughout the poem to express and escape a narrative of longing that is not legitimized by the Church.

As a result, the illicit attraction to the Black Prince has violent, dire consequences. *"[B]a mhear é a shúil, bhí a fhéachaint fíochmhar*"—"*The fiery, fierce glance of his eye*" makes the speaker ill (trans. McGuckian, ll 8). So the speaker cautions her child: "*Nó beir mar a bhíos-sa i néaróis sínte/ceithre bliana déag, is mé spíonta le pianta/faoi mar a thitfinn i dtobar ar chuma Ophelia*"— "You'll be laid low as I was in a type of ME/at the dregs of a well like a sort of Ophelia/tortured with symptoms for fourteen years" (trans. McGuckian, ll 31-33). McGuckian's extension of the poet's reference to "*néaróis*"—generalized "neurosis" to "ME" or myalgic encephalo-myelitis, also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, conveys the intent of the original: that the persistent affections of the ebony Adonis have the capacity

to wear one out. His ravenous attentions are not only merely physically exhausting, but also emotionally and spiritually depleting. While at first there is something delicious about her exhaustion, as she ages, the speaker's desire for the ultimate bad boy Black Prince becomes despotic, particularly when her daughter inherits this fascination. The Black Prince evidently loves a woman and then leaves her mournful, listless, desolate. This condition is not a temporary hitch in one's social life, but rather a debilitating, chronic disorder. Try as she may, the speaker cannot seem to shake him off.

Ní Dhomhnaill describes the speaker's anguish both in the clinical and the literary sense. Its scale is comparable to the suffering of an physical condition and to the emotional agony of *Hamlet*'s tragic heroine. Ní Dhomhnaill's doubly allusive approach thus situates the speaker firmly within the confines of contemporary medical discourse and a specifically Anglophone literary canon.[43] Although she is writing in a marginalized tongue, her frame of reference is broadly inclusive. The breadth and depth of the speaker's pain not only elicits sympathy but in Homi Bhabha's terms breaks down the supposedly binary opposition between colonizer (the British Black Prince) and the colonized Irish speaker. By portraying her speaker's trauma in terms of Ophelia, Ní Dhomhnaill creates an identity for her speaker that is based on "hybridity...[where one is] *neither The One… nor The Other…but something else besides*, " with a self-concept that emerges from a "Third Space" (Bhabha 33-41) or what I will follow the influential Irish journal *The Crane Bag* (1977-81) in calling a "Fifth Province". The space offers an amphibious, "both/and" dynamic of syncretization and amelioration in furtherance of both cultural and individual actualization or epistemological

[43] Shakespeare arguably serves as the most pre-eminent writer in English and also the most iconic *British* author, across Western history since the Renaissance.

realization. Bhabha and Ní Dhomhnaill each recognize that the identity of the (post)colonial subject is an amalgamation of native tradition (in Ní Dhomhnaill's case, the Irish language) and cultural imposition by the colonizer (England, as articulated by both the Shakespeare allusion and the possible reference to Edward of Woodstock). This notion of occupying an alternative "Third Space" or "Fifth Province" is clearly delineated by the aforementioned doorway metaphor in which the speaker imagines herself stranded on the liminal border between the quotidian world and the Otherworld. Furthermore, in true Bhabhian fashion, Ophelia receives a transposition across the Irish Sea to serve as a bedraggled emblem of the human costs of colonialism in a holy well[44] or "*tobar beannaithe*"—a space of healing in early Celtic religions, which was then itself transposed syncretically into pre-Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholic tradition—notably satirized in John Millington Synge's tragic farce, *The Well of the Saints* (1905).

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[44] In Scots Gaelic, they are called "cloughtie" wells after "the strip[s] of cloth" associated with their rituals. There are as many as 3,000 holy wells in Ireland, including Ó Danachair's report of least 44 sites in Ní Dhomhnaill's home county of Kerry. See also Moya Cannon's "Holy Wells" (1994) which asserts:

> Images of old fertilities
> testify to nothing more, perhaps,
> than the necessary miracle
> of water trapped and stored
> in a valley where water is fugitive.
>
> A chipped and tilted Mary
> grows green among rags and sticks.
> Her trade dwindles—
> …..
>
> Yet sometimes,
> swimming out in waters
> that were blessed in the hill's labyrinthine heart
> the eel flashes past. (*Oar* 16)

Like NÍ Dhomhnaill, Cannon recognizes the potent cocktail of syncretized belief and thus sacramentalized landscape that blends the natural world and the "pagan" into Christian practice. For both contemporary poets, the local environment itself thereby offers a tremendous marvel that is touched by and influences one's understanding of both ecological conditions and historical lifeways.

The rituals regarding material offerings at holy wells vary by local tradition and can also include patterns,[45] originally secular amusements but now primarily devotionals (such as specific blessings or a certain number of decades of the Rosary). Sometimes, a sacred object is left in the well, or a fine piece of cloth is dipped in the water and hung in a tree to honor the well's saint or spirit. In cases of curing sickness, the ailing body part may be washed with the wet cloth, or the offerings themselves are misshapen or infected cast-offs that need to be purified. In this poem, the offering is not merely tatters of rags or disheveled clothing, but the whole person of the exhausted speaker herself, who desperately needs to be cleansed in its redemptive waters. The Ophelia allusion also establishes the speaker as a paragon of jilted innocence, whose sanity is unraveling as the result of ill-fated attraction to her dark-haired prince.

Indeed, the reiteration of variations on the phrase "*an prionsa dubh*" at the end of every successive stanza indicates how the figure permeates every aspect of the speaker's life. Culler would insist that this repetition is more than a rhetorical gesture to make that point, but rather an essential function of the lyric genre itself: "Poems seek to inscribe themselves in mechanical memory, *Gedächtnis*, ask to be learned by heart, taken in, introjected, or housed as bits of alterity that can be repeated, considered, treasured, or ironically cited. The force of poetry is linked to its ability to get itself remembered" ("Why Lyric?" 205). After being plagued by the Black Prince's affection for over a decade, the implied outcome is madness and eventually death, and through the uncanny power of verse, he lingers in the recesses of the mind long after the manifestation of his spirit has departed.

This is only confirmed when the Prince's true identity is revealed:

[45] The poet discusses the special rituals or "patterns" of her home parish of Ventry for the feast of their patron, St. Catherine of Alexandria in *Selected Essays*.

Mar dob é an bás é, ina lúi i luíochán
in íochtar m'anama, ins an bpaibhiliún
is íochtaraí i mo chroí, de shíor ar tí
mé a ídiú gan mhoill is a shá ins an duibheagán
mar sin é an saghas é, an prionsa dubh.

[He]…was all along Sir Death, lurking in ambush
in my womb's valleys, in the summer-house[46]
and lowlands of my heart, forever alert
to decoy me into his desert, to destroy me in short
being the ebony Adonis sort. (trans. McGuckian, ll 41-45)

Ubiquitous and omnipresent, Prince Death effectively creeps inside her and then seeks to draw his victim out into the wasteland so he can obliterate her. He is presented as an invader who penetrates the speaker's entire physical being, which is depicted as terrain, a map which the imperial conqueror occupies. The Black Prince/Death "*ina lúi i luíochán/in íochtar [ina h-]anama, ins an bpaibhiliún/is íochtaraí [ina] croí"* lurk[s] in ambush in the summer-house/and the lowlands of [her] heart" (ll 46-47). The choice of summer-house for "*paibhiliún*" could refer to a gazebo, but McGuckian's translation further suggestively links the Adonis to the English aristocracy who made Ireland the site of their vacation estates.[47] Ní Dhomhnaill recalls the ban imposed upon the Irish language by having the figure force silence upon the speaker when she remains, as noted above, "*gan neach beo i mo ghaobhar, ná éinne a thuigfeadh*"—"without a living being near me or a anyone to understand" (ln 39).

The project the speaker has undertaken to locate herself amidst the confines of colonial and religious oppression is best described in the words of another female poet, Adrienne Rich: "A place on the map is also a place in history with which as a woman…[one is] created and

[46] For more on the use of the summer-house as emblematic psychic and physical space of incestuous colonial privilege and horror, forbidden desire, and revenge in *Birchwood*, see Chapter 5.

[47] Starting with smaller-scale emigration in the twelfth century and becoming more widespread officially under Cromwell in the sixteenth century, the British monarchy adopted a "Plantation" policy of seizing the land and assets of native Irish people and bequeathing it to English settlers. This move was supplemented by the infamous Penal Laws, which denied political and property rights to non-Anglicans.

trying to create…[One strives] not to transcend this [female] body, but to reclaim it" ("Notes" 64-65). Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker is radically aware of her geography in Rich's sense, whether entails a particular location (Ireland), ideology (pre-Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholicism), language or ethnicity (Irish), or a particular body (female). The speaker has made a point to address each of these forms of identification. Her figurative landscape is a rehabilitation, a reclamation of occupied territory. The speaker subverts the poetic tradition of Ireland as a female body by reconfiguring her female body as an abject map of Ireland.[48]

Her metaphorical *coup d'état* stages what Oliver identifies as Kristeva's tactics for negotiating abjection to reclaim one's "imagination and psychic space, which are essential for any kind of transformation." As I have previously explained, in order to successfully reclaim one's interiority, Kristeva advocates strategies of "intimate or psychic revolt" via interpretive and creative catharsis: "The psychic life is that interior space, that *deep down inside*, that permits us to take in attacks both from within and without—that is to say, both physiological and biological traumas, but also political and social aggressions. The imaginary metabolizes, transforms, sublimates, and works these attacks: it supports us as living" (qtd. in Oliver 72-73). Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker utilizes the imaginative form of the poem and its specifically cartographic metaphors to delineate and re-appropriate her own "psychic space" and to stage

[48] Eavan Boland identifies the roots of the portrayal of "Éire/Ireland" as a weepy female in nineteenth century nationalist movement with poets like Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, John Blake Dillon, and of course, James Clarence Mangan, translator of "Róisín Dubh," a poem which I discuss at length in Chapter 1. Indeed, I would argue that such depictions can in fact be traced back even further to portrayals of Ireland as a goddess of sovereignty in Early Irish literature (see MaCana), which persisted into the Jacobite *aislingí* or vision-quest verse and songs like "Róisín Dubh" that were being revived by men like Mangan and Pearse, among others, and may even have been intended as a calculated disavowal of early colonial stereotyping of Irish peasant women as hypersexual and deformed. See Ania Loomba's "Vocabularies of Race," in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, specifically the section on John Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis* (41-44). Regardless of when it began, the portrayal endured, and as a result of it, "women had for so long been a natural object relation for the Irish poem that women poets seemed less a new arrival in the literary tradition that a species of insubordination. It was as though a fixed part of the Irish poem had broken free and become volatile" (Boland 190). For a specific discussion of a comparable exemplar of the culture of patriarchal oppression pervasive amongst the Yeats circle, see Lucy McDiarmid's "A Box for Wilfrid Blunt".

an "intimate revolt" against the pathology of colonial oppression that is invading her body and her psyche, recognizing the Prince as a "sickness" that must be "exorcis[ed]" (ll 44, trans. McGuckian). These strategies are only successful through a complementary insistence on reassessing and reinterpreting the figure of the ebony Adonis.

And so in this case, it is not the Devotionally-Revolutionized Catholicism of Rome, another institution that sought to convert and effectively control Irish women, that enables the speaker to finally be rid of him: "*Nó gur shiúlas amach ar an nduimhche oíche duibhré/is dar an Mháthair Mhór is dar déithe mo mhuintire/a bhraitheas i mo thimpeall*"—"I walked out over the golf links to the moonless tide/and summoned up the Goddess and the spirits of my tribe/to gather around me" (trans. McGuckian, ll 40-42). Only the power of pre-Christian spirits, which embody the previous freedom of Celtic peoples from colonial subjugation, can challenge a figure as pervasive as the Black Prince. The speaker lays claim in her conjuring of Irish tribal spirits to a discourse that confronts her prior displacement, a conceptual challenge described by Spivak via Jacques Derrida as a moment when woman is "affirmed as affirmative, dissimulative, artistic, dionysiac power. She is not affirmed by man, but affirms herself" (qtd. and trans. in Spivak from *Displacement: Derrida and After* 182). Derrida's use of "dionysiac" conveys that woman, as in the poem, contains the god-like power to create and destroy within herself.

Her authority is confirmed by the original Irish text, where the speaker specifically invokes the intercession of "*an Mháthair Mhór*," literally "The Great Mother" or even "The Grandmother" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 14). Through this summoning, Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker "notice[s] the argument based on the "power" of…being-fetish, and hymen, is all deconstructive cautions taken, "determined" by that very political and social history that is inseparably co-extensive with phallocentric discourse and, in her case, either unrecorded in accessible ways or recorded in terms of a man" (Spivak, *Displacement* 185). The speaker's previous elation over the Black

Prince is actually the result of her subjugation. Up until this point in the poem, her focus has been on satisfying his whims, on sacrificing her own needs to please him. This reclaiming of the speaker's own history, this rejection of the phallocentric narrative of desire, occurs when she at last speaks by "[*ag tabhairt* a*] móid agus briathar*"—"sw[earing] her solemn word" to rebuff the objectifying and abjectifying attentions of the Black Prince in favor of a connection to the matrilineal Goddess (Ní Dhomhnaill ln 42). Furthermore, this could even be an invocation of the feminine as opposed to the masculine aspect of God: the God who is also our Mother, as opposed to exclusively God the Father or Jesus previously invoked by the nun, because the sources of the problem are both Church fathers with their narrow-minded sexual prohibitions and colonial forefathers with their linguistic, psychic, physical and affective acts of violence, all of which lead to multigenerational sagas of suffering. Through the intervention of the Goddess, the speaker thus recognizes her own strength and re-names her oppressor as "Sir Death" (trans. McGuckian, ln 46). She questions the agenda he seeks to map out in his domination over her bodily territory.

The speaker frees herself from the Black Prince through a hailing, a re-christening whether pagan or Christian. She revises her own text by invoking the secret power of his real name. Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker's re-appellation of the Black Prince within the context of the poem is both "interpretive" and "cathartic" in the Kristevan sense. She acknowledges her initial abjection and then works to rhetorically transform it through the power of poetic narration. Indeed, as Culler claims of the lyric: "language can sometimes make things happen, through acts of naming, highlighting, and reordering, as well as through the instigation of poetic forms that will repeat as readers or listeners take them up and articulate them anew" ("Why Lyric?" 204). The rejection of the Black Prince irrevocably alters the

speaker's account of her desire by enabling her to acknowledge the perils of wanting what one cannot and should not have and thus permitting her to move beyond her dangerous juvenile fantasies.

The poem thereby fulfills and exceeds the challenge Eavan Boland makes to Irish women poets to create personal political poems. In "Subject Matters" from *Object Lessons*, Boland maintains that a successful political poem is actually private in subject, addressing and investigating daily routine and the inner workings of the mind:

> Political poetry *operates in the corridor between rhetoric and reality*…. I truly believe that where icons walk out of the poem to become authors of it, their speculative energy is directed not just to the iconography which held them hostage but to the poem itself. This gives the woman poet…the unique chance to fold language and history in on itself, to write a political poem which canvasses Irish history by questioning the poetic structures it shadows. To dismantle, in other words, the rhetorical relationship by dismantling the poetic persona which supported it. And to seek the authority to do this not from a privileged or historic stance within the Irish poem but from the silences it created and sustained. (200-201; emphasis mine)

This corridor, this liminal space, is exactly the metaphor Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker employs. She stands in the corridor between the rhetoric, the dream of her desire for the powerful prince, and the miserable domination that was its reality. With this image, Ní Dhomhnaill creates a poem that is at once personal narrative of abjection and historicized political allegory. The new, explicitly courtly label, "Sir Death," yet again clearly delineates the Black Prince's infamous imperial identity and the speaker's own mode of resistance.

Although it is a painful separation from "*an ní ab ansa liom*"—"the thing I loved most" (Ní Dhomhnaill ln 43), the speaker refuses to submit to what Spivak calls "the itinerary of [man's] desire" *(Displacement* 186). No longer the adolescent worshipping the icon who possesses "*gach clis i lúth is in aicillíocht*"—"every achievement in fitness and sport" (trans. McGuckian, ll 9), the now-grown speaker identifies the Prince Death as a

"*pían*"—"pain" that must be alleviated through "*[a thabhairt] suas*"—"surrender[ing]" her beloved (Ní Dhomhnaill ln 44). With the return to diagnostic and military diction, The Black Prince of Death is depersonalized and made into a non-human force, a plague that has contaminated her. As Culler suggests, this is a function of lyric's "extravagance" and the fact that it is

> performing speech acts not recorded in every day speech and deploying not only meter and rhyme, which connote the poetic when encountered elsewhere, but also its own special tenses, such as the lyric present….[We should emphasize] the distinction between lyrics in the present tense…and those in the past which offer brief anecdotes which genre makes signify" ("Why Lyric?" 205).

In a single lyric, the speaker moves from the past in the opening stanzas (ll 1: "*Taibhríodh dom in aois coinlíochta*"—"At puberty I had a dream") to the lyric present of the middle stanzas (ll 26-27: "I*s a iníon bháin, tóg toise cruinn dó,/ní maith an earra é, níl sé iontaofa*"—"Now light of my soul, make no bones about it,/a no-good son-of-a-bitch can't be trusted") to finally offer an ominous forewarning of a future forever shadowed by The Black Prince of Death:

> *Mar sin, a mhaoineach, dein an ní a deir do chroí leat,*
> *toisc gur gabhas-sa-tríd seo leis ná bíodh aon ró-imní ort.*
> *Ní sháróidh an bás sinn, ach ní shaorfaidh choíche,*
> *ní lú ná mar a aontóidh an saol seo le chéile*
> *sinne, agus ár bprionsa dubh.*
>
> Still, my honeychild, since I've been there and done it,
> you do your own thing and don't give a shit,
> for Old Death will not get us, though he'll not let us go,
> any more than this life will condone us
> one kiss from our ebony Adonis. (ll 51-55, trans. McGuckian)

Like "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," the narrative of "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" is also bound to oral performance; it is an abject history lecture meant to instruct the speaker's daughter about her mother's individual past and also simultaneously to provide for

the reader an allegorization[49] of the real painful social condition of Irish women under colonial rule and religious tyranny.

In writing about orality and Irish women poets' "ownership" of their work, Angela Bourke reminds us of the important ties to tradition in the process:

> Originality consists in saying something that is new enough to be arresting and memorable, while remaining true enough to old patterns to be familiar—and memorable. Rhyme, meter, alliteration, and formulaic utterance—learned and perfected over a period of years—are among the templates used to fashion experience and thought into poems that can be sung or spoken for generations. (*Dwelling in Possibility* 133)

Bourke's point dovetails nicely with Culler's emphasis on lyric's memorability. The multi-generational narrative of "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" reinforces Bourke's contention that Irish women writers' invocation of oral traditions produces work that functions as collective memory and communal property, offering knowledge that lingers as long as it is sung or spoken, bearing the traces of all the women who have performed it before, while simultaneously remaining open to the influence of generations yet to come.

Indeed, although the speaker may have been temporarily disabled by the imperial forces of the Black Prince, she is not destroyed. The poem serves as first-person testimony that proves her indomitable perseverence, preserving her struggle and ultimate triumph for posterity. As Oliver observes in *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition:* "It is the paradoxical nature of witnessing oppression that makes it so powerful in restoring subjectivity and agency to an experience that shamefully lacks it…Witnessing enables the subject to reconstitute the experience of objectification in ways that allow her to reinsert subjectivity into a situation designed to destroy it." (98) The speaker confirms her previously abjected object status by warning her child of "*[a chur] faoi ghlas tú i gcás gloine iata*"—"being locked

[49] To do so, Ní Dhomhnaill revises yet another mythical tradition, that of the fairytale.

in an enclosed glass case" and then uses the power of metaphor and the direct address to the reader to repair and reinstate her own subject position by not only recounting her trauma, but also renaming the Black Prince (Ní Dhomhnaill ln 31). The woman asserts her right as speaker of the poem, as narrator of woe, as witness to and survivor of her own oppression. She encounters the Black Prince and lives to tell the tale.

The recuperative potential of the speaker's act of narration, her new appellation for the persnickety prince and account of herself is best described by Judith Butler's reiteration of the necessity and the terms of what Foucault calls "discursive practices" in response to the insidious flexibility of (in this instance, imperial) power:

> The account is an act—situated within a larger practice of acts—that one performs for, to, even *on* another, an allocutory deed, an acting for, and in the face of, the other and sometimes by virtue of the language provided by the other. This account does not have as its goal the establishment of a definitive narrative but constitutes a linguistic and social occasion for self-transformation. (*Giving* 130)

The particular postcolonial female subject's conscious development of the allucutory "I" through synthetic verb forms establishes a significant link in her verse between what Foucault refers to as "discursive" and "non-discursive practices" throughout his *oeuvre* or what Butler categorizes as the more ambiguous "acts" that can apply to both terms. In this way, Ní Dhomhnaill unites linguistic en-placement in terms of both body and location (with regard to "good", traditional Munster Irish's specific emphasis on these personal verb forms) to enactment thereby also extending speech's relation to other non-discursive practices. This a both a more precise and a more expansive way of charting the speaker's position within the mobile power network already established by the forces of Sir Death and Catholic authoritarianism that still pervade Irish culture and occupy a place on the map of the national psyche, not to mention its geographical territory. It is only through the embodied, regionally-located narration of herself that the speaker

is able to successfully engage with these forces and thereby strategically shift her relation to them. The act of telling this harrowing tale is required to both examine the encounter with and effectively purge The Black Prince of Death from her system. The speaker's direct addresses, "*a iníon*"—"my daughter" (ln 26) and "*a mhaoineach*"—"my precious one" (ln 51), suggest a younger female reader, a treasured daughter who will sympathize with her mother's plight. Butler further insists that it is through the presence of an interlocutor that language gains its full ability to metamorphose both the speaker/writer and the audience:

> The moment a story is addressed to someone, it assumes a rhetorical dimension that is not reducible to a narrative function. It presumes that someone, and it seeks to recruit and act upon that someone. Something is being done with language when the account that I give begins: it is invariably interlocutory, ghosted, laden, persuasive, and tactical. It may well seek to communicate a truth, but it can do this, if it can, only by exercising a relational dimension of language. (*Giving* 63)

Identifying the desired audience is not only restorative, redemptive and freeing to Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker. Her "laden, persuasive, tactical" account-making and the implicit symbiotic interdependency between listener and teller also simultaneously liberate the beloved child who was similarly oppressed by her affection for and affliction by Sir Death in the fifth and sixth stanzas. Though Death itself cannot be avoided permanently,[50] for the time being at least, the speaker liberates herself from the terrors of his embrace and rejects the horrors of the colonial history he represents by using language that on a grammatical level inherently recognizes not only the interdependence of listener/reader and speaker/writer, but—and this is all the more imperative for its subtlety—the utilization of both discursive and non-discursive practices of sociopolitical resistance on a local level in conjunction with and through one another as opposed to a strict delineation between them.

[50] The distress of hungry and desiring (female) bodies is in this instance explicitly transformative and recuperative, whereas for most of the *faminized* bodies represented in the works of Chapter 5, the transformation that occurs is one of irreparable physical, psychological, and communal dissolution, usually all three simultaneously.

Like both "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" and "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Oileán*/Island" insists on the importance of the textual resurrection and rehabilitation by crossing borders, literally (in terms of topography) ideologically (in terms of both politics and religion), figuratively (in terms of genre and challenging both the Anglophone and the *Gaeilge* canons), and linguistically (in terms of being written in Irish but published with facing English translations by other eminent primarily Anglophone Irish poets, whose accurate presentation of the original text is often quite debatable). Its speaker revises John Donne's famous assertion from the seventeenth expostulation of his *Devotions* that "No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe" to figure that the body of her lover is in fact an island, in particular, Ireland (87). But she concurs with Donne's contention that this island is neither remote nor isolated: "*Oileán is ea do chorp/i lár na mara moiré/Tá do ghéaga spréite ar bhraillín/gléigeal os farraige faoileán*—"Your body is an island/in the midst of the vast ocean/Your limbs are splayed on a bedsheet/brilliant beyond a sea of gulls" (Ní Dhomhnaill *PD* 41, ll 1-4). The lover/island functions only within the context of its interrelatedness, its erotic, symbiotic connection to the other figure/individual it encounters through a shared gaze. It is also noteworthy that this is the meditation where Donne specifically addresses the "translation" and the transfiguration of body and soul by God and insists "his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves againe, for that Librarie where every book shall lie open to one another" (86).[51]

Within the context of the poem, Ní Dhomhnaill, whose work is frequently translated, is suggesting that the poet's (and subsequently the translator's) ability to craft an enduring metaphor of both the individual lover's body and the Irish body politic has an almost God-like

[51] "*Gléigeal*"—containing the root "*geal*" or "bright"— literally means "pure white," and both the original and the various translations play not only on the sense of visual but intellectual brilliance contained on a white sheet or page, as well as the Hiberno-English slang of "brilliant" as in "awesome" or "superior," I would argue. Sea of gulls is also obviously a multilingual pun on seagulls.

capacity to translate into words and thereby resurrect and transform the portrayal of dead or still-living bodies or iconographies (Donne's "scattered leaves") for specific purpose (a Librarie of sorts), e.g. in service of her feminist agenda. The fact that these editions appear in facing translations and the Ní Dhomhnaill largely refuses to translate her own work, imply that both the original Irish and the English translation bear equal weight and consideration when discussing her work, and that as she, for the most part, approves of these translations and frequently works directly with the translator, the poet is fully aware of issues regarding the fidelity—which is most certainly the appropriate term for this poem in particular— of those translations: "Ultimately, the ones in Irish are my babies—and you touch them, I'll kill you dead! —but the poems in English are somebody else's babies, and they're babies that have grown up and walked the world and said, "Bye-bye, Mama," and that's it" (qtd. in Dunsford 47). As such, I insist that her corpus knowingly plays with polysemous meanings and adapts or subverts common, historical idioms in Irish itself as well as the potentialities of myriad Hiberno-English translations. Furthermore, in the spirit of Donne, the speaker and her beloved literally and metaphorically lie open to one another in every way despite centuries of alienation and linguistic, sociocultural, and religious oppression of Irish men and Irish women, despite years of famines, epidemics, disenfranchisement, and diaspora. They find unity. They resurrect—or at least *erect* and arouse—one another sexually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Of the three essays on Ní Dhomhnaill that appear in *Liminal Borderlands in Irish Literature and Culture*, though all mention that the poet's work appears in translation, only Maryna Romanets's chapter provides interlinear translations as I do throughout this text. Her discussion emphasizes the gendered-, psycho-, and socio-political complexities of translation, using this very poem as her prime example, such as Montague's version of the lines given above:

"Your nude body is an island,/asprawl on the ocean bed./How beautiful your limbs, spread-/eagled under seagull's wings" (Ní Dhomhnaill *PD* 41, ll 1-4, trans. John Montague). Though Romanets makes much of Montague's explicitly erotic addition of the adjective "nude" and his implication throughout of a splayed female body ("spread-/eagled under seagull's wings"), odd object (as the poet herself is a woman) of both the male gaze and male desire, passively awaiting penetration on that "ocean bed"; she also discusses the critical disagreement regarding the lover's sex, insists in true Deleuzian fashion that the "gender-inconclusive corporeal landform" of the original Irish text is by design androgynous (178-181).[52]

However, I concur with Bríona Nic Dhiarmada and Patricia Boyle Haberstroh and will demonstrate through a careful close reading of the original text and by examining Ní Dhomhnaill's resistance to the long, sociopoetic history of co-opting and reifying women's bodies in the Irish nationalist, Irish Gaelic, and the Western Canonical literary traditions that the lover *must* be male: "*In 'Oileán' déanann sí inbhéartú ar cheann de na híomhánna is comónta sa litríocht i.e., an tír mar bhean….Sa chéad rann faighimid friotal atá níos gaire do fhriotal agus stíl na filíochta clasaicí ná aon chuid eile dá saothar, b'fheidir, dar ndóigh….*In 'Oileán' she inverts of one of the most common images in Irish literature, i.e., the country as a woman….In the first stanza we find expression which is closer to the wording and style of classic poetry than in any other part of her work, perhaps" (Nic Dhiarmada 132). My discussion

[52] For more on the potentially ambivalent or ambiguities regarding the gender of the lover's body, see all three articles by Romanets, including the latest in Liminal Borderlands. But I would insist the feather lines (ll 23-5), subtly evoke the lover's phallus. I concur with Patricia Boyle Haberstroh's claim in *Opening the Field: Irish Women, Texts, and Contexts* that the poem represents Ní Dhomhnaill's male muse and does so to reverse the nationalist and I would add—Western—canonical traditions of mapping women's bodies as sites of conquest and occupation from which it arises, particularly in Ireland, as those described in Chapter 1. For more on the representations of "virgin territory" in discourses of American empire, see the *oeuvre* of Annette Kolodny.

of Ní Dhomhnaill's transfiguration of tradition in this instance is entirely indebted to Jane Hedley's comprehensive study of strategies address in the *oeuvres* of some major twentieth-century American women poets, *I Made You to Find Me*, and her emphasis on strategies of feminist resistance to the sonneteering tradition in "'Old Songs with New Words': The Achievement of Adrienne Rich's 'Twenty-One Love Poems'". I will use the the conventions of the sonnet as established by Hedley, as well as the specifically Irish context of the feminizing of Irish sovereignty as established in Chapter 1 to contend is that Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, like Rich before her, also tactically develops this love poem to to redress the institutions of such generic forms in her case by mixing lyric poetry with Irish voyage tales. As Romanets has suggested, "In the case of Ireland, where the collective psychological paradigm has been determined to a considerable extent by a traumatic sense of history, the land traditionally allegorized as woman is 'laden with a history and mythology of invasion, dispossession, plantation, famine, eviction, land wars, emigration and rural depopulation'" (Nash, qtd. "Travellers" 39), which in turn necessitated the rescue of that distressed female nation-state by a man. She further reterritorializes imperialist and nationalist representations of women in an effort to re-evaluate the biopolitical economy of psychic, bodily, and diplomatically-disputed spaces via an intertextual intimate cartography that explicitly forms a border-flexible "fifth Province" through the admixture of affect, (be)longing, and "ecologistic" environmental discourse.

Thus, in a conscious response to prior ideologies and iconographies, Ní Dhomhnaill exploits the subversive political function of verse that Hedley recognizes in Rich, "Poetic forms thus may and do become vehicles—the agents, even—of ideological or political agendas. The sonnet is one such form, and free verse becomes gender-inflected…by showing up…in place of sonnets" (328). While Ní Dhomhnaill resists the classical sonnet by also composing free verse,

jettisoning the fourteen-line structure entirely, making the object of the poem's gaze a man, "*Oileán*/Island" is also designed as a referential *bricolage*, ostensibly upholding other conventions of the Petrarchan blazon, such as cataloguing her lover's body and "stag[ing] a 'present passion' so intense that the poem itself becomes a little island of time-transcendence, a brief foretaste of eternity" (Hedley, "'Old Songs'" 329). Ní Dhomhnaill's "little island" of textual immortality, however, is not presented as a collection of valuable objects but rather a natural marvel:

> *Toibreacha fíoruisce*[53] *iad t'uisí*[54]
> *tá íochtar fola orthu is uachtar meala.*[55]
> *Thabharfaidís*[56] *fuarán dom*
> *i lár mo bheirfin*
> *is deoch slánaithe*
> *sa bhfiabhras.*
>
> Your temples, they are spring wells,
> The depths of blood and the surface of honey.
> They could provide a cooling pool for me
> in the midst of my burning
> and a healing drink
> in the fever. (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 5-10)

In lieu of material wealth, we have organic treasures. The speaker's association of the lover with earth and water establishes him as erotic *terra firma*. As Romanets points out, "the poet draws on tradition in which water is regenerative, essential for life, fertility, and healing in the Celtic religion" ("Cartographers" 330). His body is the ultimate safe haven, the floating promised land destined to shelter the weary traveler who appears by implication later in the poem.

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[53] Literally "true-" or "fresh-water" to indicate a pure, untainted natural source.

[54] In Irish, anatomical temples only, but also, in translation to English, there would be a specifically sacred and religious connotation is implied, of which the poet would be well aware.

[55] Anatomically, the top part, but also the word for cream literally, metaphorically as in "superior" or "cream" the color.

[56] Clearly conditional, this is an implicit interrogative, rather than an imperative.

Furthermore, the use of the conditional mood, particularly in Irish, implies that she is asking her lover, beseeching him, not demanding or commanding. The sensual mix of blood and honey alludes to a Norse belief that the two together form the divine mead of poetry. Although Ní Dhomhnaill is most well-known for her repeated use of Irish folklore, as I have already demonstrated elsewhere in my reading of "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" and "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass," her corpus has a decidedly hybridized, syncretic approach and un-self-consciously borrows from other traditions as part of her understanding of a contiguous mythos, as the poet sees fit.[57]

In "*Oileán*/Island," the speaker defines her lover's body as the necessary raw materials of her poetic enterprise:

> *Tá do dhá shúil*
> *mar locha sléibhe*
> *lá breá Lúnasa*
> *nuair a bhíonn an spéir*
> *ag glinniúint sna huisci.*
> *Giolcaigh scuabacha*[58] *iad t'fhabhraí*
> *ag fás faoina*[59] *gcuiumhais.*
>
> Your two eyes are
> Like mountain lakes
> on a fine August day
> when the sky is usually
> gleaming in the waters.
> Your eyelashes are bushy reeds
> growing around their edges. (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 11-17)

The Montague translation changes "Lunasa" or "August" to "Lammas Day" or August 1. The month is named for the Irish feast day's traditional celebrations of the bounty of the harvest, and

[57] See especially her next collection, *The Water Horse* (2000), which in addition to the Irish and the Christian traditions, invokes Greek, Roman, and a number of other international mythologies.

[58] Literally "brushy"—related to the noun and the verb *scuab*—"brush."

[59] "*Fás faoin daonra*"—"the growth of the population" is also common Irish idiom in geography and sociology, which obviously occurs through interactions, such as those described in the poem.

the *Oxford English Dictionaxry* reminds us that this is the date when "loaves of bread were consecrated, made from the first ripe corn" ("Lammas"), a sign of fertility. The feast of sanctification ties the resolute, relational mapping done in "*Oileán*/Island" with the consecrational mapping in "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass." Furthermore, Romanets highlights that the substitution of "Lammas Day"—a substitution that I would argue is an intuitive one for an Irish person, particularly a native speaker of Irish— serves as an intensifier to stress the commitment implied by the sexual exchange between the couple, because Lúghnasa was used "to draw up marriage contracts…[and is] also associated with the [Celtic] sun-god Lúgh, supposedly commemorat[ing] his marriage" (*LB* 178). Much like the mention of Erne in "Róisín Dubh," Montague's specific allusion focuses on the seasonal rituals of Ulster not as a gesture of isolation or partition but as a means of deliberately creating an embodied "fifth province" of historical and cultural continuity that disregards the constructed and contested border between the North and the Republic, in the same way Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker eventually joyously disregards the borders between her body and her beloved's.

Whereas in the sonneteering tradition, "*topoi* of insatiability and of inexpressibility co-exist in these sequences with poetic blazons whose project is to describe the beloved body from head to toe, as it appears to the greedy gaze of the poet-lover" (Hedley, "'Old Songs'" 330), Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker's "greedy" gaze is tempered, clearly sated and fulfilled by the lover. And although she begins the poem by addressing his entire body, with each progressive stanza, her emphasis shifts to the intimate minutiae of his countenance. The speaker stares deeply into the sparkling pools that are his eyes and believes even his reed-like bushy eyelashes are endlessly fascinating. Furthermore, *fabhra* or "eyelash weeds"/*calliblepharis ciliata* are a common Irish

water-plant.[60] She finds wonder in the most mundane, slightly-shabby and intentionally, playfully geographical features of his anatomy. It is his very imperfections, which make him perfect for her.

The function of Ní Dhomhnaill's anatomization/geographization in "*Oileán*/Island" is captured in Kelly Oliver and Luce Irigaray's luminous and numinous reassessment of the gaze:

> The look is no longer the philosopher's gaze that rips open and penetrates the other or fixes us with its piercing intensity….The flesh does not respond to the demanding gaze of the philosopher [or in this case, the poet] but to the loving look of another body….The unseen source of sight is a sensuous caress that touches and is touched by another sort of look, a tactile look that does not pry or gaze but caresses in the flow of irrigation and irradiances….[a loving look], which becomes the inauguration of "subjectivity" without subjects or objects….[For Irigaray,] a body in love cannot be fixed as an object. The look of love sees the invisible in the visible, both spiritual and carnal….The gaze does not have to be [Sartre or Lacan's] harsh or accusing stare. Rather, affective psychic energy circulates through loving looks. Loving looks, then, nourish and sustain the psyche, the soul….Love can bring us together outside of the hierarchy of subject/object/other, then relations beyond domination are possible. (qtd. in *Witnessing* 215-216)

The sensuous shared look essentially establishes a dialogic interrelation between the lovers' bodies and minds that brings them into closer communion, not a relation of occupation. Furthermore, it is a supplication to the lover, an implied interrogative, not an order. "…[T]he final destination of th[e] journe[y] is the [O]ther's territory" (Romanets, "Travellers" 47), but not as a conqueror, as a welcome and invited visitor. It is not a closed sentence of poet reifying object, but rather an erotic conversation that is open to possibility, as evidenced throughout the text of the poem and with its conditional verbs. When the lover's eyes are compared to the clarity of "*locha sléibhe*" or "mountain lakes" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 11), that clarity provides a reflective surface that simultaneously enables the speaker to see not only her beloved but also

[60] See entry for "*fabhra*" on tearma.ie.

herself.[61] The lakes of his eyes also, rather transcendentally, reflect the sun and presumably the stars in which—the Western poetic tradition would insist—are written their Fate. The affirming and affective nourishment provided by the island/lover's body is clearly indicated by all the aforementioned references to water: "They could provide for me a cooling pool/in the midst of my burning/and a healing drink/in the fever" (Ní Dhomhnaill ll 5-10). Seemingly binary sensory and sexual pleasures are naturalized in way that they "run like an electric charge between two opposite poles delineated along bipolar semantic and gender axes, providing an exchange of pleasure as inexhaustible as nature" (Romanets, "Cartographers" 330), but these are not incompatible or restrictive but equal and balancing. Against to the Petrarchan penchant for obsessing over breasts or thighs initially, there is no figuring of the lower torso or genitals, and later, they are only subtly suggested.[62] Ní Dhomhnaill suggests that it is in the face alone that one is able to read the truth of love. These details do not fragment, disembody, attempt to master, or isolate the lover as a strictly Petrarchan litany would but only serve to bring him into more immediate contact with her. By focusing on the details of his face, the lover ceases to be a mass of discombobulated parts and rather becomes a unified whole, an entire person, based on the intimate connection of their mutual gaze. This mutual gaze also does not echo the Petrarchan fixation with the lips or a demonstrably closed mouth. Romanets asserts that the poem's "parallel constructions shape a 'pictorial' part of the poem, traditionally romantic in its visual mode. It is static due to its lexical composition; nouns and adjectives preponderate over verbs. Much in its poetic arsenal—trite epithets and metaphors in the manner of established clichéd images—is appropriated from male poetry." ("Travellers" 41) Although Romanets claims that

[61] For more on the critical significance of both seeing and being seen in erotic relationships, see Chapter 4.

[62] See Note on Harnett vs. Montague translations.

she is not developing a positive/negative or masculine/feminine binary or dialogic, the pejorative tone of her analysis completely fails to consider that the poet's thoughtful reappropriation and revision of so-called "trite epithets" and "clichéd images" are precisely the point in order to radically challenge the masculinist canon in both Irish and English. Furthermore, the poem only begins as static and becomes much more specifically and explicitly active in its later stanzas; a preponderance of nouns and adjectives notwithstanding, the male lover does not remain frozen still, an untouchable and unattainable object, but rather becomes a partner, an equal, a consenting and eager participant in the act of love.

While the first three stanzas do acknowledge the primacy of that gaze in the romantic and Petrarchan traditions, I would argue that Ní Dhomhnaill supplements that recognition by mirroring Hedley and Rich's emphasis on touch to insist that it is a lush, lustrous, and "tactile" optic and haptic caress and that the natural progression is a move from the visual to the physical—it is a male body that the speaker's gazing at, and pivotally, that male body does not remain unmoving or untouched on the bed:

Is dá mbeadh agam báidín
chun teacht faoi do dhéin,
báidín fionndruine,
gan barrchleite amach uirthi
ná bunchleite isteach uirthi[63]
ach aon chleite amháin
droimeann[64] *dearg*
ag déanamh ceoil
dom fhéin ar bord.

thógfainn suas
na seolta boga bána
bogóideacha; threabhfainn
trí fharragaigí arda

[63] Irish idiom, equivalent in English: "Not a stitch out of place."

[64] Literally, "white-backed (cow)."

is thiocfainn chughat
mar a luíonn tú
uaigneach, iathghlas,[65]
oileánach.

And if I had a tiny boat
to bear me to yourself
a small boat of findrinny,
Without a top feather nor a bottom feather out of place on her
but one single feather
red with a white back
making music
to myself on board.

I would hoist up
the soft white sails
full-bellied [with wind]; I'd plough
through high seas
and I would come beside you
as you lie,
wistful, emerald,
islanded. (Ní Dhomhnaill 18-32)

The island lover engages with the tempest-tossed traveler in the miniature ship in a swirling sea of amorous intercourse, the erotic motion in the ocean. Together, they rock the little boat. Romanets points out the dynamic of the poem is "enhanced by a graphic, spiral movement of "*cleite*/feather," which slips and spins from one line to the other, occupying different positions to emphasize the aural quality of words." This is accurate, but yet again fails to consider that Ní Dhomhnaill is purposefully modifying a clichéd idiom for a new, subversive, specifically sexual purpose. It becomes a mere cliché no longer through her innovative usage of inverting the traditional idiom of "*barrchleite isteach/buncchleite amach*" to suggest a top-down focus and possibly rhythmical shift in sexual positions to imply entry or penetration. Furthermore, the

[65] In entomology *lestes sponsa*, "the emerald damsel-fly" are also known as "*iathglas*" in Irish for their "meadow-green" color, shared by both males and females. As one would perhaps expect based on the ecosystem established in the poem, lestes sponsa are most frequently found surrounding lake regions in July and August, where they live amongst the reeds. *Iathghlais* mate by forming tandem pairs, perhaps like the couple in this poem. See entomological gloss with full Linnean taxonomy from tearma.ie.

femininity of the noun *báidín*/boat in Irish requires the feminine pronouns, but I retained their gender in my translation, because it also metaphorically suggests the approach of the woman in her feminized vessel "*bogóideacha*—full-bellied"[66] with wind to the masculine island/lover, emblematized by her vision of his phallic *chleite dearg*—"red feather" or perhaps even a temporal transposition to suggest the sighting of a buoy.[67]

And this is not just any vessel. "Findrinny" or "white bronze" is a unique, precious combination of silver, copper, and occasionally gold that was used in heroic shields and a range of other garments and objects, such as sandals, or in the case of legends from the Fenian cycle, a horse's bridle. It is a distinctively Irish amalgamation used to indicate nobility and power, but also, simultaneously to suggest a certain delicateness. If Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker is aware of the proverbial quotation from James Joyce's letters: "A 30-year wedding should be called a 'findrinny' one" ("Findrinny"), the use of the boat made specifically of this alloy could further indicate not only the epic, mythical resonances of this union with her lover but also the depth and breadth of a lifelong marital connection. I am not claiming that Ní Dhomhnaill keeps the *Oxford English Dictionary* close at hand while writing—quite improbable since she is writing in Irish—merely that even the *OED* recognizes the explicitly Irish context and etymology of this borrowed word that would already be familiar to a native Irish speaker—not to mention the poem's verbatim and imagistic mythohistorical allusions to "Art, King of Leinster" from oral tradition (Romanets, "Cartographers" 336).

Here, I would like to reinforce Angela Bourke's point about Irish orature and the written poetry that results from it functioning as performative collective memory and communal

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[66] Pregnant in the metaphorical if not the literal sense.

[67] In nautical terminology from time immemorial, boats are feminine and land is masculine. Also in modern sailing, red and white are colors of light given off by buoys, and the buoys themselves are red.

property. Ní Dhomhnaill embeds portions of the cultural past of the Irish people in this contemporary poem to show that temporal borders are fluid in her lyrics. As she explains in "*Cé Leis Tú*?":

> The ball of wool is a common symbol in Irish folklore, especially in the hero-tale genre. There the hero or heroine is often handed a ball of wool which slips out of his or her hand and rolls ahead of them so fast (as the formulaic phrase goes) "that it catches up with the wind before it and the wind behind it does not catch up with it." Following this unreeling ball successfully leads the hero(ine) to his/her destiny, and so the unreturned balls of wool…seem to symbolize the unredeemed, unlived, and above all, unexpressed destinies of many generations before me, which for some reason I have been asked to carry. And a lot of these tangled balls and unreturned skeins are the result of many generations of emigration and displacement. (Ní Dhomhnaill 57)

The recurrent passages from legend and the choice of findrinny in "*Oileán*/Island" signify that for Ní Dhomhnaill the present is forever entangled with the past, or at least their entanglement is something her speakers are forced to negotiate. I am using the term "negotiate" as Hedley and Rosalind Jones do with "the special sense it has acquired in Marxist cultural studies, to designate a range of strategies that involve, of necessity, both acceptance and resistance to a dominant system of representation" (331) The notion of temporality throughout Ní Dhomhnaill's *oeuvre* actually evolves from a sense of overlapping, intertwined, unraveling, unending skein of Irish cultural memory.

From a purely aesthetic perspective, findrinny could also evoke pale skin, aglow with the heat of passion. And as in Rich's "Twenty-One Love Poems," the "thrust" (to borrow Montague's verb of choice) of the "*Oileán*/Island," if you will, is in the action of lovemaking with its subtle sexuality embodied in the phallic red and white-backed feather. Unlike the violent mapping suggested by Howe or the traumatic silences described in "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" and "*Féar Suaithinseach*/ Miraculous Grass," the focus here is on coupling, mutuality; it is a pleasurable geography lesson. Hedley's description of the work of metonymy

in Rich is also relevant to Ní Dhomhnaill's use of metaphor, "If it seems more 'sexually explicit' than the conventional blazon, this is partly why; partly also because metaphor has not been used to transform these nipples into 'lilies budded' or these thighs into marble columns" ("'Old Songs'" 347). Ní Dhomhnaill's metaphors are so against commodification, so invested in union, in fact, that the division between the individual bodies in the act of intercourse is lost entirely in the primal mating implied in the proleptic seafoam orgasm.

In *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses,* Susan Stewart claims in her discussion of "deitic positionality" that bodies in lyric are dependent on shared movement and "reciprocity," the fluidity of touch, time, and the (pleasurable) transgression our supposedly "stable" borders:

> …the artwork's very specificity, its 'finality of form' enables its context independence. The theory of deixis in linguistics has implications for presentational forms more generally, helping us consider framing the time and space of apprehension, the mutuality, reciprocity or nonreciprocity, the reversibility of things amid the unidirectionality of everyday time, and assumptions of intention and reception. (156)

But for Ní Dhomhnaill, as with Rich, the poem is entirely context dependent. There is no face but the lover's, and time is never quotidian and unidirectional but rather as I discuss in Yeats's corpus in the terms of Elizabeth Freeman, consciously heterogenous and "non-chrononormative". As such, there is arguably no "finality of form" as the poem itself functions to both delay or still with momentary affection but also proleptically speed up through erotic anticipation in furtherance of a continuous, flexible narrative of an ongoing haptic communication. The specificity of the mutual gaze and caress is entirely reciprocal and can be achieved only through the joining of the eyes and bodies of the poet and her lover as joyful, consenting participants in the act of making love. I chose my idiom in the prior sentence to deliberately emphasize the awareness involved in their act of consummation, the production of (possibly reproductive) sexual pleasure by choice. Love is made willing by two people together,

not by one dominating, repressing, forcing, or "penetrating"[68] the vulnerable Other with either his or her gaze or his or her body without his or her consent.

The arousal of one would not exist without the other. In Oliver's terms, "The caress is the between, both carnal and divine, both sensible and transcendental" (*Witnessing* 216). The island in the poem may be Inis na mBró or *An Fear Marbh* (The Dead Man), one of the Blasket Islands off Ireland's southwest coast, which resembles a man in repose. Furthermore, "this interpretation pulls yet another string of associations. The famed [Blaskets], located at the [proverbial] end of the world, were beloved of generations of poets for whom they represented the powerful dream of Ireland, Gaelic and free, and were perceived to be a 'Homeric Gaelic fount of simplicity and rugged human endurance'" (Romanets, "Travellers, Cartographers, Lovers" 44). But unlike prior mythologies surrounding *An Fear Marbh,* the island or lover here is very much alive.

Ní Dhomhnaill is yet again adapting and expanding on Irish tradition by offering another revisionist twist. Rather than isolate the corpus of the male lover and render it motionless, mute, or literally and metaphorically "dead" with a penetrating, pointed, debilitating, or fatal gaze, the speaker uses touch to bring the beloved body into full, intimate contact with her own, offering in this description of shared orgasm an implied "close-up that keeps us from forming any definite or bounded image of the whole" (Hedley, "'Old Songs'" 346). There are no individual body parts at all. In this moment, the speaker's metaphor suggests that all value accrued by the lover's body in the previous stanzas, all of its previous seductive power, is in fact dependent on its consenting violability, its desire and facility for union with her own. As I've already pointed out these are "naturalized" appraisals, signifying an innate value as a beautiful and necessary part of

[68] For more on this, see the discussion of Andrea Dworkin's *Intercourse* in Chapter 1.

the functioning ecosystem of desire, rather than a capitalist, commodity-based wealth suggested by Petrarchan clichés like gold, rubies, or marble. This is further confirmed by a translation of "*iathghlas*," not as "emerald" as both Hartnett and Montague do, but literally as "meadow-green."[69] I do however concur with Stewart when she describes the transformative effects touch in lyric, "We can move between subjectivity and objectivity, between sensations that are localizable and those that are dispersed; we experience a confirmation of our state of being and alienation from it at the same time" (163). The simultaneous dissolution and affirmation of the self, the blurring of the two lovers' beings and bodies is exactly what Ní Dhomhnaill figures in the spindrift climax.

Romanets's objections notwithstanding, I even prefer the deftness of the Montague translation in achieving what Nic Dhiarmada describes as "*véarsaí áille ceolmhara draíochtúla a mbíonn daríreacht a ceana ag soilsiú tríothu*"—"beautiful, musical, magical verses which are in earnest in their affectionate enlightenment from beginning to end" (132). There is something undeniably sexy in the blatant and appropriately verb-heavy eroticism of his translation: "*thrust*/through foaming seas/and *come* beside you/where you lie back/wistful, emerald/islanded" (ll 29-32, emphasis mine). The couple's love for each other is like a message written in sand/land and all the water metaphors absorb and rearrange the details, proving that the inscription on their bodies is neither permanent nor binding—but a canvas perpetually available for revision that is not burned in fire like a *sati*—instead it is a *tabula rasa* of damp skin. The erotic message to the beloved is never completed, and the "appropriation" of one another's bodies to keep re-writing it is not borne of oppression, paralysis, passiveness, or silence but rather of mutual, active, and passionate consent.

[69] Thanks to Patrick O'Neill for pointing this out to me.

Thus, it is strategically imperative for Ní Dhomhnaill to retain the use of metaphor over metonymy because only metaphor allows her to negotiate hundreds of years of conquering British imperialists and later nationalist men mapping their possession of the Irish colony and later the Free State and the Republic onto the bodies of women or vice versa. Their use of cartographic metaphors to do so dictates Ní Dhomhnaill's own direct engagement with and revision of these historical strategies of representation and domination. This nod to tradition is clearly indicated in the poem's final lines: "*uaigneach, iathghlas*,/*oileán*ach"— "wistful, emerald,/islanded."[70] The body of the man in question is not just any island, but as any tourist brochure will tell you, the shining "emerald" island of Ireland. Whereas Michael Hartnett's translation of the poem's final lines "*uaigneach, iathghlas*,/*oileánach*" as "solitary, emerald,/insular" retains a certain ambiguity, implying that there exists an almost imperious postcoital distance between the pair and that the speaker wonders how well she truly knows the lover/island, even after the close connection implied by the orgasm. Although I feel that Montague's translation of "*oileán*ach" as "islanded" is more accurate since the term could also mean "islander" and the word for "island" (*oileán*) is clearly present in the form, Hartnett's interpretation of "*uaigneach*" corresponds with the my own direct, literal translation as "lonely." Some of Hartnett and Ní Dhomhnaill's postcoital ambiguity is still relevant to my reading; for it is only at the moment of separation where the speaker can once again delineate between their individual bodies that the lover/island suddenly appears "lonely" and distant. This too is geographical, for what is Ireland if not solitary, emerald, and insular? Furthermore, "*oileán*ach,"

[70] It may also be a subtle wink to Tomás Ó Criomhthain's famously earthy (only in the original Irish version), *An tOileánach/The Islandman* (1929), an account of his life on the Blasket Islands, which only appeared expurgated in English until Garry Bannister and David Sowby's translation in 2012.

when read as intentionally ambiguously as "islander", further associates the nation and its people.

As in other poems in Ní Dhomhnaill's *oeuvre*, the speaker of "*Oileán*/Island" challenges the poetic tradition of Ireland as a female body. In this instance, she does so by figuring a *male* body as an erotic map of Ireland:

> *Agus an rud is suntasaí faoi sin ná gurb é an leannán fir a shamhlaítear leis an tír. …tharraigíonn Ní Dhomhnaill ar an tírdhreach agus ar an dúlra le haghaidh a cuid samhlaoidí - tréith comónta i dtraidisiún na n-amhrán grá sa dán féinsa.*—And the most remarkable thing about it is that the male lover is synonymous with the nation….Ní Dhomhnaill draws on the landscape and nature for her images - a common feature in the tradition of love songs—which she uses in the poem itself. (Nic Dhiarmada 132)

Indeed, Ní Dhomhnaill's specific use of vairations on lore in conjunction with reinterpreting "clichéd" metaphors and idioms enables her to claim the conventions of the both Irish-language and English-language erotic poetry while working from within to subvert them by radically altering their gaze and thereby disputing their branding, possessive power. The speaker transforms herself from passive object to active gazer and appraiser. And as Hedley does with Rich, I would concur that "the better we know the Petrarchan tradition, the more thoroughly its covert political agenda will be discovered and discredited" ("'Old Songs'" 351). The more familiar one is with Petrarch's and the Irish canon's conceits, the easier it becomes to observe how Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker knowingly turns them to her advantage to question the eroticizing and politicizing of women's bodies in the Petrarchan but also the Irish nationalist tradition. As Boland explains, "…the sense of power a woman speaker might have in an Irish poem today will not just be political; it must also be politicized. In other words, her sense of power inside the poem must be flawed and tempered not just by a perception of powerlessness outside it but also by the memory of her traditional and objectified silence within it" (186).

By addressing the most intimate of subjects, Ní Dhomhnaill can simultaneously address the status of the Ireland and thereby insist that it is no longer the sole rhetorical property of either the colonial or the nationalist tradition. The union of the couple achieves what Butler recognizes elsewhere in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) as a mode of interrogative address that allows him to (re)articulate not only his own body as a zone or site of agency but its inherent relation to other bodies:

> If the body opens him [i.e. Fanon, but also the subjectivity and body of "one"] toward a [or as] a "you," it opens him [or her] in such a way that the other, through bodily means, becomes capable of addressing a "you" as well. Implicit in both modes of address is the understanding of the body, through its touch, securing the open address not just of the other whom I touch, but of every other body. (*Dispossession* 81)

in a non-objectifying or non-delimiting, process-driven mode of hailing, tactile contact coupled with strategies of address, in this instance as well, serve as actualization and apprehension not only of oneself, but enable resistance of the negative urge to interpellate, reify, (over)determine, or even wound another.

Whereas Rich's personal and political agenda requires that the lovers' bodies in her poems be female, the specifically Irish context of Ní Dhomhnaill's feminist intervention in "*Oileán*/Island" insists that the body of the lover be male and the poet be female. The Irish nation is absolutely not figured as "*an ainnir*"—the fair damsel in distress,[71] tearfully waiting

[71] *Ainnir* is an obscure word these days, which Rosenstock and Dinneen translate as "maid" but still in use in a noble sense, by an older generation of male Irish speakers in chivalric, complimentary reference to younger women, at least in my experience in Donegal. I don't find it particularly offensive in Irish, but it is indicative of a particular way of thinking about women. It is also almost lexically identical save an absolutely essential fada—to *ainnír*—misery, penury—furthermore, only slight different euphonically, "AN nyir" v. "AN nyeer," a similarity upon which Fr. Dinneen, and I'm sure many other wise men, make no comment. Regarding the relations between both words and Ireland in the cultural milieu, see for example, Thomas Davis's "Nationality": "I have thought I saw [Ireland's] spirit from her dwelling, her sorrowing place among the tombs rising, not without melancholy, yet with a purity and brightness beyond other nations" (qtd. in Boland 182). In "*Oileán*/Island," at least, Ní Dhomhnaill's Ireland, in contrast, is a joyous, refreshing, masculinized locale that is figured in rapturous sexual celebration, which is anything but melancholy, and the melancholy aspects in the other two poems I address are figured in the context of effects of colonial and nationalist. patriarchies on individual women rather than an iconographic or emblematic vision of Woman.

to be saved by the forces of a masculine savior. As Robert Welch insists, "Nuala [Ní Dhomhnaill], in the poem, is translating Mangan ([famous translator of "Róisín Dubh"[72] or] "Dark Rosaleen") back into the Irish of Bardic poetry ("*iathghlas*, *oileánach*")…" (qtd. *LB* 180). Rather, in Ní Dhomhnaill's assessment, both the speaker and her subject—Ireland and therefore the Irish people—remain the consenting agents of their own desire.

Ní Dhomhnaill intentionally emphasizes the boundary or liminality between the fantasy of Ireland and its actuality: its physical, political, and psychic borders, engaging with the lacunae as well as the linkages among history, mythology, and collective memory by using the Irish language and the lyric form as flexible tools to destabilize conceptions of the body in space and unsettle geographical limitations. As the poet herself claims as I noted in Chapter 1: "Irish is a language of enormous elasticity….It is an instrument of imaginative depth and scope, which has been tempered by the community for generations until it can pick up and sing out every hint of emotional modulation that can occur between people." (Ní Dhomhnaill, "Why I Choose to Write in Irish" 3). Using this language of her own choosing, the Irish language, which disputes the colonial dominance of English, Ní Dhomhnaill's textual topographies challenge the projection of prescribed notions of subjectivity and restrictive cultural mores onto the female body and question Canonical atlases of Irish womanhood.

The poet imagines a gender-mutable Ireland that considers the abiding specters of Catholic, colonial, and nationalist abjection of the Irish people and considers the importance of hybrid identity in order to recuperate the national conscience and consciousness. As Ní Dhomhnaill has insisted, her muse "doesn't have to be either male or female" (qtd. *LB* 182).

[72] For more on this famous poem's cultural impact across time and language, see Chapter 1.

Not always a land of milk and honey,[73] the landscapes and the speakers are often barren and bleak, body and soul, but despite this history of oppression based on language and gender, in "*Oileán*/Island," both lovers are still able to seek and achieve *jouissance/samhás*. Speaker, subject, poet, and reader "negotiate" crossing borders and defying the limitations drawn by various authoritarian institutions, using lyric forms and engagement with deliberate strategies of address to somehow heal and claim the damaged (or desirable) terrain as home, creating in the process their own erotic, traumatic, but ultimately redemptive maps.

[73] Nor as Stephen Dedalus would famously quip, a "land of milk and money" (*Ulysses* 14.378). For a further discussion of Joyce, sexual politics, the nNationalist mythos figuring Ireland as dangerous crone/transfigured queen or *an tseanbhean bhocht/an spéirbhean* from the *aislingí*, see Chapter 1.

Sexing the Changeling: Magic Realism and Queer Geography

in the *Oeuvres* of Yeats and French

> The poor man's anger is a prayer
> for equities Time cannot hold
> and steel grows from our mother's grace.
> Justice is the people's otherworld.
> -- Les Murray, "The Steel"

Poised on the precipice of a new century, *The Irish Monthly* published a new work by young poet William Butler Yeats in 1886. No twee fairytale this, in "The Stolen Child," the poet adopts what will become a familiar stance, seeking succor in one of the nation's more disturbing pieces of folklore, clinging to a dream of the revenant Éire suspended in the amber (or rather the emerald) stasis of eternal, unchanging youth. Set in adamantine contrast to the cosmopolitan, metropoles of Europe, Yeats evoked rural Ireland as an Other World, firmly rooted in its mythical past. As the rise and fall of Parnell aggravated tensions between the British Empire and the nationalists in Ireland, the liminal land of the Otherworld continued to balance on a sacrosanct and none-too-secure border between quotidian reality and mythology, blessedly beyond time and toil, and questions of loyalty and class, shrouded in the deceptively simple tales of the peasantry. The poem ostensibly abjures manifesto in favor of adolescent recollection, focusing on the immediacy of the five outward senses, while simultaneously embracing four of the five "inward senses" or "wits" described throughout Early Modern literature most notably in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (III.iv), as imagination, fantasy, estimation or instinct, and memory, the majority of both sets of senses unconcerned with and largely defiant of the last of these, rational

sense or "common wit." So, the eponymous stolen child is spirited "Away" to a life of simultaneously simple and luxuriant pleasures, a life without the demands of maturity or the responsibilities attendant with adult "understand[ing]". "Away" becomes more than an adverbial shorthand for being taken to the Otherworld, further signifying both the physical paralysis and aphasia or glossolalia often accompanying "fairy stroke" in addition to the emotional suspension of all mortal cares. While there will be no more tears, other than from the ferns, the *sídhe* also take the boy to a place that is devoid of the warmth of humanity, where he will forever speak, understand, think as a child, never to be implored by St. Paul nor anyone else "put away childish things" (1 *Corinthians* 13:11) and face the clamoring world at large, "full of troubles/[a]nd anxious in its sleep" (ll 22-23).

Scholars have often overlooked that the poem sedulously advocates for the exact opposite. The refrain is in not only in the imperative but repeated thrice to imply ever-increasing urgency, "Come away, O human child!/To the waters and the wild/With a faery, hand in hand/For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand," and then the tone shifts in the fourth repetition to one of proleptic inevitability in an eternal present ("For he comes, the human child…"), developing not only a radical alternative geography of the nation and the body but time itself in invoking concepts of failure or regression.. Thus, "The Stolen Child" establishes a dichotomy Yeats will negotiate throughout his *oeuvre*; following in the tradition of polemical Bardic verses like "Róisín Dubh," it invites us to read the personal narrative as potential inspiration for political allegory, an allegory of abnegation and détente that uses delay and caesura in order to create.. I would argue this becomes the signature posture for the early Yeats, donning the mask of the proletariat to avoid the ethical quagmires of the Ascendancy.

The poet himself seeks to suspend time in an effort to sanctify the space "[w]here the wandering water rushes/[f]rom the hills above Glencar (ll 27-28). He wishes to preserve it in print, an enduring tribute to its psychological significance. Yeats endeavors to capture the *genus loci* or spirit of the place by providing a transformative optics that is as much dreamscape as landscape. Rather than woo the Salmon of Knowledge, the Good People of "The Stolen Child" dance and content themselves by teasing trout with "unquiet dreams" (ln 34). Yeats encourages readers to come away forever or at least temporarily with the "solemn-eyed" boy to the safety of Sligo, to eschew both seeing and knowing, choosing instead to fantasize within the comforting repetitions of its terpsichorean meters and rhymes (ln 43). We can deliquesce into the falls and lose our individuality, forsaking humanity for immersion in nature in order to choose (at least temporarily) the Otherworld, albeit in this instance less burdensome, but no less real in the Irish cultural imaginary. Such unquiet dreams are more than a nuisance to slumbering trout and represent the fundamental angst of *fin-de-siècle* Éire as the twentieth century ominously approaches, the contrarian pulls of agrarian orature and mechanized literature, of the freedoms of *Tír na nÓg* as opposed to the obligations of the "allegorical state" (Marx, qtd. Lloyd 72), and the fetishization of the past based on the fundamental terror of an unknown future.

In this poem, Yeats invites his readership to choose Otherness or at least fantasize about doing so. "The Stolen Child" emboldens us to relinquish our responsibilities and linger awhile in the parallel realm in order to better commune with everything Yeats was not. It represents an effort to elude religious, political, and socioeconomic strictures, to project a notion of Irish unity that soothes only through the promise of oblivion. A precursor of the rhetoric of cultural tourism

events, such as "The Gathering",[1] that were frequently critiqued throughout the editorial section of *The Irish Times* in the early decades of the twenty-first century as the years of the Celtic Tiger prosperity were decidedly on the wane, "The Stolen Child" likewise lures readers into a pastoral panacea, suggesting perhaps the cures for our adult difficulties can be found in "the waters and the wild," if only for a moment. Upon reconsideration, perhaps the refrain's imperative is a false one, for Yeats recognizes our respite from the rational can only be a temporary reprieve. So, too, in a world full of weeping there is warmth, routine, peace. If we too readily sacrifice those humble virtues in pursuit of fantastic pleasure, there remains the uncertain possibility of fulfillment and callowness. Yeats embraces and re-invents a Romantic and romantic explicitly nationalized (and later in his *oeuvre*, a more explicitly sexualized) mythology to avoid a crisis of identity.

Mythos is the natural mode of expression to examine hopes and fears on an individual and cultural level. Site specificity provides necessary authenticity, as poetry is written with the aid of both internal "wits" and external "senses". Sligo is cherished as a perceptual feast, a vivid actual landscape but also to borrow the title of Yeats's later play, *The Land of [His] Heart's Desire*. The admixture of memory and desire enables "the rocky highland/of Sleuth Wood in the lake" to occupy the boundary between youthful idealism and mature reality (ll 1-2), between childhood pleasures and adult responsibilities. Beset with the contradictory longings inspired by his portrait of the homeplace as "Away"-space, we must acknowledge these inherent tensions in the construction of this location as illustrative of the poet's condition. Yeats envisions an Ireland

[1] This 2013 campaign to energize the diaspora's returns to Ireland, also, rather unexpectedly and counterintuitively, shared its name with Anne Enright's 2007 Man Booker prize-winning novel, which though it garnered widespread acclaim, is hardly a ringing endorsement for Irish tourism or cultural identity as its subject is familial dysfunction, neglect, sexual abuse, and suicide in the Hegarty family. In addition to others in the media, who satirically referred to it as "The Grabbing," Gabriel Byrne, former Irish cultural ambassador decried it "The Gathering" as "a scam".

of emerald-tinted simplicity, a precious peasantry who truck with fairy folk, but like the child the poet remains to a certain degree apart from it, swept up in a fairy fugue. His isolated stance allows Yeats to weave himself into Ireland's mythology—but as an outsider—just as he will write himself into Irish history throughout his corpus in the coming twentieth century.

In their introduction to the collection *Yeats and Afterwords* (2014), which could also rightly be called *Yeats and Afterwor(l)ds*, in my opinion, Joseph Valente and Marjorie Howes emphasize "belatedness" within Yeats's poetic enterprise as indicative of what the contributors describe throughout as his evolving gestures and poetical and polemical stances of what Howes and Valente aptly describe as "past-pastness", "past-presentness" and "future-belatedness" that indicate the Hegelian dialectical amongst the remembered, lived, and prophetic senses of time—the last—or is it truly the first?— of which is often framed not in terms of prediction but bearing witness to the inevitable (5, 8). It is my contention that these specific formations through which "several modalities [of time and experience become]… inextricably conjoined in their opposition to one another" (*Afterwords* 4), are useful such that they allow us to register the often-competing vicissitudes within the Yeatsian *oeuvre* and offer a way to understand how certain symbolic economies such as "Woman-as-Nation" or "poet as changeling" can be figured in seemingly paradoxical but ultimately interrogative terms often within the same volume or even the same poem, as I will demonstrate by close-reading "The Mask" (1910), in particular.

There is a marked resistance across Yeats's work to what Elizabeth Freeman has defined as the "chronormativity" of capitalist modernity in *Time Binds*: *Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010), and "The Mask" in particular epitomizes her conception of anachronous "temporal drag" or the pull of the past that inevitably delays a theoretically revolutionary present as well as a play on the mask itself as an affectation and an effective prop of "drag" in terms of

self-poietic attire that divides the poem's purported two speakers. Temporality in these terms allows for progression that is always already inflected by suspension and for my purposes, structures the Otherworld both as mythological category and imaginative refuge that exists in concert with the "real" or quotidian world, dragging each into the other, if you will. The Otherworld in Yeats, particularly in light of its repertoire of lingering, recurrent characters and *topoi* Revived or supposedly derived or dragged up from the depths of "peasant" orature, as well as the vagaries and variations made within these works as they were told by individual *scéalaithe* or storytellers, enable Yeats's own poetic engagement with a recursive, shifting grammar of (dis-), (mis-), and (re-) placement and appropriation throughout his career.

In "The Stolen Child," the Irish nation is a ppre-Llapsarian Eden and the child is its new Adam, unspoiled as yet by his "Curse" and not yet "as weary-hearted as that hollow moon" ("Adam's Curse" ll 38, *In the Seven Woods,* 1903), but as the development of Yeats's corpus indicates, even in Ireland, one cannot remain untempted in Paradise without the pernicious snakes of identity politics furling about the ankles. Class, religion, and sociopolitical allegiance will be tested in the mettle of verse. And there can be no temptation without an Eve, so gender effectively becomes a function of genre.[2] To simultaneously address and combat the negative feminization of the mystical Celtic temperament as opposed to the commodified, sound rationality of the Anglo-Saxon by preeminent English thinkers like Matthew Arnold, Yeats creates female figures to stand as (typically Fallen) ideals of beauty and/or as ciphers of frustrated desire, the discontents of not only the individual person but the proletariat. The male Irish poet must ultimately speak for and through them, even, and perhaps most especially in proleptic and projected dialectics like "The Mask" or the later "Crazy Jane" sequence. These

[2] See Schneider and extensive discussion of genre and gender in Chapter 4.

poems are more accurately diagetical, mere pronouncements of information masquerading as dialectics or clarion calls to the audience to act. The final query of "The Mask" enables the poet and the speaker to defer, to ask without answering, and to leave the Other and the reader unsated and unfulfilled, without resolution.

Such dreams will shift with Yeats's comprehension of the disturbing futility and "vanity of Sleep, Hope, Dream, [and] endless Desire" as Manannán Mac Lír's "Horses of Disaster" become mired in the "heavy clay" of political turmoil (1899; "Michael Robartes Bids…" ln 7-8), which transforms to all being "changed utterly" as his poetry becomes another unfortunate impetus of the violent destruction and martyrdoms of "Easter, 1916," with his senses only to be drowned yet again in "the blood-dimmed tide" of both the Irish War for Independence and The Great War that conjure the slouching beast headed toward Bethlehem in "The Second Coming" (1921; ln 5). In these poems, language is performative utterance, the essence and measure of the world not only as it is, but always already offering a vision of what the poet dreams it could or should be but is not—or (sometimes unbearably) what it will and must be.

Throughout his early work, Yeats supplants physical topography with personal anatomy as a necessary effect to merge the psychic and political dimensions of place, persona, and mythologized, non-chrononormative time throughout *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910), most clearly in "The Mask," in order to strategically avoid the dissonance created by his position of sociocultural and economic advantage. Whereas in "The Stolen Child", Yeats's longings are tangible, rushing out clearly, as lucid as "the pools among the rushes/[t]hat scarce could bathe a star" (ll 31-32) as bright and apparent as those stars, in the later prismatic eyes of "The Mask," we see the fantasy Ireland refracted back at us, with the speaker's desires

simultaneously concealed under the safety of the titular mask and revealed through the intimacy of his potentially self-reflexive dialogue.[3]

Only a poet speaking and writing from a place of privilege can choose to blatantly disregard its consequences. Yeats employs or—as in the case of "The Stolen Child"—rejects the rhetoric of femininity in his deliberate fashioning of the Irish nation and how his various and multiple forms of privilege outlined above enable him to occlude the feminine body and real women's voices in favor of ethereal conflagrations who pose no real threat to his masculinist ideology. He does so by using tropes of masking, dissembling, or what Luce Irigaray would later critique as "veiled lips" which are concealed yet speaking, or rather spoken through as a didactic mouthpiece in the context of the body in space:

> Women—the deal. For—the game. What is still, and always hypnotic is when there is still a blank left blank, That can be dealt only by pretending to be what it is not: still a blank. The game goes on and the blank is given a suit. Or rather, it is covered up, since it can take on any suit. Woman is so artistic….So well disguised, made up, masked…The comedy of the other that she plays to artistically only because she "is" not in it, has no personal involvement. Remains—the blank? (*Marine Lover* 82; ellipsis original).

For Irigaray, and I would insist, Yeats, the function of that final question is completely rhetorical, for we know that Woman functions as sign or emblem onto which agendas both personal and political are inscribed rather than occupying an autonomous subject position. Rather, as Yeats would later claim, Woman supposedly fails to be inscribed in his *Last Poems* like "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (1939). The Otherworld, both mythical and literary, can be presented as a haven to further Yeats's facsimile of the feminine nation, while disregarding

[3] The distorted mirroring of identity in the eyes of oneself and in society is a recurrent motif throughout Yeats's later works, most evident in poems like "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" from *The Winding Stair* (1933): "How in the name of Heaven can he escape/That defiling and disfigured shape/The mirror of malicious eyes/Casts upon his eyes until at last/He thinks that shape must be his shape?" (II.1-12) only to come to the realization in the concluding lines that he should abandon regret and "remorse" for "[w]e are blest by everything/Everything we look on is blest."

the fact that most women at the time, particularly those of the peasantry—such as the upwardly mobile, seemingly-independent seamstress Bridget Cleary—face it as a space fraught with psychosexual, socioreligious, and explicitly gendered conflict as well as, most meaningfully, extreme violence or even death.

By addressing and redressing the myriad cultural effects or the unavoidable drag(s) of a masculinist folklore and literature that Yeats blatantly overlooks or endeavors to manipulate, I will show that femininity plays a crucial yet delimiting role throughout Yeats's *oeuvre*, as well as a tipping point in the life of Cleary, burned as a "changeling" by her husband in Co. Tipperary in 1895. Orature and literature surrounding changeling tales offers occasion for a particularly and specifically *embodied* feminist critique of place in Tana French's *In the Woods* (2007) and more explicitly in *The Likeness* (2008).[4] Although the liberties of class and gender permit Yeats and his male speakers to dabble in Otherworldliness without injury or even reprimand, the women who do so in these myths and in actuality are seen as transgressive and threatening, and thus subject to lethal aggression as a means of sociocultural and physical control. I will limn how French's novels explore the notion of Yeatsian fairy fantasy to undermine it with the historical realities of resentment, terror, and brutality, endured by women in both the past and the present, as exhibited in the tales surrounding the murders of Bridget Cleary and (fictional) Lexie Madison.

[4] At present, there is a relatively small corpus of critical work on Tana French. See stand-alone articles by Shirley Peterson, Rosemary Erickson Johansen, both of whom are also featured in the special issue of *Clues* 32.1 (Spring 2014), which is dedicated to Tana French and Irish Crime Fiction, edited by Rachel Shaffer. These essays almost exclusively focus on French as a crime writer and tend to overlook the larger historical discourses she engages with that transcend this genre or raise issues of influence other than contemporaneous socioeconomic and cultural concerns, such as The Celtic Tiger.

Furthermore, I would argue that well before Franz Roh coined the term "magic realism"[5] in 1925 regarding Post-Expressionist art (Slemon 9), Yeats and a long line of Irish-language and Hiberno-English storytellers, poets, and novelists before him (and numerous writers and thinkers of varied heritage after him),[6] engage with the fraught concept of a permeable and fluid definition of the "the real"—figured in the narratives of Yeats, (Bridget) Cleary, and French as contiguous with the Otherworld (i.e. changeling lore) —to develop spaces outside of occupation and beyond the boundaries of empire, patriarchy, and propriety, often at the female figures' respective peril. For much of Yeats's *oeuvre*, the nation of Ireland only existed purely as the notion of an "allegorical state," and scholars have neglected to consider the ways that his particularly Irish understanding and use of what we would otherwise term "magic realism" serves as a means of postcolonial discourse to achieve affective discharge and conceive what was essentially (at that time) a meticulously, extravagantly, and transgressively imagined political community through an meticulously, extravagantly, and transgressively imagined mythological one.[7]

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[5] Though the critical term "magic realism" is most often applied to fiction, it has also more recently been used in the psychologically-compensatory context of "magical thinking" to discuss essays and memoirs by Joan Didion and Maxine Hong-Kingston, and I feel is particularly relevant to the work of Yeats whose verse, drama, essays, and collections of folklore center on the uncertain boundaries between the so-called history of the real world and the legendary history of mortal encounters with the Otherworld. Also, Yeats's practices of spiritualism, theosophy, and Rosicrucianism suggest these ideas were not simply facets of his poetic aesthetic but at various times, principles of his shifting belief systems.

[6] In "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse" (1988), Stephen Slemon discusses this generic term which was at the time widely applied to Latin-American and Caribbean literatures of the mid-twentieth century as a necessary mode of reinterpreting Canadian fiction. I would, of course, add late-century feminist writers in English like Angela Carter, Toni Morrison, and Louise Erdrich, avowed postcolonial thinker Salman Rushdie, and of course, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. See also Vicki Mahaffey's essay in *Yeats and Afterwords* that argues Elizabeth Bowen's "experiment[al]…layered and recursive narrative temporalities" within her short fiction respond to Yeats's engagement with the irreconcilability of one's own and others' violability and mortality, and that Bowen, in turn, prefigures or offers a foreword to later postcolonial usage of magic realism (8-9; 254-282).

[7] The always subversive, deliberately political, and frequently sexualized Irish engagement with what I am here describing as "magic realism" is grounded historically in the orature and music far back as tales Ulster and Fenian cycles, in addition to *aislingí* and *amhráin* like "Róisín Dubh". See Chapter 1.

For example, the speaker(s) of Yeats's "The Mask" revel(s), granted not without some anxiety, delights in the deceptions of wearing a disguise in which harsh "reality" is suppressed: "For 'twas the mask the mask engaged your mind/and after set your heart to beat/not what's behind" (ll 8-10). The self is both protected and cautiously, ever-so-tentatively exposed to its own scrutiny and that of the reader. "The Mask" challenges readers to think with our minds and feel with hearts enflamed. This is only possible, counterintuitively, by Yeats's focus on occluded face(s) and omitted body(/ies) in drag or costume. The speaker or speakers can only confess his/her/their desire when unseen. My reading of this symbology alongside its attendant fascination with performative identity in Yeats's "The Mask" and its later combination with a focus on twinning, döppelgangers, and double consciousness in the French novels follows Vicki Mahaffey in emphasizing "play" and strategic interrogation as "alternative[s] to imperialist idealism, an alternative available to everyone because it is rooted in language and thought" (*States* xi). In addition to the consequences of privilege or the lack thereof, we should consider the pleasurable and (potentially) destructive aspects of identity construction in these works to examine how Yeats and French fashion "feminine" figures in response to oft competing political, personal, and erotic demands and use the Lacanian motif of the mirror as a foundational trope to do so.

In French's case, I will demonstrate the ways in which such a fashioning directly responds to Yeats's deliberate mythologizing of women in the national tradition as evidenced in "The Mask" and how the queering of notions of time (and obviously space) leads to a new understanding of the Otherworld within both of their *oeuvres*. We should consider the pleasurable and (potentially) destructive aspects of identity construction in both works. John Paul Riquelme identifies the trend in Yeats's work in the terms of Homi Bhabha and Judith

Butler as "a shift away from the pedagogical to the performative, a shift that recognizes the possibility of the performative lapsing into the pedagogical and of the pedagogical persisting even in attempts to reject its specific forms" ("Negativity" 536). I maintain that whatever Yeats originally intended, the strategies of address in "The Mask," which Richard Ellmann has described as having "an almost Cavalier tone" (*Masks* 172) when it appears apart from its original context in an earlier draft of *The Player Queen* (not published until 1922), in *The Green Helmet*, in fact, could actually be read as intimate and vulnerable. It is my supposition that the "The Mask" explores subjectivity by imagining the dialogue between the poem's supposed two speakers while speaking only to the divided and conflicted aspects of oneself in a mirror, in which the body itself becomes an instrument to engage in what Freeman calls "erotohistoriography" .

In Riquelme's terms, Yeats performatively "merges the aesthetic and the political" and "[i]n that merger, the embodied, historical, fallible dimension of human experience becomes a basis for making defensible choices about values and actions" ("Negativity" 536), in order to permit the speaker(s) to determine his/her own ethical motivations and negotiate the precarious dichotomy of public poetical and private individual identifications in relation to the demands of divergent impulses, an imagined Other, or the nation. Ellmann's whole reading of the poem's titular object as both "defensive armor" and "weapon of attack…to keep up a noble conception of [oneself]" is reliant on Yeats's simultaneous acknowledgment of the weaknesses beneath the mask and the rich imaginative life that supports the façade, even as his speaker uses it for protection from the outside world (*Masks* 172-173).

Nevertheless, as Ellmann observes, "A draft of *The Player Queen* shows that Yeats is eliciting all the ambiguities in the notions of the mask and the theatre, and insisting upon a

relation between reality and the dream which makes the dream not just capitalized abstraction but a driving force in life" (*Masks* 173). My analysis is founded upon a further examination of all these affinitive, amatory, and affiliative ambiguities and the ascription of meaning to and within the imagined world and imagined selves in Yeats's poetic enterprise. It is apposite then that a verse written for a play is all about the act of play, both literally and metaphorically. "The Mask" as a drama is at once intensely internal and nevertheless projected outward through (potentially false) dialogue for an audience of oneself and the readers. In his discussion of "Fergus and the Druid," Riquelme notes, "Both stylistically and conceptually, Yeats refuses the lyric persona whose name in English is 'I' by writing dialogical poetry that here happens to be literally a dialogue The post-Romantic Irish writer is saying 'no' to the English lyric tradition and to 'I' as an adequate, that is, authentic name" ("Negativity" 539). That assertion holds for "The Mask," in which, even if the speaker is "singular" throughout, s/he is engaging with and projecting multiplicitous, divergent identities. Re-interpreting the poem thusly enables us to better map the fraught dynamic among the fractured reflections of nascent or faltering connections, attachments, and selves, in addition to the marvelous friction between personal and polemical writing that is at work and in play.

By doing so, the poet invents a necessary "Third Space" or "Fifth Province" between the personal and the polemical that he will navigate for the rest of his career to mitigate his anxieties and frustrations, a "Third Space" or "Fifth Province" that other writers like Tana French claim by reconfiguring and re-imagining the politics of identity for a post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland, in which all territory in Ireland, whether part of the "real" or the hypothetical Otherworld bears the trace or reflection of the traditionally polemicized and thus repeatedly abjected women across history and within all three aforementioned conceptions of Yeatsian "belated," asynchronous, or

anachronic time. Because, for women, French's characters indicate, their moment of breaking disrupting this cycle of rhetorical, psychological, and physical oppression is long "past-overdue imperative," if you will. By examining the folklore surrounding changelings in "The Stolen Child," particularly its violent transformation relationship in to the harrowing true story of Bridget Cleary and the construction of an unstable gestalt in later Yeatsian verse, such as "The Mask," French utilizes both Irish mythology and Irish history to re-shape the legacy Yeats created for women in the nation by endorsing and promulgating the *topos* of woman-as-nation. Or in Irigaray's terms, "Thus, [Woman] is disguised for the performance of representation, hidden in the wings—where she doubles up her own role as other, as well as the same— beyond all that is taking place" (*Marine Lover* 83). As French herself remarked regarding her most recent novel, *The Secret Place* (2014), "The characters happen to be girls, but I'm dodgy about the idea that we can define books with male characters as books about the human experience while defining books about girls as [merely] female-centric….As long as we're considering gender to be the basic divide of humanity, it completely underrates [the complexity of] what individuals are" (qtd. Hughes).

Through what French describes as an acknowledgment of the foundational terms of Greek orature and literature, "mythos" or the uncanny operates in terms of delicate balance between it and the rational, quotidian realm of the "logos":

> …there's not just one kind of real; there were two, logos and mythos. Logos is everyday reality, your shoe, the pizza you had for dinner, the bus route to get from here across town. Mythos is the reality of the gods and goddesses and the world existing just behind this one, which is not real in the same way as your socks are real, and shouldn't be expected to be, but that doesn't detract from its own reality. (qtd. Hughes)

This "folded" psychic multidimensionality is in an integral element of both French's own and Yeats's understanding and depiction of both places and people, whether real or fantastic, a

profound belief in the Otherworld as barely beyond the limits, indeed conjoined to the borders of this one. Its overlap or layering enables consideration of the complexities of the sensate and the intuitive valences and reverberations of that "outside" or "Other" world within our own and vice-versa, as Bridget Cleary would come to learn, much to her detriment. Although French herself attributes this understanding originally to the Greeks, I argue that there is also a specifically Irish sense of mythic or "magic realism" as in the quotation frequently (mis)attributed to Yeats, "There is another world, but it is in this one."[8] Both worlds can exist simultaneously within one's ken or the field of representation.

Despite the recent trend in criticism to concentrate solely on history and the broad sweep of Yeats's whole *oeuvre*, my sense in this case is that you can't have *context* without text and my argument is only possible through a careful attention to the haecceities of the poem as written. If, as Mahaffey convincingly argues, Yeats is a "micronationalist" (*States* vii), focused on the relevance of specific Irish communities and cultural traditions, although the poem does not thematize the question of national loyalty or belonging explicitly, could Yeats also even then be simultaneously addressing a specific woman (e.g. Maude Gonne) and having their own conflict metonymically be read doubly e readas (an Irish)man's fraught political relationship with his heterogeneous feminine nation? The ambiguity of its speakers (including their number) supports that "The Mask" therefore be read in numerous, polysemous ways with the gender roles reversing and changing (a male addressing a female, a female addressing a male, two men

[8] Cf. the epigraph of Sherman Alexie's novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007). The other supposed-source of this quotation is French surrealist poet, Paul Éluard (1895-1952), "*Il y a un autre monde, mais il est dans celui-ci*."

addressing each other, two women doing the same) as you would.[9]

The fluidity and possible transpositionality of gender(s) in this reading further supports my contention that "The Mask" serves as an erotohistoriographical experiment contained within a single body as it negotiates both rather than strictly conforms to either entirely "masculine" or "feminine" traits or even endorses the notion of a unified individual persona. Regarding French's subsequent engagement with cathected, manifold feminine identity in Ireland, let us first imagine that the speaker is projecting, Narcissus-like, in a mirror, and speaking to the image of him or herself while mimicking the dialogue of an absent lover/"frenemy"/spirit of the state.[10]

Any discussion of the specular mirror-structure and the development of identity must naturally naturally include Jacques Lacan's foundational analysis in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the 'I' as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1977), in which he posits that the child's own reflection in a mirror or the mirror stage "rebounds…between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between the virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates—the child's own body, and the persons and things around him" (1285). The child therefore begins to develop an autonomous sense of self and a grasp of the actual world as opposed to the virtual one and his or her place within those surroundings or as Lacan terms it, a dynamic between "the *Innenwelt*" or inner world and "the *Umwelt*" or outer world, in order to effectively achieve a unified subjectivity or "*Gestalt,"*

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[9] Elizabeth Butler Cullingford points out that according to *The Variorum Edition of Yeats's Plays*, the first speaker is male and the second speaker is female (*Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry,* Note 24, 303).

This chapter would not have been possible without encouragement and advice at the early stages from the incredibly generous Vicki Mahaffey, hopefully my indebtedness to her own stellar work and my immense gratitude will serve as sufficient tribute.

[10] A hybridized portmanteau of "friend" and "enemy" which suits the tone of "The Mask."

> [which] symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time it prefigures its alienating destination; it is still pregnant with the correspondences that unite the *I* with the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that dominate him, or the automaton, in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own meaning tends to find completion. (1286)

My interpretation emphasizes Yeats's inquisitive approach to the ruptured nature of various selves or "phantoms" that his speakers (re)present in "The Mask," not merely the invocation of the ""automatic" writing so familiar in later works like *A Vision* but also possibly as an "auto-erotic" and distinctly "autodidactic" querying of oneself to engage with conflicting components of the individual's identity, which do indeed appear to, as Lacan suggests, "dominate" the [wo]man/the speaker/the poet (and thus the audience or reader) to the point at which s/he struggles to dismiss them.

Therefore, "The Mask" acknowledges the unfulfilled, unfulfilling, or and "ambiguous relation" between language and meaning, betwixt hope and desire, and thus the speaker's or speakers' worlds that are always in a process of becoming or transitioning rather than complete. Furthermore, Lacan insists this mirror states creates for

> …the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extend from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call *orthopaedic*—and lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego's verifications. (1288)

I would insist that Yeats radically and purposefully destabilizes the formation of identity by projecting not a singular, "*orthopaedic"* totality of a unified subject position but rather multiple conflicting ones. It is necessary then that the speaker likewise occludes his or her "fragmented body-image" by supplanting it with a deliberately concealed face. The poet creates not Lacan's "inexhaustible quadrature" of squaring the circle but rather playfully shapes varying concentric circles within the seemingly autonomous square, effectively exploring (a) decentralized subject

position(s) or formation(s) while also resisting the de-centering of the "individual" subject with regard to (personal and national) history. In Lacan's terms concerning the body's designation or place within the pre-Oedipal realm of the imaginary in The Mirror Stage (as opposed to fully vested in the Oedipal "Symbolic Order"), "The Mask" stages in its theoretical opposition of "masculine" and "feminine" a subject only in the loosest sense biologically-conscripted or "sexed" and certainly not yet definitively sexualized, if such definition is even possible.

Style, particularly the form of the dramatic dialogue, functions as a means to construct but also deconstruct the subject position through the adoption of a "mask":

> Virtue to be active, must be an endless theatrical playing with such masks, for the self evoked by the style was external, something encountered as coming from without, which only later led to the discovery of an answering self within…[Yeats] posited a Wildean notion of personality, intensified over many multiplications, until it achieved a fragmentary but real authenticity. (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 121-2)

Lacan insists upon the ego's "illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself," and Yeats' seems to intentionally exploit or question that autonomy through the dialogic of "The Mask," a dialogic that enables him to actively fashion not only himself but a whole imaginative world that takes the literal, "external" material reality of Ireland and the subjectivities of other individuals as a mere jumping off point for his own poetic endeavor. As Declan Kiberd suggests in *Inventing Ireland*, for Yeats, personal liberation only exists as a condition of national reclamation, when the potentially competing identities of the autonomous individual and the patriotic Irishman must be fused,[11] or I would argue, refracted and thus repeatedly masked and unmasked, dependent on the context, through the dual discourse of the poem.

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[11] For a further interesting discussion of the connections among Yeats's and J.M. Synge's *oeuvres* and the traditions of Irish Bardic poetry, particularly regarding the demands of functioning as a public poet and through variations on *reacaire* or Bardic recitation to elevate the word and dramatize national concerns in the theater, see Kiberd's *The Irish Writer and the World* (2005).

Such a Janus-like gyre emphasizes the political subversiveness of Yeats's writings, in that it "shatters" or reduces but also simultaneously expands categories into the dynamic of their competing wills or forces, enabling both exposition and occlusion in posing a riddle:

> Because wordplay (like dreams) both reveals and conceals meaning, it acts as a code that clothes the joy of alterity in a protective guise. …. Because [riddling] works through inclusion rather than opposition, because it offers readers (or audiences) choices among possible meanings, play is both radically democratic and threatening to the established order. A riddling method of writing discourages a channeling of desire toward a single end: instead it promotes a profusion of desires, an open network of potential connections. (Mahaffey, *States* 4)

Or in the terms of this poem, the political then can essentially *masquerade* as the personal reveling in what Mahaffey accurately calls "the joy of alterity" while also considering its pitfalls in terms of addressing both the divided Self and the threatening yet desirable Other. The "Other" or second speaker effectively becomes both conflated with the State/(Wo)man and an unattainable—particularly because this speaker remains at a remove via its masking or deformation in terms of the narcissistic extension of the ego and its continued refusal or demurral of the desire for wholeness, revelation, or understanding. The language of "The Mask" is presented as a riddled and riddling of masking to engender re- and de-flection through the tacit refusal of singular gender, "an open network" for both interpretations as well as other alternative readings. The poem's dialogic form and "conclusion" with a query facilitate its being read as a symbolical riddle where the possibilities intermingle, speaking with one another and the reader. Thus, Lacanian "totality" and Ellmann's assertion that the mask functions as "armour" are complicated by Yeats's fascination with the visible chinks within it, specifically the multifaceted emerald eyes.

The mask's bejeweled eyes and gilded exterior allow its as an emblem of nation, either metaphorically worn by man to express national unity and loyalty, or co-opted by woman to

stand as signifier of the feminine State. This image of an Irish Woman, nation, or woman-as-nation, as I have already claimed in this instance, elides the reality of poverty, colonial and religious oppression, and lack of political representation for women at the time it was written.[12] The poem's engagement with play and uncertainty notwithstanding, a possessive inscription of the feminine endures. While reification may offer Yeats the joys of alterity, it is in essence, intrinsically problematic for both the female speaker (if indeed there is one) and the woman reader through its exercise of rhetorical control:

> So therefore she is unable to talk about herself as he does, without getting lost in the process. Illusion spun by the master to seize hold of her again in what she says, But, as master—and in every sense, non-sense, counter-meaning, double meaning…--he cannot hear her. Can scarcely find anything to talk back to. Which sets things off again, thanks to a negation or denial. To the nth degree. The operation is always the same. (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 85)

If the Woman functions as the Irish State, Yeats in essence exchanges the language of imperialism for that of nationalism, which is of course, only "radically democratic" and "flexible" at this particular point in history for men, while Woman and most women remain violable objects with nondescript faces, malleable bodies, and even lacking functional voices of their own (specifically in terms of suffrage marriage laws regarding "chattel") that could contradict or resist their idealization, allegorization, and/or commodification as riddles or mouthpieces.

Nonetheless, the poem's second speaker argues that the mask is a golden treasure, a token of affection, which sets the initial speaker's heart to beat. The pulse is literally one's lifeline and its invocation is linked to common Irish-language terms of endearment that would even be familiar to an English-speaker such as Yeats, specifically "*mo chuisle*"—"my pulse" or "*mo*

[12] In just one of myriad historical examples, women were not able to vote in Ireland until 1918.

chroí"— my heart—or often the two terms together in the intimate address—*a chuisle mo chroí*—"the pulse of my heart"— that likewise map the beloved person or nation as a fixed part of one's very being, inseparable from one's own existence but still shifting and in flux, rising and falling with the beat of one's mutable heart, which Mahaffey describes across the poet's corpus "as a metamorphosing and redefined center" (*States* 101). The mask is emblematic of power, both erotic and political; wealth, both material and spiritual; mystery, and life-giving energy that sustains and drives all these states or impulses (which are in Mahaffey's sense energies "submerged" beneath yet dependent upon the façade), and as such, undeniably attractive and appealing, but the first speaker recognizes that the facets of the emerald eyes produce multiple, contradictory reflections that could potentially deceive.

The first speaker is a seeker, "who would but find what's there to find." and is hopeful of personal connection or political inspiration that is currently absent in the depths of the glittering emeralds (ln 6). The endlessly faceted gem-eyes do not provide a clear window into the soul but rather one sees as St. Paul describes, "through a glass darkly" (1 *Corinthians* 13:12), offering myriad competing, distorted likenesses that engender unease and uncertainty that the first speaker endeavors to mitigate by requesting the mask's removal. For the first speaker, the second speaker and his/her mask represent the potential danger of appearances, the possibly double-tongued nature of intimate address with the other speaker's plausibly ironic and manipulative "my dear[s]." Is the address from an honest friend or hidden foe? Are his/her sentiments false or true? A clear binary is presented: "Love or deceit" (ln 7), not both, since the latter action would effectively eliminate all hope of the former feeling being genuine.

For the second speaker, if s/he actually exists, there is vulnerability in the idea of exposing oneself to scrutiny for "[i]t was the mask engaged your mind,/[a]nd after set your heart

to beat/[n]ot what's behind" (ll 8-10). The second speaker can only confess his or her desire when unseen. The first speaker emphasizes the wary insecurity of affection for either person or nation. I am interested not in the mask's unity but rather as a metonymic expression of the nation's plurality, existing as a function of the fluctuating and variable poetic imaginary for a multiplicitous nation that only existed as a rhetorical and emotional construct in the midst of intense colonial political turmoil: "Irish nationality was both a fixed origin and an elusive Utopian end; it was a way of seeing or knowing, a mode of feeling, a set of intuitions, and a mass of images – a national symbolic. It provided the inspiring resources of tradition for the artist, and was also always in the process of being created through new cultural productions" (Howes, *Yeats's Nations* 2-3). The mask is an essential and effective symbol at this point in Irish history precisely because Ireland itself as an autonomous nation independent from Britain is the ultimate masquerade: a pure hypothetical fantasy, a shifting invocation, the aspirational impetus of secreted and dangerous political intrigues. The mask must be assumed as a means to create the allegorical state, an acknowledgment that Ireland exists apart from the Empire nowhere but spiritually, in what was at the time a *semicolonial* realm within the cultural imaginary, a place populated both with flesh and blood mortals and their fantastic linguistic, metaphysical, and magical apparitions; on the poet's page and in the reader's heart.

The poem exploits the tension inherent in such an understanding. Mahaffey redefines the flexible, absorptive, adaptable status of seemingly fixed categories in Yeats's *oeuvre* to figure a new way of understanding the nation as dynamically concerned with both local detail and a sense of "telescopic" internationalism, such that it becomes necessary to "produce a new way of reading": "Whether the subject is reading, gender, or nationalism, the boundaries that define a text, an individual, or a country are simply less important than the energy of the diverse

components to be found inside (and outside) those boundaries" (*States* 23). Concerning gender, the nation, the individual, and the text, my reading has already shown that in the supposedly-singular poem of "The Mask" there are already heteroglossic, polyvocal texts, and I don't do not merely refer to the variorum published versions or manuscript drafts, but rather the theoretical *modus operandi* which figures how that polyvocality is masked within or revealed by the completed work.

Whereas for the first speaker of "The Mask," such oppositions and uncertainties result in anxiety and discomfort (one could read the poem's first line as a shrill command with the second speaker's coaxing response to "my dear" as an attempt to placate and practice wheedling one's way around such an imperative); the second speaker "favors the superior eroticism of anonymity" (Butler Cullingford, *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry* 211). This speaker alternatively reads the ambiguity produced by not having a clear vision of his/her own face and as a consequence, possibly not being fully aware of his/her own intentions or desires as a moment open to experimentation, an invitation to play and create, to destabilize and revise the category of oneself and/or the (supposedly) beloved. S/he essentially contends in his/her refusal to shed the mask that we cannot ever truly know another (or perhaps oneself) and are therefore free to develop her/his(/one's own) subject positions according to impulse. Concealment and demurral become the preconditions of an imaginative national discourse that permits an aspirational epistemology that the nation or the individual can exist without confines as a result of imagination. Such deferrals produce to an ontology predicated upon a self-reflexsive tautology. As Nicholas Allen so aptly puts it in *Modernism, Ireland, and Civil War* (2009), "Much of W.B. Yeats's work played with rebellion as a provocation to a desired reaction" (3). Arguably, rebellion in "The Mask," then functions as provocation for provocation's sake.

Through fashioning the self, Yeats fashions the nation and vice versa but only as a hypothetical, an interrogative construct that exists as a consequence of the poem's deliberately ambiguous ending.

In the wake of the foundational *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Mahaffey insists that Deleuze and Guattari's "micropolitics, then, necessitates a radical proliferation of all sexual, racial, and national identities. Instead of rigidifying and stratifying the sexes, micropolitics aims to liberate the erotic energy of a sexuality that is not dual, but multiple, and changes from moment to moment in response to different, richly various stimuli" (*States* 35). The gender identities within "The Mask" are unstable and adaptable, based on what Virginia Woolf later identifies in *A Room of One's Own* (1928) as a principle of androgyny. As Modernists who share a sensibility that emphasizes lyrical language as the best medium to express emotion and explore sensuousness, for Woolf and Yeats, gender-blindness is as reductive as color-blindness; it radically negates all the particularities and idiosyncratic experiences that give a speaker his/her authority. "Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine" (Woolf 97). Woolf extends the sexual binary that both sperm and egg are required for procreation to include a hermaphroditic mind that is necessary for fruitful verbal reproduction. If no woman can form a man's sentence, the reverse is also true. Neither gender is *sui generis*. Androgyny thus provides a platform to deconstruct the repressive patriarchal power dynamic. It offers the rudiments of a pansexual continuum, which would enable the expression of "masculine" and "feminine" desire and everything in-between or what Butler has emphasized as the flexible and "performative" dimensions of gender and identity throughout her work. Woolf does not ask the writer to erase his gender; hers is not a discourse based on exclusivity.

On the contrary, the operative force behind androgyny is the *presence* of *both*, which Yeats successfully explores in the dialogic text(s) of "The Mask" as hidden hearts must mediate between the competing demands of "wild[ness]" and "wis[dom]" without becoming "cold." This opposition generates an exultant understanding of connection and inspiration (whether personal or political) as passionate commitment to exuberant, interrogative intimacy that delights in discovering the unknown (the "wild") while celebrating the cerebrality of indeterminacy (the "wise"). Though David Lloyd claims that nation formation, like identity formation in Yeats's late poetry, is "predicated on a performative violence which his own poetry dramatically appropriates" (5), I feel that even if representations are covertly masked, Yeats is not suppressing but rather energetically engaging with and exploring the heterogeneous facets of national and individual alterity through the act of questioning and the play of projection. The concern, which Lloyd recognizes elsewhere in Joyce is one of "verisimilitude" (6), in which Yeats is suggesting that there is not one but various perspectives and many, often disparate versions of personal and political truth at issue.

Accordingly, if this Other of the "The Mask" is Ireland, we have a mythopoetic emphasis on (wo)man-as-nation as being both transcendent and resplendent with a face and personage, in his or her willful resistance to doffing the mask, that are available to be whatever one may desire. Thus, like Pallas as iconic figurehead of Athens in Aeschylus' *The Eumendies*,

> [f]emininity is part and parcel to the patriarchal order. Woman is hidden in the thought of the father. […] She is veiled, her beauty hidden. Only the shape appears anymore. Therefore, not the woman. […] Only the face sees/is seen. And the voice clearly expresses the father's wishes, which she translates into words all men—all citizens—can hear. (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 96; ellipsis mine)

Yeats's figuring of the dialogic permits him to surreptitiously espouse a masculinist nationalist ideology by employing the interrogative and creating a second supposedly female speaker to do

so for him. The second speaker identifies this as mutual "fire" shared by both speakers, yet the acknowledgment occurs indecisively and with trepidation in the poem's final lines, "What matter, so there is but fire/In you, in me?" (ll 14-15). This "fire" is strategically suspended and displaced for its problematic ability to set one's soul ablaze with the at times unbearable and possibly excruciating passion of romantic and/or ideological fervor, the possibility of ultimately encountering not abiding "love" but "deceit" (ln 7). Passion is challenging and disruptive, and alongside an ambivalent prior insistence to "let all that be" (ln 13). The second speaker argues that one must be free to behave as one chooses, unhampered by the constraints of a single ideological mode or an unchanging understanding of one's partner or oneself.

Furthermore, as Paul de Man famously claimed in his analysis of "Among School Children" in "Semiology and Rhetoric" (1973), the question, in the case of "The Mask" as well, is not merely rhetorical but can be simultaneously read literally with its query serving to illustrate the disruption of the identities of the speaker and the lover—or the speaker's very conception of him/herself if you continue the logical progression of my previous contentions regarding broken mirroring, bedazzling masks, deliberate guises, and defiant posturing. The second speaker (hypothetical or not) may, in Shakespeare's words, "…burn…pine…perish" (*The Taming of the Shrew* I.i.149), and cause the first speaker (if s/he is really there at all) to feel similarly, but effectively asks, "So what?" One speaker beseeches the other and ergo the reader for an answer, a rationale, seeking a place on a justifiably ambiguous metaphorical map in order to project and locate of a person (and implicitly a nation) that only exist(s) rhetorically. What, then, do we do with desire suppressed and always already postponed or "belated"—when the image of our own reflection or the ideal of our imagination may not offer sufficient satisfaction? If the second speaker is the voice of Éire, the last lines could be read as a carefully-masked call

to action for the men of Ireland, tantamount to, "So, you love me, now what are you going to do about it?"

Mahaffey indicates Yeats's "suspicion of action" across his early poetic career, embodied in the preface to his and Edwin Ellis's edition of *The Works of William Blake* (1893) with "imagination as a kind of panacea for the ills of the world, as well as a principle of escape" (*States* 96). In it, they contend that, "Imagination is eternal—it knows not of death—it has no Western twilight and Northern darkness. We must cast our life, thought after thought, desire after desire, into its world of freedom, and so escape from the warring egotism of elements and years (qtd. Ibid)." "The Mask" embodies the antagonism Yeats describes in Blake between ideal fantasies and harsh realities, "the warring egotism" spurred by the pull of individualism troubled by hesitant regard for the beloved or the nation-state.

As Mahaffey contends, "[Yeats] clearly preferred the wildness of the inner world over the servility demanded by the outer one" (Ibid). Lloyd further asserts that, "The national artist not only deploys symbols, but is a symbol, participating organically in what he represents, that is the spiritual identity of nation-yet-to-be" (69) and that in "Easter, 1916", Yeats is "intensely questioning the status of the symbol and the legitimacy of the artistic act" (70).[13] Moreover, I would insist that such inquiry of the role of art and the artist in fact comes much sooner in Yeats's *oeuvre*, prior to the formation of the nation per se, and that his questioning occurs even

[13] Lloyd overstates when he reads the comingling of the aesthetic and the political in later Yeats as a sign of the "avowed authoritarianism, if not downright fascist sympathies of his stated politics" (59). In my estimation, Yeats's poetry, by and large, granted with notable exceptions, as Mahaffey also suggests, seems more deeply concerned with the imaginative interior of one's psychic life and its potential for creative expression than the violent exterior of real conflict. However, the multiple syntactic ambiguities Lloyd identifies throughout *The Winding Stair* and the attendant "radical destabilization of meaning" they produce are just what interests me in the strategies of address in "The Mask" (63). Once again, I concur with Mahaffey who convincingly affirms throughout her chapter on Yeats that the discontinuities in the function of images or emblems and Yeats's flexible intent(ions) across his corpus become an opportunity for playful, diverse interpretations, whatever his contentious political beliefs.

more vehemently when Ireland's sovereign status is largely hypothetical, outside of the realm of the rhetorical.[14] Ireland, for Yeats, is always already what I have followed Lloyd who follows Marx in terming "an allegorical state" or sovereignty (72), the formation thereof predicated upon the performative utterance and spiritual evocation of an imagined collectivity, not necessarily on literal (geo)political action.

To exploit this opposition even further, to highlight the instability of "fixed" concepts and the transgressive nature of "national" boundaries, Yeats provides no answers in "The Mask" but instead characteristically and strategically leaves the rhetorical question hanging in the air for readers to do respond or not, do as they so choose: "For every assertion there is a counter-assertion; for every affirmation, a qualification. Each answer multiplies questions, and every approach to unity and reconciliation announces fresh acknowledgment of disunity and defeat" (Howes, *Yeats's Nations* 14). While Howes reads this technique pessimistically throughout his *oeuvre*, I argue that in "The Mask," at least, it represents a devil-may-care optimism, Yeats's reveling in possibilities, and engaging deliberately with contrapuntal alternatives. Daniel Feldman[15] follows Hugo Friedrich and Hans Robert Jauss in describing this feature of Yeats's interrogative verse as producing a heightened "state of suspense" (90), but I would insist that in "The Mask" specifically, the closing question also creates a state of affective and sociopolitical suspension. The rhetoric of this lyric, far before the examples Feldman draws on from the mature verse, enables the poet to dialogically pose seemingly oppositional truths and leave the reader to negotiate them. The Socratic interlocutor is structured into "The Mask" as the

[14] Indeed, well before the latter poem's "terrible beauty is born" through the real violence of the Easter Rising.

[15] Feldman notes that Lee Zimmerman counts 38 texts in *Collected Poems* that end with a question (89), which Yeats employs to great effect throughout his entire corpus, including "The Secret Rose," "The Second Coming", "Leda and the Swan", "The Wild Swans at Coole," "The Cold Heaven", "Among Schoolchildren," "No Second Troy," and of course, "What Then?".

constructed Platonic self, rather than the reader or another speaker with whom the poet genuinely beseeches that he and we engage our minds, demanding or implicitly offering an answer in the way that Feldman interprets the later, major interrogative verses (95-99). Contra Feldman's repeated play on "the dance" between writer and reader as one meant to compel or achieve a "hybrid[-ized or [hybridizing]" understanding (101), what Yeats seeks to gain in this instance, is merely a better grasp on his own desires. He utilizes a second voice not out of some hope of exchange but to instead continue dancing with himself. "What matter?" indeed.

While Kiberd declares, "Yeats's longings were for locations, whereas his pains were caused by people" (*Inventing Ireland* 106), Mahaffey insists upon the idea that Yeats's technique is "rhizomatic" in its interconnected free associations, and that his images are, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, "'a map' that is 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real….The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions: it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification….[It] always has multiple entryways" (qtd. in *States* 26). The flexibility of the Deluzian and Guattarian map is relevant for my purposes: that whereas previous chapters have stressed the centrality of cartography and fretted over the plotting of places, persons, their affective "response-abilities," and their relation to codified political and erotic boundaries, the "map" Yeats' conceptualizes is significant in that traditional notions of topography become essentially irrelevant.

Yeats certainly longs for places, but they are not necessarily the literal places themselves. Rather, the physical, material, and environmental state of places themselves becomes econdary to their role as emotionally-laden, imaginative repository for the emotional states that are of central concern of Yeats's enterprise in "The Mask". To return yet again to the language of "diagramming" that Deleuze adapts from Foucault that I addressed in Chapter 1: "…in so far as

[the diagram] exposes a set of relations between forces, it is a not a place but rather 'a non-place': it is only the place of mutation. Suddenly, things are no longer perceived or propositions [such as an ambiguous question] articulated in the same way" (*Foucault* 85). The same claim can be made regarding Yeats's self-reflexsive image of and dialogue with the second speaker, the reader, or the nation, which remains always at a remove. I do concur with Feldman's assertion that poetry itself opens or strives to delineate numinous "space" (99), but that space is not always intended to engage the Other. Instead, as J.S. Mill, Northrop Frye, Jonathan Culler, and William Waters respectively suggest with regard to the lyric form as a genre, even an explicitly interrogative verse remains radically turned away from the audience, to focus instead on introspection. This kind of lyric, then, is ironically staged more efficiently through the faux posture of miming an explicit, even intimate, address. It is a querying that pivotally supplies its own answers.[16] Yeats shows how the reiteration of a trite commonplace "my dear" can be used to hold the Other, the supposedly beloved, at arm's length, to allow the speaker's mask remain in place indefinitely, as a barrier between oneself and knowledge of alterity, shielding the individual from the world by (re)making it in terms of oneself, after one's own *imago*.[17]

While I argued in Chapter 2 that Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker in "*Oileán*/Island" unites the personal and the geopolitical reality of Ireland, through her figuring of the beloved man's body as a map in direct response to nineteenth-century nationalist tradition and that Sligo is realized fully in the "rocky highland[s]" of "The Stolen Child," Yeats endeavors, in "The Mask", as perhaps only as a male poet can, to progress move beyond the need for such located metaphors by subverting them utterly, playing again on what Paul Ricoeur describes as the materiality of

[16] For a counterpoint to this, see my discussion of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's lyric strategies of address in Chapter 2.

[17] See especially "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "Man and the Echo".

the sign in poetic language as intended to be "looked at" but in this case as mode of "see[ing] through". The poet practices utterance as means of manifesting not only oneself but tangible and textual reality.[18] Since the personal effectively masks the political in the poem, for Yeats, the state's geographical boundaries and practical necessities become immaterial. Instead, his "map" is entirely associational, its features are the eyes and the countenance prismatically distorted; the concrete physical locale of the nation as a place, or specific desires of the supposed Other as an individual, are always already pliant and biddable, only pertinent as they relate to the prerogatives of the speaker(s') or poet's perceptions.

Yeats's fundamental failure throughout most of his corpus to (re)present a non-commodified or non-fetishized, female body or face by frequently opting to use the sign of Woman as opposed to a woman in order to dance on with himself, leaves later writers like and French and Ní Dhomhnaill to contend with the consequences of his and other Irish writers' conspicuous conflation of that cipher allied with the nation throughout their works. Butler Cullingford maintains that, "If we investigate the relations of power sustained by the [canonical] discourse of romantic love, we discover that, despite the abjection of the lover before his goddess, most male-authored Western love poetry sustains the cultural superiority of men" (*Gender and History* 4). Yeats "projected onto women either the emotional state of the men who contemplated them or the attributes of a dead (and therefore immortal) ideal" (Mahaffey, *States* 99). These ideals were most often completely divorced from material deprivation and lack of

[18] Lloyd also recognizes the irrelevance of actual geography in Yeats's later "Coole [Park] and Ballylee, 1931" and determines that, "It is mark of the success of Yeats's arrogation of landscape to allegory that it takes us so long to recognize, if we do at all, that the proper response to the question [of the stanza's final line] "What's water but the generated soul?" might simply be, "Many things" (65). While Lloyd (mis)reads this appropriation as "arrogant" (65), I would read it, in that instance, as I do in "The Mask" as playfully querying and purposefully imaginative, in which, yet again the landscape of Ireland is only relevant as it relates to Yeats's particular poetic intentions, though I would agree that ultimately "The purity of the image [of the lake and the swans] is rather the reappropriation of grace by arrogation, is realized in, not sullied by, artificiality" (67).

political representation of women, much like Yeats's invention of a noble Celtic peasantry whose "[m]aterial failure became a spiritual success rather than a shortcoming, [their] poverty became a badge of moral superiority, and the Celtic peasant became imaginatively rich and vital precisely because he was literally poor and oppressed" (Howes, *Yeats's Nations* 35). National virtue and strength or beauty in both Irish men and Irish women is for Yeats an inherent condition of their lack of social and political means—it is an endeavor to invert the delimiting principles of colonialism that actually reinforces them by neglecting to supply a mode of achieving true autonomy, authority, or agency outside of the rhetorical.

Therefore, Yeats's fantasy of Irish freedom must always be linguistic and spiritual in a consciously ambiguous way; while it ostensibly queries the political and the social, this freedom is in fact never realized by troubling real gendered, religious, or economic hierarchies or demanding concrete measures of equality, such as voting rights or property ownership. Granted, such demands may beyond the scope of the poem's agenda, but neither is the (presumably) second female speaker's subjectivity effectively figured in terms of bodily authority by showing us the beloved's real face, which would provide a true physical presence and thereby make her a *real* woman rather than a mere masked poetic phantasm. Yeats develops his female figures in such a way that they are expected "[t]o give body—and with no difference—to their ideals. And as those ideals are the gods of the language: to give them voice, foundation, material for transcendental productions. The empire [or in this case, the nation-state] of the word cannot do without the ear and the voice if it is to reproduce itself" (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 109). Indeed, for all its supposed fluidity regarding gender roles and elastic perspectives on national identities, through glorification of The (all-too spectral, barely) Embodied[19] Feminine State and hardly ever

[19] See Howes's discussion of "A Woman Young and Old" (*Yeats's Nations,* 131-132).

the body, countenance, or the mind of a specific woman, "The Mask" maintains the dominance of the masculinist Ascendancy status quo.[20]

In terms of my earlier contention of androgyny, the androgyny of "The Mask" is in fact only achieved by subsuming the particular traits of the woman as an individual and re-interpreting them in terms of oneself and one's own desire. Although I would concur with Mahaffey that Yeats's attitude gradually shifts to viewing "male and female principles not as antagonistic, but equal and interdependent" (*States* 101), this is only in terms of the dynamic presence of both principles within oneself and not in terms of his approach to specific women as individuals.[21] As Yeats himself asserted in *Autobiographies,* "Each divines the secret self of the other, and refusing to believe in the mere daily self, creates a mirror where the lover or the beloved sees an image to copy in daily life" (qtd. Cullingford, *Gender and History* 4). At the same time, Yeats maintains that the seeming-openness of the relational "map" operates or is oriented based on the fundamental unknowability of the alien terrain of the Other's or even one's own consciousness; successful mapping of cathected mental and emotional topography is achieved with limited signage, few guideposts, and (heart)broken compasses, which facilitate one's projection onto a person or a place his/her own desires in any direction.[22]

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[20] One of the few rare exceptions to this tendency is "A Prayer for My Daughter," which I discuss in Chapter 4.

[21] It is exactly that attitude with which later feminist poets have taken issue, arguing as I did in Chapter 1's Joyce's plum hags that sexual and poetic conquest are allied with other forms of domination. See Boland or Mahaffey's "Heirs of Yeats," expanded to include even more women writers in *States of Desire* (112-120).

[22] Such a rhizomatic map of desire is also relevant to a fascination with literal topography as previously mentioned with regard to Friel's *Translations* (1980). Its love scene between Lt. Yolland and Máaire—who is implicitly betrothed to Hugh's son and assistant schoolmaster, Manus—arises out of the amorous recitation and linguistic exchange of Irish-language and Anglicized place-names as the only means by which the ultimately ill-fated pair can effectively verbally communicate their forbidden passion through the aid of the surveyors' map, using the prop to stage what is otherwise impossible in their reality: a fulfillment of longing, cross-cultural understanding, and shared location or territory.

As Riquelme points out, "[Yeats's poetic] multiplicity provides no single direction or set of directions for reaching home, lyric I, or the myths and styles that try to define the limits of meaning, value, and behavior" ("Negativity" 539). Rather, it is a flexible "map" predicated on desiring and imagining[23] what one wishes to be there as opposed to a factual representation of what actually is: "Attention is given less to the concrete world—about which the writer cares too little even to spurn it—than to the fertile minds, which repeatedly displace it with their own superior alternatives…..against the ability to imagine things as they are, [art] counterpoises the capacity to imagine things as they might be" (Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* 118).

Yeats consciously allies nation- or world-building with autobiography, positioning his own identity as an artist and public intellectual in the same way he evokes the nation. The poem's final lines confirm that Yeats is not reifying but rather interrogating. Thus, identity, gender, and the supposed individuality of the body itself within the poem are clearly emergent processes of "becoming" rather than permanent states of "being," able to be transformed by shifts in the poet's emotion.[24] As Yeats asserted in a letter prior to writing the poem, "I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self; that all joyous or creative life is a re-birth as something which has no memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed" (qtd. Ellmann, *Masks* 174).

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[23] Mahaffey examines the consequences of this phenomenon of renunciation in later Yeats, specifically *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1929): "...light moments exist in close proximity to the heaviness of responsibility and remorse, a remorse that weighs on him for the same reason that it briefly and periodically makes way for ecstasy—because he has with much effort and suffering relinquished the consolations of imaginative denial" (*States* 137).

[24] Yeats would later develop this into the notion of "the anti-self" in relation to his mystical correspondence with the spirit of Leo Africanus in poems such as "Ego Dominus Tuus" and an unpublished dialogue called "The Poet and the Actress," the unity of the lame man and the saint in *The Cat and the Moon,* as well as the automatic writing period and ontological symbolic schemas of *A Vision,* which he initially wrote between 1917 and 1925 and continued to revise until 1937, with the final edition appearing posthumously in 1956 (Ellmann, *Masks* 196-200, 218, 226-230).

Ironically, Yeats thereby utilizes the decorative and valuable mask not only as an aesthetic object but as a tool of economic and sociopolitical patriarchy, obscuring the feminine face in the same way he occludes her body, In Irigaray's terms,

> Nature can be loved only if she is concealed, as in a dream[….] [T]hese moonstruck men with eyes open, see nothing in it but art. Their dream is to cover the natural world with veils. To climb ever higher, get farther and farther off, turn away from nature toward certainties that they can no longer even see, as an escape onto dangerous heights—their plans, their plans. As a way to rid their thoughts of the disgusting things to which nature subjects every woman (?) (*Marine Lover* 108; ellipsis mine)

Although one could argue that "Under Ben Bulben" (1939) marks a return to where Yeats began in "The Stolen Child" with a focus on what Irigaray calls the "viscera of the Earth" (94), it remains a viscera for which he attempts to credit to the "great forefathers" (ll 39) of art and verse while shaming the "unremembering hearts and heads" (ll 73) of the next generation of (obviously male) Irish poets. As Laura O'Connor suggests:

> The tone of aggrieved entitlement that laces Yeats's declarations on behalf of 'we Irish' blends aristocratic *noblesse oblige* and the pride of a bardic elite with the indignant riposte of a downtrodden people. The precedent of Yeatsian bardic authority exemplifies how writers can combine international literary eminence with the oppositional iconoclasm and novelty of hitherto lesser-known traditions to secure 'major' status minority literatures. (*The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* 83)

Indeed, as O'Connor notes later in her essay, this is not an unproblematic form of appropriation, which in its essence effectively enables the silencing and occlusion from the national tradition of the contributions of many women poets who published throughout the 1930s and '40s.[25] And

[25] See also Anne Fogarty's crucial essay also in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* in which she builds on the works of Rita Felski and J.C.C. Mays in her contention that Irish women artists uneven and variegated experience of modernity should not be placed in false equivalence with strictly time-bound notions of modernist periodicity and that the often neglected contributions of George Egerton, Eva Gore-Booth, Lady Gregory, and others as well as Elizabeth Bowen, Kate O'Brien, and Maeve Brennan are "at once proleptic and belated" in their engagement with one another and their male counterparts (*The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* 148). Joe Cleary poses a comparable argument about the extensive and continuing influence of Irish modernists like Shaw and Yeats on much more ideologically and regionally diffuse "Irish American Modernism" included in the same volume.

much earlier, "The Stolen Child" is a similarly moonlit fantasy of stasis where the charmed boy will never have to face maturity and any unsettling physical changes in himself or anyone he loves. The fairies are decidedly asexualized and their gluttony transmutes one's potentially burgeoning and dangerous sexual appetite into a physical one of consuming only "berries" and notably, "reddest, stolen cherries," emblems of *virgo intacta* feminine sexuality (ll 7-8).

Critically, "The Mask" establishes its titular conceit through the use of what Irigaray would term a "veil" in order to promote an ideology that effectively erases the female body and reduces it to the aforementioned blank, a mouth, a mere concealed hole that parrots the poet's own voice. Yeats's effective and affective dismembering of the feminine and thus the state also functions as a proleptic un-remembering and failure to acknowledge the vital role played by women in the struggle for Irish independence, similar to the way he subsumes most of his female figures into his undeniably misogynistic portrayal of "the raving slut" (ln 37) in "The Circus Animals' Desertion". Whatever his earlier ties to women like Maud Gonne, Constance Markiewicz, and Augusta Gregory, at the end of his life, Yeats seems deliberately engaged in a metaphorical "measurement" (ln 42) contest and in a compensatory effort to mark his own territory even at the last.

To put what Mahaffey has already keenly described as "warring egotism" into the theoretical context of Irigaray, "Don't you measure your ecstasy against the yardstick of envy? And isn't your circle made of the will to live this irradiation—there will be no other but me" (*Marine Lover* 15). Yeats is continually employing phallic images of the peak of Ben Bulben and the headstone itself is a piece of local limestone,[26] not to mention the obvious "cocks a-

[26] For an alternative reading of the absorptive capabilities of the porous limestone that permits Yeats's admixture with the environment in a non-hierarchical form, see Nicholas Allen.

crow[ing]" (ln 4), as both textual and actual *memento mori* in an effort to literally co-opt the place in service of his desire for poetic "immortality" (ln 8). As Irigaray insists,

> For whenever that question, 'Where is my body?' is reborn in you, what do you do but go right back digging in the earth who has always kept it for you? And are you not prepared even to steal from her the song she might sing of that memory? Will you relieve her of a burden or scratch away all her living layers? And how will you know the difference if, in your soul, the limits of the body disappear? (*Marine Lover* 19)

Over fifty years earlier, Yeats anticipates exactly this as he envisions the grave-diggers literally penetrating the earth to make room for him—not merely as one who grew from this ecosystem and thus returns to it—but rather to claim space and show his mastery of the natural world, the "completeness of…passions won" (ln 9). All roads lead to Drumcliff(e)[27] and all signs must point to Yeats's monument, the most erect one in the family plot (and the most substantial one there in general, other than the high Celtic cross that predates it), upon which many a tourist must still cast an eye, however supposedly "cold" and cynical it should be (ln 93).

If the world of magic or mythic realism in Yeats is ultimately both literally and figuratively subsumed by Yeats's grave in the *terra firma* at the foot of Ben Bulben itself, dispelling both the poet's fantastical creations and the phantasmagoric, eschatological Horsemen with the stroke of pen, it is at such a juncture it becomes necessary to delineate between forms of of mythic- or magic-realist narrative that as Stephen Slemon notes, are structured oppositionally, in which one reality "remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the '"other,'" a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences," whereas another permits synthesis, a symbiotic codependence of one reality upon the other (11). Yeats's *oeuvre*—like my reading of "The Mask" itself and my

[27] Although, of course, some as yet unidentified French body, or rather, amalgamation of several bodies, currently rests in his grave in Sligo.

understanding of how the tenets of magic realism are figured throughout the history of literary and cultural discourse amongst the Irish and the Irish diaspora—opts instead to read both of these formations simultaneously and not exclusively.

As I have argued, it is in Yeats, possible that y the mask is not always the face of another, but our one's own face, whether or not it is commemorated as it is hidden in gold, which has the power to dissemble and conceal our one's true identity or intentions in life or in death. "The Mask" read this way, would serve quite perfectly suitably as an epigram to Tana French's *The Likeness*, which expands upon its exploration of performative identity and adds a further and appropriately Yeatsian fascination with fairy legend. The poem's closing interrogative demonstrates the poet's embrace of liminality and ambivalence. One can acknowledge desire but demur from acting upon it. Such a choice or demurral represents in this case a delicious paralysis, an anticipation and a sublimation. But its pleasures are all too fleeting. How can we love ourselves when we conceal or distort our own reflections? How can we love another or our nation if we refuse to embrace themthem?and w In the poem, the speaker(s) reach(es) towards the Other but also the narcissistic reflection of the self unseen beneath the mask. It is the mask itself that allows one to live in the liminal, suspended between two worlds and two states of being within the variegated flux of the present, the past, and the future. *The Green Helmet* in general and this poem in particular represent the crux or pivot point between mythical fantasy and political actuality. Unlike "Easter, 1916" and the verse that follows it, Yeats is not yet forced to choose, he can adroitly move back and forth, blurring the boundary *in medias res,* in a style that is much more provocative to later writers like French because it permits the personal to be polemical and vice versa, while at the same time acknowledging the fraught coexistence of

both the magic and the real, the fantastic and the quotidian, the world and the Otherworld, within Irish psychology and sociocultural practice.

Concerning magic realism, both French's *The Likeness* and French's prior debut *In the Woods*, fluctuate between the language of Celtic mythology and hardscrabble criminology. Each alternately delights or despairs in an indeterminate ending, like many tales from the orature, and although some cases are ostensibly concluded, mysteries nonetheless linger long in the detectives' imaginations unsolved, or at least, unresolved. Coincidence and fantasy often serve to both precipitate tragedy and ameliorate it. The magic and the real meet on the edges of the Irish landscape, a suburban housing estaste that has hardly emerged from the primeval forest or a former "Big House" with an unshakable, malignant past and a foundation reputed to be constructed atop a treacherous fairy *ráth*. Furthermore, French employs challenges Yeats's exploration of traditional representations of woman, nation, and most importantly, woman-as-nation, to examine issues of gender and subjectivity in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland. Like their poetic predecessor, French's novels also reminds us that the distinction between history and mythology is a fine line of razor-wire walked at the protagonists' peril. As a life "Away" beckons, *The Likeness* questions if Cassie Maddox can not only eschew her adventures as Lexie Madison but use them as a means to find the other woman's murderer(s).

While the female speaker of "The Mask" is potentially nonexistent, intentionally ambiguous, or at best, the hypothetical projection of a male poet,[28] French grounds her work at the juncture of realism and the supernatural, examining the nature and consequences of affiliation for female characters who are ordinary women, not extraordinary idealizations of the

[28] Butler Cullingford maintains that it is not until 1915's "The People" that "the female voice in Yeats's verse mount[s] a direct political challenge to the male lyric consciousness" (83). Mahaffey sees it develop later in the Crazy Jane poems from 1929's *The Winding Stair* (*Gender and History* 137-141).

supposedly feminine State. What Yeats seems to fear is what French forces Cassandra Maddox to confront: "The boundary that crumbles. The ornament that falls to pieces. The mask that drops" (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 108).

Even as she strongly and wisely resists interpretations that suggest a false universality or homogeneity in Irish women's writing, Anne Fogarty notes the presence of "shared psychosexual patterns" in the work of contemporary Irish women writers, which endeavor "to interrogate notions of identity whether it be in the realm of the sexual, the national, the local, the political, or the familial…Their writing depicts the self not only as fissile and divided but also as defined by and entangled in historical, familial, and socio-political legacies of meaning" ("Deliberately Personal?" 3-4). Although it was written six years after Fogarty's analysis, I would argue that French situates *The Likeness* at the interrelation of these common concerns regarding the historical position of women, their sexuality, and the contentious nature of subject-position formation in varied sociocultural *mileux*, explicitly dramatizing the fissionability of identity through its döppelganger plot. The novel appropriately begins with the heroine, Cassie Maddox's dream of herself in the empty, but still impeccably decorated as if inhabited, Whitethorn House— ,repository of colonial history as the small fictional Wicklow village of Glenskehy's "big house" dating back to the Ascendancy, the Penal Laws, and of course, *An Gorta Mór,* but and alsorepository of her own fractured memories about her undercover case impersonating her döppelgangeruncanny double, one of its inhabitants who was murdered, con woman and pretender postgrad in English, Lexie Madison.

Maddox's idealized vision of the pristine home with its sweet "smell of hyacinths, drifting through the wide-open windows" and "fresh-cut honeysuckle trailing from a crystal bowl" on a dining table set for five painfully comingles the sense-memories of the space's

pleasurable past—when the house was full of life and warmth, as if all of her/Lexie's roommates are still there, secreted just out of sight— with the deep-seated or rather "deep-seeded" grief and unease she now feels toward the barren site:

> I got it all wrong, somehow. They're only hiding; they're still here for ever and ever. I follow the tiny noises through the house room by room, stopping at every step to listen, but I'm never quick enough: they slide away like mirages, always just behind that door or up those stairs. The tip of a giggle, instantly muffled; a creak of wood. I leave the wardrobe doors swinging open, I take the steps three at a time, I swing round the newel post at the top and catch a flash of movement in the corner of my eye: the spotted old mirror at the end of the corridor, my face reflected in it, laughing. (French 1-2)

As the dream suggests, for Cassie, the case is never over. She is still searching and trying to come to terms with her investigation, and like the first speaker of the "The Mask," "would but find what's there to find," as yet on the hunt for new secrets, different perspectives, solutions to questions that have not been answered to her satisfaction.

For Irigaray the mutability and "re-producibility" of the feminine resists Freudian or Lacanian mirror logic: "

With the result that she is always already othered but with no possible identification of her, or of her other. Who is not even a foundation for identification: some mirror, for examples. There will therefore never be a her and her other. The possessive, the mark of belonging, does not belong to her". (*Marine Lover* 86-87).

The dream of a unified "Gestalt" is permanently distorted by the spotted mirror of culture that demands the woman perform many roles that may fragment her personality or sense of belonging. This prefigures Cassie's struggle to reconcile various aspects of identity, an effort which Irigaray would consider false or unnecessary, but one that nevertheless becomes integral not only to Maddox solving the murder of Lexie Madison, but also resuming her own life *as*

herself by negotiating both the painful and the pleasurable aspects of the double-bind Irigaray recognizes in femininity.

Whitethorn House and Maddox's mirror dream[29] function as emblem of her former life in "Away" (as the tales term it) in this fairy Otherworld, where she lived as the proverbial changeling child, Lexie Madison. As the rich multitude of folklore on changelings suggests, "In Irish accounts, the changeling is often witty and mentally precocious and has the capacity for unnatural insight as evinced by [her or] his ability to reveal the identity of a murder or to prophesy the impending death of some individual" (Mac Philib 125). While Madison serves as a troublesome indicator of Maddox's own mortality, Maddox herself discovers her döppelganger's murderer while impersonating her.

As contemporary perspectives on "stolen" (including literally as "Madison" obtains or assumes Maddox's fake identity and Maddox must then pose as the double of her impostor) women, Maddox and Madison's shared story exploits the tension Seamus Deane identifies in Yeats's work,

> Therefore it is in the body—his own or that of his beloved—that the combat between the permanent and the transient is inscribed. It became one of the paradigms in Yeats's poetry that he should steal from the world beautiful women that they might dance into eternity in his poems…The stolen child or man or women remains with Ireland as part of its true and permanent history and yet in exile from all that in Ireland is part of its transient and yet actual existence. The two realms are connected by memory and forgetfulness, both of which are necessary for the maintenance of their coexistence as, simultaneously, distinct and related zones. (*Strange Country* 113)

Yeats's work has a dual focus on the personal and the political or rather, as I have insisted, the personal as the political as well as the magic as the real and vice versa. Furthermore, his use of

[29] For more on the issues of mirroring and masking, see Oscar Wilde's essays "The Truth of Masks" and "The Decay of Lying," the latter of which features the famous formulation of "cracked looking glass" that Stephen Dedalus will later endeavor to apply to Irish society.

distinctly Irish mythology and symbology to achieve their interplay through a grammar of loss and longing prefigures French's examination of the same tropes.

But in order to effectively challenge the Yeatsian poetic phantasms of a feminine Nation, French makes certain her characters are not insubstantial spectral voices but real individuals, whose personal narratives override any political allegory. French recovers and adapts the mythological as a mode of—to borrow from Fogarty, *deliberately personal*—storytelling and feminist resistance by exploring internal (i.e. psychological) and external diasporic identifications through emotional migrations. *The Likeness* limns the concept of exile from oneself by inscribing it in Cassandra Maddox and Lexie Madison's magically-real nearly-identical bodies, not only in the intimate cartographies of shared spaces, but also shared faces. For as fairy-lore tells us, "those who visit fairyland are never quite the same. They are strange and silent, with a wild look in their eyes, and are given to wandering the hills alone in search of the 'gentle' fairy places" (White 35).

While Cassie Maddox seeks dialogue and contact with her former roommates, the only sounds in her dream are her "own footsteps echoing off the floorboards" and the call of "wood doves, lazy somewhere outside" (French 1). Doves, as birds that are traditionally depicted in happy contented pairs, re-emphasize the fact that Cassie, —in contrast, —feels profoundly alone, and likewisefurther, that the hollow reverberation of her tread offers no consolation. The isolated image of Maddox's own dappled and distorted reflection in the old mirror bears out that she has completely internalized her grief over thethe excruciating end of the friendships she made and lost as a result of her investigation.

As the appositely-named "Operation Mirror" progresses, the novel essentially re-stages an adult version of Lacan's mirror stage, with Cassie Maddox confronting her own *imago* or likeness, but whereas in Lacan this allows the infant to form a unified subjectivity, French, like Yeats before her, uses the image to indicate the fractured or fraught nature of her subject's identity, an issue which she will then appropriately contenddramatize throughout the rest of the work. It seems from her damaged reflection that the laughter which she witnesses and experiences at the end of the dream occurs in lieu of sorrowful sobs, of sorrow and perhaps, as a wild, anxious, frustrated expression of the madness[30] she feels now as a soul divided by having to taketaking on another's identity alongside her own.

This theory is only supported by Maddox's contention immediately following recounting the recounted dream that,

> This is Lexie Madison's story, not mine. I'd love to tell you one without getting into the other, but it doesn't work that way. I used to think I sewed us together at the edges with my own hands, pulled the stitches tight and I could unpick them anytime I wanted, Now I think always ran deeper than that and farther, underground; out of sight and way beyond my control. (French 3)

Rather than an image of a unified, "whole" subjectivity, we have multiple, tattered consciousnesses hybridized and crisscrossed by various borders or fragments, patchworked personalities, a riddled map of fraught, aporetic personas whose supposed connection is always tumultuously in danger of splitting or bursting. As such, this portion of the chapter will be examine ing the slippage of seams or fault lines within her Cassie Maddox's gestalt, the

[30] I am thinking here of Susan Gilbert and Sandra Gubar's discussion of tortured laughter in *The Madwoman in the Attic* and their discussion of Bertha Mason Rochester as Jane Eyre's dark double. When she is at last revealed, Gracie Corrigan, etc. aka Lexie Madison also discloses French's own engagement with the long history of imperialism suggested in that dangerous encounter between the Creole West Indian heiress and the poor English governess by reconfiguring the transportation of Irish rebels and criminals to the penal colony of Australia by instead having Gracie transport herself under various illegal aliases to America, Britain, and ultimately, Ireland, all of which serve as alternative Otherworlds.

moments of rupture and discontinuity created by such a haphazard quilting of identity. "Lexie Madison" is originally a false persona invented by Maddox and her supervisor, Frank Mackey,[31], in order to enable her to infiltrate a drug ring at UCDUniversity College Dublin.

After Maddox discards the persona, it is subsequently co-opted by an unknown con woman whose resemblance to Maddox enables her to steal the Madison identity. At first, the joy of undercover work for Maddox is lies in her ability to spin another person completely out of whole cloth, to invent details about another version of herself that she is bringing into existence:

> There was something intoxicating about this. I kept wanting to laugh, just at the lavish giddy freedom of it: relatives and countries and possibilities spread out in front of me, and I could pick whatever I wanted, I could grow up in a palace in Bhutan with seventeen brothers and sisters and a personal chauffer if I felt like it…Lexie Madison developed out of nothing like a Polaroid, she curled off the page and hung in the air like incense smoke, a girl with my face and a life from a half-forgotten dream. (French 7)

Madison revels in "the lavish giddy freedom" produced by her reverie, the invigorating thrill of identity construction that, as in "The Mask", is available to be whatever her heart desires. The figuring of Lexie Madison's spirit as "incense smoke" ties her creation to the ritual practices of Catholicism, the burning of incense at funerals as well as during the Good Friday service and Christmas Eve Mass to signify the passing or birth of souls, a memorial link to the breathing of the *pneuma* into Adam and Eve by God in *Genesis*,. with t The transformed-void of the Polaroid standing stands in as a postmodern replacement for the formless lump of clay. Cassie recognizes that her fantasy is powerfully creative and generative, and initially delightings in such play.

However, when the other woman posing as Lexie Madison is murdered, Maddox is forced to reflect on the cost consequences of her actions: "

[31] Mackey and his daughter, Holly, also appear in and respectively narrate French's next novel, *Faithful Place* (2009), and her most recent novel, *The Secret Place* (2014).

You can't make a person, a human being with a first kiss and a sense of humor and a favorite sandwich, and then expect her to dissolve back into scribbled notes and whiskeyed coffee when she no longer suits your purposes. I think I always knew she'd come back to find me, someday". (French 8).

By taking Lexie out of the realm of textual representation ("scribbled notes") and liquored-up imagination ("whiskeyed coffee") and literally embodying her through performing her identity in all its highly specific details of personal history, preferences, and personality, Cassandra Maddox, named perhaps after the infamous Greek prophetess of doom, who is cursed never to be believed, has her own creation come back to haunt her and compel her, once again, into staging a slightly different version of the same role,. This role is one that has been reinterpreted by the unknown con woman living as Lexie Madison, whose corpse is discovered in an abandoned famine cottage on the outskirts of Glenskehy.

The horrifying image of a corpse with her own face spurs Maddox to a revelation:

> For a whirling instant, I understood completely: Frank and I had done this. We made Lexie Madison bone by bone and fiber by fiber, we baptized her and for a few months we gave her a face and a body, and when we threw her away she wanted more. She spent four years spinning herself back, out of dark earth and night winds, and then she called us here to see what we had done. (French 19)

Once again French expresses the raggedly unsettled nature of one's identity in the combination of the sewing or "spinning" metaphor with a further, now eerie revision of *Genesis*: Lexie's *sui generis* reformation "out of dark earth and night winds." As opposedIn contrast to the heady, luxuriant intoxication of God's breath and one's soul as perfumed incense, in Irish legends, the harsh, wild night winds are also the forces of the *bean-sídhe* or banshees, female spirits who blow through the countryside on dark and stormy evenings as animate pathetic fallacies, sage and fearsome harbingers, often of great chaos and death. Whereas the states of being in "The

Mask" are seemingly eternal, compelled by internal fires that never bank (at least within the poem), for French, every breath Cassie takes is now troubled by the specter of another's and her own death. It is as if Maddox's private Frankensteinian 's monster creature,[32] re, which bears her face, has come forth to give her an eschatological vision of her own demise. As Freeman suggests,

> As a genre, the gothic traffics in alternate temporalities or a-rhythms that present in concretely historical terms....Just as the monster's body is composed of dead flesh touching more dead flesh, the gothic character often experiences both a fleshly touch from the dead and an unpredictable fleshly response to it: the monster is, in many ways, a double for both the genre [s]he inhabits and the disaggregated sensorium of the the gothic character and reader. (98)

French merely clearly reduplicates this generic-doubling phenomenon in through having the "monster" be an otherwise perfectly ordinary woman but also an uncanny doppelgaänger, whose un-dead or reanimated status becomes a sticking point of the plot and a point of unease for Det. Maddox, who wears the face of the dead woman and must continuously perform Madison's reanimation by assuming her identity. The a-rhythmic temporal and narrative elements of the neo-gothic here are the gothic made mundane, in which disaggregated individual subjectivity (as in Yeats's poem's gothic mask) becomes the platform for querying identity and queering the realism of crime fiction as a form, rather than using it as a synecdochal response (or deferral) of national politics.

[32] *The Likeness* also re-genders and contemporizes the familiar "split masculinity" trope of many nineteenth-century gothic texts that explore alterity, including Oscar Wilde's *A Picture of Dorian Gray* (1895), several of Wilde's fairytales, and of course, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Furthermore, Cassie has been experiencing some trauma herself over the prior case[33] of a murdered young twin girl,[34] the recent destructive and deadly past still revenant in her present, causing:

> …shaking, not eating, sticking to the ceiling every time the doorbell or the phone rang,…my coordination went funny; and I stopped dreaming. Before I had always dreamed in great wild streams of images, pillars of fire spinning across dark mountains, vines exploding through solid brick, deer leaping down Sandymount beach wrapped in ropes of light; afterwards, I got thick black sleep that hit me like a mallet the second my head touched the pillow. (French 9-10)

The loss of both physical appetite and the release of her dreams, expressions of intellectual and emotional appetites, coupled with both physical and emotional instability indicates that, prior to the Madison case, Maddox feels off-balance, uncomfortable in her own mind and body, disjointedly separated from the self she knows and hindered by the deficiency of her various appetites, which sustain her as a fully living and vibrant individual. She insists that, just like a glass that holds one's reflection, "…my life had slipped through my hands and smashed to smithereens. Everything I had—my job, my friends, my flat, my clothes, my reflection in the mirror—felt like it belonged to someone else, some clear-eyed, straight-backed girl I could never find again," the pressure of what Yeats describes in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" as the danger of one's own reflection in "[t]he mirror of malicious eyes" (French 140; Yeats II.10). It is only while working "Operation Mirror" that her appetites and energy return, but it is the energy of flux, of shedding Cassie Maddox and changing into Lexie Madison.

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[33] See French's first novel, *In the Woods* (2007), in which Cassie's former partner, Det. Adam "Rob" Ryan, whose childhood friends disappeared in the woods where young Katy Devlin is found murdered, describes his lost friend Peter as his fantasy twin (54) and himself as the surviving conjoined twin (120) and the victim of shared twinship fairy fugue (12).

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My gerund of choice—changing as in changeling—reminds us that as with other fairy legends, French's narrative also shows that some "boundaries marked by fairy intervention are social: occasions of transition and ambiguity in human life" (Bourke, "Virtual Reality" 12). To properly illustrate and negotiate this liminality, Yet Maddox must revise the Lacanian mirror ,to a motif to that expresses her sense that working with Sam and Frank is a cheap imitation of the camaraderie she felt when working with her beloved ex-partner Det. Rob Ryan[35] on previous cases, "This prickly, crowded place—greasy smell of cold Chinese, my shin hurting like hell, Frank watching me with those sidelong amused eyes—this wasn't the same thing, it was like a mocking reflection in some creepy distorting mirror" (French 86). As such, it is perhaps even a begrudging relief to be "Aaway" by embracing the former persona of bright and energetic Lexie Madison, leaving Cassandra Maddox and all of her woes behind. Going back undercover offers Maddox a second chance to play at a different life and as well as the opportunity to solve the mystery of the murder.

As an only child orphaned by a car accident at age five, Maddox once longed for the companionship and unity of look-a-like siblings which she dreamed up (much like Lexie Madison) because "this was the eighties, everyone in Ireland was related to one another.. When I was a kid looking for things to get angsty about, being without this felt like having no

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[35] In *In the Woods*, Ryan explains their partnership, its dissolution after a disastrous one-night stand, and his rejection of Cassie as a consequence of the disruption of their previously stable "secret shared geography":

> She was my partner. I don't know how to tell you what that word, even now, does to me; what it means…But a girl who goes into battle beside you and keeps your back is a different thing, a thing to make you shiver. Think of that first time you slept with someone, or the first time you fell in love: that blinding explosion that left you crackling to the fingertips with electricity, initiated and transformed. I tell you that was nothing, nothing at all, beside the power of putting your lives, simply and daily, into each other's hands….Every sunny familiar spot in our shared landscape had become a dark minefield, fraught with treacherous nuances and implications. I remembered her, only a few days before, reaching into my coat pocket for my lighter as we sat in the castle gardens; she hadn't even broken off her sentence to do it and I had loved the gesture so much, loved the sure, unthinking ease of it, the taking for granted. (French, *In the Woods* 197-8; 290)

reflection'" (French 34). She adeptly figures her lack of wherewithal or substantive presence as reflectionlessness and describes an absence of bonds as possessing "nothing in the world to hold me here" (French 34) and no sense of belonging. Maddox is less than a penumbra. Her childhood anxieties are complicated by the sense of autonomy she now feels is being threatened by the Lexie Madison impostor, "Now, all of a sudden, I had the best reflection on the block, and I didn't like it one bit…This girl was a link like a handcuff, slapped on my wrist out of nowhere and tightened till it bit the bone" (French 35). The imagined bite of the handcuff expresses Maddox's feelings of outrage and violation, as if she has been both the victim of and the unwitting accomplice in in Madison's deception. Despite the objections of her boyfriend and fellow investigator, Sam O'Neill, Cassie sees the opportunity to pose as Lexie Madison once more as a challenge, an escape, and also the as a way to settle ing of a debt with this now-deceased otherwise unknown impersonator.

An alternate title to the novel or this chapter could be Lexie's savvy dissertation project called "*Other Voices: Identity, Concealment, and Truth*…[which is appropriately] about women who wrote under other identities" (French 37). As Maddox herself admits,

> My border fence between real and not-real has never been so great. My friend Emma, who likes things to add up neatly, claims that this is because my parents died when I was too young to take it in: they were there one day and gone the next, crashing through that fence so hard and fast they left it splintered for good. When I was Lexie Madison for eight months she turned into a real person to me, a sister I lost or left behind on the way; a shadow somewhere inside me, like the shadows of vanishing twins that show up on people's X-rays once in a blue moon. Even before she came back to find me I knew I owed her something, for being the one who lived. (French 52)

Cassandra Cassie is concerned with the laden, easily- crossed liminality between fantasy and actuality, which as in Yeats, is fixated not on literal physical reality but rather mental and emotional topography, the permeability of psychic borders as she lives "splintered" between

personas. Though Lexie Madison began as a fictive apparition, her presence still lingers as a quasi-alternative version of Maddox with which she must contend for "all the best undercovers have a dark thread woven into them, somewhere" (French 53).

The image of weaving or image-weaving continues in Maddox's sense of the roommates' close "seamless" dynamic and her discovery that "Lexie" evidently decided to attend Trinity College Dublin after a chance encounter with "Sticky Vicky," Maddox's own former contact at University College Dublin, where Maddox had used the idea of transferring schools as an exit strategy from the Madison persona: "Lexie hadn't ended up at Trinity by chance or by some dark magnetic pull that had her shadowing me, elbowing her way into my corners. I had suggested it to her. We had worked together seamlessly, she and I" (French 112, 382; 133). Whereas supposedly "transferring" was Maddox's way out, it serves as this con woman's way *in* to co-opt the identity, not unironically through the transference facilitated by chance resemblancelikeness. Cassie as Lexie, like the speaker(s) of "The Mask," must endeavor to mediate between what I have previously described in the terms of the poem as the competing demands of "wild[ness]" and "wis[dom]," effectively performing the persona that Madison recreated, based solely on being called the wrong name and bearing a likenessresemblance, to find the other woman's murderer.

Yeats's insistence that true creative rebirth has "no memory" is replicated in Lexie's housemates' edict of "no pasts" (qtd. Ellmann, *Masks* 174; French 184, 200). Like Maddox herself who willingly assumes the Madison cover to escape her own personal baggage, the other residents of Whitethorn House struggle unsuccessfully to unburden themselves of the weight of their individual histories and the traumatic history of the domicile itself., Their homeis is inherited from the family of Daniel March, one of the roommates, and,

which serves as an emblem of Ireland's messy land disputes before as well as colonialism's lingering complications post-Independence. Take, for example, the nasty rumor about one of the March family ancestors, an Anglo-Irish landlord, impregnating a local girl, refusing to marry her, and thereby inspiring her to hang herself (out of the shame of being an unwed mother,) or the rumor that he murdereding her himself because he feared their child would be a changeling (French 214, 277). Whitethorns are traditionally the "fairy tree;" Glenskehy lore has it that the house covers a fairy *ráth* or (ring)fort and that the March family has truck with the fairies "or the devil, depending on which way your mind worked" (French 276).

Like the incidents surrounding the March family, the "changeling defense" was infamously used in the sensational 1895 murder trial of Michael Cleary,[36] who forcefed, beat, and then burned his wife Bridget to death, claiming his "real" wife had been possessed by a monstrous fairy double, forever immortalized in the nursery rhyme: "Are you a witch, or are you a fairy?/Or are you the wife of Michael Cleary?" The true and disturbing history of Bridget Cleary's tragic death offers as an illuminating template in the cultural memory of Ireland for the novel's subsequent examination of the associations among Irish lore, locations, and the dangers of supposedly transgressive female sexuality:

> In the narrative maps of oral storytelling, ringforts function as alternative reference points to places of human habitation and activity. Telling stories about them allows an imaginative, fictional, or metaphorical dimension of experience to be accommodated along with the practical, for they can serve as metaphors for areas of silence and circumvention in the life of the society which tells stories about them. All the

[36] See See also Hoff and Yeates's *The Cooper's Wife is Missing* and Angela Bourke's *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*. Bourke reminds us that Bridget Cleary angrily insisted in an argument with her husband prior to her death that "there were no pishogues about her" and that the Irish *piseog* is the diminutive of the word for vulva, *pis* or *pit*, implying in this case malevolent, explicitly feminine magic or curses (92-93). Bridget Cleary was also the subject of Tom MacIntyre's play, *What Happened Bridgie Cleary?*, first produced at the Abbey in 2005. Rather than examine a text that supplies a fictional Bridget by conflating various accounts, I chose to respond to the historical lacunae surrounding the real Bridget who left no written accounts and only appears *sotto voce*—or rather, *voce fortissimo*—screaming for her life, in the harrowing testimonies of the family members who murdered her.

> ambivalence attaching to them is contained in the common assertion that forts are where the fairies live. (Bourke, *The Burning of BC* 48)

Like Bridget Cleary's infamous, now-abandoned cottage in County Tipperary, through which her supposed greedy lover William Simpson allegedly gave grisly tours to tabloid journalists, Whitethorn House is and always will be *verboten* space for the fictional community in County Wicklow. This is only reinforced by the initial ambiguity of dates regarding the investigation of when exactly one of the Marches alleged offense with the local girl occurred as "sometime between 1847 and 1950" (French 214).

The novel limns the slippage "of the division between past and present and construct[s] fractured plots that point to the buried and censored tales and scandalous secrets hidden beneath the primary stor[y] which [it] unfold[s]" (Fogarty, "Uncanny Families" 64). Responding to socioeconomic as well as religious tensions dating back as far or even further than the Cleary murder and opprobrium concerning both the female mind and body, Whitethorn House's own notorious legacy and taboo location, makesing the residence an obvious target for local venom, such as burglaries and graffiti.[37] In the rambling, farraginous family chronicle written by the least remarkable March progenitor, Daniel's drunken Uncle Simon, even its history is framed as an angry, pedantic warning against daring to cross carefully regulated religious andand class boundaries, "These events may be taken as a lesson in the dangers of lust, or of the mixing outside of the boundaries of one's natural level in society" (French 230).[38] Whitethorn House

[37] For more on the history of the Big House as a claustrophobic space for Irish female sexuality, particularly during the Famine period, see Chapter 5. Yeats demonstrates that he has a similar sense of the oppositional valencesdichotomous energies between the big house and the cottage throughout his *oeuvre*, particularly in *The Tower*, *The Winding Stair*, and most explicitly in the play, *Purgatory*.

[38] The same is essentially said of Bridget Cleary in the persistent rumors of her infidelity with Protestant emergency-man, William Simpson, reported by Bourke, and in both Bourke and Hoff and Yeates' repeated emphasis that as a literate, professionally skilled (as a dressmaker/milliner), and somewhat economically independent woman through her trade and through the sale of eggs, Bridget and her cooper husband may have been considered well "above" many of their farm laboring neighbors and relations.

and all the detritus within it stand as symbol of this seemingly inescapable past and these intense social strictures.

Within this network, the famine cottage operates as the polar correlative to Whitethorn House in French's symbolic geography. While the latter shows Anglo-Irish wealth throughout colonial occupation and all the advantages of Ascendancy privilege, the former catalogues the history of discrimination, deprivation, and death that made such advantage possible. Maddox points out, "Famine cottages are all over the countryside, we [egi.e.: native Irish people] barely even see them anymore. It's only tourists—and mostly tourists from other countries, America, Australia—who look at them long enough to feel their weight" (French 63). The dialogic between the two locations is pivotal to understanding the emotional valence of Lexie's death. Her movement from the still-thriving, somewhat refurbished "big house" to the tiny, destroyed one figures her mortality and vulnerability, much like the victims of *An Gorta Mór*.

As a result of Madison's callous betrayal of her friends, it is only within the walls of the dillapidated cottage that Maddox begins to feel genuine sympathy for the passing of her counterpart, despite or perhaps because Madison is yet another victim in its long history of loss: "The cottage had a century and a half of its own stillness stored up, she had taken only an eyeblink; it had already absorbed her and closed over the place where she had been….'Whatever it is you want,' I said softly, into the dark cottage, 'I'm here.' There was a tiny shift in the air around me, subtler than a breath; secretive; pleased" (French 140-141). For Maddox, Madison herself has literally become part of its surroundings when she stands in the cottage and reflects on the notion that, "there were things growing beside me out of the earth where she had bled, a pale clump of bluebells, a tiny sapling that looked like a hawthorn: things made of her" (French 316). This unforeseen, quasi-miraculous renewal is almost parallel to the vision of Yeats's Crazy

Jane in the poem "Crazy Jane on God" who envisions a similarly transformed and enlivened space in the midst of immense personal turmoil and tumultuous national conflict: "Before their eyes a house/That from childhood stood/Uninhabited, ruinous/Suddenly lit up/From door to top/*All things remain in God*" (*The Winding Stair; CPollected Poems* 258-9, ll 13-18).[39]

Maddox's protective view of both the ruin of the cottage and Whitethorn House in light of their shared cycle of decay and renewal—for the roommates' work tirelessly together on breaks and weekends to refurbish and restore their home, despite these acts of vandalism and the ravages of time—not only reveals that there can be no such thing as "no pasts" when the past is always already inflected in the present tense or what I have already described as non-chrononormative "past-presentness," but also that the borders separating Maddox herself from the Madison persona are (perhaps too) easily transgressed:

> [Whitethorn House] looked different, that night. The gray stone of the back was flat and defensive as a castle wall, and the golden glow from the windows didn't feel cozy any more; it had turned defiant, warning, like a small campfire in a savage forest. The moonlight whitened the lawn into a fitful sea, with the house tall and still in the middle, exposed on every side; besieged. (French 197)

Implicit in this chapter-ending passage is that Maddox knowingly and willfully decides to enter the house whatever the consequences, aligning herself with the roommates in their us-against-the-world mentality and in direct opposition to Uncle Simon's rationale of caste-based exclusivity. She chooses to stoke "the small campfire"[40] and cast her fortune as one of "Lexie's lot" of strays, who make up a carefully-collaged "family" by choice in light of their repudiations of their families by birth for various reasons, as indicated in Maddox's prior discussion of the

[39] For more on the significance of Famine spaces and Irish cultural memory, see Chapter 5.

[40] Maddox's response to the aforementioned subtle Yeatsian clarion-call of "What matter, so there is but fire/In you, in me?" would surely be one of supportive action and affirmative identification.

group when she refers to them with an identificatory "we" as opposed to an objective "them" (French 193).

This Her slippage clearly prefigures Maddox's insistence that, "This time I knew them all by heart, their rhythms, their quirks, their inflections, I knew how to fit in with every one; this time I belonged" (French 320), which the *OED Oxford English Dictionary* reminds indicates is a compound of Middle English "*bi-*, *belongen* appears to be an intensive (with BE- *prefix*) of the simple *longen*, common in the same sense from 13th c.: see LONG *v.*2 OHG. has, in same sense, *bilangên*, MDu. *belanghen*, mod.G. and Du. *belangen*, also a n. *belang* 'concern, interest, importance'" ("Belong"). There is a clear association in French's usage to the etymological relationship between *being* and *longing* as well as *longing to be.* It is also important to note Freeman's emphasis on "being long" or "persisting over time" (13). The word further relates to dependence and possession, as in ownership (as in one's belongings), but, I would also argue, as in desire or even spiritual possession. Accordingly, I read Madison herself, with all her different identities, as well as Maddox, who is posing as the "real" Lexie Madison as French's postmodern exploration of how affiliations, identifications, or *be-longing* (or the lack thereof) can trouble one's autonomous subject-position and judgment, as well as revisions of the mythical changeling trope.

As exemplified by the Cleary case, not only infants and children, but also women in transitional states, such as being ill or becoming as new mothers or brides, were in danger of being possessed by the fairies. Infertility, [41] sudden illness, and their attendant horrors for

[41] Hoff and Yeates claim that Bridget Cleary was known in the community for her frequent trips to the fairy *ráth* at Kylenagranagh Hill and these trips, whether they implied infidelity, the practice of pagan belief in fairycraft, or both, were a frequent source of discord between her and her husband. They believe that a little over a month before her death on the fraught date of 1 February 1895, the feast of St. Brigid of Kildare (Bridget Cleary's patron, as her name would obviously suggest) and also the First Day of Spring/Imbolc in the pre-Christian calendar as well as the

"Bridgie" Cleary and her family in 1895,[42] become transposed into the modern contemporary Irish characters' respective pregnancy panics, Maddox's shame at "taking the boat" to England for an abortion after breaking up with her former partner, Rob, or Madison's plan to flee the country with money from the sale of her share of Whitethorn House. All three women, Maddox, Madison, and the real Cleary, (albeit only rumored in the case of the latter, who may have been having an affair,)[43]) have engaged in sexual contact outside the bounds of wedlock and experience acrimonious betrayal and /reprisal by their partners, thus suffering dire and agonizing social, psychological, and physical consequences—fatal woundings in the case of Maddox and Cleary, at the hands of those who swore to love and protect them.

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first anniversary of the death of her mother Bridget Keating Boland, "perhaps she went to the fairy fort to seek the goddess's help in conceiving a child….As her mother's only child, Bridget may have seen herself as he only one responsible for carrying on folk traditions within the family" (163). While I would love to believe the perfect storm of this fated date and purely hypothetical further furtive trips to the ringfort are the impetus which when combined with Bridget's biting tongue and severe illness/fairy possession caused the tension between the couple to finally erupt into her violent demise, Bourke's explanation of Michael Cleary's sleep deprivation from tending a sick Bridget and his exhaustion from walking great distances to fetch the doctor, the priest, and her relatives, combined with his feelings of grief over the death of his father in the midst of this ordeal, his dislike of her family (as shown by his angry outbursts against them during trial), and Bridget's own irritability, scorn, or even terror from the harsh treatment of the so-called "fairy cures" make for a much more compelling rationale for her death, whether she was a fairy, a witch, a secret pagan, a devout Catholic, or a cheating spouse or not.

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[43] Bourke claims Bridget Cleary's affair was with Protestant emergency-man and neighbor William Simpson, while Hoff and Yeates believe she had illicit rendezvous with Jack Dempsey, a local egg dealer who mysteriously committed suicide while Bridget was ill. MacIntyre includes both as Bridget's lovers in his play.

Throughout his writings on Irish legend and folk belief, Yeats[44] points out that there are two dominant theories about those taken "Away" to the Otherworld by the fairies, "Those who are carried away are happy, according to some accounts, having plenty of good living and music and mirth**.** Others say, however, that they are continually longing for their earthly friends" (*Writings on Irish Folklore* 10). Maddox and her theories about Madison consider both perspectives. For Maddox, her life as one of the housemates has an almost- magical, fated charm to it, as if she has been waiting for their mirth, music, and laughter all her days. Through her we discover that "Lexie Madison," however, did not yearn for her various pasts, but instead, her yearning took the form of a dangerous longing for a new future still "Away" in yet another identity, which ultimately led to her demise.

Both women dangerously exchange roles at will in the same way that the fairies supposedly swap bodies, and Maddox realizes in the course of her investigation that "the past was the dark conjoined twin wrapped round th[e] future, steering it, shaping it" (French 280). And when her supervisor, Frank, wants to remove Cassie from the investigation, his metaphor of choice once again returns us to the thematic of border transgression when he accuses her, "You're losing your boundaries" (French 362). Maddox even comes to think of her role as Lexie Madison as a fantasy fulfillment of Madison's own wish for "chang[ing] placessomeone to change places with her" because:

> I wear her face; as I get older, it'll stay her changing mirror, the one glimpse of all the ages she never had. I lived her life for a few strange bright weeks; her blood went into making me what I am, the same way it went to make the bluebells and the hawthorn tree [in the cottage where she died]. But when I had the chance to take that final step over the

[44] Irish mythological and oral traditions surrounding fairy-belief also feature heavily in Yeats's poetry and drama, as well as his mythological writings and the orature collected and adapted by himself and Augusta Gregory, see especially the aforementioned "The Stolen Child" (*CP* 18-19) and *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894), his first professionally-staged play, and "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland" (*The Rose*; *CP* 43-5).

> border, lie down with Daniel among the ivy leaves and the sound of water, let go of my own life with all its scars and all its wreckage and start new, I turned it down. (French 365-366)

Maddox has the opportunity to remain the proverbial changeling child, safely ensconced in Whitethorn House and the bosom of her new friends, to go on pretending to be Lexie Madison indefinitely, but she ultimately eschews this chance at a new life because of her obligation to Madison's ghost, her obligation to explain the woman's death at the hands of those who claimed to care for her, who inadvertently murdered killed her in the midst of a heated argument because they could not bear the treachery that she might sell her joint share of their precious house out from under them. mMadison and Maddox's respective changes and the knowledge both gain as a result comes at a tremendous unpredictable "price…a wildfire shape-changing thing" (Ibid). Daniel March confesses to Madison's murder and attempts to shoot Maddox, being becomes mortally wounded himself in the process, and as a result, all the roommates lose the house as a resultbecause of the arson of the local vandal in their absence while the incident is being sorted at the station.

The destruction of the house, coupled with the interrogation Maddox must endure for shooting March in self-defense, are presented as a stripping away of her Madison persona and a painful re-emergence into her own life:

> They took my badge…it felt like they had shaved my head. They peeled off the bandage and unclipped the mic. They took my gun like evidence, which of course it was, careful latex fingers dropping it into an evidence bag, sealing it, labeling it with neat marker strokes…She swabbed my hands for gunshot residue and I noticed, as if I were watching myself someone else from a long way away, that my hands weren't shaking, they were rock steady, and that a month of Whitethorn House cooking had softened the hollows by my wrist bones. (French 434)

The hermetic, sanitized, rote efficiency of police procedure displayed in the passage as the conscious paring down of all the elements of her undercover identity become a vehicle to

illustrate that the journey back from Lexie Madison to Cassie Maddox is arduous, draining, and literally disembodying; the peeling of the microphone bandage is affectively effectively a shedding of skin. As Bourke reminds us in *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*, "In terms of Irish fairy-narrative, we do well to remember here that the whole Irish tradition of fairies is preoccupied with boundaries, including those of the human body….Young women taken away by the fairies bear in their bodies the marks of their adventures" (106). Maddox, even in her traumatized state, realizes that she has been irrevocably altered by it, and her hands are merely one sign of her utter transformation. Furthermore, the crime scene technician even goes so far as to takes the clothes she was wearing to test them for gunshot residue, and Maddox refers to those items as "the last of Lexie Madison" (French 436).

Cassandra Maddox becomes Lexie Madison in the same way Yeats would put on the masks of Aengus, Oisín, Red O'Hallaran, the mystical spirit of Leo Africanus, among others, and of course, his very own divided narcissistic self in "The Mask," Cassie takes the case "Operation Mirror" at first out of duty and obligation resentful dedication to the lost woman who shared her face, but she eventually learns amidst her own peril the potentially-fatal consequences of assuming, particularly assuming another's identity, just as Lexie Madison did before her.

As when Yeats assumes the proverbial "death mask" in *Last Poems*, "The Circus Animals' Desertion," presents compelling figures of fancy haunt the poet and leave him without any sense of satisfaction and with an intense longing to return to his origins, a fey and lonely heart that manufactured these spectral women. Irigaray's discussion of idolatry of The State offers fitting commentary on the perspective Yeats offers in *Last Poems*, particularly in "The Circus Animals' Desertion":

> For isn't that the way the State begins—with war between men alone? The State—that cold monster that claims to be the people and, over the heads of the herds, hangs a belief in love and the sword of desire. The State speaks of good and evil in a single language and, in that one language, decrees only lies. For there is no common language that speaks the truth. And the State has stolen his language from each individual and then mixed them all up in one death wish. (*Marine Lover* 26)

Ironically, however, despite his numerous and frequent protestations to the contrary across his whole *oeuvre*, it is Yeats who sought to assume the language of the individual peasant, the united proletariat, various Irish mythical heroes, and the State herself which long held sway over his heart. "The Circus Animals' Desertion" traces the arc of Yeats's poetic career but ultimately concludes that these supposedly "masterful images" (ln 33) are but the product of "a mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street" (ln 35). It is the poet who bears the culpability for his own supposed manipulation as well as his endeavor to fashion an Irish national rhetoric that supposedly spoke for all, for believing his own propaganda as gospel.

Yeats receives no peace from his mother country, only vitriol and recrimination for trailing after her "red-rose-bordered hem" ("To Ireland in the Coming Times") that only left him with thornpricks. It and the women he created in service of it must thus bear the brunt of his final *ressentiment.* The retrospective impulse and the repetitive rise and fall of the *ottava rima* of "The Circus Animals' Desertion" become a failed Onananstic exercise and futile search for new inspiration while the poet can only "enumerate old themes" (ln 9) thereby failing to find fulfillment in either lion, woman, or the Lord knows what (ln 8).

Although Yeats's poetic voice may wane with a whine "in the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart," as a murder detective, Cassie lives in that same psychic space all the time as a professional investigator, especially generally surrounded by death, dread, and treachery that are not only rhetorical poetic or political projections but results of the actions actual (albeit fictive)

people, much like Yeats's concerns about his own "dirty slate" in "Man and the Echo" (1939). While Yeats has previously used symbolism to displace violence and avoid his own responsibility even as he claims to "own" it. These are postures of arrogance, and eventually desperation and decrepitude. Maddox is stalked by a classmate, stabbed by a crazed junkie, shot by her own housemate, and yet she continues to regard these individuals with mercy and compassion. Furthermore, prior turmoil and frustration become the fodder necessary for new deductions and better understanding that enable Maddox to give and receive closure on Madison's case both personally and professionally.

Yeats's female figures, however, inevitably remain oppressed, for the poet's resigned and pointedly refuses the concept that there could be any delight in his creations at the conclusion of his corpus and of *Last Poems*. For French, the past is the raw material necessary to generate legitimate solutions as opposed to verbally masturbating to phantasms. Yeats's final mapping of woman onto nation is "that raving slut/Who keeps the till" and the ledger of his debts, lingering amidst debris and desolation (ll 37-38). The slut , who does not speak, although we hear her obliquely in the chattering, nagging repetition of "old" upon a garbage heap of hard consonantal nouns as all crumbles in "The Circus Animals' Desertion". In "Sonnet 55," it is Time that must bear Shakespeare's accusations of "sluttish[ness]", for Yeats it is the State which has with such cruelty and wantonness betrayed him, after he sung the nation's praises and served her government. At the end of his career (and perhaps not coincidentally, his life), Yeats comes to see the error of his ways, what I will call the detriments of the declarative. Earlier in his *oeuvre*, the privileges of youth meant that many questions could be posed and left blissfully unanswered, but when facing his own mortality, later Yeats seeks solace and satisfaction that are not to be found, not even in the mythology he once adamantly embraced and the nationalist

principles it advanced. There is no more escaping to the waters nor the wild.

Yeats may not have invented this image of Ireland as "*an t-seanbhean bhocht*" but he adopted and promulgated it, only to eschew repudiate it at the last, claiming it is she who holds the purse strings, leaving him prostrate, broken and impoverished in every way except verbally. Despair is inertia. The speaker has lost his ladder and his female phantoms have abandoned him. There is no option but stasis. While earlier poems like "The Stolen Child" are awash in youthful nostalgia, yearning backward most fervently, even in "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland" from *The Rose* (1893), clings bitterly but fervently to escapism even as it purports to rebuff it in the final line, "That man found no comfort in the grave" (ln 48). In 1910, the speaker of "The Mask" cannot bear to look at himself or directly at another but strives to look outward and defer with questions, maintaining the material façade of the mask and the metaphorical façade of the (hypothetical) second speaker's professions of ambivalence. There is a thrill to this uncertainty, or as I have described it earlier, an element of play; play that ultimately and only temporarily attempts to gratify the poet himself.

Later Yeats, admittedly "crack-pated" (ln 88) when dreaming in "Nineteen Hundred Nineteen" finds himself in an even greater nightmare of absence and deferral in "Circus," a failing of imagination so staggering he must write a paean to his supposed poetic impotence. In "The Mask" there is still titillation in choice, even greater relish in refusing to choose, as both an aesthetic and an ethical position. Yeats would prefer not. In "Circus," there is no room for play or preference—no delight, however brief, only resignation. French's Cassie Maddox, on the other hand, does not share his approach. It is "The Mask" I chose as the center of my argument not only because French is responding to earlier Yeatsian mythology, the history of Bridget Cleary, and the particular conceits of this specific poem as a result of its fascination with the

mechanics of mimicry, its implicit denial of dialectical art as a revelatory technique to disclose the self, and the consequences of impersonation; she too is invested in questions concerning the limits of narrative art to bear witness and situate or locate the complex nature of the facts about herself and her friends/suspects concealed or divulged during Operation Mirror.

Thus, Whitethorn House, now just a memory, becomes the equivalent of the fairy Otherworld, where Maddox was suspended for a time:

> I could feel the map of Whitethorn House branded on my bones: the shape of the newel post printed in my palm, the curves of Lexie's bedstead down my spine, the slants and turns of the staircase in my feet, my body turned into a shimmering treasure map for a lost island. What Lexie had started, I had finished for her. Between the two of us, we had razed Whitethorn House to rubble and smoking ash. Maybe that was what she had wanted me for, all along. (French 438)

Here the conflation of interior geography and intimate anatomy is complete. The personality of the space is yet again writ large on Maddox's body, but as traces of ephemera, a series of all-too fleeting sensory impressions, a refashioning of the heartbreaking dream from the novel's opening.

This persistent dream illustrates the cost of her return and bears the last vestiges remaining from her liminal alternative life as Lexie Madison. Maddox's private recollection of Whitethorn House, like other fairy lore

> provide[s] fictional characteristics for otherwise anomalous or unknowable places. They deepen the native's knowledge of her physical surroundings, but also thriftily use the gaps in the known environment for the elaboration of an imagined world where all those things that are in Heaven and Earth and yet not dreamt of in rational philosophy may be accommodated. (Bourke, "Virtual Reality" 12)

And equally apropos to a changeling legend, it is fire which serves as the transformative mythical purgative to bring Cassie Maddox back to herself. As Yeats points out, "According to Giraldus Cambrensis, 'fire is the greatest of enemies to every sort of phantom, in so much that

those who have seen apparitions fall into a swoon as soon as they are sensible of the brightness of fire'" (*Writings on IF* 10). Maddox's own image in the mirror serves as the equivalent of a what Yeats describes as "fairy blast" or "*sí-ghaoth*"[45] the permanent, personal mark and reminder of her change, and every breath she takes with the memory of the home borne inside her serves a similar function. Maddox's dream "accommodates" and compensates for a painful reality, keeping the House alive in her heart, resurrecting it from ruin. Although Whitethorn House may be ashes and rubble, its former glory is seared in her memory, its blueprint not effaced but enduringly imprinted, sealed in every aspect of her being.

Yeats insists, "only those who have been or are themselves 'Aaway'—that is, in the world of fairy, a changeling taking their place—can cure those who are 'away'" (*Writings on IF* 228). "Away" in the mythical lexicon here indicates the subject's status as transformed by surviving his or her encounter with and suspension in the fairy Otherworld. This instance of like(ness) curing like(ness) is essentially what Maddox does when she restores the memory of Madison—finally identified as Gracie Corrigan—by assuring Grace's father that his daughter was a good person and "turned out all right in the end…in her own way" (French 458). Mr. Corrigan's assertion that his daughter "wasn't made right for this world" affirms the fact that as a result of her various aliases and guises Gracie/Hazel/Naomi/Alanna/Mags/May Ruth/Lexie lingered forever in the liminal Otherworld of shifting personas and mutable identities, that she could not stay in one place or as one person for too long (French 458). To be sure, "When a mortal woman desires so that her very marrow aches, she is most like the fairies, and they embrace her as kin in *Tír-na-n-Óg*" (White 50).

[45] Literally: "fairy-wind"—the Irish suggests it's more spiritual or metaphorical as in a possessed breath or ill-wind, although Yeats refers to it as a distinctive "tumour" or paralysis from a "fairy stroke" (*Writings on IF* 15).

As Bourke claims in her discussion of the Cleary case, "In fairy-legend we find a sort of vernacular textbook of belonging, a way of teaching about the many boundaries that social life imposes, about the perils of transgressing them, and the necessity of revising them" (106). Maddox is able to explore, transgress, and revise the boundaries of her own identity, allowing the (symbolic?) whitethorn to fulfill its prescribed mythical function by healing her broken heart after her painful break-up with Rob and her secret abortion. It is in direct counter-response to this Corrigan's fey ways in the aftermath of her investigation that Maddox is able to completely doff the Lexie Madison mask, fully re-assume her own identity whatever its present expectations and past limitations, and in that spirit of finally belonging in her own skin, joyfully accept Sam O'Neill's marriage proposal.

French responds to Yeatsian mythology on many levels, but most paramount to to this argument engagement is that is her presented fiction presents as specific a individual as opposed to a Woman, who is flesh and blood as opposed to a national projection and a pathology of oppression, both *In the Woods* and *The Likeness* argue that one cannot in good conscience choose to remain "Away" hidden in the masquerade ball of a life that is not truly his or her own. More than a simplistic argument for bourgeouibourgeoiss individualism, the novels critique the general erasure of women's roles as a whole from the sociopolitical milieu beyond their function as icons of the national tradition and mothers within the domestic sphere. Like Bridget Cleary, Cassandra Maddox bears the weight of her choices not as hypotheticals in her mind but as marks on her body, albeit not fatal wounds. Just as many Irish women before her did, she decides to "take the boat" to England to have an abortion that she would be denied in Ireland. That act is irrevocable, and her time as Lexie Madison provides her with distance but also leads to the

recognition that we must learn to transcend our pasts, changed by our choices in the same way Lexie's blood mingles with the earth to transmute it, to better enable it to grow something new.

For all its whirling gyres, Yeats's corpus often relies on sentiment and suspension, whereas French's novels rely on memory and motion. These are not merely differences endemic to their respective genresa but products of the differing cultural and explicitly gendered positions from which they are writing. I am using the words genre and gender specifically because when they were borrowed into English from French (obviously the language, not the author), which uses the original term interchangeably to describe both sexual and literary types (Schneider). It is my contention that French (the author, not the language) never wants us to forget either of these usages: her mystery has a solution, and it is that answer which provides her heroine with satisfaction, satisfaction not untempered by a longing for the past. But endless backward-looking questions like unending quests lead to paralysis and defeat, lying down all alone in the foul rag-and-bone shop or a crumbling edifice, the "wreck of [one's] body/[s]low decay of a blood,/the testy delirium/[o]r dull decrepitude" of a lonely and "troubled" heart (Yeats, "The Tower" ll 185-188; 2).

Conversely, Maddox's acceptance of Sam demonstrates that only when one abandons the interrogative for the declarative can there be the hope of happiness. It is a mood of awareness of possibility, liberating in its definitiveness. The expression "making a choice" shows how each decision is transformative, constructive, acknowledging awareness of an opportunity. There is powerful, performative agency in such statements enabling Maddox to build her new life grounded solidly in reality with the same authority and agency through which she initially developed the Lexie Madison persona from the unstable ether.

Not irrespective my earlier statements in Chapter 1 about the problematic potentially posed by Molly Bloom's "Yes I will yes," in *Reauthorizing Joyce*, Vicki Mahaffey contends that Molly's long unpunctuated sentences amount to image- and word-weaving that tie her explicitly to Penelope, her mythological foremother. For both semicolonial authors, like Joyce and Yeats, and a postcolonial one, like French, as Slemon suggests, the art of "…imaginative reconstruction [in a historically postcolonial context]…requires the recuperation of lost voices and discarded fragments, those elements pushed to the margins of consciousness by imperialism's centralizing cognitive structures" (16). Disparate thoughts and what T.S. Eliot elsewhere described as "a heap of broken images" (*The Waste Land* I.22), must be carefully woven back together to create a new whole which proudly exhibits the flaws and the damage out of which it iswas borne, which is what Maddox achieves in by picking apart and following the aforementioned "dark thread" within herself.

Contrary to Yeats's lament in "Adam's Curse," that stitching and unstitching has not been naughtnaught, these characters', sensuous and almost ritualistic remembrance of things past is what enables Molly to ecstatically recall Poldy's proposal on Bray dunes as she makes him breakfast at the conclusion of *Ulysses*, and it is likewise what enables Cassie Maddox to see her doppelganger for the first time—also at Bray dunes via a grainy cell phone video taken during the housemates' literary pilgrimage and picnic—cathartically imitate Madison to solve her murder, and assent to Sam O'Neill's proposal as Cassie becomes reacquainted with her own reflection in the mirror. The ghost of Lexie or whatever she would like to be called can at last rest in peace, her body, as Eliot would have it, "breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land…" (*TWL* I.1-2).

Such transformative events and utterances contain just as much potential for pleasure and play, perhaps even more because there is in Cassie's case, authentic dialogue with another, her would-be fiancé, Sam. Though Operation Mirror has ended, just as we were able to investigate that, the case of Cassandra Maddox remains just unresolved enough to pique our interest, to offer the protagonist the occasion for self-analysis and the reader occasion for speculation. Cassie's affirmative to Sam's proposal is an acknowledgment of what has been and an invitation to join her for what has yet to be, not a look backward but ahead. In this instance, a period is merely the beginning of an implied ellipsis that invites another, the Other, whether it be your double or your lover or your reader, to mindfully fill the gaps, address aporia, and continue the tale in one's own imaginative Otherworld.

French imagines that the intimate connection of seeing one's beloved or oneself face-to-face that is always already deferred in Yeats's "The Mask" can ultimately be achieved. For women writing post-Yeats and post-Joyce, the struggles of individual women, as opposed to paradigms representing the Nation or Woman as an archetype, are a means to explore the shifting, polyvalent selves that must be crafted in response to the masculine canonical tradition, the silence and violence (rhetorical and otherwise) it supported and sustained. Historically, even fairy legend itself has a masculinist agenda, for "a female child figures in only 67 of 430 narratives [in the National Folklore Collection of Ireland at UCD]. The reason for the male dominance, may, of course, rest in the higher status widely accorded to male children" (Mac Philib 131). French resists this essentializing gendered history in her feminist reinterpretation of fairy lore, creating in Cassandra Maddox the rare exception of legend, "Most women die when seized by a longing for fairy things; but a few, a very rare few, overcome death by the desire and

thus remain eternal and young among the *sídhe*" (White 50). Maddox herself will remain immortal through the enduring power of the text of *The Likeness*.

Through examination of herself over the course of the novel, Maddox in her own way fulfills what Lacan describes as the goal of the psychoanalytic process: "Psycho-analysis may accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of 'Thou art that,' in which is revealed to him the cipher of his mortal destiny, but it is not in our mere power as practitioners to bring him to that point where the real journey begins" (1290). Perhaps, when French returns to the dream at the novel's end, the laughing image of woman in the mirror is not one of frantic terror or hysterical madness, but one of exuberant possibility, even joyous liberation. For as Irigaray reminds us, "[…]woman is still deep. The fact that she may have served, may still serve, as mirror of every kind does not solve this remainder: extra, deep" (*Marine Lover* 88; ellipsis mine). Cassandra Maddox seeks and finds contentment in this world, not the Otherworld, reassured in the knowledge that her identity, like that of the speaker(s) of "The Mask," can be whatever she desires it to be—and the only person she is beholden to is herself, her very own image in the mirror. By reorienting her perspective on the case and on herself, Cassie realizes there are no maps for the real journey she is just beginning, beyond those etched in the lines of her finally smiling face.

50,000 Shades of Green: The Eros of Topos and the Topos of Eros in Irish Landscape Love Stories

Introduction: "*Bíonn siúlach scéalach," dá bhrí sin: "Beagánín rá is a rá go maith*": "Travelers have tales to tell," thus: "To say little is to say it well"[1]

In this chapter we move from an epistemological understanding of the Otherworld and Ireland as charged gendered political spaces for Yeats in Chapter 3 to understanding them also as charged erotic ones. So, too, our cartographies of intimacy return to the issue of *jouissance*, addressed in Chapters 1 and 2, but also its counterparts linguistic, narrative, and comedic *frisson* with proverbs, nostalgia, and perhaps unexpectedly, stereotypes, as the vehicles thereof. Therefore, I cannot begin a discussion of the role of language and landscape in popular films and novels set in Ireland without explaining the performative function the dialogue to John Ford's

[1] *Seanfhocail* are literally "old words"—figuratively, wise words or proverbs—ie: significant, memorable language. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. The proverbs in this chapter come from a variety of sources, including my own summer spent conversing with teachers, including Éadaoin O Sullivan, Fintan Moore, and Yvonne Ní Fhlatharta; native speakers, such as Kate McNern and her family; and so many other learners in the *Gaeltachtai* of Donegal and Connemara at the immersion programs of Oideas Gael in Gleann Cholm Cille and NUI Galway in An Cheathrú Rua. Thanks especially to Lucas Miller of Haskell University for this first one. Also helpful have been Irish language websites for learners and cultural enthusiasts including *Daltaí na Gaeilge* and its message boards, *Tribe*, *Island Ireland*, the fatefully insightful "Seanfhocal an Lae" of *Labhair Gaeilge*, and three excellent compendiums compiled by Irish writer, Gabriel Rosenstock, *Irish Proverbs in Irish and English, A Treasury of Irish Love Poems, Proverbs, & Triads in Irish and English*, and *The Wasp in the Mug: Unforgettable Irish Proverbs* as well as various *as Gaeilge* collections from nineteenth-century ethnographers and folklorists, when the disciplines were emerging in Ireland as part of the Celtic Revival. But most especially, they have come from my two primary Irish instructors here in the US, who are the reasons I possess anything more than *cúpla focal*: Roslyn Blyn-LaDrew at Penn, who inspired in me an abiding passion for the language, and Patrick Ó Néill here at UNC, a trove of proverbs himself, not to mention a wealth of historical and cultural information with the patience of Job regarding my poor accent, frequently misplaced fadaí, and loose translations. *Ní féidir an seanfhocal a shárú, 'is tá súil agam nach bhfuil sé seo an múin de dreoilín sa bhfarraige!*

The Quiet Man had in my family.[2] For my grandparents whose own grandparents had come over from County Mayo, the idyllic "green world" Ford presents in the film and the language spoken by the inhabitants became a coded shorthand (Dowling 197), an ongoing quotation game that every person in the room viewing the movie could participate in. My grandfather would run a parallel narration to Ward Bond's Fr. Lonergan. It is the first film I remember seeing as a child, and as a result of countless viewings, I can recite long exchanges by heart. Watching the movie was a communal activity; the engaged audience, comparable to a screening of The Rocky Horror Picture Show, would echo all the pivotal phrases with a laugh. It provided a shared script of insider knowledge that could be referred to within the precious and often precocious matrix of our family. The actions of individuals could be compared to characters. Moments of joy and angst could be summarized with a single line, most memorably the tension-relieving adaptation one Thanksgiving: "Is this a dinner or a donnybrook?" Any journey of considerable length could be termed merely "a good stretch of the legs." I was often known to quip to my impatient mother who waited to take me to school that, "I'm no woman to be honked at and come a-running." There was a quotation for nearly every occasion; Rough day? "I'm as fresh as a daisy." The reply, of course: "You look more like a black-eyed susan to me." Since most of us had no more than *cúpla focal,* its words were our *seanfhocail.*

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[2] The close ties between the Innisfree clergymen and their respective congregations frequently transcend and in fact altogether disregard what one would expect to be contentious denominational differences between Roman Catholicism and the Church of Ireland, clearly illustrated in the bonnet plot, the advising of one another's flocks and most notably, during the visit from the Rev. Mr. Playfair's superior, The Bishop, when the mostly Catholic population, priests included, assembles, dissembles, and raucously "cheer[s] like Protestants" to exaggerate support for that faith tradition in the community as well as encouraging and then celebrating the mixed-religious courtship of Sarah Tillane and Red Will Danaher. The close ties between the Playfairs and Lonergan comes from Maurice Walsh's titular short story of the same name, that on which *The Quiet Man* is loosely based later appeared in the collection, *Green Rushes* (1935), and is apparently the result of the anecdote that during the mid-to-late nineteenth century after the Famine period, Fr. Neal Ryan evidently "loaned" his Catholic congregation to his needy Protestant friend, Rev. James Benson Tuttle, in an effort to impress the bishop, which is what occurs with great success in both the collection and the film. Apparently, the two cordial clerics also passed away within weeks of one another, as recounted on and verified by a plaque on "The Pettigo History Trail" in County Donegal.

This iconic film in particular is a source of much cultural and scholarly debate, as any criticism on the film or any Irish or Irish-American person who has ever seen it, willing or unwillingly, at least once or repeatedly can attest. While many native Irish people find the film trite or offensively stereotypical,[3] many Irish-Americans, like the Mulligans, appreciate it, as evidenced by the film's inclusion and preservation in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress and the obligatory annual screenings on television in celebration of St. Patrick's Day. It also bears traces of the absurd, tragicomical, and potentially offensive "stage Irish" of George Bernard Shaw, John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey,[4] particularly relevant as both Barry Fitzgerald and his brother, Arthur Shields, trained at the Abbey Theatre and made notable appearances in O'Casey's plays. Fitzgerald, in particular, not only featured in the stage production and Ford's film adaptation of *The Plough and the Stars*, but he was also previously O'Casey's roommate.[5] From a hermeneutical perspective, *The Quiet Man* clearly and frequently winks at this tradition only to illustrate the profound difference between Ireland in the cultural imaginary of native Irish people versus Ireland in the cultural imaginary of Irish-Americans.

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[3] The view that Hollywood-izing Ireland is generally detrimental, inauthentic, and presents a sort of grossly manipulated bastardization of Irish culture and existence, often tragically so, is the position taken by Belfast playwright Marie Jones's *Stones in His Pockets* (2000) which recounts the arrival of a film production in County Kerry, where it disrupts the rural community and leads the lead actress and production crew to mistreat the local extras, including a teenage boy, Sean Harkin, who drowns himself by placing stones in his pocket as a result of being humiliated and publicly snubbed by the film's American star, Caroline. The chief conceit of the play is that two male actors perform fifteen different male and female roles (symbolized in the set design in the original West End and Broadway productions by a row of various pairs of shoes), through minimal prop and costume changes and mostly through adjustments in staging, posture, manner, voice, and accent, including portraying a septuagenarian whose claim to fame is being the "one of the few surviving extras on The *Quiet Man*," known personally to John Wayne as "wee Mickey" (27) . The scenes in *Stones in His Pockets* in which the current film is being shot also utilize familiar sections of Victor Young's indelible original score from *The Quiet Man.*

[4] As evidenced by rioting at and following the premiere of both Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in January 1907 and O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* in February 1926 at the Abbey, this lead Yeats to disparage the violent and vocal nationalist protestors as a collective "disgrac[e]" who failed to properly acknowledge and appreciate "Irish genius" on both occasions.

[5] For more on the legacy of representations of Ireland throughout global film and television, see the works of Luke Gibbons and Lance Pettitt's *Screening Ireland* (2000). For more on the transition from stage to screen for Irish actors in the golden age of American cinema and continuing today, see Adrian Frazier's *Hollywood Irish* (2011), Steve Brennan's *Emeralds in Tinseltown* (2007), and Ruth Barton's *Acting Irish in Hollywood* (2006).

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha convincingly argues for the stereotype as extant within a desiring economy of Freudian fetishism that struggles to negate, erase, or mask racial, gendered, or ethnic difference, even as such difference is commodified or archetypically foundational to the underpinnings of colonial discursive and ideological systems. It is only through an awareness of stereotypes as representations simultaneously foreign and familiar, deliberately articulated through ambiguity and ambivalence to permit "that 'otherness' which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity. What such a reading reveals are the boundaries of colonial discourse and it enables transgression of these limits from the space of that otherness" (96). Stereotyping then, is not uniform, but both fixed and fluid, thus contradictory and heterogeneous, presenting the subject with "multiple modes of cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous, and perverse, always demanding a specific and strategic accounting of their effects" in terms of racial, gendered, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic expectations and so-called "norms" (96). While Bhabha focuses most closely on the first of these categorizations of differentiation, most relevant to my discussion of Irish stereotypes within this chapter are the latter issues. However, the racialization of Irish alterity continued to play a major role within colonial discourses from the medieval period to discrimination against Irish natives in the British media and negative, even violent sentiment toward Irish-American immigrants during the early twentieth century in the U.S.—including lingering images of alcohol-sodden, slurring, raucous, and bumbling "Paddies"—as well as pivotal religious biases that still play a prevalent part in ongoing tensions in the Republic and Northern Ireland, especially.[6]

[6] See Loomba, Michael De Nie's *The Eternal Paddy* (2004), Jennifer Nugent Duffy's *Who's Your Paddy*? (2013), as well as Roger Scott's "Northern Irish Stereotypes." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1.2 (1978): 261-2.

Gender, ethnicity (particularly Irish versus Irish-American), and belief not only in terms of organized religion, but an understanding of the way stereotypes serve "as a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (95). These constructs mediate between stasis and flux, the expected and the unknowable, enabling them to militate subject-formation both in the realm of the "actual" and the "imaginary" in terms of desire or longing and engaging with the "real" as well as the "mythical" aspects of belonging in a particular location.[7] I will demonstrate how the use of amusing and vivid language that is deliberately playful, defiant, instructive, romantic as well as Romantic,[8] affirms the significance of both the visual and fantastic aspects of place and space, in addition to both the quotidian and the extraordinary dimensions of experience in the "real" and the Otherworld. As such, this chapter will establish a link between Ford's sentimental film that I contend inspired a subgenre of immigrant/tourist pastoral romances set in Ireland in American cinema, which I will term the "Irish Landscape Love Stories," including *The Matchmaker* (1997), starring Janeane Garofalo and David O'Hara; *P.S. I Love You* (2007), starring Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler; and *Leap Year* (2009), starring Amy Adams and Matthew Goode; and one of four separate trilogies of romance novels set in Ireland by Irish-American author, Nora Roberts. The *Gallaghers of Ardmore* novels (1999-2000) and each of the films respectively create fantasy hearths and landscapes manifested through language and the lovers' bodies in order to depict the phenomenon of reverse Irish-American immigration and cultural tourism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. They examine the need to seek or discover one's past or roots, and as a result, future in Ireland, via the outgrowth of new

[7] For more on the implications of (be)longing, see my discussion of Yeats and French in Chapter 3.

[8] In both senses: concerned with love and human emotion, as well as preoccupied by the bucolic as an external expression via pathetic fallacy of the internal states of characters or figures.

relationships and connections to both individuals and places.

These works limn the *eros* of *topos* and the *topos* of *eros*, making both the erotics of place and the embodied place of the erotic integral elements in their narratives. Each invokes the pastoral as a necessary mode to stage the erotic and vice versa. The topographic features of Ireland itself present a semaphore for the sexual desires of its inhabitants; familiar clichés serve as signpost tropes to be accepted, negotiated, and humorously subverted, rather than avoided, offering a map to the expected but nevertheless satisfying happily-ever-after endings. The proverb and the stereotype, then, become modes of engagement that both defy and reinforce norms elevating the every-day into the epic and the clichéd into the cultural touchstone that exploit what Bhabha describes as "dualistic metropolitan debates around realism and the possibilities of rupture" (99). Michaleen Flynn's oft-quoted exclamation, "Homeric!" recognizes that the stakes of *The Quiet Man* are that of a (vision-)quest narrative in which the goal is seeking one's true psychological and physical home-place and thus self-fulfillment through a chosen community, a trope repeated throughout the later works that pay it homage.[9]

It is in terms of the pastoral romance, its stereotypes or conventions, and the proverb that provide the appropriate framework in which to discuss all of these works because they all function as the generic, linguistic, and sociocultural quintessence of the kind of consciously "timeless" or mythic and largely non-chrononormative stories being told in each of the narratives. Nonetheless, they are not without their surprises. Proverbs, whether in English or Irish, serve as the verbal distillation of ethnic insider knowledge, a succinct and pithy way of predicting and depicting behaviors or understanding outcomes that a particular people know

[9] One that is not too far afield from the *aislingí* of Chapter 1, with Mary Kate Danaher appearing as the *spéirbhean* made mortal, whose rightful union with Sean seals his fate in Ireland and enables the two of them, after claiming their respective birthrights, to presumably continue the Thorton legacy.

well; they vary from place to place and person to person. In Irish especially, proverbs are rich with detail and vivid in description related to setting, to custom, which are often slyly related to the wealth of polysemous meanings that are key features of a language that relies heavily on familiar and recursive rhetorical structures from the traditions of its early literature and orature. Likewise, romances have a set plot and predictable outcome but vary the means of achieving it. As Carole Cadwalladr explains in her interview of Roberts which is subtitled, "The Woman Who Re-Wrote The Rules of Romantic Fiction," in *The Guardian*,

> The reason you probably haven't heard of her is that Roberts writes what she refers to cryptically as "the big R". Romance. All genres are scorned by literary types, but none more so than romance. In lit-land, it's lower than crime, lower than horror, lower, even, than sci-fi. But then, it's a genre written by women for women. Unless "a guy writes one and they call it something else. And it gets reviewed and made into a movie," says Roberts.

As Roberts inquires, why is it that when men write romantic fiction it is praised in reviews and produced into major motion pictures, such as David Nicholls's *One Day* (2012) or the *oeuvre* of Nicholas Sparks, but when women write the same material it is largely dismissed in both the popular and academic press?

The work of Roberts herself is certainly popular-with-a-capital-P. According to Cadwalladr,

> There are more than 400m[illion] Nora Roberts novels in print. Last year alone she shifted 10m[illion] books. Thirty-four Nora Roberts titles are sold every minute….[I]n 2007, *Time* magazine chose her as one of only two writers in its 100 most influential people in the world (the other was *Cloud Atlas* author David Mitchell); she has won 19 Rita awards from the Romance Writers of America, the association's highest accolade, as well as being inducted into its hall of fame; and she's spent more than 893 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list – roughly 16 years.

Additionally, the Nielsen Top Ten website reports that she was the #3 bestselling author between January 2001 and January 2011 ("Who Wrote the Top Ten Books of the Last Decade?").

Despite this success, Roberts herself states in this interview that there is "more than a streak of misogyny" in the way romance is viewed and reviewed:

> "All some people see is the big R and dismiss it. But I've made my career on my own terms and that doesn't necessarily suit the likes of the *New York Times* book review.
>
> "They don't see that as legitimate. But it's just so insulting towards millions of people. Why would you apologise for what you read for pleasure? Just think of the illiteracy rate. Every book read for pleasure should be celebrated. And novels that celebrate love, commitment, relationships, making relationships work, why isn't that something to be respected?"

Furthermore, when writers, particularly women writers, illicitly wrote about sex in the Medieval Period, the Renaissance, or the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is now privileged by scholars as scandalous and thus celebrated as art, but when contemporary women consciously explore and engage with the erotic in the form of the novel now, it's termed [read: mere, trashy] "pop lit," and largely deemed unworthy of scholarly inquiry outside of the realm of cultural studies, most recently and commendably Susan Weisser's edited collection, *Woman and Romance: A Reader* (2001), Pamela Regis's landmark, *A Natural History of the Romance* (2003), *The Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (2010-Present), Emily S. Davis's *Rethinking the Romance Genre*: Global *Intimacies in Contemporary Literary and Visual Culture* (2013).[10] Why should the lapse of centuries, which included a sexual revolution and the supposed dawning of an awareness of the import of directly addressing these issues for both men and women, make a difference in our judgments about the value of eros-focused literature and film, whether it is—*Dia linn*[11]—contemporary and "popular" or not? If we can cherish and study the secret Latin

[10] Cf. Jarus's and Read's respective articles on Elizabeth Dacre's "16th Century sext".

[11] My first, favorite, and most frequent exposure to the rich polysemantics of Irish: "God bless us!" but also, "God help us!"—literally "God [be] with us!"—a phrase that is entirely tone and context dependent. It can refer to a sneeze, a blessing, a supplication said with sincerity or with sarcasm. In reference to the sneeze, it is always plural.

palimpsest poem apparently composed by Lady Elizabeth Dacre and pasted into a copy of Chaucer given to her tutor during the sixteenth century, which is now widely considered to be the conceptual precursor of a digital "sext" message (Read; Jarus), we should likewise be able to reconsider the value of contemporary romantic fiction or film, if, as nothing else, a source of harmless enjoyment, at least mild entertainment, and ideally, beautifully-filmed or charmingly-described escape appreciated by millions of people worldwide as part of a continuing tradition of texts written by women (and men) for their pleasure as opposed delimiting and deleterious form of insidious heteronormative oppression.[12]

Essential works such as Jane Tompkins' *Sensational Designs* (1985) and Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) have re-evaluated the import of the figure of the woman reading the popular novel in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America and Britain. I am using these two distinct forms in conjunction with one another because as Tompkins and Armstrong respectively elucidate, sensational fiction permits feeling to become a

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You don't just sanctify the sneezer, you beseech benediction for everyone in the room (some might argue, everyone on Earth or at least in the *Gaeltachtai* of Ireland), lest Heaven forbid you be forgotten and become cursed with his or her sickness. I'm being glib, but invoking the Divine is a way of warding off debilitating illness and disease across cultures, well before it was factually verifiable that your heart stops for a nanosecond when you sneeze. At one time, any sign of disability or weakness, real or imagined, was a matter for genuine and sincere concern for an impoverished nation ravaged by famines as well as influenza and tubercular epidemics: malnourished, overworked, plagued by communicable contagions, whose collective health was an all-too precarious and as such, a zealously protected thing, especially prior to and during the development of modern medicine. See Sarah Marsh, "Consumption, Was It?": The Tuberculosis Epidemic and Joyce's "The Dead"." *New Hibernia Review* 15.1 (2011): 107-122.

[12] For more on this, see especially Regis's delineation of the genre from Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) to the *oeuvre* of Roberts, particularly Regis's manifesto in Chapter 2, which is titled, as one would perhaps expect, "In Defense of the Romance Novel," and Davis, as well as the (relatively) small corpus of criticism published by the *JPRS*. The Romance Writers Association (RWA) has expanded tremendously with the advent of digital publishing and formerly "niche" category markets such as LGBTQI+, paranormal, BDSM, as well as romances with racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, geographically, and chronologically (i.e. "historical" no longer strictly refers almost exclusively the Regency period, not to mention time-travel) diverse protagonists are continuing to emerge. Also of note, romantic films, both comedies and dramas, have grossed roughly $18 trillion at the box office according to industry data aggregated on the site Box Office Mojo. Roberts has almost half a million Facebook followers in addition to subscribers to her monthly email newsletter and readers of her blog, *Fall Into the Story*, as well as founding the Nora Roberts Writing Institute, a series of lectures and workshops for aspiring novelists at Hagerstown Community College near her home in Maryland.

mode of deliberate social critique, while domestic fiction offers a more complex perspective on the ways in which the supposedly-trivial "feminized" scenes and spaces of its time were actually revolutionary from both a cultural and a political perspective. Both grant women agency and influence within the various cultural milieux. This chapter argues that popular romantic fiction and film, perhaps counterintuitively, inherits this matrilineal legacy and by refiguring stereotypes within the context of genre and thereby continuing this necessary work. Just as Tompkins and Armstrong have each claimed in regards to earlier periods, sentimental, domestic, and I would add, in this case, romantic fiction, endeavor to bring attention to the private sphere as a way of validating fictions written for and by women that advocated for macrocosmic social change, justice, or equality by examining the microcosm of the hearth, the homeplace, and the individual relationship. Despite more recent work on "chick lit" and popular romantic comedies, such as Caroline J. Smith's *Cosmopolitan Culture and Chick Lit* (2001), which examines the role of print media in figuring social norms surrounding beauty, dating, and sex in commercial fiction written by and for women in the 1990s, why have feminist scholars unquestioningly accepted the perspective of Tania Modleski's *Loving With a Vengeance* (1982) and the even more influential view of Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984)—aside from the important exceptions noted above— to be the prevailing authority that —as Cadwalladr calls it, "big-R-romance" begins and ends as a repressive tool of patriarchy? Radway and Modleski each conclude that the popular romance genre is ultimately a product of patriarchal culture and oppressive to women as opposed to liberatory and valorizing of desire.

In a debate that ranges and rages hotly from *Slate, The Huffington Post,* and *Salon* to *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York, Los Angeles, and London Review(s) of Books*, numerous authors from Claire Messud to Jennifer Weiner have explored and either defended or

decried the unequal relationship between supposedly "likable" female protagonists in "genre" and supposedly "unsympathetic" ones in contemporary "literary" fictions in terms of reviews, readership, and merits. Bethany Schneider reminds us that "genre" in French was originally borrowed into English as "gender" and borrowed again later in its current iteration to categorize subsets of literature. By explicitly establishing a link between the two "genres" in our understanding, I would argue that Schneider alludes to the way that both are produced by cultural norms of what Judith Butler would call "performative" functions, such as jacket copy, cover image and font, shelf placement, and online tags. Furthermore, the linking of genre with gender has been used to diminish one as somehow inferior to the other, not fairer, but definitely weaker and possibly flightier. The recurring association of romance with Nathaniel Hawthorne's infamous "damned mob" of the "scribbling" sisterhood who theoretically continue to write them remains forever a hindrance, a hindrance that is frequently defined through femininity in the form of what Schneider aptly describes as "genre panic" ("Roundtable on *Fifty Shades of Grey*").

Schneider explains her own novel, *The River of No Return* (2013), as a "a mash-up", which was written under the pseudonym of Bee Ridgway, which is itself a portmanteau of one of her nicknames and a spelling out of her first initial combined with her maternal grandmother's maiden name for a surname. This admixture of a matrilineal background and Schneider's nuanced contextualization of forms demonstrate that the supposedly lesser works of genre present both the author and the reader with the opportunity for mutability, flexibility, and an openness to possibility and "play" (to borrow another deconstructionist term). Thus, genre fiction is not bound by the constraints, or if you will, the corset-strings of fidelity to the unbreakable conventions of supposedly low-brow art nor disabled by the hamstrings of high-brow topics supposedly befitting The Great Work of Literature. In *Ireland's Others* (2001),

Butler Cullingford follows Anthony Easthorpe in calling and employing "a practice of cultural studies that instead of replacing the analysis of the canon with analysis of, say, advertising or soap operas, recognizes what Easthorpe calls 'a necessity to read high and popular [texts] together'...the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture are too porous to be strictly policed" (193), especially now almost fifteen years since that statement with the continually evolving integration of formerly marginalized local cultural practices and digital and social media, including "viral" groundswells of commentary and approaches from scholars, journalists, and the larger public across numerous platforms. This debate has been recently beautifully satirized in Daniel Abraham's "A Private Letter from Genre to Literature", which proclaims:

> Let me be honest, dear, I take comfort in the fact that I make more money than you … My house is larger and warmer, and the people there laugh and weep more loudly. Not all of them are sophisticates. Many of them find comfort and solace in things you consider beneath you. But they are my people, and I love them as they love me. (qtd. A. Flood)

As Abraham cannily recognizes, "literature" always already lays claim to all works that "transcend [genre];" but why not push ourselves to consider the ways in which the conventions of genre are a skeleton framework, while the individual author/filmmaker provides details that fully actualize the work's beating heart, comprised of various veins and arteries of influence, throbbing to its own unique beat?

Thus, the romance novel or romantic dramedy[13] today is not merely a tool for erotic gratification that delimits the subjectivity or expectations of women or men to an obsessive longing for unrealistic, unhealthy, or demeaning heteronormative relationships, as Radway and Modleski claim. But I would insist the forms now serve as a mode of narrative that offers perspective on other's lives and sexual experiences into which the reader, whatever his or her

[13] Portmanteau combining "drama" and "comedy."

gender, is able to project and envision him or herself, not disturbingly as a victim or a rapist, but usually, as a successful, healthy person in a nonviolent relationship begun under specific set of intriguing circumstances, such as, while traveling or living abroad. The romance offers a means of authenticating or querying one's own subjectivity vis-à-vis recognition and discovery, a discourse that does not require one to merely reject or critique the Other, but instead, usually literally, invites us—both characters and readers or viewers— to embrace her or him.

Despite or perhaps because of their tremendous popularity, many feminist and literary scholars have long overlooked or disparaged the worth and pleasures of both popular[14] feminism, by which I mean women's social and personal empowerment apart from an explicit political agenda and the popular romance novel or film To be fair to Modleski and Radway, the conventions of romance writing have expanded and changed significantly they published their now-classic studies. As Cadwalladr asserts in her interview, Roberts herself is held up as a paragon and trailblazer in terms of these generic shifts away from the largely passive victim-women of the Mills & Boon or early Harlequin model:

> Back in the 1980s, when Roberts started writing, the Mills & Boon model still dominated the market. It was a world in which the drinks were strong and the men stronger. Or as she tells it: "He was often a Greek tycoon; she was often orphaned and raised by an aunt. She's on her way to a new job, working for the richest man in the free world. In the airport, she's rushing through with her battered suitcase. She runs into this man and the suitcase falls open, revealing a pitiful wardrobe – it's all neat and well mended but sad. And he calls her a clumsy fool and helps her stuff her clothes back in the suitcase and storms off, and the next day she goes into the offices of the richest man in the free world and who should be there but the man she ran into in the airport?"
>
> Roberts started out writing "category romances" short novels featuring formulaic plots, but over time she stretched and expanded the genre, Americanised it (when she started writing, most romance novels sold in America were by British authors), and ended up

[14] See Van Slooten and her use of "popular feminism" to define narratives centered on accounts of a bold, "liberated," educated, sexually-assertive, and fun female protagonist in cinema and television, such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Ally McBeal*, which were also targeted at that self-same core demographic.

> changing it beyond all recognition. Her heroines are unrecognisable from the old Mills & Boon doormats. They have jobs, often quirky, interesting ones. They're not that bothered about getting married.
>
> And it's this that fellow romance author Meg Cabot, the author of the *Princess Diaries* novels, says is the cornerstone of her success. "Her heroes and heroines are so strong yet so flawed. They have these personal handicaps, and that's something that's made Nora's books so different to many written in the past, because the characters are so relatable."

While one might initially bemoan Cabot's use of the hot-button catch-all "relatable," Roberts's new breed of heroine and the fantasy international-travel thematic, in particular, actually permit a temporary emotional, and imaginative (or in the case of the films, also visual) vacation from the hardships and stresses of women's daily lives, demanding careers, and families. If one can't, for any number of reasons, hop the next flight to Ireland and fall in love, why not at least be able to read or watch a film about it? As Emily S. Davis has suggested, romantic texts and films, "as commodities themselves…also serve as a means by which reading and viewing publics attempt to satisfy their own globalized desires" (17). Moreover, the subgenre of "chick lit" as well as corresponding romantic comedy, drama, and dramedy films have exploded in popularity since the mid-1980s.[15] As Joe Cleary maintains,

> The closing decades of the twentieth century in Ireland [and throughout the work of artists in or engaged with the diaspora, I would add] have witnessed a shift in gravity from what Pierre Bourdieu calls the field of restricted production, where the accumulation of long-term symbolic capital was prized above short-term economic profit, to the field of large scale cultural production directed towards immediate economic gain. (*Outrageous Fortune* 82)

There is an obvious delineation between the consciously esoteric high modernist aesthetic and the prevalence of mass cultural forms, such as the works addressed in this chapter, but it is

[15] More to the point, I would argue that one has not really experienced the full potential of Nora Roberts's work to inspire feminist unity, collectivity, and empowerment across socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds until one has witnessed it read as a boisterous, performative dialogue in a room full of approximately 1,200 cheering women during Freshman Performances at a women's college. A room, I must add, that is filled with the very women who also read, study, and interrogate many of the very same feminist critics who would largely dismiss the entire romance genre based solely on this popularity or its supposedly patriarchal agenda. Thanks to Kim Lunsford, Megan Roberts, and Sophia Wolfenden for beautifully illustrating this point for me.

paramount to note, as Cleary does, that "Modernism was never able to extricate itself from the world of capital, but at least supped it with a long spoon. Today, the spoons are shorter, any sense of real alternatives thinner, and it is this that constitutes the decisive constraint within which both high and popular cultural production in the new Ireland now operates" (*Outrageous Fortune* 84), spooning up and out, to extend this line of thinking, the rhetorical and visual repertoires of global tourism and erotic desire as commodity to great effect, obviously less (at least directly) polemicized than works that came before them.

Furthermore, as Davis suggests, "Rather than dismissing the appropriations of popular generic forms as a calculated attempt to reach a larger global audience via an abandonment of politics…global romances provide crucial lessons for a transnational feminist politics…the instability of the romance makes it an especially malleable tool for representing fluid political, sexual, and racial identities and coalitions in an era of flexible global capitalism" (2). With this in mind, I would, as Luce Irigaray does in another context, reject a fixed and narrow purview of woman, both in body, mind, and spirit, and insist we be open to the limitless potential of her desires and choices: sexually, politically, personally: "woman has sex organs more or less everywhere…the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified…than is commonly imagined" (*This Sex Which is Not One* 28). In an effort to argue against Radway and others' dated negative assessment and the condescending aspersions of numerous other literary and film critics both within and outside of academe and building on the precedent and terms established by Pamela Regis's *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003), we must expand our common imaginings and diversify the geography and sociopolitical economy of our pleasure as critics and readers and viewers, recognizing the scholarly relevance of popular feminism, popular contemporary romantic fiction, "chick lit", and "rom-coms", and that these discourses and their

most recent incarnations suggest that a heteronormative gender dynamic and late capitalism does not always necessarily damage women, but should instead be considered as an option available to them that can in fact provide the fulfillment of an equal and contented partnership rather than the bitterness of silence, the violence of rape or domestic abuse, and the unhappiness of total subjugation to men. As such, I will examine the ways Roberts's novels and these films offer more complex iterations of feminine subjectivity and nuanced developments of conventions, such as themes, imagery, and motifs, within not only within the novel per se as Regis has already done but more broadly conceived for the purposes of this study— the pastoral mode in general, including Yeats, Shakespeare, and site-specific legends from Early Irish orature and literature and how the biogeographic and architectural anthropocene of Ireland is shaped by and contributes to those understandings.

I. "*Castar na Daoine ar a Chéile agus Cabhrú le Castar ar na Cnoic (ná na Sléibhte)*": "The People Meet Each Other and Help the Hills to Meet, (or the Mountains)"

This is an adaptation of a familiar proverb that further illustrates the connection in the Irish language and mindset betwixt the mortal and the topographical. The original proverb reads: "*Castar na daoine ar a chéile, ach ní chastar na cnoic (ná na sléibhte).*"—"The people meet each other, but the hills never meet (nor the mountains)." While admittedly, the original's repetition of hard, consonantal c's and n's is much pithier than my clunky revision, its original use is ironic, emphasizing the contrast between humans who can be together and the isolated, lonely hillsides that can never consort with one another, it is my argument that the Irish connection to the landscape, is so deeply ingrained and profound, so primal, that places and spaces themselves become vital parts, visual emblems and to borrow shamelessly once again

from Homi Bhabha—locations of culture— as well as contributing factors in their social relationships. These locations are made manifest through the love—both amicable and amorous—expressed in them. Furthermore, the characters develop an abiding affection for and connection to the spaces and places themselves, making their travels the most intimate of cartographies. In her discussion of travel and landscape in contemporary Irish poetry,[16] Maryna Romanets contends that poets, and I would add filmmakers and novelists, are

> … navigating incessantly along the channels of Irish psychohistory to this place of origin—the territory set apart and insulated from the rest of space—whose internal consistency allows it to attain the existential status of a world and is instrumental in making it a sight of autoreflexivity. ("Travellers" 35)

All of the spaces permit the requisite opportunity for self-determination, reflection, and discovery such that

> [a]lthough defined as an island, this is rather a non-place, a *heterotopos* that is more an idea about space than any actual place, an elusive spatial continuum and a marker of the desire for 'beyond'. This transient space, unattainable through the imaginable, charted by the routes of multiple voyages captures a convoluted nexus of imagination, ideology, and power. (Ibid)

While Romanets calls a *heterotopos* "a non-place," I would insist on a more literal translation of the Latin prefix—"other" or "different" place to clarify that Ireland is unique, standing both apart from and within the Western and Anglophone traditions. It is both the ür-place and what George Bernard Shaw would call *John Bull's Other Island* (1904)—with my emphasis on the Other. Bhabha insists that, "For [Edward] Said [in *Orientalism*], the copula seems to be the point at which western rationalism preserves the boundaries of sense for itself" (*Location* 102). The use of the copula implies a definitive grammar of being, when in fact colonial processes and discourses are always already undermining that certainty, those simple definitions, equations,

[16] Romanets cites almost an entire generation of Irish poets who share this insular obsession: Ní Dhomhnaill, Heaney, Murphy, Carson, Longley, and Muldoon.

and essences; for instance, Ireland is an island comprised of three main tribal provinces: Leinster, Munster, and Connacht that include twenty-six counties (or historically, four provinces and thirty-two counties, if you count the contested six counties of the Ulster or Northern Ireland); it has been (and in the case of Ulster, continues to be) a colony, a Free State, and a Republic—the site of an imperial occupation that still looms large in Irish cultural memory, as I have argued throughout.[17]

The "Fifth Province" (or what I refer to in this specific context as the "Romantic Otherworld") of philosophical and geopolitical space delineated by the Field Day artists and critics discussed more thoroughly in my introduction is created by the ethical responsibilities of love, specifically *agape*, described by eminent Anglo-Irish apologist, C.S. Lewis, as the highest level of affection man could ever hope to be able to express—a selfless love, a love that is passionately committed to the well-being of The Other. Thus, Éire functions as a form of Foucauldian *heterotopia*,[18] different, and consequently possibly ephemeral or imaginary spaces contained within a supposedly single (or technically double) place(s), delineated and contextualized in different ways by the presence of numerous and multifaceted factions or communities and visitors. Depending on their shifting needs or desires, these sites become loci of verbal and representational play as rich in variation as the figures who inhabit it or them. These sites are frequently aspirational and interrogative assemblages as opposed to strictly realistic concretizations. As the protagonists in these works travel around Ireland, the characters'

[17] Ideal examples of this iconography in addition the numerous texts I cite are the 1939 stained glass window "My Four Green Fields" by Evie Hone, made for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City and currently installed in the ceremonial staircase of the Government Buildings or office of the Irish *Taoiseach* in Dublin and the traditional song of the same name with lyrics borrowed from Yeats's *Kathleen Ní Houlihan*, which prophesies the eventual reunification—after many generations of bloodshed---of the North and the Republic, most notably recorded by Tommy Makem in 1967.

[18] See Foucault's "Of Other Spaces".

movements, excursions, exchanges, and interchanges, identify them as metaphorical islands adrift in a sea of opportunities for further developing and valorizing their own senses of self, swayed by the tides of appetence for particular places and people. Like Yeats before them, these works and figures respectively invoke the 'beyond' of fairy lore, folk practice and superstition, music, and erotic fantasy, yet they do so not in furtherance of the cults of personality or cultural nationalism, but to better commune with the 'beyond' that transcends the individual ego. These engagements (both literal and metaphorical) permit emotional, physical, and psychic union with the Other through these nexuses of adventure, curiosity, and acts of seeking and finding diverse kinds of territory.

Whereas I addressed Yeats's problematic retreat into the mythic Otherworld as a means to separate himself from personal disappointments, political violence, and the privileges of socioeconomic status and gender in Chapter 3, all the works in this chapter endeavor to establish these sentimental "Otherworlds" not solely based on local lore but rather on romantic possibility. The potent combination of *mythos*, *eros,* and *topos* allows characters and readers to suspend their cynicism and more fully negotiate with a "real" world in which they recognize the transformative capability of love: to alter their priorities, change their attitudes, and move them both emotionally and physically. As Cleary observes,

> ...cinematography is construed, in other words, not as an instrument of rational demystification, but rather as a technology of mystification or re-enchantment—one capable of simulating its own 'false' experience of the miraculous. From its inception, and in ways that speculation about a hidden projectionist being the material source of the [Marian] apparition at Knock [in 1879], there is the suggestion that cinema itself has a capacity to function for the masses in a way religion had also done. It too was conceived of as a technology of wonder and rapture... (*Outrageous Fortune* 139).

Desire is the constitutive force that enables them to place themselves on the map, staking both a psychological and geographical claim upon the places and people that are integral to their lives.

This is not a gesture of isolation or compartmentalization but rather a distinctive grounding in community and place-based identification. Plots and relationships develop simultaneously and organically—I am using this adverb literally in the sense of being a result of sharing space in the natural world, of growing out of the land itself.

For all the filmmakers and Roberts, the scenery of Ireland itself is fabulous (in both senses), a sacred repository of their protagonists' hopes and dreams, a country and countryside always already beloved for each green and rolling hillside, each glistening raindrop, each glittering rainbow. From the opening scene, *The Quiet Man*'s Innisfree is as much a fantasy space as the subject of Yeats's famous poem from which the town takes its name, places that the poet and the protagonist each hold in their respective "deep heart's core" ("Lake Isle of Innisfree" ll 12). Sean hears only contradictory, absurd, and particularly Irish directions that fail to deliver him to his destination, filled with obfuscating landmarks and irrelevant personal anecdotes:

> **Porter**: You see that side road there with the long arm?—Don't take that one.
> **Conductor**: Ah, Innisfree, best fishin' in the country. Salmon, and trout as long as your arm! I'd bring you there meself, only I've got to drive the train. *[to Porter]* Did I tell that trout I got three Sundays before last?
> **Sean**: At Innisfree?
> **Conductor**: No, not at all! Not at all! At Ballygar, over the other end of the country.
> **Sean**: All I want is to get to Innisfree.
> **Townswoman**: Me sister's third young one is livin' at Innisfree. She'd be only too happy to show you the road.
> **Sean**: Well, fine!
> **Townswoman**: Oh, no, no, if she was here.

No matter how Sean tries, he cannot get anyone to take him there until leprechaun-esque Michaleen arrives and promptly totters away with his luggage. Desperate and potentially doomed to stasis, Sean must trust in the kindness of strangers and follow an as-yet-unknown path.

In the wake of Ford's classic, the "Irish Landscape Love Story" has likewise also adopted and adapted the use of travel, cultural tourism, and reverse Irish-American immigration as a means of belonging to become a common subgenre of the romantic dramedy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In his discussion of Atlantic and Pacific archipelagic *Postcolonial Tourism* (2011), Anthony Carrigan follows Jennifer Wenzel and Gayatri Spivak in productively addressing the obvious, "Literary texts [or films] are not "ready-made blueprints for action"—a notion that "would assume a transparency so un-literary that it cannot even be dubbed 'realist'" (3), and instead, he employs the aesthetic as comparative locus for the interrelation of economic and sociocultural effects of mass global tourism that extend beyond empirical inquiry and offer modes of sustainable development or even resistance to its at times harsh impact on specific regions. Particularly relevant to my work on Ireland in this chapter is what Carrigan aptly identifies as a constitutive negotiation of "the commoditization of culture on one hand and the indigenization of modernity on the other" (xvi). As such, Ireland and the "borderzones" or points of touristic contact and conjecture that I map as Romantic Otherworlds (Carrigan 10), exist within such a framework that enables, in these instances, the dissolution of barriers between the locals and the tourists that instantiates both personal and socioeconomic growth on both sides. I will demonstrate the ways in which the practice and re-interpretation of traditional lifeways (such as *ceilidhs*, storytelling, wedding feasts, matchmaking, and musical performances) and the construction of language, imagery, and thus subject positions engages with biogeographical place in an endeavor to address the needs of the of tourists and the needs of the hosts. Participation in consumption (as well as being consumed by passion) and meeting demands (in terms of providing goods/services and fulfilling mutual erotic desires), in turn,

lead(s) to adaptable individuals and relationships that mark a pivotal shift from diasporic exploration to communal amelioration.

Furthermore, as Cleary claims, "It might even be argued that this cinematic [and in the case of Roberts, novelistic] construction of fairy-tale Ireland—its landscape still numinous with wonder, its narratives [largely] free of the constraints of realism—represents a low-brow version of those [earlier] forms of magic realism (*real maravilloso*) [i.e. folklore and mythology] nowadays associated with with Latin America and some other 'Third World' cinemas..." (*Outrageous Fortune* 143). It is my contention that this cinematic Ireland in the twenty and twenty-first centuries is not merely delimited by the Jamesonian paradigmatic between the "nostalgia" film or text and the "magic realist" explorations of other global cinemas and literatures, only to observe that these novels and films I discuss (especially following *The Quiet Man),* mediate diasporic encounters through a complex blending of the "magic real" or mythical and predestined (particularly concerning the landscape itself, if not folklore, per se) with a concomitance to navigate a form of "realism" that alternately punctures and elevates those mythemes through the works' function as quests or travelogues. Quests or travelogues that are often instantiated and derived from those same nostalgic fantasies, but nonetheless, fully engage with modern capitalist economies of tourism and the attendant problems and rewards that they can produce for both the locals and the visitors. These works also indulge, perhaps most idealistically and fantastically of all, in forming what Cleary follows Jameson in describing as the *Geimeinschaft* [organic community] not in oppositional contrast (as in Cleary's remarkably nuanced reading of Jim Sheridan's *Into the West*) to the *Gesellschaft* [corporative society] (*Outrageous Fortune 150*), but out of and because of it, even in the case of *The Matchmaker* in which Marcy ultimately repudiates the McGlory campaign. As Butler Cullingford attests, "The

idea that 'high art' [or I would add any art] should remain uncontaminated by money is a Romantic fiction. Regrettably or not, tourism is a fact of Irish life" (*Ireland's Others* 197).

These novels and films do, as Carrigan states with regard to the other archipelagic postcolonial texts and sites he interrogates, present a mode of engagement "from *within* the current capital-driven global paradigm" and recapitulate in increasingly complex and nuanced ways the dynamic and the power differential among "privileged" tourists and many natives who ostensibly depend on them for their livelihoods as publicans, hoteliers, and/or tour guides in terms not simply of "equity" but "equitability" in both financial and marriage contracts (4, 8). While ostensibly questioning the nature of the "authentic" in tourist rhetoric, imagery, and practices, Gerald Smyth, on the other hand, minimizes the complexities of the power differential between tourist and local in his particularly cynical approach concerning the benefits of "heritage" sites, like those featured throughout these films; sustainable development, and the evolution of spatial and personal identifications as imbricated within one another, even as he claims "we're all tourists now" (32-40). Smyth's work also notably significantly precedes more recent periods of socioeconomic struggle and austerity that naturally inflect the "spatial grammar" of the later films I address, specifically Declan O'Callaghan's extraordinary effort to take on the role of chauffeur and tour guide out of necessity to gain an influx of liquid capital from Anna Brady and thereby save his pub in *Leap Year* as a small-scale, under-the-table, back-room-dealing singular but still representative and evocative exemplar of the national Irish mortgage crisis. In essence, destinations facilitate destinies and vice-versa through the contiguities as well as the disjunctures between and within the Ireland of the "cultural imaginary" (often explicitly fantasized and mythologized individually and collectively throughout these works and in tourist materials) and Ireland as a historicized socioeconomically-,

culturally-, ecologically-, and environmentally specific place. By reiterating work of Edward Bruner, Carrigan rightly insists, sites of tourism "are not passive for they are given meaning and are constituted by the narratives that envelop them" and this is why both Carrigan and I respectively emphasize "the mutual entanglement" of cultural practice (both indigenous and touristic) and the environment, in alliance with what Carolyn Cartier asserts as the significance of reading "landscape as a multi-sensory, located subjectivity, including memories about it" (Carrigan 20).

Each of the films I cited earlier share a similar concern with *eros*, self-actualization, and presenting the Irish landscape in the most appealing and desirable way possible through frequent sweeping panoramas that imitate the compelling images that Ford and his cinematographers, Winton C. Hoch and Archie Stout, employ throughout in *The Quiet Man*, for which each of them won an Academy Award. It is my contention that all of these later films, as well as all three of Roberts's novels, revise elements of Ford's famous film and update the reverse immigrant or tourists' respective searches for ardor and identity for the contemporary audience/reader. As Davis argues, "representations of the expansive version of intimacy share a method for approaching the interface between the personal and the systemic, the individual workings of subjectivity and the large-scale economic and political mechanisms associated with the era of globalization" (13), to which I would add the vital dimensions of intersectional conceptions of space, place, and language(s) through not only the genre of the romance but of the romantic travelogue.[19] In all these Irish romantic dramedies on film and *The Gallaghers of Ardmore* Trilogy, (mis-) or (re-) interpreting both language and the nonverbal language of gesture, touch,

[19] For intimacy, see Lauren Berlant, Ann Laura Stoler, and Lisa Lowe, and for more on romance and love in throughout the historical imperial context of Britain and a contemporary postcolonial one in settler colonies of the US and Australia, respectively, see Laura Chrisman and Elizabeth Povinelli.

and gaze, as well as the symbolic language of the landscape of Ireland itself and the erotic landscapes of the lovers' bodies, is a necessary traversal in order for each of the characters to seek out or reclaim their hearts' desires in connubial bliss, often preceded by blistering retorts.

II. "*An Bhfuil Aon Leigheas ar an nGrá Ach Pósadh*?"—"Is There Any Cure for Love But Marriage?/Is the Only Cure for Love Marriage?"—*Nó* "*Ní Féasta go Rósta, 'is Ní Céasta go Pósta*"—Or "There is No Feast Like a Roast, and No Torment Like A Marriage"[20]

The original proverb as I heard it is, "*Níl aon leigheas ar an n-grá ach pósadh*."—"There is no cure for love but marriage/The only cure for love is marriage." The double entendre of this popular wedding toast paves the way for my use of the interrogative, as this section will query both the merits and disadvantages of the marriage mart. Or as Roberts herself inquires,

> "…[W]hat's so bad about a happy ending…?"….."Romance gets disparaged for the happy endings. But all genres have expectations and all genres require narrative resolution. But it's disparaged because it's happy. And if it was important, it would be tragic. Which is bullshit! Look at *Much Ado About Nothing* – everybody is happy!"
>
> You prefer Shakespeare's comedies?
>
> "Yes! And it's a brilliant romantic comedy. It's one of my favourites. And that's not crap. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* isn't crap. There's nothing wrong with being happy."
>
> There isn't. Whatever *The New York Times* book review happens to think.
>
> (qtd. Cadwalladr)

[20] Nó "Ní Féasta go Rósta, 'is Ní Céasta go Pósta"—Or "There is No Feast Like a Roast, and No Torment Like A Marriage."

Using Shakespeare's comedies and romances as a paradigm, Roberts's trilogy and these later films, like *The Quiet Man* before them, embrace (pun intended) as they simultaneously force us to reconsider the virtues of marriage.

British psychologists Susan Quilliam and Juli Slattery respectively claim that romantic fiction, specifically Mills & Boon novels, encourages women to have unrealistic (s)expectations, creating what Slattery calls "a dangerous unbalance" and leading Quilliam to propose that clients "put down the books—and pick up reality" (qtd. A. Flood, "Does What…?"). Quilliam's study was published in *The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Healthcare* in 2011, "a publication one can safely assume has never had anything other than a chastening effect on a reader's carnal appetites" (Ibid), and the backlash from both writers and readers stemming from Alison Flood's coverage in *The Guardian* was swift and unrelenting, including trending of the satirical hashtag #romancekills on Twitter. Quilliam rejects the genre for its pervasive "escapism, perfectionism, and idealisation" and fears that these qualities engender problematic recklessness in the real world but Roberts novels in particular, though not studied by Quilliam, offer a more nuanced depiction of escapism, perfectionism, and idealization.

In fact, Jude Frances Murray, heroine of *Jewels of the Sun*, engages directly with these disconcerting issues. Her move to Ireland is effectively staged as an endeavor to break out of her rut and literally escape her disappointing marriage by putting half a continent and an ocean between herself, her cheating ex-husband, his new wife, and her unsatisfying career in Chicago. It is a carefully calibrated attempt at spontaneity, and it is not without consequence. The whole *Gallaghers of Ardmore* Trilogy gleefully exploits the tension between rational Jude and the mythical world around her. It is not necessarily intended to encourage a belief in the Otherworld per se, but rather, I would insist, to suggest to the reader that romance itself creates Otherworlds

of possibility, as do the acts of reading and writing stories, which—in a meta-narrative moment of acknowledgment and commentary— Jude, like Roberts herself, ultimately pursues as her new career that begins with the admission to her journal: "I *have a deep and nearly crushed-out delight in the fantastic*" (Roberts, *Jewels* 137). The three *Gallaghers of Ardmore* novels offer interlocking mythic tales of love (Carrick and Gwen), historic tales of love (Maude Fitzgerald and John Magee), and contemporary tales of love (the three Gallagher couples) within them in the same way *A Midsummer Night's Dream* intertwines the tales of the mortals, the faeries, and the tragicomic production of *Pyramus and Thisbe* staged by the "mechanicals".

Contra Quilliam's assertion, the "Otherworld" of romance, like the Otherworld proper, is not without limitations and complications, borders and barriers, rules and restrictions, disappointments comingling with desires. Quilliam's study fails to acknowledge that there is room for both the logical and the fantastic in a woman's personal philosophy; for the romance, like the Shakespearean comedy in general, pivots deliberately in the interregnum between the two extremes and thus permits essential emotional catharsis, but not at the expense of one's own values or freedom of choice. Indeed, romances merely present more fantastic and pleasurable options beyond the limits of "reality" that are not without consequences in "reality," when day has dawned, awakening one from the dreamworld and the protagonists have left the primeval forests of longing to return safely of inhibited civilization. Unlike Oberon and Titania or Puck and his motley crew, Carrick and his ghost beloved can cast no spells making asses of men—the men (and women) do so all by themselves and as such, must negotiate the troubles such a transformation inevitably causes in their respective relationships. No pansies intoxicate our lovers. Rather, the titular *Jewels of the Sun* and *Tears of the Moon* become cynosural, integral metonymies of the couple's passion and longing, further reflected in the fiery solar heat and the

cool lunar isolation suggested in the flowers' respective names and blossoming patterns as well as by the magical fairy diamonds and pearls from which Carrick's tale claims they originate.

Just as Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* also reminds us that when we need "fear no more the heat of the sun" (IV.ii.258) as our mortal toil has ended, and we have "come to dust" (IV.ii.263), these floral reminders emblematically endure and serve as tribute marking our graves by those we love, as they do for Fidele/Imogen:

> With fairest flowers
> Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
> I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
> The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
> The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor
> The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
> Out-sweet'ned not thy breath. (IV.ii.219-224)

In this same way, Carrick assures that Gwen's garden continues to bloom and also causes flowers to sprout on Maude's grave. The Gallagher family triumvirate of siblings, Aidan, Shawn, and Darcy, also mimics *Cymbeline's* focus on loyalty, lineage, and family bonds, particularly the rightful reunion of two brothers, Guiderius/Polydore and Arvigarus/Cadwal with their sister, Imogen. Furthermore, the fact that Fidele/Imogen is not dead and resurrects to be united with her beloved is echoed in Lady Gwen whose spirit walks the cottage and the cliffside until she can once again join Carrick when their curse is at last lifted by all the modern lovers. Although neither *Cymbeline* nor the novels of the *Gallaghers of Ardmore Trilogy* is as overtly comic as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which Roberts cites as directly inspirational to her *oeuvre* in the aforementioned interview, she nevertheless explores and exploits the conceits of the Shakespearean pastoral romance providing even more historical weight and a richer literary lineage to the contemporary romance novel beyond the lineage of the novel itself as a popular

form developed by Pam Regis. As far as these particular narratives are concerned, thematically, Wales is not so far from Ireland, after all.

However, the implicit marriages or romantic reunions in each text can only occur once the prospective grooms Posthumus and Aidan have proven themselves worthy through their respective battles, the former with a Roman legion on behalf of Britain (and then nobly offering himself as a Roman captive), and the latter with his beloved on behalf of his marriage "proposal". Jude objects to marrying again, specifically to Aidan's chosen mode of proposal, "I need a wife." The man's not asking; he's demanding, albeit charmingly, all the while trying to seduce her into submission. He does not say he loves her, but instead dangerously assumes it's implied. Such tactics, however seemingly suave, are completely unacceptable to both his intended and the readership. This is the old model of romance that Roberts is clearly rejecting through Jude's initial vehement and violent refusals of Aidan's so-called "proposals" that are in no way proposals, but commands and declarations of inevitability, their world according to him.

This is never more clearly illustrated than when she completes the heroic feat of breaking his much-lauded for being never-before-broken nose in anger, an almost *de rigueur* acknowledgment of fiery Irish tempers and a savvy subversion of what William Dowling describes as *The Quiet Man's* representation of "mock hostilities" and "shaming jests" meant to diffuse anxieties and aggressions between Celtic kinship groups before a marriage in the Early Modern period (204). While one would not typically advocate violence, Jude's comic punch is presented by Roberts as striking a blow for female empowerment. Jude will not tolerate being frequently told by Aidan that they *will* marry, as if no other option is possible; she demands to be loved for herself, not her convenience to a man, and appreciated as an equal agent in their relationship, with as much say in it as he has. Her resistance, which eventually turns violent, is

strategic.[21] The novels of Roberts's Trilogy ultimately promote matrimony, but not out of slavish devotion to either partner's selfish agendas or a subservient deferral to their egos. And rather, to borrow again from Shakespeare, as a "marriage of true minds", unimpeded and unaltered by tempests, quite literally for Trevor Magee and Darcy Gallagher; the ever-fixéd mark of Shawn Gallagher and Mary "Brenna" as childhood friends, and ultimately the star to Aidan Gallagher and Jude Frances Murray's respective wandering barques who choose Ardmore as their shared homeport ("Sonnet 116").

In contrast, *Leap Year*'s Anna Brady, in fact, is so violently set on marriage for marriage's sake to her boyfriend, Jeremy, that she has a special dress made in anticipation of his supposedly impending proposal. Then, during the fitting, she and her friend speculate regarding the hypothetical engagement ring's karat total and repeatedly practice and critique Anna's look of surprise for when Jeremy reveals it. When the expected enormous diamond ring instead turns out to be a pair of enormous diamond *earrings*, Anna is so distraught, misguided, and wedding-fixated that she frantically plans to follow her less-significant-than-she-prefers other of a cardiologist to a medical conference in Dublin. She plots to surprise Jeremy in order to propose to him herself on Leap Day, as per the film's invented Irish tradition. The repeated hitches and glitches in Anna's travels are not the only surprises she receives.

[21] This is comparable to the transition in Disney's animated *Beauty and the Beast* when the Beast proclaims to Belle, "You'll join me for dinner! That's not a request!" and when she initially refuses, he proceeds to demand, "I thought I told you to come down for dinner…I'll break down the door." Belle remains resolute and at the urging of Lumiere, Cogsworth, and Mrs. Potts, the Beast's consternation at her repeated rebuffs grows into roaring rage, "Will you come down to dinner?....It would give me great pleasure if you would join me for dinner….Please?....Fine, then go ahead and starve! If she doesn't eat with me, then she doesn't eat at all." Over time, he makes a consistent effort to win her friendship and woo her by sharing his library, improving his table manners, and delicately feeding tiny birds from his massive paws, leading Mrs. Potts to sing about the tentative progression of their relationship and courtship in the ballad, "There May Be Something There That Wasn't There Before."

In *The Matchmaker*, a hatchet of considerable size would be required to cut through the cynicism of its hardly romantic protagonists, Marcy and Sean. Garafalo, a vocal feminist, imbues Marcy with her ideals, including a dubiousness about agency and commitment in heteronormative relationships. Out of all the characters I discuss, Marcy and Sean are the only ones likely to use such terminology or not overlook the practical complications of a bi-continental romance in a time well before the advent of social media, smartphones, and Skype. They are also rightly concerned about the theoretical implications of such a relationship in response to their differing ideologies. Sean repudiates Marcy's role in McGlory's duplicitous plans for electoral glory, and she responds by shaming him for not telling her about his soon-to-be ex-wife, "It must be so easy to be virtuous when you're stuck dicking around here on Brigadoon." This enrages Sean and he tells her off, "Brigadoon, is that it? Look, this place is as real as anywhere else, and if you haven't realized that, then *fuck you*…". *The Matchmaker* asks a unique question for the genre: how can a love story where both the protagonists actively and repeatedly cast aspersions on romance be compelling and effective? Marcy and Sean believe themselves to be thoroughly induratized against romance, and in fact, such repudiations and protestations provide an excellent foil to make the narrative all the more compelling, for the film delights in proving them wrong.

Marcy and *Leap Year*'s Anna would surely despise one another, so antithetical are their personalities, values, and priorities. Sean and Declan would probably get on like a house on fire, sharing a dry wit and dry whiskey, dubious of both *amour* and American women. As Sean and Marcy protest and refuse, the scenery itself seduces them. Sweeping shots of the Connemara coastline, particularly the charming seaside village of Roundstone, which poses as Baile na Grá, and the Aran Islands contrast with their at times awkward, cerebral coupling. Courtship is most

definitely the wrong word, for there is nothing courteous about it. These are damaged and disparaging souls, who, despite all their express wishes to the contrary, are frequently thrown together by Dermot's machinations (see the section in his home video when he broaches the topic of "The Matchmaker's Ethics" and then sheepishly blinks at the camera in silence) and destiny. Other than those dynamic panoramas of sea and shore, the romantic "Otherworld" of the film perhaps bears a closer relation to harshly-lit reality than soft-focus romantic fantasy, with Sean and his brother frequently beating each other senseless and his dog, Muffy, frequently marking Marcy's luggage, staking a proprietary claim of his own.

Even the characters' wardrobes, from Marcy's dreary uniform of all black and gray to Sean's garish Hawaiian shirts, suggest their conflicting attitudes. Marcy remains the prim pragmatist, while Sean is shown as the disillusioned idealist who as she says, believes "tending bar in a tasteless shirt is a more profound and valid way to spend [his] time" than writing brilliant editorials or exposés on political corruption that do not result in any meaningful change in the status quo. As he ruefully observes, "Things rarely go according to one's youthful, heroic master plans." The entire basis of their fascination with each other is sarcastic banter—the thrill of matching one another quip for quip—as Sean retorts snarkily in turn that, "Maybe [Sen. McGlory's] ancestors were leprechauns—that'd be good, wouldn't it?—get the leprechaun vote" while Marcy rolls her eyes heavenward. She snipes back, "They can't vote—too small, can't reach the ballotbox."

Yet, when the pair stops resisting the connection of acerbic humor and social commitment that a savvy Dermot recognizes exists between them, repulsion turns to attraction, with Sean falling over himself to drunkenly serenade Marcy with an utterly pathetic, off-key rendition of Van Morrison's "Irish Heartbeat" in an impetuous and endearing effort to win her

affections and the singing competition at a famous pub, *Tigh Ruairi*. Marcy, at last relenting, permits herself to be charmed by a man who is in general lacking in the quality and ultimately responds by literally and figuratively falling into bed with him. *The Matchmaker* is a triumph of sincere yet skeptical love, a love that lacks poetry, and individuals who possess neither finesse nor delicacy, and as such, do not require it. In my many years of devoted viewings of numerous romantic comedies as research for this chapter, this is perhaps as close as one could ever hope to get to a comedic romance for cynics without veering into the tragic. Marcy and Sean surmount various (what were for the mid-1990s) ultra-modern complications: his ex-wife, misunderstandings and miscommunications based on career and location, their own nagging insecurities about a passion founded on mutual repugnance for the very idea that genuine passion and earnest compassion can exist between two people, much less themselves. When Marcy, plainly overworked and exhausted at the film's outset mutters at her boss, "How could it be a personal call when I don't have a personal life, *asshole*?" The audience believes her, convinced by everything from her rumpled black clothing to her smudged black eyeliner and her unkempt black hair.

Because the couple succumbs to their emotions unwillingly, there is pleasure in their doubt, in just how unpleasant and unexpected the experience is for the two of them. They never fail in their unflinching honesty, even to the point of brutally accusing one another of compromising or abandoning their own cherished ethical standards. This is never more evident than when Sean shames Marcy for participating in the McGlory campaign's schemes to manufacture some Irish relatives for a video promotion by conniving with Dermot and some other townsfolk to create a sardonically abject display of Irish poverty worthy of *An Béal Bocht/The Poor Mouth*. Their "family" gathering includes a small farmyard in the cottage

kitchen and an elderly "McGlory cousin"—dressed in a jacket, vest, jumper, and longjohns—who finds his false teeth in the antediluvian "shit-bucket" and puts them back in his mouth as he offers the senator a cup of tea. Next, the "cousin" tries to vehemently seize the senator's belt to beat the elderly man's "daughter" for being a slattern, a stunt so spectacularly disturbing, horrendous, and hilarious that Marcy almost gets fired.

All the while, like Dermot, the viewer is better able to acknowledge what Marcy and Sean desperately hope to ignore: the yearning Irish heartbeats, the shared pulse of both place and person, which inexorably draw them together beneath their brittle exteriors and amidst their sardonic retorts. She confesses, "I…I…I long to fax someone," and he replies, "I have a fax." Marcy's gasp of delight, "You do!" combined with her earlier yen for *The New York Times* represent the apogee of the film's approach to swooning sweet-nothings. Is there any mode of communication less sexy than sending a fax? Nevertheless, Sean's fax machine and Dermot's matchmaking video, as well as Holly's continual replaying of Gerry's voicemail greeting in *P.S. I Love You*, and Trevor Magee's magical email in *Heart of the Sea* that I address below are prescient forerunners or early exemplars of what Davis characterizes as the "emergence of global intimacies in an electronic age" through more recent digital technologies, such as social networking culture (162), with equally significant—albeit with less instantaneity regarding their outcomes. These media not only facilitate the crossing of the obvious borders of geographical proximity, but also the borders between life and death in Holly's case, and the quotidian world and the Otherworld throughout *The Gallaghers of Ardmore* Trilogy. For, as Dermot has wisely pointed out to Marcy earlier in the film, "Sometimes, you get two lonely people together, and it's like they've known each other all their lives." These modes serve as a way of resistance to the development of a hierarchy that privileges certain forms of connection or communication over

others, and instead enable us to consider "the ways in which these forms might serve to reinforce and amplify one another" (Davis 171), much like a necessarily intertwined understanding of—to borrow from Schneider—the "mashed-up" relations among "literary" and "popular" genres displayed throughout these works. As Dermot senses, Marcy and Sean want to be known despite all their claims of knowingness, all their airs of aloof superiority and false self-sufficiency. Sean must chase Marcy across the Atlantic back to Boston lest the cord of caustic communion between them is snapped and they take to bleeding inwardly for each other.

As a result of their denigrations of love, their defensiveness, their deflections and denials of loneliness, we are able to see all the more clearly how kindred they are and how each pines desperately for the other. It is a romance for the recalcitrant and obstinate non-believer. We rejoice when Sean once again awfully sings out Van Morrison over a microphone to a despondent Marcy, who has reclaimed her principles by renouncing the campaign's manipulations of the electorate and resigned as a consequence. It is precisely because she has realized the truth of Sean's earlier statement, "Sometimes, it's not only easier to walk away from something, it's also the right thing to do. Sometimes, the easy way out is the right way out, yeah?" We see the pair at last a little less weary, for as the proverb tells us, *"Giorraíonn beirt bóthar*." –"Two shorten the road." There is hope in every discordant note, for now two hearts beat as one.

After the tragic death from a brain tumor of her young husband, Gerry, Holly Kennedy is paralyzed by her grief in *P.S. I Love You* and refuses to clean her apartment, allowing the dishes to pile up and spending her days in Gerry's old clothes singing aloud at full off-key voice all alone with old Judy Garland movies as her only companions, until her family and friends intervene on her birthday. Holly's mother refers to her as "Miss Haversham [sic]", who was

technically not a widow (having been jilted at the altar) but a remarkably prolific and bitter mourner nonetheless. The comparison also suggests the mordantly self-involved and extravagant nature of Holly's grief. The young widow is terrified that she can have no meaningful life without her beloved; the very idea of continuing life as she knew it, even necessities such as bathing, grooming, cleaning, and working, much less finding pleasure in such mundanities, is unfathomable. Holly squirrels herself away with her delusions of Gerry's ghost. Because the pain of Gerry's loss is so enormous, she cannot bear to see or speak to other people, most especially those she loves, and consequently be forced to acknowledge its reality.

This is why the expression of condolences in Irish, which Gerry would know well, is so apt, so keen for its double meaning. When someone dies you would say, "*Tá brón orm.*"—"I'm sorry." But the mourner can use it too, "*Tá brón orm*."—literally "Sorrow is upon me."—"I'm sad." It is only with the arrival of surprise gifts and letters from beyond the grave, which serve as the equivalent of messages in a bottle, appearing to an individual who is otherwise completely isolated on an island of desperation, distress, despair, and denial. Gerry's messages offer Holly a lifeboat cobbled together unexpectedly out of cake, lamps, aborted singing telegrams, audio tapes, and paper, especially the airline ticket to Ireland, all of which provide her with succor (both physical and spiritual), light in terrible darkness (both actual and metaphorical), the ability to laugh at herself, the voice of her beloved filled with hope, pride, and joy. Most importantly, these gifts from Gerry offer Holly direction in every sense of the word, and ultimately, a larger purpose: finding herself after her beloved is gone. With the mystery of Gerry's letters to pique her interest, time mercifully passes and this combined with the various adventurous tasks he plans for her, helps Holly to heal.

III. "*Is Fearr an Scéalaí an Aimsir*.": The Power of Narrative, Myth, and Place[22]

While the role of timing, pacing, and orality has virtually been ignored by critics of *The Quiet Man*, my argument about its import to the film in particular and the pastoral popular romance in general coincides neatly with a film that begins as an oral performance: "Well, then…ahem…now, I'll begin at the beginnin'" (Nugent 2). Fr. Lonergan inserts himself as narrator throughout to focus our attention on the little details (the perpetually late train to Castletown, the fact that Sean and Mary Kate are married in "the same little chapel where [he] gave them their baptism," his description of Mrs. Playfair's bicycle as a "Juggernaut[23]", inter al.) that are peculiar and unique to his version of events, to remind us that the story is being spun out at his own pace, in his own good time. Though it is Michaleen Oge Flynn who (in)famously describes Sean Thornton's actions as "Homeric," Fr. Lonergan's narration reaches back to the songs of Homer and the Irish tradition of wandering bards and *scéalaithe* or storytellers. From the outset, we are entirely dependent on the priest to move seamlessly through the stages of Sean's life in Innisfree.

Such an auspicious attention to the act of telling signals to the audience that we are in a carefully constructed story world, a pastoral romance, a modern Irish myth. As William C. Dowling suggests, "John Ford saw in 'Ireland' something like the imaginative resource that Yeats found in Irish myth—'a symbolic language,' as Yeats himself once puts it, 'reaching far back into the past' " (191). As Bhabha and Said claim, there are archetypal narratives or

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[22] "Time is the best storyteller."

[23] The *OED* informs us that the Juggernaut is from: "*Hindu Myth.* A title of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu; e*spec.*, the uncouth idol of this deity at Puri in Orissa, annually dragged in procession on an enormous car, under the wheels of which many devotees are said to have formerly thrown themselves to be crushed. This ritual is cited as particularly barbaric elsewhere (Cf. *Jane Eyre,* Vol. I, Chp. 7) and ties Mrs. Playfair's seemingly innocent bicycle rather ironically but still in the film's "hybrid" spirit to another former British colony, India.

"coordinates of knowledge" that exist within discursive systems, colonialism in general for the former, and Orientalism in particular for the latter, and I would extend this to the stereotypes or conventions of specific genres, i.e. the pastoral romance:

> Altogether an internally structured archive is built up from the literature that belongs to these experiences [of colonial or cross-cultural contact]. Out of this comes a restricted number of typical encapsulations: the journey, the history, the fable, the stereotype, the polemical confrontation. These are the lenses through which [the Irish Landscape Love Story] is experienced, and they shape the language[s], perception, and form of the encounter between East and West [or I would add, rationalism and fantasy, specific Irish or Irish-American individuals or mortals and the Good People]…[As a result]…a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to [have new experiences or] see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. (Said, qtd. Bhabha, *Location* 104; insertions mine)

When removed from the racialized and colonizer/colonized double-bind of blind or overdetermined double-vision, Bhabha and Said's nuanced taxonomy further offers an interesting engagement not only with questions of form but also the ideological expectations of viewers and readers exposed to those forms. For Ford, Sean's mother's stories and his dreamlike memories of Ireland, serve as sufficient myth for *The Quiet Man*. In *Ireland: Towards A Sense of Place,* Dolores Dooley describes her family's sense of Irish-American identity by recounting a sociocultural geography:

> My story begins on the South Side of Chicago where I grew up with one certain conviction: I was Irish. A third-generation Irish father never told me there was any difference between 'American' Irish and 'native' Irish. As far as he was concerned, we were a thoroughbred transplant from Inishderg and it was only by accident of opportunity that we were living in Chicago. (qtd. Lee 47)

The richness of the history of Ireland within many of its immigrant communities indicates the strong focus on their ethnic identity and the significance of cultural memory and ancestral bonds.

These are just the type of connections that spur many of our respective protagonists to come to Ireland, even Marcy, although she is doing so not for herself, but on behalf of the

McGlory campaign's efforts to fully establish their candidate's authenticity to the heavily Irish populace of Boston by "following [his] destiny" to Ireland—although McGlory's heritage is ultimately proven false, just the idea of it, in conjunction with a convenient engagement to Sean's ex-wife Moira *Kennedy*—surname of the preferred patron political saints of Massachusetts—proves to be enough to win re-election. For Roberts and later filmmakers, this particularly Irish-American focus on memory, ancestry, and personal history is combined with an interest in mythology as well as folk belief and practice, to become key elements of their respective narratives. While Bhabha contends that "the scene of [site- or sexually-specific] fetishism is also the scene of the reactivation and repetition of primal fantasy—the subject's desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division, for the subject must be gendered to be engendered, to be spoken" (*Location* 107; insertions mine), these protagonists are able to hold contradictory beliefs without irrevocably "splitt[ing]" and ultimately damaging either their sense of self or their sense of place (*Location* 106). Gendering and engendering occur through shared consent and mutual vulnerability, both physical and emotional acts of (re)union.

In particular, this is achieved because, unlike the work of Yeats and French in Chapter 3, what I previously characterized as "moments of rupture" are not inherently problematic, for these pastoral romances are not purporting to be realist narratives told by fully-formed, perfectly whole subjects. The "moments of rupture," disjunction, and albeit mild intercultural conflict are in fact, are what help these protagonists in their respective processes of achieving a unified subjectivity through conscious engagement with the Other and the unknown. They see aporia and uncertainty within their narratives as fecund opportunities for actualization and self-determination explicitly as a result of the fact that these narratives are almost completely devoid of a politicized religious, linguistic, or colonial context, other than *The Quiet Man*'s token British

regimental "General" who sits all day in Pat Cohen's pub in a tweed jacket with a pipe and a (news)paper, nary speaking a word or ever so much as raising his gaze from the headlines.

Indeed, legend with little to no basis in historical context becomes Anna Brady's motivation in *Leap Year*, thanks to her father's semi-drunken tale of Grandma Jane's Leap Day proposal to Grandpa Tom, presumably based on an apocryphal story of St. Brigid and St. Patrick striking a deal for temporary gender parity and balance of power regarding popping the question as an acknowledgment of the parity and balance within the Gregorian calendar on 29 February. Anna needs this particular folkloric framework of feminine agency to justify her journey to Ireland. It provides an occasion to wrest control of her destiny back from Jeremy, who unwittingly spoiled her dream of a perfect proposal, transforming her much-practiced face of faux surprise and delight into one of genuine shock and dissatisfaction. She uses the power of this auspicious date to save her hypothetical wedding date. The film ultimately swaps this specious mythology for a version of the Fenian tale, *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*/*The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne*, trading a clichéd notion of limited female power that can only occur once every fated four years on one propitious day for an enduring narrative of mutual passion, and fitfully swapping Jeremy, representative of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and the establishment, for Declan, representative of reluctant rebel Diarmaid.

In *The Gallaghers of Ardmore* Trilogy, Roberts not only triples *The Quiet Man*'s traditional and passionate courtship by writing about three separate modern couples, but she further incorporates the history of two prior failed couplings involving Faerie Hill Cottage's former inhabitants, Maude, and her suitor, Johnny Magee, who perished in The Great War, and most importantly, between Gwen and her lover, Carrick, Prince of the Fairies. This imbues her novels with an element lacking in *The Quiet Man's* narrative of romance and redemption; the

inclusion of a particular cultural myth. As Jude herself says, her interest and mine too lies in "[t]he fantasy elements, of course, but also the social, cultural, and sexual aspects of traditional myths. Their use in tradition as entertainment, as parables, as warnings, in romance" (Roberts, *Jewels* 64). The novels' tragic romantic legend of Roberts's own invention between a mortal and one of the Good People results in a curse by which the three modern couples, which include five people who are somehow, vaguely and extremely distant cousins of "Old Maude" and one man who is a descendant of John Magee's brother, must all come together at the fated cottage to facilitate the reunion of the mournful ghost of Gwen with her bombastic and scheming immortal paramour, Carrick.

The repetition and reiteration of narrative structures from legend as well as the use of Roberts's own legend are genre markers just as much as the Trilogy's happy endings. The novels spring forth from the legacy of a tragic piece of orature only to have its curses reversed by love. These gestures situate the Gallagher trilogy in particular within a specific tradition, both folkloric and generic, a recognition as much as an astute subversion of their key tropes. The supernatural and mythical intervene in the contemporary relationships through dreams, visions, appearances, and the pathetic fallacy of a dramatic thunderstorm in furtherance of breaking this curse. Within the walls of Maude's cottage, and on Tower Hill where she herself is buried with a tombstone reading "Wise Woman," in incidents not unlike the visions of the *aislingí* I discuss in Chapter 1, ghosts walk, weep, and speak, and faerie princes make glamorous shows of their power with lightning strikes, prophetic visitations, and the pouring of jewels at the feet of unsuspecting mortals. Roberts accesses the same maudlin immigrant nostalgia for a myth of origins that Ford emphasizes in *The Quiet Man* and reinterprets it in terms of (invented) local folklore. Her modern heroines are also completely indebted to Maureen O'Hara's unforgettable

portrayal of the feisty colleen,[24] whose blazing passions are matched by their tempers and indomitable spirits.

P.S. I Love You, too, shares *The Quiet Man's* concerns with mixed Irish-American and native Irish marriages and its need to seek one's origins (in this case, the start of a defining relationship) as a means of self-discovery. Ireland is where Holly and Gerry Kennedy's relationship began as they met while she was studying abroad. His postmortem plan to send her back there allows her to finally, properly mourn him, in contrast to her conversations with his imagined ghost throughout the film. In doing so, her journey also provides the audience with more of their personal mythology, the pivotal moments in their whirlwind courtship. Holly's not-so-merry widow's tour of Wicklow not only showcases its breathtaking vistas to great advantage, but also offers her the advantage of choosing daring new experiences and making fresh memories with her best girlfriends over dangerous and debilitating fantasy, which as I previously noted, involves hiding away in her filthy apartment day and night, belting out Judy Garland at the top of her lungs, and talking away to Gerry's ghost, or wishing hopelessly that her friend Daniel was her dear, deceased but not-quite-departed husband.

In visiting Gerry's parents and meeting his friends, revisiting their special places, while also venturing out with her own friends, Holly is at last able cope with the fact that Gerry is genuinely dead. Although she can cherish his memory in her heart, she can also forge ahead into

[24] Not coincidentally, Roberts's first publication was *Irish Thoroughbred* (1981) about an Irish émigré mail-order bride and an American business tycoon, so Ireland remains a major source of inspiration throughout her work. She also has another trilogy, the *Born In…* series set in County Clare, several other Irish-themed stand-alone titles, and a new Irish trilogy dealing with "magick" called *The Cousins O'Dwyer Trilogy*, the first book of which appeared in October 2013, the second in March 2014, and the final in October 2014, works set in Cong and other locations in County Mayo, the result of a research trip and vacation, during which Roberts met Maureen O'Hara for the first time at an event commemorating *The Quiet Man* at Ashford Castle, now a world-renowned luxury hotel, which, alongside its numerous local amenities and attractions, features prominently the most recent novels ("Ireland: Part 15" Travelogue https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=192936000774393).

the unknown without him. As she tells her mother after receiving Gerry's last letter back home in America, "I can't feel him anymore." Here, too, another proverb applies, "*An rud a ghoilleas ar an gcroí caithfidh an t-súil é a shileas*."—literally, "The eye must drain what pains the heart." It is only through crying for the first time since Gerry's death in front of her mother, her final release of the weight of the tremendous grief she has borne throughout the film, that Holly can at last come to terms with her staggering loss and move forward on her own.

The Matchmaker, meanwhile, critiques the sentimental longing for one's origins by demonstrating that Marcy's employer, Sen. John McGlory is not part of some noble Irish clan, but is in fact, as his father reveals at the end of the film, the product of American ingenuity and opportunism via a Hungarian surname transposed at Ellis Island. The Boston politician's ersatz Irish ancestry, which he ultimately achieves by association in marrying Sean Kelly's ex-wife, Moira *Kennedy*, hallowed surname of the (in)famous political dynasty. Sen. McGlory and Moira as well as Sean and Marcy offer competing visions of mixed Irish and Irish-American partnerships, one of contrived convenience and one of reluctant romance. The film hinges on the idea that Sen. McGlory is about as authentically Irish-American as a box of Lucky Charms, the keen-eyed viewer will recognize that the supposedly-Irish flags adorning his limousine are a gaffe, they actually represent the Ivory Coast ("*The Matchmaker:* Goofs" IMDB).

False tribal affiliations are rejected in favor of authentic ideological ones when Marcy discovers the deception and, after the incident with the fake McGlorys, chooses to resign rather than participate in more duplicitous political spin. Homelands of the heart are more significant than those of blood, as long as one is not using the construct to manipulate the voting public. Couples trump cabals, as demonstrated by the folk wisdom and teasing insults of Dermot and his competitor, Millie O'Dowd. Like politics, matchmaking, is also an endeavor to manipulate

variables of individual preference for a desired (and in the case of the latter, desirous) outcome. For Dermot and Millie, it is done with the best of intentions: granting others the happiness of true love, rather than seeking to sate one's own lust for material gain or power. Here it becomes necessary to make a clear distinction between these interrelated concepts: *eros* and *agape*, or desire versus love. Of the former St. Paul observes in Chapter 7 of *1 Corinthians*, "It is better to marry than to burn with passion," while in later of the latter in Chapter 13, read as the scripture of choice during Christian wedding ceremonies the world over, he clearly promotes love as the "greatest" of spiritual gifts, that exceeds and selflessly endures all things, permitting one to at last be fully known by the Other (*1 Corinthians* 7: 9; 13:1-13).

In the titular matchmaker's death scene, we see Dermot's cote of turtledoves, aforementioned avian emblems of the bonds of such fidelity, which he faithfully tends. Then, as the camera pans around the room to mimic his final gaze, we see that the walls of his wee cottage are bedecked by the wedding portraits of the many other pairs he's created. Dermot dies secure in the love he has helped to nurture with intercontinental aspirations of continuing to spread that love further still when he exclaims to the camera with a wink, "Come on, Marcy! Let's matchmake America! I'll be waiting for your call." It is Marcy herself, with no family connections to speak of, who has become part of the community of Baile na Grá, and when she is reunited with Sean in Boston, they serve as the final word on the lingering efficacy of his enterprise.

IV. "*Ar Scáth a Chéile a Mhaireas na Daoine*": "People Live in One Another's Shelter"[25]

The function of *The Quiet Man's* landscape of Ireland as a recuperative symbolic language enables and supports various moments of linguistic play and interplay within its dialogue. Although Dowling objects to the use of postcolonial theory as an ahistorical and taxonomically burdensome means to interpret *The Quiet Man*, I want to reiterate here that Homi Bhabha's theorizing of the post-colonial identity as "hybrid" is key to understanding the interaction between Sean Thornton and Mary Kate Danaher. As I established in my reading of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill in Chapter 2, Bhabha maintains that postcolonial discourse is always already attempting to mediate between "native" (in this case, Irish) and "imposed" (English) languages. It is a mutable rhetoric that borrows, "mimics," amalgamates, toys with, and thereby subverts the two options, effectively emerging from a "Third Space" or as I have called it elsewhere in this chapter, a romantic "Otherworld".

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I argue that the relationship between Mary Kate Danaher, a bilingual Irish woman, and Sean Thornton, an Irish-born English speaker, necessitates the development of an intimate Hiberno-English "Third Space" or in Carrigan's terms a "borderzone" where the two speak a distinctive *patois* of their own that enables them to effectively communicate with each other, which is facilitated by the frequent interventions of the people of Innisfree on their behalf in furtherance of their romance. Such a claim is supported by the fact that the first time Sean spies Mary Kate in a nearby field while she herds sheep, he turns to Michaleen Flynn and remarks, "Is that real? She couldn't be." Michaleen replies, "'Tis only a mirage brought on by your terrible thirst," and urges Napoleon the horse in the direction of Cohen's pub. The land provides a perceptual panacea. Mary Kate emerges from the landscape

[25] *Nó "Ní Heaspa do Díth Carad*"—or "There is No Need Like the Lack of a Friend."

not as the mere chimera of male daydream, but a flesh and blood woman who bridges the gap between fantasy and reality, showing the permeable border between the two in these and the subsequent works. "Is that real?" Sean asks Michaleen, before declaring, "She couldn't be." But indeed Mary Kate is. Miss Danaher is no *dea ex machina spéirbhean* or mere "mirage brought on by your terrible thirst," unless Flynn was referring to Thornton's feeling sexually rather than physically parched. The landscape, the hearth space, and the community further contribute to the development of the couple's real-life marital *patois* and thus become integral elements in the later films and novels that consciously re-imagine the paradigms established by Ford in *The Quiet Man.*

For example, both Inisfree's White o'Morn and Ardmore's Faerie Hill Cottage are havens, idylls, to the travel-weary and lost visitors who arrive on their thresholds. White o'Morn develops into the visual representation of Sean's hard-won peace that Yeats figures in the burgeoning, loose iambic syncopation between hexameter-tetrameter alteration in the closing lines of the second quatrain in "The Lake Isle of Innisfree":

> And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
> Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
> There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
> And evening full of the linnet's wings. (ll 5-8)

The staccato rhythm of the stanza's last line prefigures the often abrupt nature of Sean's journey to Innisfree, first presumably by boat or plane, then train, and finally, jostling in Michaleen's cart. The meter implies the bounce of motion, and the full rhymes "slow" and "glow" echo the earlier and later stanza's repetition of "go" (ll 1, 9). The considerable overlap between the film's visuals and the poem's images is clearly intentional on Ford's part. What Butler Cullingford characterizes as the "violence to topography" in *The Quiet Man* as Ford "juxtaposes picturesque

images of the village of Cong, the mountains of Connemara, and the beaches near Clifden as if these widely scattered places were all in easy walking distance of each other" (*Ireland's Others* 200), but this bricolage effect is precisely the point of the film's pastoral mythology that is derived from Yeats's own "Innisfree" and its use as cathartic fantasy space. What Freeman describes as "a *dialectics* of feeling" enables the reader and the viewer in these works and cinematic or story-worlds, to "feel through and with representational, technological, and social forms whose histories are uneven and overlapping" (127), and to which, I would add, in many cases, inherently bound to the fantastic, mythic, or ostensibly ahistorical and ageographical. He models the frequent exterior shots of White o'Morn in keeping with the paradisiacal setting Yeats presents: "the veil of morning" falls away as the Playfairs come to call. Soft afternoons and evenings echo with cricket and birdsong and transition into big, tempestuous buffetings that keep the branches on the trees rustling, as well as Mary Kate's hair and skirts wildly billowing—followed by quiet, moonlit nights. The walls of the cottage are presumably also "of clay and wattles made," according to common practice during the nineteenth century in which White o'Morn was built (ll 2). Although Sean keeps no hives and doesn't live alone indefinitely, the foundations of Ford's depiction of the Innisfree cottage are constructed based on savvy location-scouting that palpably replicates the Yeatsian fantasy space, which is both tangible and metaphysical or "another word for heaven" to Sean—and presumably would be to the poet too, though it's located in Mayo, not Yeats's beloved Sligo.[26] Thornton's impeccable maintenance of and sentimental attachment and the "wee humble cottage" where he was born and to its curtilage, for which he paid the outrageous sum (particularly at the time) of a thousand pounds sterling and thus must suffer the wrath of his new neighbor, Squire Will Danaher. I would also insist that the

[26] However, Yeats's ancestral home Thoor Ballylee in Co. Galway makes a brief appearance in Sean and Mary Kate's courtship-escape ramble on bicycle and foot.

frenetic buzzing of Yeats's "bee-loud glade" (ll 4) is replaced both by the birds-and-bees-based sexual *frisson* between Sean and Mary Kate when she sneaks into White o'Morn to clean it and he kisses her for the first time, when she arrives as a dissatisfied bride—during which "bee-loud" is transformed into "be loud"—as they have their first heated, door-slamming, bed-breaking argument as a married couple, and ultimately, when she returns home as a contented spouse and woman of the house.

Old Maude's home, which once belonged to Lady Gwen and is still inhabited by her ghost, serves as the delightful setting that will bring all our lovers together in the Gallagher Trilogy:

> [Jude] lifted the brass knocker in the shape of a Celtic knot and rapped it against a rough wooden door that looked thick as a brick and was charmingly arched….It was like a doll's house, she thought. All soft white with forest-green trim, the many-paneled windows flanked by shutters that looked functional as well as decorative. The roof was thatched, a charming wonder to her. A wind chime made up of three columns of bells sang musically. (Roberts, *Jewels* 11-12)

Faerie Hill cottage, too is famous for the beautiful riot of color and texture in its garden, nourished not only by sunlight, rain, and mortal toil but some fairy benevolence on the part of her neighbor, Prince Carrick, whose *ráth* lies below it. It is the simultaneously revered and accursed location where the fairy prince met and wooed Gwen, who fearing immortality and her father's wrath, chose to wed a mortal and thrice rebuff Carrick's offers of jewels that represent his devotion and serve as the novels' titles. Carrick in turn curses them to be forever separated until "true hearts met and accepted the gifts he offered her [the diamonds of passion, the pearls of longing, and the sapphires of constancy]. Three times to meet, three times to be accepted before the spell could be broken. He mounted [his winged-white horse] and flew away into the night, and the jewels at her feet again became flowers" (Ibid 102). All the couples in *The Gallaghers*

of Ardmore Trilogy take the proverb I quoted as my section title both figuratively and literally—they do live in one another's shelter —with one member of each of the fated pairs subsequently residing in, tending to, and cherishing Old Maude and Lady Gwen's enchanting and enchanted domicile, per the requirements to break Carrick's curse in the Ardmore Trilogy.

Much like Faerie Hill, Sean also remodels neglected White o'Morn[27] to look like the standard photograph of a thatched cottage on a postcard: white walls and green shutters, leading the Rev. Mrs. Playfair to wax in delighted bemusement, "It looks the way all Irish cottages should but so seldom do. Only an American would've thought of emerald green." This leads her husband to quip, "Red is more durable." The thatched cottage of White o'Morn is a simulacrum of Irish peasant "authenticity" via Pittsburgh, "the product of immigrant nostalgia and tourist demand"—as is Roberts's Faerie Hill Cottage after it (Butler Cullingford, *Ireland's Others* 202). And later in their garden, much to his Mary Kate's chagrin, Sean plants "not a turnip nor a cabbage nor a potato on the place" but maudlin roses, for he and Mary Kate's future children, and in memory of the ones his own beloved mother had planted there before him—and of course, from Yeats's *oeuvre* we are reminded again and again that The Rose is feminized Ireland by another name, meant to be tended with care.

In John Ford's other films, primarily westerns, Luke Gibbons notes the presence of Irish characters whose subplots allow "counterpoints to the main action—often slowing it down through almost sacramental notions of ritual involving eating or drinking, ceremonies of birth, marriage, or death, or other expressions of family and community" (14). I would argue as he

[27] As of 2015, a campaign successfully petitioned the Galway County Council to declare the White o'Morn cottage and its curtilage as a cultural heritage site and part of the Record of Protected Structures, and campaigners hope to fully restore the site from its current state of shambles, in addition to a separate effort to restore the disused Ballyglunin railway station which serves as Castletown in the film.

does that *The Quiet Man* is almost entirely comprised of such "sacramental" moments and instead of the wild American West, presents the West of Ireland. The film and its later counterparts each affectionately genuflect to the power of history, sense-memory, and tradition—even as they wink at them, for it is the key of linguistic play within such moments, including transforming the supporting cast of "mechanical" stage Irish villagers from pure fools to plotting wise fools—that enables the lovers I discuss to develop a discourse of their own and the film itself to suavely subvert stereotypes of "stage Irish" imbecility. Furthermore, such moments of tenderness and reverence—both actual and metaphorical ones—occur throughout each of the later works and indicate the sacrosanct status of community in Irish and Irish-American life, across time and distance.

For instance, Will Danaher accuses Sean Thornton of "taking liberties" with his sister after Mass and though the latter retorts that he only "said 'good morning' to her," I feel that Danaher's contention that "it was 'good night' ye had on your mind," is valid because Thornton's seemingly benign language is combined with the act of using his own hand as a makeshift basin for the holy water. Michaleen Flynn points out ex-post-facto that this fleeting caress "is a privilege reserved for courtin' couples," but this quasi-transgressive momentary touch of two hands transforms the public space of the church steps via close-ups into the personal space of the pair and the previously strictly sacramental gesture into an intimate one. At this juncture, the demure and modest Mary Kate takes in Sean's brazen gesture without so much as a word, but O'Hara's brief but meaningful glance says it all. For as the triad tells us, "*Na trí nithe is géire*[28] *amuigh: Súil iolair i gceo; Súil con i ngleann; Súil mná óige ar*

[28] Rosenstock also cites another version in *Irish Proverbs*: "*Na trí súile is géire: súil na circe i ndiaidh an ghráinne; súil an ghabha i ndiaidh an tairne, agus súil ainnire i ndiaidh a grá gil.*"—"The three sharpest eyes: the eye of a hen on the grain; the eye of a blacksmith on the nail; the eye of a fair damsel in the thrall of love." *Ainnire* is an

aonach."—"The three sharpest things in the world: eye of an eagle in the mist; eye of a hound in the glen, eye of a young woman on a fair [man]." (Rosenstock *Treasury* 150—translation mine).

All the linguistic manipulations indicate *The Quiet Man's* verbal syncretism and Ford's deliberate blending of various facets of Irish and English-language culture, which is embodied in the characters' Hiberno-English. Furthermore, "Good morning" becomes an emotionally laden phrase for Mary Kate and Sean when their budding romance is initially thwarted by her brother. When they see each other in the countryside after Will rejects Sean's proposal, Mary Kate's "good morning" is tinged with sadness when she directly addresses her former suitor by his full name. This direct address is subsequent to his calling her by her own full name when he greets her, rendered in the screenplay as "Hello, Mary Kate…*Danaher*" (Nugent 46; emphasis mine as per the Wayne's delivery). The awkward pauses before the names and evident anguish in both their deliveries remind the audience that Sean and Mary Kate are separated. Their full names[29] and the painful emphasis on their differing surnames delineate their specific, isolating places within the community. "Good morning" seems to no longer contain the potential for an eventual "good night," but rather for the divided lovers, it may as well be "good-bye." At this moment, she is a Danaher; he is a Thornton; and it appears ne'er the two shall meet.

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obscure word these days, which Rosenstock translates as "maid" but still in use in a much more specifically noble sense, by an older generation of male Irish speakers in chivalric, complimentary reference to younger women, at least in my experience in Donegal. See Chapter 1, in which I also cited Bourke on another, less pleasant version of this sharpness triad, relevant to Ní Dhomhnaill: "*trí rud is géire ar bith: súil cait, dealg láibe agus focal amadáin*: the eye of a cat, a thorn in mud, and the word of a fool" ("Fairies and Anorexia" 32).

[29] Maureen O'Hara's character name in the film is a compound of "Mary" in honor of John Ford's wife and "Kate" because that is the name O'Hara's father intended to christen her (MacHale 30). Wayne's character name, in Michaleen's drunken, syllable-slurring matchmaking speech, becomes significant as Ford's added spoonerism "Thean Shornton" (MacHale 105). This addition confirms my contention of Ford's own investment in subversive, humorous linguistic play within the film.

Although *The Quiet Man* more obviously resembles Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, this wounded naming reinforces the logic of Juliet regarding Romeo: " 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy" (II.ii.38). However, unlike the star-crossed pair in Verona, Mary Kate and Sean are cognizant that they are unable to doff their surnames by sheer force of will and that they lack the capacity to escape the limitations imposed by those wretched names all by themselves. It is only through the intervention of the community through the conspiracy formed by The Playfairs, Fr. Lonergan, and Michaleen Oge Flynn and the introduction of a third name—Sarah Tillane—that Mary Kate can become a Thornton.

Technically, it is not really the widow's name but instead her accessories that make her an unwitting accessory in the plot that permits our lovers to end well; it is the implication of Thornton's affection for her by seizure of her bonnet while besting Danaher and the rest of the field at the Inisfree Races.[30] Women wear many hats, and the placement of them at this event announces their availability as a romantic partner, the ladies fair leaving garments for their would-be chivalric champions. This establishes a paradigm for the significance of clothes and material possessions playing pivotal roles in the lives of the women featured in these works. From Anna and Holly's fixation on designer brands to Marcy's dour black clothes and Jude's sexy black lace lingerie, these items also serve as devices to forward the works' respective marriage plots.

Sean's very public grab of said bonnet, much to the horror and rage of both Danahers, essentially announces his intent to pursue the Widow to the assembled community. Furthermore, substantiating the false credibility of this intention is a group effort; Michaleen Oge Flynn's slyly

[30] Like Mary Kate's furniture, the widow's bonnet stands as a tangible emblem of her rank and worth as a woman. Mary Kate's bonnet, alas, is rejected and left up on the phallic pole.

affirms Red[31] Will Danaher's fears regarding the hat-snatching; the Playfairs silently concur, and more importantly, their endeavor is most definitely contingent upon Fr. Lonergan's demurral, "I won't say that it's true, and I can't say that it's not." All of them are completely responsible for misleading Danaher in order to secure his speedy consent to Sean's courtship of Mary Kate. Their rejection of a single narrative of truth—the embrace of a truth that is in fact a blatant lie—by a priest and a vicar, no less—upholds the film's preoccupation with linguistic manipulations and re-appropriations of the status quo. When combined, action and speech provide the necessary fuel to facilitate and feed the otherwise frustrated fires of passion. By refusing to play fair, the soon-to-be toasted "successful conspiracy" indicates that the savvy group will go to any lengths to see the couple blissfully and properly wedded, even risking damnation. Michaleen dutifully reminds Fr. Lonergan of their required atonement for the deception, "Three 'Our Fathers' and three 'Hail, Marys.'" Indeed, it is never revealed what wild threats, whispered promises, and worthwhile penances were later made by the villagers during their wedding-night intervention upon Red Will to restore to his sister her cherished dowry of heirlooms, and thus, her respectability as a bride.

Jude's move to Ireland is effectively an intervention on herself, a frantic gesture of self-preservation in order to escape the disastrous failure of her marriage and her unhappiness as a tenure-track professor of psychology by taking a sabbatical from America and academia. The disoriented, travel-wearied, and emotionally-drained Jude not only finds herself on exactly the right doorstep at the right moment but also figuratively finds herself within the walls of Old

[31] The specific nickname "Red Will" is an English version of the Irish convention of designating individuals with a distinctive adjective that would serve (in lieu of using the more formal surnames) to distinguish one Will from another. This is also true of the designation of Michaleen with diminutive "-een" and the "Oge" indicating he is Michael the young(er), even though it seems counterintuitive if one thinks only of Barry Fitzgerald's age and not that such names were multigenerational and thus marks of both tradition and individuality.

Maude's cottage and the community of Ardmore. She, Darcy, and Brenna become true friends, which Jude's former life has desperately lacked with its boring marriage, all-too-conventional faculty parties, and her dry social science scholarship. They shop, bond over wine, and gossip during an impromptu sleepover, and instead of a fussy cocktail party, the women help Jude throw a festive *ceilidh* to properly christen the cottage as her new home and essentially Jude herself as a member of the larger Ardmore community, all of whom manage to attend, despite its seemingly diminutive dimensions. All the couples in the Trilogy are joined not only by the respective connections of the three Gallagher siblings, the building of the theatre onto the pub, but also the legacy of Carrick's curse, as he frequently visits each of them to give their romances a nudge in what he hopes is the right direction.

In *The Matchmaker,* Marcy, too, learns how to make sincere, honest, and caring friends, not just backhanded and deceptive political cronies and colleagues during her time in Baile na Grá. She comes to genuinely care about the community, especially Dermot, and is brought to tears by watching his last video message after he passes away unexpectedly. Although Marcy and Dermot never have a chance to fulfill his plan to "matchmake America," Holly returns to Ireland with her friends, according to Gerry's final wishes, and they humorously support her throughout all her mishaps and miseries as they have done before in America. Holly's mom bears the brunt of her grief but also offers secret, precious consolation when she is revealed to be the source of Gerry's messages.

Most of all, in *Leap Year*, Declan's pub is a part of the community, which Anna inadvertently joins. The pair also makes unexpected friends in their peregrinations, including the kind couple that invites them to their reception after Anna and Declan accidentally interrupt their wedding ceremony. At the reception, the bride gives a sentimental proverbial toast to her groom,

"To my husband—may you never lie, steal, or cheat. But if you must steal, steal away my sorrows. If you must lie, lie with me all the nights of my life. If you must cheat, cheat Death, because I couldn't live a single day without you." Declan and Anna also encounter other couples at the B&B who adamantly encourage their first kiss, and of course, engage with the elderly regulars at the pub, whose fittingly contradictory proverbs bookend the couple's adventure, such as:

> **Man 1**: It's bad luck to start a journey on a Friday.
> **Man 2**: It's bad luck to start a journey *on a Saturday*.
> **Drunk Man 3**: Tuesday!
> **Man 4**: No, it's Sunday, to be sure!

And when Declan finally proposes:

> **Man 1**: Would you look at that!
> **Man 2**: On a Sunday, no less! It's good luck to get engaged on a Sunday.
> **Man 1**: And end a journey…
> **Man 2**: Aye, and dig a well!
> **Man 1**: Eejit! Do they look like they're digging a well?!
> **Man 2**: Ah, you know what I'm talkin' about.
> **Man 1**: I *never* know what you're talkin' about.

Declan and Anna experience unexpected compassion, humor, and hospitality all around them from people who ask no recompense but cordiality and the cooking of a meal or the pulling of a pint in return.

Furthermore, though admittedly with a good deal of contentious bickering, Anna supports Declan by helping him come to terms with his bitterness resulting from his prior jilting and urges him to reclaim his family engagement ring from his cheating former fiancée. Declan proves himself to be a faithful friend to her in offering her advice and delivering her to Jeremy, as promised. Afterwards, he honorably and poignantly exits without so much as word of objection when Jeremy proposes to Anna in the hotel lobby. Declan is willing to nobly ignore his own

feelings because he thinks Jeremy is the man Anna truly wants. The community also makes contributions to save the pub when the loan shark, implicitly a Traveller, increases his demands.

Anna, in contrast, must take a risk and reject the narcissistic company she has been keeping and its "keeping up with the Joneses" lifestyle. By setting off the fire alarm at her own housewarming/engagement party, Anna chooses the adventure of the unknown and the genuine, generous people, like Declan, that she met through her travels in Ireland over the predictability and supposed-security exemplified in her luxury dwelling filled with disingenuous and materialistic so-called friends in America. She eschews the false glitter of the of world of overpriced clothing, overpriced gadgetry, and overpriced diamonds in favor of the slightly rough man and the metaphorical diamond he offers her in the shining, unadorned claddagh ring that belonged to his Granny: the luminous promise of home, hearth, and heritage.

In all of these examples, it is evident that the friendships, even if they are temporary (and in most cases, they are not), made by the protagonists in these narratives are as significant, if not more so, than the romances. Furthermore, each facilitates the other. In Ireland, "It takes a whole village to make a marriage [work]." The necessity of building and maintaining relationships, be they platonic, erotic, or both, is a recurrent theme across these works. Irish-American communities in particular, as I've already suggested, possess a special nostalgia regarding their Irish roots, no matter how long ago one's family emigrated. In Ireland too, the notion of the home-place or the need to discover it becomes a central thematic in these films and novels.

V. "*An nDéannan Seilbh Sásamh*?": "Does Possession Make [For] Satisfaction? Or Tales of Surprising Matchmakers[32]

In each of these works, any kind of love is made and maintained through language. The absolute necessity of building such strong relationships and sustaining them through playful verbal amalgamations is further illustrated in the matchmaking scenes between Michaleen Oge Flynn and Mary Kate Danaher. During his initial fumbling approach, she mocks him for being a little worse for whiskey:

> **Michaleen (in falsetto)**: I have—(coughs)—I have come—
> **Mary Kate**: I can see that. But from whose pub was it?
> **Michaleen (indignant)**: Pub, pub! You've a tongue like an adder. I've a good mind to go about me own business and tell Thean Shorton he's well off without you!
> **Mary Kate**: Sean Thornton! Wait a minute! What was that?
> **Michaleen**: Will ya listen then and not be interruptin' the *shaughran*, the matchmaker.

These first few introductory lines manage to make jokes about Michaleen's penchant for drink, (including the slurring Spoonerism "Thean Shorton,") translate a common Irish insult (*teanga nimhe*—tongue like an adder), and offer a quick gloss for the audience (*shaughran*/matchmaker). Their exchange also reminds us of the social customs of Innisfree and the importance of third-party intervention in the couple's romance.

As the scene progresses, Michaleen also offers some legalese with his contractual terms "party to the first part" and "party to the second part" and a little dig at Mary Kate when he refers to her contemptuously as a "spinster." When they adjourn to the parlor in search of a bottle to slake his considerable thirst, there is even the use of some American idiom when Michaleen recounts Sean's own turn of phrase:

[32] In this case, not only material possessions, but possessing one's beloved.

> **Michaleen**: To resume—the party of the first part—
> **Mary Kate**: That's him!
> **Michaleen**: Has instructed me to inquire before entering into formal negotiations whether the party to the second part—
> **Mary Kate**: That's me!
> **Michaleen**: Thinks kindly of the general idea, or in his own words, ah American—ah yes, yes—he wants to know if ya go for it.
> **Mary Kate**: Go for it?
> **Michaleen**: And if you do, I'll speak to your brother.
> **Mary Kate**: Oh, that won't be easy.
> **Michaleen**: And it's well I know it.[33] He'd as soon put his *cloch* of a fist in me teeth as bid me the time of day.

Michaleen's frequent use of the Hiberno-English possessive "me" like the Irish possessive "mo" and his ease with Irish vocabulary like *cloch*, which means stone, as well as the aforementioned "tongue like an adder" and *shaughran,* show the fluid mix of Irish and English in the speech patterns of the community. When Michaleen informs her that Sean is indifferent to her fortune, he shows some restraint by remembering that though she may be a "spinster," Mary Kate is still a lady and should be spared any profanity, "He says he doesn't give a d—he says it's all one to him if you come with the clothes on your back, or without them, for that matter."

Naturally, Mary Kate becomes agitated by this slightly scandalous insinuation and offers insight into the cultural mindset of the time, rushing to defend her worth as a would-be bride by dragging Michaleen and his drink into the next room to show off her possessions and wealth. She relates an exhaustive inventory of her inheritance and her earnings, and he, making notations in his little black book, acknowledges her value, "Heh, you're a well-propertied woman, I wouldn't mind marrying you meself." Mary Kate smiles warmly in response, but Michaleen barely notices as he is suddenly more concerned with more important matters, wondering, "Where did ya leave the bottle?" as he heads back into the sitting room in search of it. Mary

[33] Typical Hiberno-English "cleft" construction of: "I know it well." See Algeo/Pyles 224.

Kate, less irritated now but still determined, calls after Michaleen, "And I'd have you tell him, I'm no pauper to be going to him in my shift!" While Michaleen looks for his beloved whiskey, Mary Kate, aflutter with the thrill of being matched and intent on showing off her talents as well as well as her treasure, decides to play a song.

So, she uncovers the spinet and sings a verse of Thomas Moore's "The Young May Moon":

> The young May moon is beaming, love,
> The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming, love;
> How sweet to rove
> Through Morna's grove,
> While the drowsy world is dreaming, love!

Soon Michaleen returns to join her at the instrument with liquor in tow:

> **Michaleen**: Do you know the "The Peeler and the Goat"?[34]
> **Mary Kate**: I do not.

[34] "The Peeler and the Goat" is a controversial, funny ballad with implicit reference to bestiality in regards to the unjust imprisonment of said goat by said Peeler as a result of widespread corruption, alcohol abuse, unfair implementation of the infamous Penal Laws. As a result of the latter's lack of liquid assets (in terms of both cash and liquor) to bribe and thus dissuade the Peeler—being only "hoary-lock[ed]" and admittedly horny goat. The animal thereby narrowly avoids trans-continental transportation to the "Penal Colony" of Australia—where Sean Thorton's grandfather was also sent, implicitly for activities related to colonial resistance, according to Fr. Lonergan. In various versions of the song, the goat is female. According to the goat, the Peeler is both "drunk" and a drunk, and whether or not the constable is inebriated at the moment, the goat feels it must or is forced to submit to the Peeler's advances with sexual favors, the only resources at his or her disposal. This possible exchange highlights what I would term the goat's "[bodily] fluid" assets. (For more on these, albeit a fully consenting, joyous, serious and feminine perspective, see Luce Irigaray's "The Mechanics of Fluids" in *The Sex Which is Not One*. See also Chapter 1 for another humorous take on "fluid assets" in Joyce's plum hags.) Thus, it would be completely unacceptable for a woman like Mary Kate to admit to knowing this song, even though it was well-known at the time, and she most surely had heard it at least once. The ballad's scandal also results Michaleen's instantaneous exclamation, "Neither do I!" for he is present in an official capacity, putting on the somber role of authority, playing at being the officious gentleman, while all the while, truly, cannily, acting the wise fool, particularly for any audience members who know enough to get the reference. "Peeler" is of course a derogatory nickname for an RIC or currently RUC police officer, after Robert Peel, the founder of the British police force. The goat itself also possibly represents an oblique, mistranslated reference to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s chief trickster and mischief-maker, Puck, a result of the Irish *Aoanach on Phoic* or "Fair of the He-Goat" in Killorglin, County Kerry, dating at least as far back as 1603. Once captured, the wild goat is brought to the town square, crowned "King Puck" by a local schoolgirl who serves as the "Queen of Puck," and then the king is elevated in a cage on a high pedestal for three days before being released and led back to its mountain home. The he-goat is traditionally a symbol of pagan fertility rites coinciding with Lúghnasa (see Chapter 2), and legend also credits one of King Puck's ancestors with warning the revelers of the approach of Cromwell's invading army (www.puckfair.ie).

Michaleen: Neither do I!
Mary Kate: Could you use a little water in your whiskey?
Michaleen: When I drink whiskey, I drink whiskey. When I drink water, I drink water.
(Mary Kate continues to play, humming the melody.)
Michaleen: But back to business, what answer[35] will I give Sean Thornton, Mary Kate Danaher?
Mary Kate: Well, you can tell him from me—that I go for it.

Here, Mary Kate and Michaleen continue to play fast and loose with various elements of Irish culture. We have a the same pervasive, famous first verse from Moore that Molly Bloom also recalls singing during her illicit rendezvous with Blazes Boylan in *Ulysses* (18.80-82) from what is perhaps the most enduring and popular sentimental ballad from his *Irish Melodies*.

Michaleen's question and Mary Kate's response offer a censorious dig at another traditional and bawdier ballad ("The Peeler and the Goat"), as well as Michaleen's comical, more polite revision of Joyce. Also in *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan crudely quips, "When I makes tea, I makes tea, as old Mother Grogan said. And when I makes water, I makes water" (1.357-358). As Sean and Mary Kate did in the earlier scene, Michaleen makes much of their differing surnames to remind Mary Kate of her potential position as a pariah, an easily mocked spinster. As they finally come to terms, the remainder of Moore's verse, particularly the alternating rhythm of iambic tetrameter/trimeter in the quintain is suggested as Mary Kate continues playing and humming along dreamily, and then Michaleen chimes in and they finish the final lyric together:

[Then awake!—the heavens look bright, my dear,
'Tis never too late for delight, my dear;
And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days]

[35] Here, "answer," the most psychologically significant word, is fronted by Michaleen before the verb and the subject. This speech pattern is typical of Hiberno-English and is also evident in the linguistic order in Mary Kate's later use of Irish with Fr. Lonergan.

Is to steal a few hours from the night….my dear.

After she and Michaleen happily join together in the last melodic lines of Moore's ballad, they seal their deal the old-fashioned way with a spit-and-shake contract, and Mary Kate has even chooses to embrace Sean's American idiom of "go for it". The hybridity of their Hiberno-English dialogue foreshadows Mary Kate and Sean's further negotiations with both Irish and English later in the film.

Milo O'Shea offers the contemporary take on Michaleen with his portrayal of *The Matchmaker's* Dermot O'Brien.[36] Barry Fitzgerald's looming presence as an indelible and Academy Award-winning character actor in the first half of the twentieth century, fully informs the nuances, the delightful winks and nudges of O'Shea's charming performance for the informed viewer, such as when he introduces himself while struggling to make a video—his effort serving as a device that will mark plot and thematic progressions within the film— "I'm a matchmaker, a maker of matches—no, not the wooden kind of matches with the flammable heads—but a maker of matches that are the human kind of matches. You know, the kind where people hit it off together, go away, and get married." Just like Fitzgerald's Flynn, O'Shea's O'Brien is ever-scheming and won't refuse a drink when it's offered.

Matchmaking, much like the genealogy Marcy is seeking for Sen. McGlory, is a profitable financial enterprise, and Dermot diversifies his investments by operating Baile na

[36] Like Barry Fitzgerald before him, O'Shea also had an eminent career as a character actor in the theater and in film, including an appearance in O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* (it was his final stage appearance). Other notable roles include his starring turn as Bunjy Kennefick in the BBC's 1960s-update of stage-Irish comedy, *Me Mammy!*, his portrayal of Leopold Bloom in Joseph Strick's film adaptation of *Ulysses* (1967), Friar Laurence in Franco Zefferelli's *Romeo & Juliet* (1968), mad scientist Durand-Durand in Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* (1968)—from which the band Duran Duran took its name with O'Shea naturally appearing in character in their 1985 music video for "Arena", Fr. Sullivan in Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy* (1997), and nominated twice for a Tony on Broadway as one-half of a gay barber couple, Harry C. Leeds in Charles Dyer's *Staircase* (1968) and as a complacent priest, Fr. Tim Farley in Bill C. Davis's *Mass Appeal* (1982).

Grá's one and only turbo tanning salon, TanFanstic, which causes severe sun-lamp poisoning for a young local client. Michael almost bakes himself in the booth in a misguided, "penance" because he half-heartedly "want[s] to die" for fear of "d[ying] a virgin like Joan of Arc"after being repeatedly rejected at the Festival, specifically inadvertently by Marcy herself. [37] Dermot even has a female competitor, Millie O'Dowd, who bets him fifty pounds that he "can't sort out Sean and the Yankee," to which of course, he gleefully doubles down. The Baile na Grá (a grammatically incorrect translation of "Town of Love"—in Irish, the appropriate use of the genitive would make it Baile An Ghrá) Matchmaking Festival is based on real town of Lisdoonvarna in Co. Clare, though it was actually filmed in Roundstone, Co. Galway.

According to its website, the Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival takes place continuously over five weekends in September and early October and is over a hundred and fifty years old, "the largest singles' event in Europe" with the town of 800 receiving over 40,000 visitors. All events are presided over by Willie Daly, who bills himself the most famous and final (third-generation) familial practitioner of a dying art—as well as a publican, farmer, and author of the memoir/advice manual, *The Last Matchmaker* (2010). As of 2013, Lisdoonvarna's programme has diversified with "the first-ever gay and lesbian matchmaking festival" known as "The Outing", highlights of which included a line of step-dancing drag queens and a *sean-nós* rendition of Madonna's "Like a Virgin".

Just as the notion of socially suitable partners has evolved with the times and matchmaking festivals are no longer deemed a success by the per capita proposal or marriage rate, I would argue that so too should our understanding of whom or occasionally, what, makes

[37] Thus, the TurboTan would be a humorously appropriate demise, for Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

an effective matchmaker. In *Leap Year*, for instance, the owners of the bed & breakfast function as the "matchmakers" that ultimately bring Declan and Anna together by encouraging them to be publicly affectionate when they misrepresent themselves as a married couple in order to snag the last available room without shame or retribution. So, too, do the real bride and groom whom Anna and Declan surprise by inadvertently turning up in the midst their wedding ceremony and subsequently getting invited to the reception in the name of hospitality. Despite the fact that Anna accidentally knocks the bride in the face with her flying footwear during a particularly vigorous effort at set-dancing and that she vomits equally vigorously all over Declan's shoes after getting horribly drunk out of her embarrassment over the high-heel-to-forehead incident and her resentment at not being engaged herself, Declan and Anna's pre-puking almost-kiss continues the momentum of their unavoidable yet frequently denied and slightly disaster-prone attraction.

More to the point, myth itself is Anna and Declan's matchmaker, offering a paradigm not simply in the story of Anna's Grandma Jane who proposed to Grandpa Tom on Leap Day, but in Declan's abbreviated version of the tale of mythical lovers Diarmaid and Gráinne. When he recounts the legend from the Fenian cycle while they await the next train to Dublin, Anna accuses Declan of trying to seduce her and ostensibly scoffs at the erotic pull of his dreamy tale while they explore the windswept, rain-soaked, and ruined castle, and the sweeping view of the gorgeous scenery below. Although Declan denies it vehemently, we as viewers are at least temporarily romanced by the setting and the telling, especially if one is familiar with the sexual tension and the intimate details of the original legend, which only augment *Leap Year's* own mounting will-they-or-won't-they-anticipation.

Furthermore, if one knows the details of the legend as outlined by Declan: a broken vow and forbidden lovers, who when violently pursued by the jilted groom, seek shelter in a new location every night, and can manage to overlook Matthew Goode's egregious mispronunciation of Fionn Mac Cumhaill's first name, it becomes readily apparent that seducing Anna is exactly what his character was endeavoring to do. Despite the fact that Dr. Jeremy is neither old nor decrepit, he, like Fionn, is as wealthy as a lord and represents economic power, the secure choice for a groom, while fair Anna and the young, brave, and pugnacious Declan become the modern equivalent by exactly reversing the narrative of Diarmaid and Gráinne. Initially, Anna as Gráinne is not running away with Declan/Diarmaid, but instead, it is she who actively and adamantly pursues the stability offered by Jeremy/Fionn. Declan's version of the tale also strategically excludes Diarmaid's tragic death-by-boar and Fionn's initial refusals then final inability to save him. Over the course of Anna and Declan's journey together, during which they like their mythical predecessors, travel around Ireland, spending each night in a new place, and thereby fall madly in love. It leads Anna to ultimately flee her prior engagement.

The legend's figurative *geis* or magical contract/bond linking them is transformed into a formal business arrangement to chauffer Anna from Dingle to Dublin. *Leap Year's* scene where Declan furtively gazes at a bathing and unwitting Anna through the shower translucent curtain is a transposition of the famous encounter at the stream from *The Pursuit*,[38] when Gráinne famously accuses Diarmaid of being too timid to touch her:

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[38] In "Song," from *The War Horse* (1975), Eavan Boland emphasizes Gráinne's brazen pursuit of Diarmaid:

> My skirt in my hand,
> Lifting the hem high,
> I forded the river there.
> Drops splashed my thigh.
> ….

> Gráinne was getting tired, and when she realized that had no man to carry her except Diarmaid…she gained courage and a lively spirit and she began to walk boldly by Diarmaid's side until an errant little splash of water sprang up beside her leg, so she said: 'Diarmaid,' said she, 'though your valour and your bravery be great in conflicts and in battle-places I think myself that that little drop of errant water is more daring than you are.'
> 'That is true, Gráinne,' said Diarmaid, 'though I have been for a long time keeping myself from you through fear of Fionn I will not suffer myself to be reproached by you any longer; and it is hard to trust women,' he said. And it was then for the first time that Diarmaid ó Duibhne of the bright-tooth made a wife of Gráinne, daughter of the king of Ireland. (Ní Shéaghdha 47)[39]

'Look how the water comes,
Boldly to my side;
See the waves attempt,
What you have never tried.'
He late that night
Followed the leaping tide. (ll 13-24)

Boland's version euphonically joins Gráinne's decisive, transgressive action of "lifting the hem high" with a rhyme on the site of her exposure and vulnerability "thigh" and with a half-rhyme to show Diarmaid's hesitation at her bold challenge, never "tried" that leads to his eventual seduction under cover of "night" just like the leaping "tide." The flow of long i-sounds charts both the course of the river and their journey, as well as the progression of their desire. By using her own body as map, Boland's Gráinne implies some of the corresponding actions of her beloved's, "hands" that will delicately progress up her torso like the currents. Unlike Anna, who willfully remains in denial of her true feelings for Declan almost until it's too late, Gráinne's actualization of her longing for Diarmaid shows the frank, uninhibited sexuality of a woman who knows what she wants when she sees it and uses the power of a convenient location to her advantage. On the other hand, Moya Cannon's "Diarmaid and Gráinne's Beds" from *Oar* (1994), insist that cairns or ruins like that of the castle from *Leap Year* are spaces that mark the conveniently-forgotten fatal end of the legend, crumbling reminders of decay and loss, rendered evocative of our own fleeting mortality in the face of geological time, because although lusty beginnings may occur in the water, all end in the earth, noted only by a heap of stones:

These dolmens
were death's doors, death's tables.
They were wrested from the earth,
to shelter hoards of bones.

But memory faltered,
or mind capered,
and a story spread
that these were the beds
of lovers. (Cannon 17)

[39] Nessa Ní Shéaghdha's 1967 edition for the Irish Texts Society, unlike the earlier ITS translation by Standish H. O'Grady in 1855, and reprinted throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reproduces the MSS text with facing translations and notably translates this scandalous section, which O'Grady found objectionable enough to expurgate with thirty asterisks (or six lines total) from "…boldly" onward, picking up the tale postcoitally when the couple comes into "the very heart of the forest" and Diarmaid slays a deer to slake their other appetites (O'Grady 48).

Both narratives uphold the dramatic erotic tension necessary to move their respective plots forward, with the male figure at first not daring to be bolder than the water that splashes upon the woman. Gráinne notably draws a distinction between deeds done in amidst the spectacle "conflicts and battle-places" and those performed intimately, albeit out in the open, between lovers, though in yet another transposition, it is not their private moments alone together, such as standing on the shimmering shores of Glendalough backlit by the moon, but in the spectacle of their dinner with an audience at the bed and breakfast that unites Anna and Declan in a kiss on command of their hosts. Declan, even more often than Diarmaid, frequently espouses the untrustworthiness of women amongst the "chancers and cheats" of Dublin, such as his unfaithful former fiancée who is still in possession of his beloved granny's ring. The ultimate consummation and thus confirmation of the romance is left to the end, and in turn, we get a near-complete if largely fictionalized totality of the Republic of Ireland, with the film conveniently excising the hero's tragic demise at the conclusion of the original tale of Diarmaid and Gráinne. While it may at first seem counterintuitive to argue that a maudlin ancient legend presents a prototype for a successful contemporary courtship, particularly one that includes the shorting of Dingle's electrical grid by a Blackberry and prominently features trains, planes, buses, and automobiles, both are travelogues about the romance of location though the *modus operandi* of transport may be different. Legendary sources are also pivotal in *The Gallaghers of Ardmore Trilogy*, Gwen, a dead woman, and Carrick, a supposedly imaginary immortal, as I mentioned, serve as the matchmakers, whose fated curse and various interventions help bring all of Roberts's pairs together. It is Carrick and Gwen's desolate tale with a prospective (and ultimately fulfilled) happy ending, tied to the site of Faerie Hill cottage and environs that first ignites both Jude's passion for stories and her passion for Aidan, the teller.

Even in *P.S. I Love You,* Gerry essentially plays ghost-matchmaker in Holly's fated meeting and romantic interlude with her husband's childhood best friend and former bandmate, William. Holly herself subtly plays matchmaker when she introduces her mother to William's father and the pair share a brief flirtation. Kate Thomas's *Postal Pleasures (*2012*),* Jacques Derrida's *An Carte Postale/The Post Card* (1980), and Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse* (1977) each examine the fraught notion of reciprocal desire in the act of composition in erotic entanglements of correspondents in literature and philosophy and the necessity of mutual exchange, or at least the necessity of imagining and imaging the Other.

As Barthes himself concludes, writing simultaneously enables one to assert oneself as separate from and yearning for the beloved while undermining the very notion of the "I-function":

> I cannot write myself. What, after all, is this "I" who would write himself? Even as he would enter into the writing, the writing would take the wind out of his sails, would render him null and void -- futile; a gradual dilapidation would occur, in which the other's image, too, would be gradually involved (to write on something is to outmode it), a disgust whose conclusion could only be: what's the use? what obstructs amorous writing is the illusion of expressivity: as a writer, or assuming myself to be one, I continue to fool myself as to the effects of language…. *Someone would have to teach me that one cannot write without burying "sincerity" (always the Orpheus myth: not to turn back).* What writing demands, and what any lover cannot grant it without laceration, is to sacrifice a little of his Image-repertoire, and to assure thereby, through his language, the assumption of a little reality. All I might produce, at best, is a writing of the Image-repertoire [Imaginaire]; and for that I would have to renounce the Image-repertoire of writing -- would have to let myself be subjugated by my language, submit to the injustices (the insults) it will not fail to inflict upon the double Image of the lover and of his other.
>
> The language of the Image-repertoire would be precisely the utopia of language: an entirely original, paradisiac language, the language of Adam -- "natural, free of distortion or illusion, limpid mirror of our sense, a sensual language (die sensualische Sprache)": "In the sensual language, all minds converse together, they need no other language, for this is the language of nature. (98)

In essence, the writer cannot exist without a correspondent. Gerry's letters facilitate Holly's preservation of him as an "image-repertoire" figured through a spiritual presence given a

projected body long after that physical body has ceased to exist in reality. At the same time, what Barthes would describe as "Adamic" capabilities also allow her to address Gerry's passing in the statement, "I can't feel him anymore." Gerry's being is at once authenticated and diminished by her shifting relationship to his written, edible, and recorded communiqués. This is the only occasion in which Holly can find words to express the depth of her loss to another person, her mother. It is also implicitly the first time when she hasn't been subconsciously endeavoring to pretend Gerry's still alive by continually speaking to his "ghost," repeatedly listening to his voicemail message, or making the Freudian slip of accidentally calling Daniel by his name. Gerry's intentionally didactic texts, written in the imperative, become the step-by-step instruction manual necessary for Holly to mourn him and ultimately assert agency in her own life. Her dead husband may tell Holly what to do and she may comply, but it has been she who gives his messages life by reading and receiving them.

By employing what Barthes initially dismisses as the "fool[ish] effects of [written] language" Holly can grieve the past and eventually discover the will to go on living, not shuttered in her apartment like Miss Havisham, but as a global citizen, with the whole world at her disposal, empowered by text. As in the Orpheus myth that Barthes references, Holly is at first inclined to always look backward and imaginatively re-member Gerry by recalling him singing their song, Steve Earle's "Galway Girl", but it is that looking back that finally frees her to look forward through the recognition that Gerry's love is permanently inscribed not only in the post (as well as plane ticket, cake, music, and aborted singing telegram), but forever in her heart and memory. The reconciling of love with death through the intermediary of words and enchanting music as healing balm is what enables Holly to at last leave the Eden of her first love behind and chart her own "paradisiacal" undiscovered countries, in both America and Ireland.

What begins as a self-harming and futile exercise in resurrection ends in a glorious ascension and acceptance. The film portrays the transition by moving from gloomy Manhattan to glintingly verdant, meadow-green *Dun Laoghaire*, from claustrophobic walk-ups to the sweeping, seemingly endless Wicklow Mountains that stretch before the viewer and Holly as far as the shot can pan.

Gerry's last words in his final letter, "P.S. I will *always* love you," engender Holly's response:

> **Holly:** Dear Gerry, you said you wanted me to fall in love again, and maybe one day I will. But there are all kinds of love out there. This is my one and only life. And it's a great and terrible and short and endless thing, and none of us come out of it alive. I don't have a plan... except, it's time my mom laughed again. She has never seen the world. She has never seen Ireland. So, I'm taking her back where we started. Maybe now she'll understand. I don't know how you did it, but you brought me back from the dead. I'll write to you again soon. P.S... Guess what?

Holly's voiceover at the conclusion thus transforms the whole of *P.S. I Love You* into the cinematic equivalent of her reply to Gerry and its narration as the text of the letter. In those terms, by progressing from tight close-ups to wide angles and dull indoor spaces to verdant outdoor ones, Holly achieves what Barthes aspires to in *Lover's Discourse*, the very "language of nature" speaks for itself and we find "there are all kinds of love out there" as the camera pans up and outward to show us the enduring possibilities suggested by the glistening landscape that surrounds her.

VI. "Cad É Sin Don Té Sin?"[40], Or "Is This a ____ or a Donnybrook?"

Indeed, in "the Irish Landscape Love Story", strange fits of passion often result in strong fits of temper. For all the couples in the films, bickering becomes a means of foreplay. Expressions of distaste quickly give way to those of desire, and notions of honor lead to all manner of hostilities, epitomized in *The Quiet Man's* classic clash between Sean and Red Will. When Sean "returns" his wife and demands payment of the financial dowry, only to burn it in a furnace, his actions infuriate his brother-in-law. With the exteriors filmed on the grounds of Ashford Castle, the epic family feud spans the surrounding countryside, progressing from the Danaher fields to Innisfree proper as the men proceed to ceremoniously—but with utter disregard of Michaleen's precious "Marquess of Queensberry Rules"—beat one another from riverbed and haystack to pub floor and through its door. The purgative process sweeps the whole community into a fervor of bets and blows. Sean and Red Will's battle royale does not merely "dispel antagonisms" as Dowling notes, but it provides an exuberant entertainment for the whole community, a live-action drama.

Even as it at first appears to reject prevailing cultural norms surrounding marriage, the donnybrook actually endorses and upholds these time-honored Irish customs. Pivotally displacing the actual historical violence of imperial resistance, evictions, and civil unrest that continues to plague Ireland to this day, the film offers a cathartic and thrilling climax and, with its amicable conclusion, an enormously satisfying relief. After the requisite pummeling of all

[40] Literally, "What's That to Anyone?" also the title of a classic Irish ballad about eschewing propriety in favor of desire, popularized by Clannad in the late 1980s and animated as part of a charming TG4 series, *Anam an Amhráin—The Soul of the Song* to teach Irish music sung and arranged by traditional performers through adding narrative lyric videos, albeit one that elides the raucous intent of the original: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-cjNBsEvPM

injured male parties, aggression has at last given way to affection with the aid of a little alcoholic lubrication. These romantic "Otherworlds" offer us the most benign of brutalities. Conflict temporarily engenders dramatic tensions and physical altercations that are quickly resolved and supplanted by sexual tensions. Very rarely do the characters experience true and lasting harm, and even that is mitigated by their communal and familial support systems.

Petty violence to relieve aggravation also recurs throughout the novels in the *Gallaghers of Ardmore* Trilogy. In addition to the incident in which Jude breaks Aidan's nose, Brenna and her younger sister, Mary Kate O'Toole have a knock-down, drag-out girlfight over Shawn and the fact that Mary Kate repeatedly calls her elder sister a whore. Despite Roberts's later delight at meeting Maureen O'Hara at an event honoring *The Quiet Man* at Ashford Castle, Mary Kate O'Toole functions as the whiny antithesis of the actress' portrayal of Mary Kate Danaher, who cares only for her own feelings until she realizes that Brenna is willing to forsake Shawn, the man that she has loved since adolescence, to mend their bond. Mr. O'Toole also soundly punches Shawn squarely in the jaw as a result of the discord in an effort to defend Brenna's virtue. Afterwards, just like Sean and Red Will, the two men make peace over whiskey.

Marcy and Sean are not *The Matchmaker's* only constant quarrelers. Sean and his brother, Declan, continuously verbally and physically abuse one another throughout the film, causing various injuries to both men, including a broken leg for Declan and one for Sean, which, his brother's repentance and extraordinary efforts on Sean's behalf, including their efforts to chase Marcy to the airport by recklessly driving their car in awkward, disabled tandem notwithstanding, still regrettably hinders him from preventing Marcy's return to Boston. Anna and Declan's discontent with one another in *Leap Year* not only results in power outages as well as wrecked rooms, cars, shoes, and sandwiches, but to spite him, when they become stranded,

she accepts the supposed-offer of a lift from passersby in a van, and the men—again implicitly Travellers based on their mode of transport, their accents, and their attire. The men then hijack her luggage, which our dynamic duo must retrieve in a backroom bar brawl. By joining forces to rescue her beloved "Louis" (as in Vuitton) suitcase and lingerie, the pair realizes that their mutual animus is actually beneficial when directed at a common enemy. Amidst the chaos of jabs, kicks, thrown elbows, and beer bottles broken over heads of their assault, Anna and Declan become a team, each sincerely invested in the care and well-being of the other for the first time since their inauspicious meeting.

P.S. I Love You begins with an intense and bitter argument between Gerry and Holly Kennedy in which they debate criticism and pressure from Holly's mother regarding having a child, Holly's desire to quit her job, and her fears Gerry will abandon her just as her father did her and her mother. It begins with mutual disapproval, such as Holly demanding of Gerry, "Stop acting all bilingual!", at which point he refers to her as a "pain in me hole" and explosively culminates in Holly banishing Gerry from their apartment. He exclaims, "Kiss me arse!" and she bitterly retorts, "Kiss mine—*in English*!" He storms out and no sooner does the door slam before he immediately rushes back in; she runs to him, leaping over furniture, and hurls herself into his wide open arms with the pair of them murmuring numerous heartfelt apologies. Their making up leads to making love, and this initially moving scene becomes all the more so when it is immediately followed by Gerry's memorial service after his death from a brain tumor. The highs and lows of their marriage, its central crises and joys, are compressed into those scenes, which offer the audience both poignancy and tragic immediacy as we fully comprehend the fleeting nature of our mortality, the all-too-quick succession of tears, laughter, and more tears.

While all the couples can use sex and marriage to mend fences, Holly's disputes with her friends and family after Gerry's death serve to depict both her deep-seated dissatisfaction with her own life as a consequence of his loss and how much she resents their happiness and endeavors to pull her out of her miasma of grief and despair, which is only accomplished by Gerry's postmortem letters. Long after his passing, it seems as though Gerry's memory is the only friend Holly actually appreciates, while she spends many a night burrowed under the bedclothes repeatedly listening to the gentle lilt of his voicemail recording. In cocooning herself alone in their apartment and emotionally conjuring his ghost, Holly embodies her yearning for Gerry and endeavors to preserve their love by maintaining the space in which it existed.

VII. "Oh, But the Kissing's a Long Way Off Yet!": Eros and Topos

While interiors represent Holly's increasing interiority and isolation, imagery of open space is similarly critical to emotional openness in *The Quiet Man*. Following the matchmaking scene and the contentious beginning of their courtship, Mary Kate and Sean escape from Michaleen Flynn and have their first real moments alone together on screen. In the sprawling countryside, they discover their Inisfreedom. Language becomes the medium through which Sean actualizes their relationship and sets its terms:

> **Sean**: If anybody had told me six months ago that today I'd be in a graveyard in Innisfree[41] with a girl like you that I'm just about to kiss, I'd have told 'em...
> **Mary Kate**: Oh, but the kissing's a long way off yet!
> **Sean**: Huh?
> **Mary Kate**: Well, we just started a-courtin', and next month, we, we start the walkin' out,

[41] Innisfree, too, is pertinent to my earlier discussion of the importance of names. Though it technically translates as "Isle of Heather" a compounded Anglicization of the Irish "inis" and "fraoigh," to the non-Irish speaker, Innisfree could potentially sound like "Isle of Free(dom)." The site also has specific mythical consequence as a locale of cherished youthful memories for W.B. Yeats in the poem that bears its name, as well as sentimental significance in Richard Farrelly's song "The Isle of Innisfree," most famously recorded by Bing Crosby, which appears instrumentally in the film itself with a new verse written by Charles FitzSimons, Ford, and O'Hara (MacHale 44-47).

and the month after that there'll be the threshin' parties, and the month after that...
Sean: Nope.
Mary Kate: Well, maybe we won't have to wait that month...
Sean: Yup.
Mary Kate: ...or for the threshin' parties...
Sean: Nope.
Mary Kate: ...or for the walkin' out together...
Sean: No.
Mary Kate: ...and so much the worse for you, Sean Thornton, for I feel the same way about it myself!

Sean has to talk about kissing Mary Kate before he actually does it and reverses the earlier assertion that he kissed her "so [she could] talk ." In that earlier scene, despite the fact that Sean is clearly still a monolingual Irish-American, he subscribes to a purely Gaelic mindset displayed in the proverb "*Is fearr obair ná caint.*"—"Work [in this case, the work of love] is better than talk," for "*ní briathar a dhearbhaíos ach beart*."—"it is not a word which proves but an action." Or in a form with which he might be more familiar from the Latin: "*facta non verba*"—"deeds not words." Here, it is rather the counterpoint, which holds, because Sean changes his tune, as Ford, continues to center their romance on the power of speech. Sean's rejection of all of the rituals of courtship is a performative utterance, tantamount to his prior actions.

For as Mary Kate recognizes and the proverb insists, "*Ní uaisle mac rí ná a chuid*"—"A prince is no nobler than what he does." It's not who you are, it's what you do, or in this case, say.[42] Words now become the equivalent of deeds. When Sean eschews the Irish traditions, they effectively cease to exist as barriers between himself and his plans to marry Mary Kate. The potential months of their engagement are instantly condensed into this one outing, encapsulated in a single embrace. This is a convenient device to move the plot forward, but it is also Sean's verbal figuring of the couple's intense passion that can no longer be restricted by the rules of

[42] This trend is supported by female authors in the genre, according to the Festival of Romance. A 2011 survey of 58 British romantic novelists ranked the most "essential" trait of the ideal man as loyalty (91%), followed closely by honesty (89%) and good personal hygiene (88%), while 53% consider wealth to be "not important" (Flood, Alison)

society. Even the natural world itself seems to confirm the pair's unbridled tempestuous affections, since wind howls and the rain begins to pour in pathetic and passionate fallacy when they finally kiss. In the next scene, the couple is married. Mission accomplished. In the DVD commentary on the graveyard scene, O'Hara claims, "This is a beautiful love scene. There's no other woman in the business or man, other than Duke, that could've done it the way we did it. In movies now, to play a sensuous scene, they've all got to take their clothes off. Duke and I were able to do it by just looking at each other." Mary Kate's early costumes, the red, white, and blue of her shepherding garb and the green and white of her courting dress further represent the transition of the couple from the American vision of Sean to her own Irish tradition to the *tabula rasa* of a bridal gown which signifies the purity and possibility of uniting in holy matrimony.

In seeing his sister and his sworn enemy in their marriage portrait, Red Will recognizes a fundamental truth evident in his drunken blustering at Sean and Mary Kate's reception, "What's a house without a woman in it? Where would any of us be without a woman? Even Fr. Lonergan had a mother!" The priest snaps back, "What do you expect?" Danaher then proceeds to "propose" to the Widow Tillane by giving a toast to himself and inquiring in the midst of his sister's reception, "When's the happy day, Sarah, darling?" The widow Tillane not only refuses, insults him, and stomps out, but her rejection sparks the ruckus over the dowry that leads to a physical altercation between Mary Kate's new husband and her brother. In the mêlée, Sean is knocked unconscious and flashes back traumatically to his accidentally fatal knockout of Tony Gidello in the boxing ring. The appropriate proverbial answer to and consequences of Red Will's pontificating teach us what the rest of *The Quiet Man,* the other films and all of Roberts's novels demonstrate, the *seanfhocal* as I originally heard it, "*Is folamh, fuar teach gan bhean*."—"Empty and cold is the house without a woman."

VIII. "*Ní hAithne go hAontíos*": Desire, Language, and the Establishment of Confessional, Domestic, and Intimate Space[43]

For Mary Kate, her journey to become the woman of her own house is an incomplete one after the shame of the wedding-feast fiasco:

> **Mary Kate**: Ever since I was a little girl, I've dreamed of having my own things about me. My spinet over there. And a table here, and my own chair to rest upon. And a dresser over there in that corner, and my own china and pewter shining about me.

After their wedding and her brother's refusal to pay the dowry, Mary Kate linguistically constructs the sentimental happy home in the same way Sean has physically constructed the exterior of the cottage itself by growing roses in honor of his mother and painting it the impractical emerald green. What Sean fails to initially grasp is that she is making an impassioned plea for what Virginia Woolf has described as a "room of one's own." Her angst is not what he trivializes as "a lot of fuss and grief over a little furniture and stuff," but rather these objects are the substantive embodiment of "three hundred years of happy dreaming," all the marital hopes passed down from her mother and her grandmother. As Gibbons asserts,

> Though Mary Kate rejects the financial aspect of the dowry, she does not turn her back on tradition altogether, but, in fact, seeks to reconnect with it through her 'things,' the goods and chattels she insists on bringing with her to her new home…[using them to establish] a material basis and a communal recognition for equality within marriage. (73)

Like her bereft bonnet, the furniture is cultural currency that symbolizes her worth as a wife. Whereas Sean's reading has thrown tradition out with the bath-water in the graveyard embrace scene, Mary Kate reclaims an understanding of the underlying social mores as the necessary

[43] Literally, no recognition/understanding/knowledge—in the Biblical sense, too, in my usage—until cohabitation. Also frequently used in the same context: "Ní hEolas go hAointíos."

foundation for their relationship. Not all customs are evil; they can establish one's place in the community by affirming her identity and worth as a wife.

Mary Kate demands that he recognize the value of these objects, that he effectively recognize her value, and realize that without her cherished keepsakes, "I am the servant I have always been….I'll say no other word to you." This threat of silence and her translation of respect for tradition into a required component of the couple's dynamic represents Mary Kate's contribution to defining the limits of their marital gender roles through language. Other than insisting he get her fortune, the tangible representation of her significance to him, she has nothing more to say to him in the scene. Each item on her list adds another layer to the image, enabling Mary Kate to verbally and imaginatively stage her desired domestic space. Then, Ford fulfills her dream later when Mary Kate sits singing at the spinet once more, but this time in her new home, after the community has restored her furniture. Once again, it is the linguistic manipulation of Red Will Danaher (this time unseen) by the people of Innisfree that enables this restitution.[44]

Even when Mary Kate's beloved furnishings are officially hers again, tensions over the monetary dowry continue to divide the couple. While English will suit when figuratively and actually arranging the cottage's décor and is necessary in her marital communications with Sean,

[44] The sequence where Mary Kate's furniture is returned includes the infamously censored (in Ohio) disheveled bedroom scene and the Michaeleen's scandalous exclamation at the couple's broken bed, "Impetuous—Homeric!", as well as the singing of the comic ballad "Mush, Mush," whose lyrics in my opinion are apt for our star-crossed pair and perhaps offer insight into the extraordinary measures resorted to by the guests—who are still in last night's wedding garb—to convince Red Will to do the right thing: "It was there I learned all of me courtin'/Many lessons I took in the art/'Til Cupid the blackguard while sportin'/An arrow drove straight through me [heart]/Mush, mush, mush, mush tooraliaddy/…/And just like the Dingle puck goat/I lathered him with me shillelagh/For he trod on the tail of me coat" (MacHale 182). MacHale, on the other hand, wryly observes that "The composer of this masterpiece is unknown or in hiding," but all things considered, this sequence succinctly suggests an evening of much reveling (of all kinds), and the wink to the audience regarding Sean and Mary Kate's wedding night remains my favorite of the entire film.

Irish becomes the language of the confessional when she recounts their argument to Fr. Lonergan. Mary Kate firmly believes the proverb, "*Tús na heagna eagla an Tiarna*,"—"Wisdom begins with fear of the Lord," and as such, goes first to her priest for counsel in her native tongue:

> **Mary Kate**: Father, may I tell you in the Irish?
> **Fr. Lonergan**: *Sea, sea*.—Yes, yes.
> **Mary Kate**: *Níor lig mé m'fhear chéile isteach i mo leaba liom aréir. Chuir mé faoi ndeara dhó chodladh i –oh— i mála codlata! Mála codlata! —*
> I did not allow my husband in my bed with me last night. I insisted he sleep in—oh—in a sleeping bag! Sleeping bag!"
> **Fr. Lonergan**: *Céad é sin*? Bag? –What's that? Bag?
> **Mary Kate**: Sleeping bag, Father, with...with buttons! *Mo spré*[45]*, níor throid ar a shon—an peaca*[46] *é?*—My fortune, he did not fight for it. Is it a sin?
> **Fr. Lonergan**: Woman, Ireland may be a poor country, God help us. But here, a married man sleeps in a bed, and not a bag! And for your own good, I'll tell you—

(Un)fortunately, Lonergan's lecture is interrupted by "the king of all salmon"[47] pulling on his fishing line and dragging him into the stream in a thwarted attempt to capture it. Nonetheless, Irish remains the only language in which Mary Kate can share the most private of shameful secrets and express the otherwise inexpressible horror of the *mála codlata*. I would argue that the moment is not merely *cúpla focal*[48] to pander to an Irish-speaking minority, but rather, according to Gibbons, it functions as yet another example of Ford's investment in authentically

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[45] Here, the fronting of "*mo spré*" or "my fortune," as the idea that is most psychologically important, shows the influence of Hiberno-English word order on Mary Kate's Irish, which would traditionally be VSO.

[46] *Peaca*, as one would expect in a devoutly Catholic country, is derived directly from Latin for sin *peccatum*, whereas in English there has been a semantic loan, attaching the concept to the Old English *syn* (injury).

[47] MacHale associates Lonergan's aquatic epic battle with the myth of Fionn MacCumhaill and the Salmon of Knowledge (191).

[48] Irish does make other cameo appearances at the film's end when Fr. Lonergan repeats "*Sea, sea, sea*" to Mrs. Playfair's request to deceive the bishop and earlier in the lyrics that FitzSimons, Ford, and O'Hara added to Farrelly's melody for "The Isle of Innisfree": "Oh, Innisfree my island, I'm returning/From wasted years across the wintry sea/And when I come back to my own dear island/I'll rest awhile beside you, [a] g[h]rá mo chroí" (MacHale 184). MacHale, obviously not an Irish speaker or a lazy one, neglects the vocative particle "a" but is correct in his translation of "grá mo chroí" as "love of my heart." He also offers an amusing anecdote of the Spanish mistranslation of "mo chroí" as "Cromer Creek" and notes the American misspelling on her sheet music.

portraying Irishness and all aspects of Irish culture in his work.[49] In addition to this scene, Ford and O'Hara also spoke Irish on the set (Gibbons 8). Des MacHale maintains that the director "spoke just a little Irish but liked to give the impression he was fluent in the language" and is rumored to have given an Irish "acceptance speech" for the Congressional Medal of Honor that was actually merely an *as Ghaeilge* recitation of The Lord's Prayer (192). Ford and O'Hara are traditionally credited with writing this dialogue because in Nugent's screenplay, the Irish portions of the scene are merely designated "(in Gaelic)" (84).

At the same time, Sean is having a parallel conversation with the Rev. Mr. Playfair. When the two return home, Mary Kate offers Sean a stick with which to beat her, and he tosses it away.[50] They then acknowledge these conversations to each other, seated side by side, with her on the arm of his chair. This exchange and their placement is evidence of their similar positions, their mutual need for spiritual guidance, and the physical embrace at the end of the scene is followed strategically by Sean's emergence from their bedroom the next morning with the oft-quoted, "Woman of the house, where's me *tae?*" Mary Kate's use of Irish as the language of confessional intimacy with Fr. Lonergan paves the way for Sean's partial use of Irish for their own intimate dialogue.

As I've heard it said over and over again amongst native speakers of Irish, "*Is fearr Gaeilge bhriste, ná Béarla cliste*."—"Broken Irish is better than clever English." And

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[49] The infrastructure of the production of *The Quiet Man* is also replete with Irish family ties: Barry Fitzgerald (Michaleen Flynn) and Arthur Shields (Mr. Playfair) are brothers; Ford and O'Hara's respective brothers appear as minor characters, as well as John Wayne's four children in the race scenes. Victor McLaglen's son served as an assistant director, and Ford's son doubles for McLaglen in the scene where Red Will Danaher falls into the river during the donnybrook.

[50] This gesture is a significant one because it emphasizes another dimension of nonverbal communication to the marital *patois* at work between Sean and Mary Kate. These repeated exchanges or rejections of the phallic stick are also determinative of the fluctuating power dynamic between the pair.

furthermore, "*ní tír gan teanga"*—"there is no nation without a language." This is the first embrace of Hiberno-English speech patterns by Thornton—such as the address "woman of the house" which recalls the Irish word "*bean*," referring simultaneously to a woman and a wife, or even more directly to the phrase "*bean a tí*"[51] that it translates, the substitution of "me" for "my" reminiscent of the Irish possessive "*mo*," and the use of the actual Irish word *tae* instead of the English tea—suggesting that there is finally a linguistic, emotional, and physical union between the pair. They are communicating on the same terms because he clearly did not spend the previous night on the floor.[52] It shows that though he may not be anywhere near fluent yet, he is a member of the community, and thinks of the cottage in particular and Innisfree in general as home.

Other than the stick, this scene is replicated almost exactly in the second novel of Roberts's trilogy, *Tears of the Moon*, in which the appositely named hero, Shawn Gallagher, and his friend and lover Brenna O'Toole make up after a disagreement by curling up in a chair by the fireside.

> "Why don't you come sit with me awhile, Mary Brenna?"….
> She couldn't think of a finer way to make up. After walking to him, she sat on his lap, angling herself so their faces were close. "Friends again?"
> "We ever were."
> "I hardly slept for worrying we'd never be easy with each other again, though I know we promised we'd stay friends."
> "And we will. Is friends all you're wanting to be just now?"
> For an answer she closed the distance between them and laid her lips on his. Her little sigh slid into him, warm, familiar now. He drew her closer, lingering over the kiss, drawing it out soft and sweet, before trailing his lips up to her brow.

[51] And I agree with MacHale that this phrase identifies Mary Kate as "not just a housewife but the mistress and queen of all domestic affairs" (203). Used as a term of endearment and announced while Sean is smelling the roses, it confirms their state of connubial bliss.

[52] In the commentary track for the DVD, Maureen O'Hara clearly declares Thornton "a satisfied man."

> Then he tucked her head on his shoulder, circled his arms comfortably around her….he only held her while the fire smoked and simmered, and the rain flowed in to splat and patter.
>
> Gradually, she relaxed against him, sinking into the comfort and coziness, lulled by the intimacy of silence. (291-2)

If imitation is indeed the sincerest form of flattery, Roberts is clearly presenting an homage to this pivotal moment from the film, which represents the crux of Sean and Mary Kate's dilemma of how to be together while negotiating tradition. The parallel scene serves the same purpose for Shawn and Brenna, who are both struggling with their new roles as lovers instead of merely friends and negotiating the perilous balance of gaining her family's approval, despite Brenna's younger sister's heady and naïve youthful infatuation with Shawn and Mr. O'Toole's concerns about his daughter's reputation and propriety.

Both scenes indicate that cultural mores and social acceptance are as relevant and significant to early twenty-first century Ardmore as they are to early twentieth century Innisfree. As such, while Sean and Mary Kate expressly seek advice and spiritual succor from local clergymen, Brenna utilizes and appreciates the insightful opportunities provided by the Mass and uses it as time to work through her issues with Shawn and her family through prayer and quiet reflection. Equally vital is that both situations depict that *compassion* and consideration are as significant as passion and attraction. Tenderness and sensitivity to one's partner's needs, qualities that the cynic may at first dismiss out of hand, are key in each relationship in the films and the movies.

IX. "*Is Buaine An Focal ná Toice an Tsaoil*": "The Word is More Enduring Than the Wealth of the World"

Despite his initial outrage and offense that Brenna sold the song that he gave her to Trevor Magee, Shawn recognizes that her action indicates that she values his talent and himself more than he gave her credit for and proclaims the air "Brenna's Song" in honor of their engagement. Darcy discovers that prosperity is pleasant but not a sufficient substitute for abiding love, so she intends to throw the wishing-sapphire Carrick gave her into the sea and is instead met with Trevor's profession of devotion when he fears he has lost her. In Roberts's romantic "Otherworld" her lovers do not have to relinquish one jewel of great price at the expense of another.

By the conclusion of *Leap Year*, Anna has realized the error of her ways and her desperation for the wrong man, who could provide all the material advantages she lacked growing up. Instead, Anna chooses Declan, the struggling pub owner she truly loves, who has helped her re-examine her priorities. In their fraught and fractious car journey around Ireland, he pushes Anna beyond the boundaries of her Type A schedule of prescribed social conventions and making her realize that in a crisis, no object in her new fancy apartment in Boston would be a sufficient substitute for her soulmate:

> **Anna**: When my sixty seconds came around, I realized I had everything I ever wanted...but nothing I really needed. And I think what I need is here. And I came all this way to see if maybe you think so too. If you do, well... I don't really have plans past that, which is new for me. So, Declan O'Callghan and I should probably learn your middle name, here is my proposal; I propose we not make plans; I propose we give this thing a chance and let it work out how it works out. So what do you say, do you wanna not make plans with me?

Anna is shattered when Declan leaves her standing in the middle of the crowded pub without a reply and flees outside in mortification, "I guess that's an Irish 'no'."[53] Of course, Declan merely makes a temporary exit to get his grandmother's precious ring, immediately returning to propose and present her with the simple claddagh: "I reject your proposal. I don't want to *not* make plans with you. I want to make plans with you," but not before the audience has been made aware of the newly improved, flexible, and adventurous Anna. She chooses a less financially prosperous life surrounded by a nurturing community as opposed to the expensive but useless technologies that fill her luxury apartment alongside her disingenuous friends, none of which provide the genuine connection that she experienced by traveling and talking with Declan. The one thing that remains from her old life is her taste for designer clothing and her cherished suitcase, "Louis," which accompanies her and Declan on their next adventure, their honeymoon, strapped to the roof of the repaired "Baby".

Marcy and Sean have also become less contemptuous and materialistic. They not only appreciate one another, but their shared values. Marcy clearly rejects the power and advancement she was so adamantly seeking in the aptly-named McGlory campaign because it would come at the expense of her ideals. Furthermore, she allows smarmy campaign manager Nick to publicly reveal his own and Sen. McGlory's lies regarding the candidate's Irish ancestry to an angry and bewildered crowd at the campaign's victory party because Nick has inadvertently left his microphone on as he smugly lectures her regarding their machinations, referring to the re-elected Senator, his co-conspirator, as a "moron." Marcy may be taking the

[53] This is a particularly clever little quip because the Irish language has no words for "yes" or "no", the respondent to a question generally repeats the verb phrase of the question in the affirmative or negative.

easy way out, as Sean recommended, but it is only the best way because her scheming employers earn their humiliating comeuppance.

As much as it is necessary for Marcy to give up her profession, Holly must obtain one. A sign from Gerry inadvertently provides selfish, greedy, needy and impoverished Holly with the new career path that leads to her fulfillment and security, both fiscally and emotionally. Possession of one's beloved, in Marcy's case, or a healthy relationship with his memory, in Holly's, and satisfaction with one's career or unemployment, as a result of inspiration from the men they love (albeit posthumously from Gerry) supersede any of Holly Kennedy's enviousness or any of Marcy's material concerns. Holly is at last able to happily rejoice in her friends' respective marriage and pregnancy, finding a new contentment designing shoes and traveling with her mother. No longer forced to begrudgingly show apartments she can't afford or wear "Marc Jacobs from Minneapolis" purchased from eBay, as she is now a (footwear) designer herself, she can at last let Gerry's ghost rest amidst the peace of her own mind. This shift enables her to repair her relationships with her friends by making Denise's wedding shoes and celebrating Sharon's pregnancy. Fulfilled by at last being fully supported both podiatrically by what she has created and personally by those she loves, Holly begins thriving instead of merely surviving, as signified by her return trip to Ireland with her mother and her implicit reunion with William. While Marcy, despite her unemployment, or rather because of it, can at last be open and carefree enough to let down her guard and let Sean into her life.

X. "*Is Maith An Bhean Í ach Níor Bhain Sí A Broga Di Go Foill*": The Perils of Pastoral[54]

Alas, *The Quiet Man's* fragile Hiberno-English bubble quickly bursts when Sean discovers Mary Kate's absence and her plans to "escape" their marriage on a Dublin-bound train. Or does it? William C. Dowling identifies the five-mile dragging of Mary Kate from the Castletown train station back to Red Will Danaher's house in Innisfree as a "display of mock hostility" typical of traditional Celtic as well as Elizabethan shaming jests acted out to celebrate a wedding and in order manage conflict between kinship groups, like those in the film's obvious predecessor, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Dowling 204). This reading dovetails nicely with MacHale's consideration of the possibility that this sequence—in a film that is full of secret conspiracies—

> involves another conspiracy—this time between Mary Kate and Sean to force Red Will Danaher's hand and shame him into paying the dowry. This seems to be the way Ford directed it and Maureen O'Hara, who should know, told me in a personal interview that this is the way she and the Duke were told to play it as the movie was being shot. (qtd. in Gibbons 87)

Despite the fact that I would normally be reticent to base a theory of interpretation on an unheard whisper of dialogue, the end of *The Quiet Man* does place an emphasis on the private verbal intimacies between a married couple.[55] Moreover, Mary Kate eagerly opens of the furnace door to burn the troublesome money and then proudly declares, "I'll be goin' on home now," after which she boldly saunters back down the hill twirling her hat in her hand. This could easily be

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[54] Literally: "She is a good wife, but she hasn't removed her shoes yet." This particular proverb requires some explanation: because Irish women historically had only one pair of shoes and otherwise went barefoot, it implies that the wife has not removed the shoes worn at the wedding as a bride and settled comfortably into her role as a wife. This *seanfhocail* is particularly problematic because of the further implications it has accrued over time, specifically in the Irish-American community re: the expectation that the ideal wife should be barefoot, perpetually pregnant, and preferably silent. Though often said in jest, it remains an extremely offensive one.

[55] There are other key moments of verbal manipulation that the audience never sees, such as when the townsfolk of Innisfree convince Red Will to give the couple Mary Kate's furniture.

conceived as a wink to the audience, thereby suggesting that she finally "got exactly what she wanted" all along.[56]

While the contemporary feminist may cringe, for Mary Kate, this moment is the antidote to, the recuperation of the five-mile walk of shame. More to the point, heroine shaming—both in earnest and in jest— becomes a recurrent motif of the "Irish Landscape Love Story". For example, Shawn washes Brenna's made-up face before her date with someone else. Gallagher overreacts out of intense jealousy because he desires Brenna and cannot bear to think of her dating another man. Darcy is likewise furious and horrified when Trevor demands to know which of her former lovers painted the provocative mural of her as a mermaid that decorates her bedroom wall. But Darcy rejects the shame-and-blame paradigm immediately, refusing to be ashamed of her sensuality or her body, informing him that her sister-in-law Jude painted the offensive image. Darcy's responses justifiably cause Trevor to regretfully apologize for his presumption in what we would now effectively term the "slut-shaming" of his lover, who pointedly reminds him that she has made no such degrading outbursts or hurtful assumptions regarding his own prior relationships. Although she is writing a traditional romance with the classic "HEA" or "happily ever after"-ending, Roberts works from within patriarchal culture to destabilize assumptions about women and desire, refusing to participate in the denigration or exploitation of an adult woman who is comfortable with her sexuality. Furthermore, each of the contemporary heroines has no qualms about her status as a sexual being, despite what insecurities and judgments others try to project onto them. The pleasure principle remains paramount as they navigate their relationships.

[56] I wrote this sentence and then discovered, aptly enough, that this is the exact phrase Maureen O'Hara uses to describe Mary Kate's walk back down the hill in the DVD's commentary.

If only the pleasure principle were paramount in *The Matchmaker, P.S. I Love You,* and *Leap Year.* These films and even Jude's arduous journey to Ardmore are presented as decidedly un-idealized travelogues, which offers the reader and the viewer significant *schadenfreude*. Marcy endures a grueling journey to Baile na Grá. She is rightfully overwhelmed by jet-lag from her first transcontinental flight, a second flight on a "baby planelet" and then travel on an overcrowded tour bus that crashes on the pier, followed by the cramped quarters of a "bijou" hotel room with low ceilings, a lumpy bed, dingy wallpaper covering thin walls, and a bathroom that she must unfortunately share with Sean and his border collie, Muffy. These events culminate in Muffy urinating on her luggage. Her exhaustion and frustrations are further exacerbated by increasingly humiliating experiences when her efforts to find McGlory relatives during events at the Matchmaking Festival result in unwanted proposals and attempts to match her in spite of her protests. The more forcefully Marcy insists that she is neither an eager nor a willing participant in this town-wide dating game, the more avidly the awkward and desperate suitors pursue her.

Holly likewise endures a seemingly endless series of humiliations: breaking her nose after being forced into karaoke against her will, getting stranded on the lake with her friends during their failed fishing trip, being discomfited by the unexpected presence of a naked William in their rental house, with the feeling exponentially multiplied upon discovering after they make love that he is her dead husband's boyhood friend. She spends the majority of the film resenting her friends' contentment and having extremely uncomfortable encounters with her earnest acquaintance, Daniel, culminating in a liplock he describes as being "like kissing my sister," after which they mercifully agree to just remain friends. Despite these many and varied

disappointments, Holly eventually takes her mother, who has never been "back" to the proverbial homeland, to Wicklow in the hopes that they'll both find joy.

Leap Year even gently mocks the genre's and its own penchant for focusing on romance and charming scenery through Anna's various catastrophic travel experiences and subsequent embarrassments. She must be frequently mortified in order to teach her the hard-learned lessons of excursions abroad: a willingness to surrender to unexpected events with humility and patience and the absolute necessity of adaptability in the face of frequent adversity, for her journey goes nothing as planned. She lives the truth of what I can only describe as the maxim of the globe-trotter, a favorite proverb of mine ever since I learned it, "*Níl íseal ná uasal ach thíos seal agus thuas seal*."—"There is neither low nor high, but down for awhile and up for awhile."

Anna learns it by often getting knocked onto her rear-end and scrambling back to her feet in every way imaginable, both literally and metaphorically. Her flight from Boston to Dublin is oddly grounded in Wales because of a storm; ferries remain docked, so her only way to Ireland is a small fishing vessel that takes her illogically from Cardiff to Dingle through rough seas. Throughout the film's geography, *Leap Year* also follows in *The Quiet Man*'s tradition of an equally fantastic and syncretic *dinnseanchas* or place-lore that mixes or rearranges regional landmarks or allows them to stand in for one another, e.g. Kilmurvy and Dun Aegnus on Inis Mór for the exteriors of Declan's pub on the Dingle peninsula, the Rock of Dunamase in County Laois for one of Diarmaid and Gráinne's ruined "beds" in "Tipperary",[57] showing that is although it is not quite a long way to Tipperary, they are still taking an extremely circuitous and

[57] In the MSS of *The Pursuit,* the site of Diarmaid and Gráinne's first true "marital" bed is actually in the borderzone of Sliabh Eachtaí, between Galway and Clare.

meandering route to Dublin, especially as the wedding reception itself occurs on the moonlit shores of Glendalough in Wicklow.

Once in "Dingle", the local taxi driver passes out dead drunk, so a financially-strapped Declan offers her a room for the night and to drive her to Dublin the next day, hoping to save his pub from foreclosure with her money. Unfortunately, Anna "frie[s] the whole village" in Dingle by plugging in her Blackberry without a wattage converter, destroying her room above the pub and damaging the ceiling below in the process. The fractious early stages of their trip culminate in her stepping in cow excrement in her Louboutin pumps while arguing with Declan, during which she inadvertently pushes his beloved Renault 4, "Baby" into a lake. This scene is followed immediately by the aforementioned luggage theft and rescue.

When they're rushing to make the last train to Dublin after going to the ruin, Anna stumbles and rolls down a rocky and extremely muddy hillside in a torrential downpour. Her ineptitude causes the pair misses that train from Tipperary and be forced to wait for the next day's bus to Dublin. Later, just as she and Declan are about to share a dreamy kiss on a moonlit shoreline after basically gate-crashing the reception, Anna drunkenly vomits all over his shoes and thus ruins both them and the moment. These trials and tribulations also change her for the better, eliminating her materialism and elitism, showing Anna the shallow emptiness of "staging" other's apartments and living up to their expectations, as opposed to fully living her own life free of them, with gusto and a sense of adventure. Over the course of her travels, Anna becomes brave; she learns the value of risk (in taking a chance on Declan, a stranger, as her guide and companion) and its rewards. While the film continues to aggravate and simultaneously titillate the viewer with mounting tension until its concluding scenes when Declan and Anna finally

reunite, seal their engagement with a long-awaited kiss, (implicitly) get married, and set off on another road trip for their honeymoon.

In the midst of the "mock shaming" in *The Quiet Man* a townswoman offered Sean another stick, and yet like the first instance where Mary Kate herself hands him the stick, he still refrains from beating his wife. And yet, at the last, it is Mary Kate, finally ensconced in her position of honor as a wife by the recovery (and burning) of her monetary dowry and more importantly, the reclamation of all her beloved "things," who chucks the phallic stick and the patriarchal oppression it symbolizes. In the words of Brandon French: "Her [selective] break with tradition is epitomized at the end of the film when Mary Kate tosses away the stick, which an old woman gave Sean to keep his wife in line. In doing so, Mary Kate rejects the notion of her husband's mastery, to which the old woman has obviously acquiesced" (qtd. in Gibbons 18). More importantly, immediately before, she whispers an unheard phrase to her husband. While Gibbons explains that "the enigma of Mary Kate's quiet word in Sean's ear has taken on something of the mystery of the Third Secret of Fatima" (87), I would argue that Ford's whole point is that it ultimately does not matter what exactly Mary Kate says—just that she says *something*, and whatever it is, the words are seductive and provocative enough that he chases after her into the house. As Des MacHale explains:

> John Ford always maintained that to be suggestive or erotic, a movie should leave as much as possible to the powerful imagination of the viewer, and that tactic certainly seems to have succeeded in this instance. Nothing Mary Kate actually whispered could be half as suggestive as what people imagine she whispered…it is nice to be chaste, but even nicer to be caught. (244)

In the end, the beauty and significance of Sean and Mary Kate's marital *patois* is that some speech remains private, a language hidden from the audience, so intimate that it must never fall on other ears. Gibbons's mystical comparison is quite fitting, because whatever the suggestion

might be, it has the power to erase any taint of (real or fictive) discord as the pair head into the house side by side, arm in arm, a final emblem of the dreamed-of equality in their marriage.

In all these cases, shaming becomes a critical tool in establishing feminine autonomy, to succinctly paraphrase my earlier quotation of Sedgwick in Chapter 2, owning or claiming one's shame, and recounting it for or displaying it to an audience becomes transformative and recuperative. Each woman experiences various hard knocks from life and criticism from the men in it, learning to adjust and overcome difficulties. These female characters use their resilience to find love in spite of situations that are the antithesis of romantic and Romantic idealism. They remain undeterred by adversity that sometimes borders on the absurd. Ambitions, both personal and professional, become the means of actualizing what Seamus Heaney would later call the *Human Chain* (2011), a chain which he recognizes links us not only to one another but both the natural and the metaphysical worlds we choose to inhabit.

XI. "*An Áit a Bhfuil Do Chroí is Ann a Thabharfas Do Chosa Thú,*" Or, "Impetuous! Homeric!"[58]

Though O'Hara would probably object and the MPAA censors themselves (in Ohio) notably cut the lines of dialogue I just quoted and removed the entire scene in which Michaleen Oge Flynn (Barry Fitzgerald) surveys Sean and Mary Kate's disheveled bedroom and broken marital bed from *The Quiet Man* when it was first released in 1952, in order for Roberts to explore the connections between the erotic and the topographic in *The Gallaghers of Ardmore Trilogy*, her lovers must, and frequently do, take all their clothes off. Deliberately heedless of

[58] "Your feet will bring you to where your heart is."

Michaleen's prohibition to Sean and Mary Kate, "No patty-fingers, if you please!", Roberts obviously focuses on sensual engagement between her lovers within their local environment, describing both their longings and the landscape in great detail. The same level of attention is lavished on the environment and the body simultaneously. The readers come to know the lovers' physical forms in the same way we experience their surroundings. Both are contiguous in one's imagination, and these traversals are exhilarating, erotic. In her response to the honors from the U.S. National Film Registry, O'Hara herself explicitly states that "Ireland herself" is the true star of *The Quiet Man*, and she was never more glorious than when captured for all time in Technicolor in 1952. This is merely an extension of the phenomenon I described in prior chapters, from which this work takes its title: the intimate cartography.

Place and bodily space become so conflated affection for the landscape is matched only by the heart's desire for the beloved who occupies it. The two in tandem gladly surmount and transcend all impediments and borders, as the ultimate erogenous "contact zones". There is a correlation between copious descriptions of the scenery and the copious amount of coitus and foreplay occurring, often out of doors, in both Roberts's novels and the later films:

> The grass was so soft, and he was so warm, To be needed was such a miracle, so much more important than sense and modesty. There was a tenderness in his hands as he stroked her, slowly, slowly, heating her blood, His mouth brushed over hers, whispering promises….She lay naked in the grass, moonlight sprinkling over her….He pressed his lips to her shoulder, then let her hair riot down to curtain his face and smother him with silk and scent. "Lie back on the grass and let me pleasure you." His teeth scraped lightly down the side of her neck as he lowered her again. "I'll give you all I have."….Long, luxurious kisses that shuddered into the soul and drew soft moans from it. And at each moan he went deeper….She lost herself in the delightfully dizzy mix of senses and sensations. Cool grass and warm flesh, fragrant breezes and husky whispers, strong hands and patient lips. She watched the moon soar overhead, a gleaming white ball against a deep blue, chased by tattered wisps of clouds. She heard the call of an owl, a deep, demanding cry, and felt the echo of it leap in her blood as he urged her up and up to that first rippling crest….Then with a sound of triumph, she drew back and threw her

> arms high, "Oh God, I feel wonderful. People should always make love outside. It's so liberating." (Roberts, *Jewels* 307-9)

This excerpt from one of Aidan and Jude's many nights of passion demonstrates that both physical and spiritual intimacy in these texts and films is wedded to intimacy with the natural world. Is it not the logical extension of Sean and Mary Kate's scene in the graveyard, minus the inclement weather and the mid-century mores? Here, at the end of the twentieth century, Roberts presents a couple fully attuned to their own desires, capable of expressing them and acting upon them, and as a result, more fully able to appreciate the beautiful setting they are fortunate enough to inhabit, luckily without interlopers beyond an owl.

Scenes like this beg the question implicit in O'Hara's earlier assertion: is sex sexier when it is obliquely suggested as opposed to when one can directly see it on film or visualize it based on frank narration? While Bhabha objects that "the regime of the *scopic*[59] drive, [t]hat is the drive which represents the pleasure in 'seeing', which has the look as its object of desire, is related both to the myth of origins, the primal scene, and to the problematic of fetishism and locates the surveyed object within the 'imaginary' relation" (*Location* 109), I would argue that is precisely the point in these works. Regardless of whether the intercourse or foreplay is explicitly described/depicted or left to the imagination, both options not only allow the reader/viewer to experience arousal. Irrespective of the characters being physically nude and exposed, they remain emotionally vulnerable to one another, such that the readers/viewers can project themselves into the scene and be both titillated and moved. But more importantly, the premise of

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[59] Although perhaps Thomas Moore's telescopic gaze in the unsung verse of "The Young May Moon" is pleasurable for all concerned:

> the Sage, his star-watch keeping, love,
> And I, whose star
> More glorious far
> Is the eye from that casement peeping, love.

popular romance as a genre is that for the reader or viewer, "seeing" or visualizing the sex is as much about *being seen* and appreciated by one's partner. Reciprocation cannot and thus does not occur in terms of paralytic, one-sided, scopic reification but instead is a result of shared narratological or visual engagement coupled with mutual physical engagement,[60] as these individuals are presented as the fulfillment of both the emotional and erotic desires of their respective lovers. Even the cameras in the films' love scenes use wider, shifting angles to encompass both partners' bodies, rather than use single-perspective close-up to imply one lover staring (what would surely be unnervingly and disconcertingly)[61] at the other.

Though not expressly politicized, sex becomes an ethical act that represents "the forfeit of the will, the insecurity of the debt, the death of the gods, the end of being," meaning an end to false idols or false representations of selfish individualism and mitigating Andrea Dworkin's aforementioned notion of penetration as "occupation." Instead, *intercourse*—with an emphasis on the prefix inter- as among, within, or between—is presented as a commitment to revolutionary becoming and unification over isolation. This is not an understanding of the particular body itself as (stereo)typed male or female, "which as a form of multiple and contradictory belief, gives knowledge of difference and simultaneously disavows or masks it. Like the mirror phase 'the fullness' of the stereotype—its image *as* identity—is always threatened by 'lack'" (Bhabha, *Location* 110). As the work of French shows in Chapter 3 and even the *oeuvre* of Yeats itself within this chapter, the body need not succumb to this threat. Unification and becoming can, I would insist, re-demarcate and ameliorate one's experience or sense of shame or discrimination by what Irigaray terms "risk[ing] the abyss" and asserting

[60] See Chapter 2.

[61] Take for counterexamples the fetishized, burgeoning body of *Lolita* in both Stanley Kubrick's 1962 film and Adrian Lyne's 1997 remake.

through deliberately forgetting, rejecting, and thus dissolving the individualized subject/object dichotomy that "frontiers [spatial, geopolitical, and most importantly, bodily]…belong to no one":

> Arrive at your skin and say to you: come back this way once more, and heedless of the membrane enveloping us, let us embrace once more. And instead of a tearing, let it be a return to something that has never taken place. The embrace of earth and air and fire and water, which have never been wed. Forget the knife-cuts, the chalk-line partitions. Forget the appropriations at frontiers that belong to no one and are marked by arbitrarily solid lines that risk the abyss at every moment. (*Marine Lover* 21)

Whereas I argued in Chapter 3 that Yeats's rhetoric of nationalist desire endeavors to replace the rhetoric of imperial domination by misapplying an equally damaging misogynist mythology and symbology in an effort to reify women in the Irish Free State and woman-as-the-Irish-Free-State, the love in these novels and films seems free of such problematic preoccupations and instead offers insight into *eros* without emotional limitations or physical control, without abjection or subjection, based on realistically-portrayed characters rather than egotistical and self-serving allegorizations. Physical borders become as irrelevant as political ones because love has the ability to transcend them.

There is a dual teleology of characters finding their natural purpose through specific locations and thus, the ideal presentation or preservation of those locations is achieved through the characters' devotion to them and one another. At the same time, I would insist that this chapter should remind us of the significance of the pastoral as a tool of environmental and social obligation and emotional understanding. Furthermore, I want to examine Yeats's use of the mode on the rare occasion when it did not function as a political platform but instead offered an embedded cultural consciousness, which I will address by discussing the poem, "A Prayer for My Daughter" (1919), after briefly surveying relevant ecocritical thought and how all of these

examples promote the kind of loving relationships Irigaray characterizes above. Relationships that resist hierarchies in favor of *desire-archies* that seek to chart progressions of feeling rather than (over)determine them by force or coercion, that endeavor to depict nature and longing while avoiding "rapture more and more rapt with overcoming life" (*Marine Lover* 21). I would argue that they teach us to respect not only one another but spaces and places, all of which are attached to particular histories that must be considered but need not be strictly definitive or delimiting.

In *Modern Painters* (1859), eminent British cultural critic John Ruskin coined the term "pathetic fallacy" to describe the ascription of human emotion to inanimate objects. Though the term "fallacy" itself suggests his intended critique of over-sentimentality, in his discussion "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," Ruskin actually upholds such ascriptions in the verse of Charles Kingsley. He insists that the merit of art lies is in the ability to accurately conjure an image as it is, either with words or brush-strokes, but also that it is the responsibility of the artist to "faithfully" capture the feeling or mood the object produces within him or her by using it symbolically. It is an issue of the veracity of emotion, of the fundamental truth of our response. Based on the *desire-archies* conveyed in these novels and films, I would argue it is a question of fidelity to the essence of how we present the natural world. The phrase has, for all intents and purposes, lost Ruskin's pejorative connotation and has evolved beyond basic personification to specifically refer to the different ways we project our feelings and selves both into and onto the places and spaces we inhabit. Ruskin demanded that disingenuous contrivance be sedulously rejected in favor of offering the authentic experience of the senses. Noted historian and art historian Simon Schama's foundational *Landscape and Memory* (1995) examines the fundamental linkages of physical environment and folk memory, paving the way for locating them in a specifically Irish context in more recent studies like Oona Frawley's *Irish Pastoral: Nostalgia in Twentieth-*

Century Irish Literature (2005) and Donna L. Potts's *Contemporary Irish Poetry and the Pastoral Tradition* (2011). I would argue as Frawley does that these connections hearken to the tradition of Bardic poetry and *amhráin* like "Róisín Dubh" all the way to the explicitly "opened ground" of Heaney and his contemporaries that Potts explores. Both the pastoral mode and the pathetic fallacy not only assert the necessity of our emotional connection to the natural world but also our ethical responsibility of preserving it.

As such, many of the women in these novels and films seek and all ultimately find a stability in their distinctly Irish roots, a connection fixed in the landscape from Old Maude's garden and her flowerbed of transformed jewels to Marcy's breathtaking boat trip to the Aran Islands with Sean and Anna and Holly's respective excursions throughout and final returns to the Irish countryside that has enchanted them. The films provide a visual lexicon to bond feminine identity to the mother country. Only in the latter can the former become actualized effectively. Throughout Roberts's Trilogy, both Brenna O'Toole and Trevor Magee are conscious of this in their designs for and construction of the theatre, that maintain the authenticity of historic Gallagher's Pub through conscientious commercial development, which does not disrupt the architectural integrity of the existing community of Ardmore. Instead, they strive to blend the theatre almost seamlessly into the existing panorama by using local materials and local craftspeople to achieve this effect, modeling a form of what Carrigan calls "sustainable" or "equitable" development. The Gallaghers and their significant others don't just love one another, they love the land and the community.

The connection between landscape, pathetic fallacy, and *eros* is made explicit in the *Heart of the Sea* when Prince Carrick creates a tumultuous thunderstorm to manifest his rage that Trevor refuses to profess his love for Darcy beyond an offhand remark in an email to his mother

which he never intends to send, but magically, mysteriously gets sent anyway thanks to a storm-related electrical surge. The exhibition of Carrick's blazing temper indicate the apotheosis of the fairy prince's baser instincts and his ever-present desire to manipulate all situations involving the Gallaghers to his advantage. Through the use of an identically stormy metaphor, Irigaray conveys how certain incidents demonstrate petulance, neediness, and the way in which the force of one's displeasure is equal to that of his desire, which can result in great damage and turmoil, "Such is the purity of your love. This is what it keeps of age-old destruction. Of insolence and ridicule at the highest hour. For will the hope that hour heralds outlast a thunder bolt?" (*Marine Lover* 23). Though it is perhaps not so for Nietzsche and Irigaray, for Roberts, the answer is a resounding yes.

Despite Carrick's immature tantrum, his outburst evoked in the cloudburst of torrential rain and violent storm ultimately results in good; our hope for love as well as the enduring goodness of humanity survives. The upheaval of the adverse weather and ensuing power outage are doubly fated by the concurrent urging of Lady Gwen's ghost to bring Trevor to Ardmore proper, where he is alarmed by the unusually darkened Gallagher house in the village, he stops to check on Jude, who has unfortunately gone into labor without another soul there to help her. What has been throughout the novels a pleasurable tension of unfulfilled desire and titillation approaches genuine suspense as her labor progresses quickly and perilously. While Trevor, despite his innate terror, soothes her and maintains a calm and authoritative presence by gathering the family from the pub and orchestrating the speedy delivery of Jude and Aidan's daughter, Ailish. The subsequent presence of all the siblings and their partners at the birth and the attendant celebrations and felicitations only further serve to cement the connection between all three pairs, especially when Jude chooses Trevor's mother's name, Carolyn, as her new

daughter's middle name. In every sense, as he had wished, Trevor has fulfilled his destiny by coming to Ardmore, and leaving his mark not only on the place itself but on its people. Collectively, they embody the Irish principle of *comhair* or shared labor, in every sense of the word. Jude and Aidan, Brenna and Shawn, and Darcy and Trevor, like Gwen and Carrick before them, likewise become a part of the particular *duachais* of Ardmore, another term for place-lore, after which Darcy fittingly names the new theatre.

As I mentioned above, of particular relevance to my discussion in this chapter is Yeats's "A Prayer for my Daughter," in which he wishes Anne to be a laurel, classical tree of triumph and status, a tree "rooted in one dear, perpetual place" (ln 48). Pace the notable critiques of my sister feminists, particularly those of Marjorie Howes, Joyce Carol Oates, and Brenda Maddox, but, Yeats's concerns, especially in the face of the Great War and the Irish War for independence, is it such a crime that he wishes for her stability? I think Oates in particular overstates when she claims the poet aspires for his child to be the equivalent of a "vegetable: immobile, unthinking, and placid" (17). Trees offer a much more multifaceted image of the feminine. Particularly in light of the classical allusions in the poem and Yeats's engagement with Irish mythology throughout his *oeuvre*, trees in those modes are endowed with spirits, associated with sprites, wood-nymphs, and of course, faeries.[62] Ruth Salvaggio reminds us that eminent classicist as well as poet and novelist, Robert Graves grounds the language of poetry in the Celtic "tree alphabet" and its inspiration from what Graves calls the "White Goddess" of the moon, while in the Greco-Roman mythology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Orpheus himself, after failing to retrieve Eurydice from the Underworld, sings trees into existence, including the "still unwed" laurel, as consolation for his immense grief (184-5).

[62] See Chapter 3.

Furthermore, trees are given voice in the breezes that blow through them, and in the text this one remains eternally alive and joined with its surroundings via complex root-networks. Trees are profoundly affected by place, bound to it and yet reaching up and outward to the sun. Though stationary in themselves, the wind carries tree seedlings far and wide. They are emblems of both breadth and depth, not merely an object of male "delectation" (Oates 17). Trees are anchors of vitality that offer us oxygen. Often marking what is a critical boundary between the quotidian known world and the Otherworld, trees are no mere delicate flowers, and Yeats dreams of his daughter having the strength to withstand many a coming storm and to wear the proleptic rings of age and matrimony with grace and endurance. In *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, the poem is immediately followed by "Meditation in a Time of War." Yeats hopes that Anne —because the phrase is so apt here I must repeat it—does not merely survive but comes to thrive. By means of what I am terming Yeatsian *arborealistic* discourse—not only in the sense of emerging from trees but also from a realism that is sensitive not only to a particular historical moment but a unique metaphorical and mythological contexts of shelter and succor—the poet wishes his beloved child to be a support and to be supported in what are immensely fraught times.

Although "A Prayer for my Daughter" relies on tradition and convention, it does not, as these critics insist, so deliberately relegate the poet's daughter to a restricted and delimited, utterly passive role as a woman. Interdependence does not necessarily correspond to codependence and permanent helplessness. It may seem be incredibly counterintuitive to Deleuze and Guattari's original claims in *A Thousand Plateaus*, but in the Yeatsian symbolic economy of *arboreality*, trees are distinctly rhizomatic or at the very least offer a nuanced, interwoven representation of sexual union and regeneration (as George Hyde-Lees as well as the

poet himself were both required to create Anne, and her future hypothetical husband will be required to supply their future hypothetical offspring), as opposed to a strictly linear and specifically patrilineal *sui generis* hierarchy.

If read in its proper context as the War for Independence rages, "A Prayer for My Daughter" is a testament to feminine stamina and fortitude, eschewing vanity, frivolity, and vituperation: "For arrogance and hatred are the wares/Peddled in the thoroughfares" (ll 75-76). The merits of womanly *arboreality* are set in stark contradistinction to the Early Modern heedless and intemperate seductions set in lush gardens or dangerous forests, that synecdochally evoke the *vagina dentata,* such as Acrasia in the "Bower of Bliss" in Book II of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) or even later Romantic poems that echo its themes and influenced Yeats earlier in his career, like the temptation represented in the "Elfin grot" (ln 29) of the fairy woman in John Keats's "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*" (1819). Anne Yeats is decidedly not envisioned as the classical femme fatale but a flesh and blood woman of valor and worth. In "A Prayer for My Daughter," her father is expressing a comparable sentiment and hope of a phenomenon that was late rhapsodized in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931), by the character of Susan as she stands in the expanse of a wide-open field in the early morning light, "I am rooted, but I flow" (259); Susan's voice and persona, when joined in Woolf's sensuous and sensual chorale with her nearest and dearest friends and lovers through the shared perspective of their mutual experiences within the novel is figured as at once both autonomous and collective, joined to one another as well as the sea and the earth, contemporaneous and also eternal and echoic. This is what Yeats implies Anne's imagined voice, place, and perspective will be by prefiguring her connectivity within the integral natural and metaphysical network she will ideally create and sustain in her family and community.

Yeats's "[h]orn of Plenty" suggests the riches of a life well-lived and well-loved, as both sheltered and a shelter from harm and hunger of the physical or spiritual variety, rather than a hollow desire for material wealth. We should indeed be appalled by the nature of Yeats's concern regarding Anne's intellectual capacities—heaven forefend she have too many "accursed" opinions— but we cannot fault him for his concern with the state and grace of her soul, which is "self-delighting, self-appeasing, self-affrighting" (ll 56; 67-68). Though this father dreams of a bridegroom, the idea of his daughter's contentment is founded upon her own self-reliance, the inter-reliant roots of compassion and generosity she herself will hopefully establish and nurture throughout her development into womanhood.

The female protagonists of the *Gallaghers of Ardmore Trilogy*, possess myriad opinions and complete agency, and yet, as Yeats would surely have it, they are surprisingly old-fashioned in their wishes for security and comfort, provided by their environment in Ardmore in both the physical and emotional sense. Like Yeats's laurel of a daughter, the novels' three heroines form strong networks of support and vitality that facilitate their professional aspirations, interpersonal connections, and romantic relationships. These networks enable the community to expand, not only in terms of reproduction, but in terms of construction. Brenna, like *The Quiet Man*'s Mary Kate, has found succor and sustenance by remaining in "one dear, perpetual place," a place she helps both mend as town repairperson alongside her father, and build anew as a head contractor on Trevor Magee's theatre project. Roberts shows that women have the option to simultaneously stay rooted and break new ground, both figuratively and literally.

Their stories reinforce the Yeatsian adage, "How but in custom and in ceremony/Are innocence and beauty born?" (ll 77-78). The poet was perhaps addressing innocence in terms of chastity and modesty, but Roberts's novels and the other "Irish Landscape Love Stories" aren't

so narrow and reductive in their purview. Nor should we assume Yeats was so either, after all it is her soul that "recovers *radical* innocence" (ln 66; emphasis mine), addressing not the undefiled state of her body. After all, the primary definition of "innocence" in the *OED* is much broader, "Freedom from sin, guilt, or moral wrong in general; the state of being untainted with, or unacquainted with, evil; moral purity." Moral purity for the romance novelist or the contemporary filmmaker is not necessarily, not even at all, equivalent or even related to being physically inviolate. The closing couplet's benedictory gloss further earns the reprieve: **"**Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,/And custom for the spreading laurel tree" (ll 79-80). Ritual is representative of the blessings of marriage a couple hopes to bestow on one another, its purpose is to enrich each other and encourage the "spreading" links of family and community. Fittingly then, Yeats's ancestral home, Thoor Ballylee, makes a brief appearance as Sean and Mary Kate traverse the countryside during their condensed courtship escapade in *The Quiet Man.* The poem and the scene illustrate that there is beauty in tradition (even as Sean is about to abbreviate it), in promises made in time-honored words, the pledging of troths in multi-generational spaces.

The significance of custom, myth, and location is further evident in the conclusion to *The Gallaghers of Ardmore Trilogy*, which sees all its couples, both actual and mythological, united:

> Music, full of joy and celebration, the lilt of pipes, the herald of trumpets.
> "Look, Darcy." He touched her hair. "Over the water."
> She turned her head, stayed in the circle of his arms and watched. As the sun broke through in the east, shimmered with its light over the sea, turning the sky to a polished glow of seashells, the white horse flew with a flash of wing.
> On his back rode Carrick, his silver doublet aglint, his dark hair swirling. In his arms, her head on his heart, rode his lady, her eyes of misty green bright with love. Up they rose, a triumphant sweep of motion, over green hills shimmering with dew. And in their wake left a rainbow that glimmered like jewels.
> "They're together at last," Darcy whispered. "And happily now, ever after. The spell's broken."

> "That one is. This one…" He turned her face back to his. "It's just getting started. Can you handle ever after, Darcy?"
> "That I can, Trevor Magee." She kissed him, sealed the vow. "I can handle it, and you." While the sun strengthened, they walked away from the sea. The music drifted into the hush of dawn, under a rainbow that arched from beginnings to ever afters.
> (Roberts, *Heart* 368-9)

Aside from the brief implication that the elation of the couples' ardor turns the narrator into a slightly giddy magpie whose eye is immediately drawn to the sparkle of all that glitters, the Ardmore coast is integral to the completion of the narrative, and the imagery, if a bit heavy-handed, dovetails appropriately with the expected end of a romantic fairytale. Love conquers all, with a little musical accompaniment, and of course, a rainbow, token of a Biblical covenant and in the specifically Irish context, does not offer a pathway to material wealth but instead, the treasures of the heart, which we know to be much more valuable.

As Darcy has assuredly said of the dilemma of having to choose between either love/pride or riches earlier in the novel, "I'd find a way to keep both" (Roberts, *Heart* 103). My tone is glib, but this imagery engages with youthful feminine fantasy in such a blatant way, that how could one not be? That in no way diminishes the import of these signpost tropes in the iconography of these novels and films. The effect Roberts achieves here is mirrored throughout the other works from the theatrical bows of the entire cast at the conclusion of *The Quiet Man* when Sean and Mary Kate rush back into the White o'Morn arm-in-arm after a breathy, suggestive whisper to Anna's non-proposal to Declan on the Dingle Peninsula to Holly and her mother's return to Wicklow and a hobbling Sean singing out "Irish Heartbeat" to Marcy over a microphone on a crowded Boston street. The novel only offers a textual equivalent of what the films accomplish visually, albeit one that's more deeply invested in mythologizing all aspects of romance than its counterparts.

Places and spaces, old or new, dear and perpetual, are central to the desirous vocabularies and iconographies in all the novels, films, and Yeats's poetic undertaking, which in this rare instance, is addressing the potential needs and desires of a particular flesh and blood female rather than a poetic abstraction of the nation-state. In "A Prayer for my Daughter," Yeats contends such conventions are the layers of cultural soil out of which we grow and build ourselves. It is not abhorrent to wish a loved one settled on familiar ground and firmly rooted amidst times of uncertainty. He preaches a gospel of bounty and balance that our heroines eventually adhere to, finding themselves "happy." Must we steadfastly refrain from sharing in their joy in all these instances simply because of their normalization of heterosexual love?

The border between cinematic or novelistic fantasy and reality is clearly permeable and functions to present a kind of feminine autonomy or what Regis terms "affective individualism" that is separate from though not exclusive of (at least in Marcy's case) political or activist-based feminism (54, 89). Through messages of empowerment, endurance, and adventure, the female characters do not merely consign themselves to a life of drudgery and "confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags" (Brontë 126), or whatever the modern equivalents of those occupations would be. As Regis delineates in her *Natural History*, modern popular romances stand as representative of the declaration of *Jane Eyre*, "Women feel just as men feel!" Personal autonomy or acts of resistance against restrictive cultural norms regarding sexuality, desire, and the balance of equity in romantic partnerships are social changes just as valuable as political rebellion, regardless of whether or not they end in "companionate marriage," which in almost all of these cases they do (Regis 89). Marcy even stages her own ideological rebellion of one by ultimately resigning from the corrupt McGlory campaign, and it is also critical to the values professed by Sean and Marcy in *The Matchmaker*

that we never see her and Sean marry or even a proposal—their match endures implicitly without a need for such contractual absolutism, focusing on the companionate dimension of connection rather than the formal institution of marriage.

As I have been emphasizing throughout my discussion, the figure of the contemporary woman reading popular fiction solely for the purpose of her own enjoyment needs to be re-evaluated by most critics. Romance as a genre should cease to be an easy target for scorn and shame, surreptitiously concealed on an e-reader or given an intentionally ambiguous title and cover as a book. Furthermore, reading groups or groups of girlfriends who band together to see the latest romantic comedy should not be browbeaten for neglecting their ethical responsibilities to the political or professional sphere or for refusing to participate in what I would insist are ultimately false distinctions between high and low culture. Rather, they should appreciated or at least acknowledged for seeking their own gratification within a genre that as I have shown has made considerable strides in the evolution of how it presents both women and relationships, moving strongly away from the violence and misogyny of earlier examples of the form. Furthermore, the idea of sharing these texts and films with one another creates a space for women to dialogue about their concerns and desires in the context of such narratives and consider how these works reinforce or defy certain cultural expectations regarding female sexuality and personality.[63]

[63] This phenomenon was most recently illustrated by the immense popularity of E.L. James's BDSM romance trilogy *Fifty Shades* (2011-2012), which has now sold over 90 million copies worldwide as of February 2014 (Schneider et al.) The film based on the first novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey* has grossed almost $570 million with future installments forthcoming, and the author has most recently published a fourth title in the series, a retelling of the first novel from the perspective of the male protagonist, Christian, entitled *Grey* (2015).

Conclusion: "*Bíonn Súil le Muir Agus Bíonn Súil le Tír i gCónaí*": "There is Always Hope from the Sea and Hope from the Land"

This section heading is a deliberate modification of a traditional emigrants'' proverb: "*Bíonn súil le muir ach ní bhíonn súil le tír*."—"There is [usually] hope from the sea, but no hope from the land." However, for "reverse" immigrants returning to Irish shores as cultural tourists by choice like those in these novels and films, not fleeing it as the result of Famine or the lack of economic opportunities, Ireland, the island, is the ideal semaphore to represent the erotic union of ocean (the feminine) and land (the masculine), for the love which they each discover on their respective journeys.

In Chapter 2, I previously dismissed Maryna Romanets's use of the phrase "gender inconclusive corporeal landform" to describe the lover of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Oileán*/Island", and in this case my objection stands because cultural discourses about landscape too often rely on conceptions of individuality or the psychoanalytic discourse of feminine absence when they should instead be invested in—to borrow from Seamus Heaney in a way of which theorists of *écriture feminine* like Luce Irigaray would surely approve—"acts of union." The interchange between person and place is not one-sided, but rather interconnected and dynamic. Each work presents an imperfect environment in which the fragile yet absolute power of human connection can still be attained, not in spite of travail and woe, but as a result of it—albeit occasionally with the aid of some Otherworld magic, but more often, with the sheer force of will and desire of the couple who refuses to be deterred by any obstacle set in their path.

Love, we are taught, requires perseverance and compromise, dedication and strength. As Irigaray famously claims throughout her work, specifically in *The Sex Which Is Not One*, we

should say not, "I love you," but "I love *to* you" with the preposition indicating the joyful offering and consenting reciprocation of equals as opposed to a dichotomy of subject/object dependent upon a relation of domination. It is a choice, not an obligation. "I love to you" acknowledges our mutability, our capacity for true transformation when we expose our vulnerabilities to others. It is essentially, "I extend my desire in your general direction, but do not be afraid to move or shift, to alter your perspective or my own" and that act does not diminish my autonomy but rather seeks to increase both of us through union. For example, when Jude at last accepts Aidan's proposal with his grandmother's simple diamond band, he offers it with a promise, "*Belong* to me, Jude, as I belong to you. Build a life with me, on even ground. Whatever that life is, wherever it is, it's ours" (Roberts, *Jewels* 346; emphasis mine). These lovers do not demand (at least not effectively), they interrogate. I mean this both in the sense of critical self-examination and in terms of inquiry regarding the beloved. Connecting the beloved both verbally and physically—creating Third Spaces, Fifth Provinces, or Romantic Otherworlds through language, touch, and landscape, matrices that encourage and sustain longing and belonging to one another—is vital to the respective pairs in each film and novel.

Jude and Aidan's standing as equals, their simultaneous being and longing for and within one another over time, is confirmed in the novel's concluding sentence, "Then, reaching out, reaching forward, she opened the door herself" (Ibid 347). By making herself emotionally available and daring to love, Jude has found contentment beyond measure that comes not only from her beloved but from a sense of her own independence. On the threshold of Faerie Hill Cottage, the special place that has facilitated her transformation from nervy psychologist to confident folklorist, Roberts subtly hearkens back to Jude's dazed and tentative knock on her own door as she is drenched by a deluge of rain. The promise that lay within her new home has

been fulfilled, "Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it will be opened unto you. For everyone who asks receives, and [s]he who seeks finds, and to [her] who knocks it will be opened" (*Matthew* 7:7-8). And so it is, this time, appropriately, in the warmth and light of the sun, and she realizes at last, as the proverbs would have it, "*Doras feasa fiafraí,*"—"Asking is the door to knowledge," and "*an rud nach fiú é a lorg, ní fiú é a fháil*"—"what is not worth seeking is not worth finding."

I have used paradigms from Shakespeare and Yeats to trace discourses of matrimony and establish that these works each epitomize a classical and ethical *pathos* that encompasses a rich history of the pastoral romance that exists both within and beyond simplistic notions regarding "popular" genres because they affirm the at once fixed and flexible nature of desire. This desire also moves both within and beyond time, encompassing both the flesh and the spirit, the field and the ocean, and passionately advocates for the interrelation and integration of geographical and anatomical locations:

> But endless rapture awaits whoever trusts the sea. For as she rises and falls, so one's rapture swells and sinks. Whether the sea is rising or falling, nothing changes in the enchantment of living—moving about endlessly. And does it matter if the sea is pouring over the beaches or sinking back into its bed? Doesn't the one will the other, and the other the one? And isn't it the passage from one to the other that makes for eternal good fortune? (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 13).

Irigaray's diction already implies the linkage of nautical tides and the natural ebb and flow of human pleasure. By using "other" and "one" she indicates her focus on bonded pairs that actually become a unified whole; the shore and the sea exist as a harmonious, transformative coupling that moves beyond the simple dyad, "[s]pread out and open in this endless becoming" (Irigaray, *Marine Lover* 14), particularly for an island nation.

In the final book of the Gallagher Trilogy, *Heart of the Sea*, Roberts employs both oceanic dreamscapes of the Otherworld and the real coastline of Ardmore to figure a principle of synchronicity vis-à-vis Ireland as an island balanced by the union of water and land in the same way the couples in the Trilogy and *The Quiet Man*, *The Matchmaker*, *P.S. I Love You*, and *Leap Year* are balanced by the joining of "masculine" and "feminine" in the act of love**.** Jude reminds Carrick that it is his flowers Gwen kept and nurtured, despite the fact that she had thrice rejected his professions of passion, longing, and constancy. The land itself is fetishized in such a way that its haecceities represent the journeys of the couples toward love, and we are constantly reminded that like its lovers, the land itself has endured dispute, discord, and decolonization, but retains what I have already described as a Yeatsian dimension of moral purity or alacrity, not only absorbing the desires of its people, but pivotally, helping to fulfill them, existing simultaneously as "real" and "mythic". Roberts uses Carrick's final gift to Gwen, the pulsating sapphires that represent the novel's title to illustrate that fidelity or constancy, true and eternal devotion to the beloved, is the final element necessary for a successful relationship when combined with the passion and longing represented by the first two jewel-flowers.

Despite the fact that Aidan and Darcy have travelled extensively, they, like their brother Shawn, and all of their other halves become inevitably rooted, like those same flowers, in Ardmore and establish the seeds of and spaces for generations yet to come by building families and a theatre for the community attached to their legacy pub. Nostalgia is planted firmly in the landscape of Faerie Hill cottage in its past and present of lovers' parted or united from Gwen and Carrick and Old Maude and Johnny Magee to Aidan and Jude, Shawn and Brenna, and finally, Darcy and Trevor, their stories abloom in the emblematical jewel-flowers that permanently adorn its garden. The reader is granted access to the tumultuous cycle from love to heartbreak and

back again, writ large in the mythology and charted through the full progression of seasons from summer to autumn/winter and spring as the arc of the Gallagher Trilogy blossoms.

By creating the proverbial triad of her own based on a legend of her own creation, Roberts adapts traditional forms from orature to serve as metonymies or what Irigaray calls resonant *echonomies* of the progression of each couple's respective desires; *re-currents* of longing enable recurrence and enduring commitment. In the various visual and literary cultural productions I've discussed, a successful relationship requires symbiotic interdependence, not hierarchical control. Self-awareness and consciousness of one's impact on not only the human element but the tangible and emotional environments are key. These couples are as much inextricably bound to one another as to the specific places in which they reside. The ecosystem of desire in these works, like the metaphysical triad concerning Anne Yeats's soul "self-delighting, self-appeasing, self-affrighting," though not always necessarily in that order, and must remain balanced and aware not only of itself but also the needs of others and its place within a larger geo-spiritual context in order to flourish and grow. "If this be error and upon me proved/I never writ/Nor no man ever loved" (Shakespeare, Sonnet 116)

Potato Drills: P(h)antomiming and *Faminizing* the Body in Twentieth Century *An Drochshaol* Narratives

In the previous four chapters, I've addressed the formation of gendered iconography and subjectivity in terms of both the erotic and the abject cartographies across Irish and diasporic cultural productions from the eighth to the twenty-first century and their past and present repercussions for women, men, and the nation-state of Ireland itself, geopolitically, psychosocially, and symbolo-somatically. I will conclude this project by examining the relations between memoir and fiction and how bodily distress in the context of *An Gorta Mór*—widely considered the tipping-point of modern Irish history— complicates individual and narrative agency in re-tellings of the nineteenth century Irish Potato Blights in the twentieth century as it continues to loom large in the cultural memory of the Irish and the Irish diaspora in Nuala O'Faolain's *My Dream of You*, An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire/Fr. Peter O'Leary's *Mo Scéal Féin/My Own Story,* John Banville's *Birchwood,* and Brian O'Nolan/Myles na gCopaleen/Flann O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht*/*The Poor Mouth*.[1] Using the work of Kevin Whelan, Margaret Kelleher,

[1] In this chapter, because of the both O'Leary and O'Brien's respective reliance on different dialectal forms with orthographical vagaries and particular historical contexts and nuanced connotations, in most instances, unless otherwise noted or a literal translation is required or inserted, I have chosen to use the acclaimed translations of *An Béal Bocht* by scholar Patrick C. Power for the Dolmen Press and of *Mo Scéal Féin* by Clare poet, writer, and translator, Cyril Ó Céirín for Mercier Press, who also produced an edition of O'Leary's famous Gaelic version of the Faust myth in the tale of the shoemaker, *Séadna* (originally serialized in *The Gaelic Journal* starting in 1894, published as a book in 1904), supplemented by my own emendations for clarity as necessary. The page numbers t of *An Béal Bocht* in Irish refer to the fourth edition in hardback, the second from Dolmen Press in 1975, from which Power drew his translation and the first printed in Roman script, designated by the inclusion of (*ABB*) for its Irish title, while Power's English translation is cited as it appeared under its English title, *The Poor Mouth* (*TPM*). The page citations for *Mo*

Christine Kinealy and David Valone, Diarmaid Ferriter and Colm Tóibín, I question the limits of historicizing trauma through both collective and personal recollections and accountability or "response-ability" and Foucauldian (often parodic) "counter-memory" as a form of resistance within the process of account-making or what I've described elsewhere in Mahaffey's terms as a "micro-national" approach.[2] My reading interrogates current critical understandings of traumatic memory and (physical, sexual, spiritual, political, and psychological) hunger in regards to the famine years and post-Famine poverty endemic and systemic throughout the *Gaeltachtai* in the early-to-mid-twentieth century. It is my contention that the act of writing an explicitly historicized work— whether fiction, memoir, or fiction-as-memoir— alters each author's narratives and narrators and orients their narratives toward site-specificity. Such a distinction also insists that through these authors' deliberate grounding in the potato fields and "big houses" or cottages of Ireland endeavor to localize as well as engage with both intimate and communal sites of suffering writ large in the landscape itself. For the Great Famine period, undeniably, is also about a kind of linguistic "death" or marginalization that requires bereaved and/or comedic memorialization of the passing away and exodus of so many millions of Irish-speakers. As such, these four works perhaps offer occasions for self-transformation and transformation of the reader's perspective on *An Gorta Mór* as

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Scéal Féin in Irish refer to the 1915 edition text published by Brún and Nuallan and are included in Roman script for purposes of clarity, though originally printed and retaining the non-standard orthography of the original in Gaelic script, such as the titular "scéal" being printed as "sgéal", designated in the citation (O'Leary) and Ó Céirin's English translation designated by abbreviation as (*MSF*).

[2] See especially Kelly Oliver's *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* and Butler's *Giving An Account of Oneself* discussed previously in Chp. 2, as well as the politics of address or the lack thereof in Butler and Anthanasiou's *Dispossession: Performing the Political* 66-68; 92-96; 104-126, also discussed throughout this chapter. On "counter-memory," in addition to "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" cited here, see also "What Is An Author?" and "Theatrum Philosophicum," all in Foucault's *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (1977). For an extended discussion of "micro-nationalism", see Chapter 3.

one endeavors to unearth the past from the chthonic depths of the land and the language. These authors question whether language in the face of mass death is a necessary, integumentary form that endeavors to preserve the malnourished or debilitated body and successfully commemorate individual and collective losses, whether it can offer a means of protection when all biological systems fail. Can it and the other arts remain to memorialize and effectively cope with cultural and corporeal remains?

Through the infamous clause that bears his name in Irish Poor Law legislation (1847), Sir William Gregory denied relief measures to tenants who owned more than a quarter of an acre, unless the family relinquished its land. In Colm Tóibín and Diarmaid Ferriter's "documentary" book on *The Great Famine* (2001), Tóibín speculates that the Gregory's famous home, Coole House and is Park, must have been haunted by the specters of the Famine and subtly implies that Lady Augusta Gregory and W.B. Yeats's desire to collect Irish legends, orature, and folklore that as Yeats says arise "from contact with the soil" (qtd. Tóibín 3), was in fact facilitated by Sir Gregory's own prior obsession with soil, or more rightly, increasing his and other landlords' holdings, prior to his death in 1892. Coole House itself was demolished in 1941, only its plinth remains, but the initials of Lady Gregory, W.B. and Jack Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, several other members of their circle can still be found carved into a copper beech that is not far from where the domicile once stood. In Chapter 4, I discussed the importance of trees in the symbolic economy of Yeatsian verse, but here a real tree endures as a literal marker of the impact of the Yeatses, the Gregorys, and the others not only on the scene literary and artistic culture but the scenery of Ireland itself, as the legacy of both the Famine and the big houses that would in turn engender the

Celtic Revival, sings through its boughs and remains rooted in the earth even to the present day, representative of an *echonomical* and revenant phenomenon that is replicated in both Banville's and O'Faolain's novels, regardless of whether the estates themselves remain. The shape and landscape of Ireland is still marked by memory, from woods of copper beech and birch to untilled fields nevermore to be planted and crumbling edifices of what was once meticulously-laid stone. The feminization and fetishization of place and space which I have been discussing throughout this work pivots again into the realm of desire and longing, but it is one that derives from hungers: material, physical, and spiritual, that rage unabated by the lapse of over a hundred and sixty years.

What Garret O'Connor and Deborah Peck refer to as the "malignant shame" and the "transgenerational trauma" of the Famine is a lingering psychological consequence of the experience of occupation for both the (ex-)colonizer and the (de-)colonized *(Ireland's Great Hunger Vol. I* 14). Historian Joseph Lee has described "the instinct of inferiority….feelings of self-deception, begrudgery, contempt for authority, lack of self-confidence and poor leadership" have arguably been exacerbated by the Famine ruins that mark the landscape as well as, I would add, by the post-Celtic Tiger "ghost estates"[3] that similarly mark sites of socioeconomic and personal collapse (Ibid 15). David Valone and Christine Kinealy point out the reticence of government officials in the nineteenth century to use the word "famine," or a translation of the Irish "hunger" designated especially great to distinguish it from other crop failures that had occurred at intervals since 900 A.D., preferring instead more exculpatory terms like "*distress, destitution, extreme destitution, calamity, or suffering*" (*Ireland's Great Hunger Vol. I* 17), and

[3] See Tana French's fourth novel, *Broken HarbourHarbor* (2011).

though at various points in my discussion, I will use all those as well as other terms, such diction is not meant to minimize or misrepresent the events portrayed in these texts, but rather to give them more depth, shade, and nuance: "While [Hunger] captures more of the human dimension of the tragedy, the use of the word *famine* more fully conveys the political dimension of food shortages—especially in regard to food distribution and entitlements. Famine is never just about foot shortages but is ultimately about political choices and decisions, and what happened in Ireland in the 1840s is a clear case of this" (Ibid). Whatever vocabulary one uses and whether written in Irish or English, these texts explore the constellation of experiences around *An Gorta Mór*, as well as what novelist Sean Kenny reflects on as its larger sociocultural and psychospiritual relevance, "a Famine repressed breeds an incipient hunger of its own, a hunger to know, to grieve, to hold accountable, to resolve, and to honour" (qtd. Ibid). It is in the interest of addressing these hungers that in the absence of photographic records from the period, I link these texts imaginatively to the figures of Irish-born artist, Francis Bacon (b. 1909),[4] as well as to the Famine orature of the 1940s Folklore and School Surveys, both presenting the visions and recollections of those, in many cases, merely a generation removed from the period of *An Drochshaol*.

While Banville and O'Faolain's "Famine memoirs" as novels or blended with contemporary fiction represent a postcolonial perspective, admittedly, not in Banville's case, temporally so, but in the sense that he portrays Ireland as having fundamentally reached a point of imminent and immanent breakdown when British imperial dominion,

[4] For more on Bacon in an Irish context, see Luke Gibbons's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* (2015). For more on the complexities of Famine representations with regard to Irish art history in general, see Emily Mark-FitzGerald's essay in *The Great Hunger Vol. II*.

in failing to prevent—and as many would argue—actively contributing to this calamity, has by operating at a remove through their officials and landlords, wreaked havoc, most especially upon their subaltern subjects. This perspective suggests at best, a willful ignorance and at worst, a genocidal obliviousness on their part that actively engenders the resistance Gabriel Godkin himself encounters during agrarian agitation prior to and presumably including the Land Wars with the Molly Maguires and other militarized Fenian groups. At the *fin-de-siècle* of the twentieth century, O'Faolain employs a mindset that questions the notion of just how far, if at all "post" the colonial Ireland is and joins it with concerns about gender and sexual liberation, in particular by co-opting an outmoded early second-wave feminist rhetoric of women's victimization for both its would-be-novelist protagonist and her subject/heroine, with the former's account of the latter interpolated with italicized "facts" from testimony and other records of the infamous Talbot divorce case.

In reading these two figures, Gabriel especially, it is necessary to distinguish between Freud's concept of primary narcissism, a normal stage of child development when an infant cannot yet distinguish between itself and the outside world, from which one would progress, and pathologized secondary narcissistic disturbance in which a subject regressively withdraws libido or desire from the outside world and directs it instead at the self, becoming enamored of his or her own ego or "mirrored shape" ("On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914) qtd. O'Connell 5). Mark O'Connell follows Annie Reich in her assertion that the narcissist is preoccupied by the phallus and functions within a totalizing "body-phallus fantasy" to allay castration fears that subsequently attach to the whole body and further extend to shame regarding female genitalia as

“destroyed, bleeding, dirty, etc.” (6-8). What Heinz Kohut refers to as “selfobjects”, as O'Connell observes concerning Banville's complete *oeuvre*, serve as a way of comprehending how Gabriel's “ego incorporates elements of alterity within itself”, and the ways in which trauma or a lack of “optimal frustration” can produce a relation in which “the preconscious center from which these characterological disturbances emanate is the sense of an incomplete reality of the self and, secondarily, of the external world” (qtd. O'Connell 9). Extending O'Connell's engagement with Reich and Kohut, I will show how Reich's principle of ”magical denial” as a feature of narcissism coupled with grandiosity as well as exaggeration in response to trauma or loss is what facilitates Gabriel's construction of *Birchwood* as a meta-narrative, magic-realist (con)fabulist text and the estate itself as the repository/object of desire, because it too is a selfobject or *selfspace*, that permits a further turn inward, back to the site and scene of the familial incest that precipitates or at least exacerbates the admixture of self-loathing and self-aggrandizement Godkin exhibits throughout the novel. The now-abandoned Big House, though nominally part Kohut's “external world,” is nonetheless explicitly a world of Gabriel's creation, a dominion entirely devoid of other inhabitants, but in which he still struggles to exercise mastery over his own narrative and persona(s). Gabriel's profound failure to attain unity within himself and his further displacement within the bio-ecological crisis of the Famine necessitate his narrative as compensation in the face of numerous personal and epistemic disasters.

These theories also provide an abundantly useful psychoanalytic context to the events of the novel, such as Gabriel's sexual interactions and limitations concerning women. He feels unmitigated terror in regard to both The Feminine and The Famine;

through his narrative, Banville depicts both the vagina or as Gabriel prefers to call it, the "cunt" and the devastated Irish landscape as the ultimate aporia, the gaps from which Gabriel may emerge physically but from which he can never emerge psychologically. In this instance, it is evident that the penis of the narcissistic subject's body-phallus is rendered both flaccid and profoundly irrelevant, as is vaginal intercourse itself. Gabriel as body-phallus, in my reading, becomes penetrative in other registers and with other organs, through trying to penetrate or join a different social class as what I have already described using the terms of Michael Tratner as a form what we would now identify as "class tourism" or more rightly, as "poverty tourism"; through effectively penetrating or reaching the collective consciousness of the audience as a circus performer and the reader as a writer; through "penetrating" or exploring the Irish landscape beyond his homeplace, through penetratively fathoming or repudiating "reality" in his insights and obfuscations; through the use of his hands on Rosie, Mag, and of course, on Birchwood itself; and most significantly, through the final interpenetration or doubling of his own consciousness with the *phantasimago,* if you will, of Michael.

Gabriel's silences and the ellipticality of his narration further represent what psychologist, Deborah Peck has described as the "unthinkable history" of the Famine (*IGH* Vol. I 143). She interprets colonial Ireland as a "borderline society," which is related to borderline personality disorder,

> a term attributed to a pathological condition for individuals hovering on the border between reality and psychosis…characterized by a tendency to perceive and react to the world in emotional extremes, that is, as all good/bad. Hence, borderline refers to the demarcation between sanity and insanity. In the mid-nineteenth century, religious and class differences formed these "borderline societal separations"…[which] a whole group of people can recognize and respond to in psychologically stereotypical ways. It is these psychologically

> determined roles and responses that are at the heart of oppressive systems. (Ibid 147)

I've already made a point of addressing the liminalities throughout Irish literature directly in the context of visions of the Otherworld as a space of affective discharge in the previous chapters, but through Banville, Gabriel once again limns the consequences of a stratified society on an individual level meant as a synecdoche or metonymy of the collective phenomenon that Peck details above, reinforced by the event of the Famine itself. As such, Gabriel must displace his own emotional deficiencies onto women in the same way the bodies of actual famine victims were supposedly feminized in their weakness. In *Birchwood*, no major female figure survives, and in real-life as in *My Dream of You*, Marianne McCausland Talbot is removed from her life at Mount Talbot to endure a future in which she was not only an impoverished pariah but also, for all intents and purposes, the Anglo-Irish equivalent of the Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "Madwoman in the Attic," and Godkin himself quite literally raves and writes in Birchwood's increasingly decrepit attic.

Birchwood is not simply an examination of what happens when the borders between the "real" world and the Otherworld disintegrate entirely—it explores and exploits a constitutive tension between "the real" and "the abstract" or the imaginary also evident in Bacon's *oeuvre*—where the world is both simultaneously rather than one or the other. Brendan McNamee offers a useful survey of criticism prior to his work in *The Quest for God in the Novels of John Banville* (2006) and focuses on the juncture of mysticism, specifically apophatic discourse, notable concerning Banville, in my view, because it also offers a spiritual and precursor of and philosophical correlative to Keatsian "negative capability" which McNamee only makes passing reference to in his

conclusion. McNamee allies apophaticism to (post)modern stylistic forms regarding what he explores throughout Banville's oeuvre as a dialectical tension between articulable "significance" and (perhaps the lack of or otherwise ineffable) "meaning" or simply put "language's inadequacy *and* its necessity" (21). On a psychological or psychoanalytical level, this results in Gabriel's dissociated and disjointed magic realist narration. As he says, "How would I explain, I did not understand it, but it was as if in the deep wood's gloom I had recognised, in me all along, waiting, an empty place where I could put the most disparate things and they would hang together, not very elegantly, perhaps, or comfortably, but yet together, singing like seraphs" (Banville 25). I further contend that the novel demonstrates what happens when the borders of one's personality dissolve so profoundly that the very "reality" of another character, i.e. Michael Godkin, becomes questionable.

For Gabriel, who ultimately admits and acknowledges that Michael is his twin and not his cousin, is beset by a "terrifying notion that there was ahead of me, as far as the duration of that momentary hesitation, a phantom of myself who mimicked my every movement precisely, but in another time, another world" (Banville 94). His abject dissociation and his involution combined with other signs of familial distress, including madness, incest, the selling off the estate because of Joseph's gambling debts to the "Gaddern swine[who are] crowding [them] on three sides and the sea at [their] back" (Banville 55), all of which causes Gabriel to run away from Birchwood.[5] O'Connell

[5] The "Gaddern swine" is an inverted reference to Christ's casting out of demons of a Gadarene man into a herd of pigs that then plunge off the cliff into the sea. See *Matthew* 8:28-34, *Mark* 5:1-20, and *Luke* 8:26-39. In Matthew's gospel the unclean spirits possess two men, in Mark and Luke, only one, which is interesting in light of my discussion of Gabriel's split or doubled persona as Michael. It also suggests, of course, that the demons of the Irish are "Legion," and will dovetail with point regarding historical racist speciation that gave rise to O'Brien's concern in *An Béal Bocht* regarding the supposed similarities between the Irish and pigs. In *In the Woods,* Det. Cassie Maddox also quips to her former partner, Rob that the

notes this as movement from the gothic and even farcical elements of the Big House novel to a picaresque quest narrative (72).

Additionally, Banville's protagonist frequently transgresses the instantiated cultural and psychological borders of Irish culture, which in turn, further destabilizes him emotionally, and it is only the substantive presence of the Birchwood big house itself that (re)assures Gabriel of his own existence. Gabriel presents on an individual level the memory distortions, confabulations, and survivor's guilt represented on a larger scale in the historical accounts of emigrants and other survivors who remained in Ireland (Peck, *IGH Vol. I* 167). And yet, whereas those émigrés and remaining survivors most often deliberately minimized the impact of the Famine, Gabriel's dissociation and "myth-making" regarding his own experiences actually amplifies the Famine's impact because they are rich in detail and replete with desperation, pain, and violence that the reader can recognize clearly, perhaps all the more so, because Gabriel repeatedly acknowledges his own inability to cry or otherwise emotionally engage until finally returning to a broken Birchwood. He inverts the Resurrected Christ's initial prohibition of "*noli me tangere*"—"touch me not"—to a repetitive need for tactile contact, at first with female bodies through the manual penetration of vaginas or as he refers to them, "wounds"—which prove unsatisfactory and unfulfilling—to a primal need for a grasp of reality that can only be derived from the materiality of Birchwood itself: "I had to see everything, touch everything [in the house], as if by those contacts alone did I exist" (Banville 167). Gabriel's repeated fetishization of the estate reinforces Banville's critique of the Big House novel as a genre and a form that prioritizes property over all else, and his version

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name of her stalker at UCD was Legion, implying that the experience of gendered harassment and sociopathy is not individual but all too common, especially in policework. See Chapter 3.

emphasizes instead the genuine social turmoil that resulted from the colonial system, a kind of space- and land-lust, often overlooked or deliberately elided in earlier texts.

Banville undermines the Godkins' skewed notions of false propriety in the face of their iniquities and exposes their hypocrisy throughout, most evident in the "secret" of the incest plot and the necessity of giving Granny Godkin's scorched feet an elaborate full coffin, especially during a time when many were buried without the dignity of a coffin or even worse, in a mass plot or "Famine hole". In addition, Cathal Póirtéir's selections of the English-language historical lore from the National Folklore Collection, *Famine Echoes* includes two instances of communal "bottomless coffins" from folk memory (183, 193), which are similar to the Magnus and Silas' seemingly outlandish tales about the "exploding" or "false coffin," which the surviving circus members discover, is awful and all-too-real, not a grand trick but a shoddy necessity (Banville 114, 140). Banville deliberately mixes folk memories surrounding the Famine into his texts and even acknowledges the reader's as Gabriel's own skepticism surrounding such a creation through what begins as a joke amongst the circus-folk that speaks to larger anxieties about the lack of funeral rites at the time and the general desperation and cessation of social norms:

> The people had no food down there, they were eating grass, the bark of trees, dried leaves. Children were seen gobbling fistfuls of clay. Bands of savage-fanged hermaphrodites stalked the countryside at night killing and looting. Some said they ate their victims. These preposterous stories made us laugh yet filled us with a quiet terror which we could not admit to ourselves or each other. The admission would have made it worse, and so we played at exaggeration as a means of keeping reality at bay. It did not work. Reality was hunger, and there was no gainsaying that. (Ibid 140)

Other than the hermaphroditic Gothic vampires that would eventually appear in Le

Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871) and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), almost all of these examples recur in historical accounts, Famine lore, and literature. The "exaggerations," of course, like Fr. O'Leary's own telling of the semi-proleptic "joke" in *Mo Scéal Féin* about Síle Ua Buachalla's sincere worry over her mother serving the family gravel, are based on grisly desolation in the struggle to survive that was factual, as undeniable as the gnawing hunger within and the emaciated faces without; hunger that all too often resulted in death. As Peck observes, "Where are the Famine dead buried? How could a million bodies have disappeared in a country the size of Massachusetts? Why are there no markers?" (*Ireland's Great Hunger Vol. I* 162). There is perhaps no cartography more intimate than the one for which there are almost no clear maps and few visible markers, one that in turn, permeates an entire nation.

This lack of markers is emblematic of the inability to effectively process such staggering mortality, evident when Gabriel buries his father:

> …I hauled him up the ridge and dug a hole among the birch trees, cursing the rocky ground and the blunt spade and the dead weight that nearly pulled me with it into the grave. I covered him up, and tried to think of a prayer I might say, not that I thought there was anyone to hear it, but that it might lend a touch of solemnity to this farcical ceremony. All that crimson death [of poppies] sprouting around me in the sparkling green morning had made me light-headed. I could remember no prayers, and so a song, the only one I knew, had to suffice.
>
> O there's hair on this
> There's hair on that
> And there's hair on my dog Tiny
> But I know where there's plenty of hair—
> It cheered me up, standing there weeping and giggling[….]
> —On the girl I left behind me! (Banville 168)

Gabriel's denial and flat or ebullient, inappropriate affect as a narrative effect facilitate the reader's own sense of traumatic numbness and the vastness of the damage to the population as a whole as metonymized through the death of many people in the novel

whose individual particularity (and peculiarity) further engenders sympathy, and it all comes back to a vision of the Irish world as blighted vaginal void. Thus, we are offered both the macro-national perspective of 1.2 million deaths and what I've already described as the "micro-national" or localized "counter-memorial" perspective tied to the novel's radical specificity regarding family, community, gender, and place.

This dual perspective also occurs in each of the other main works I examine in this chapter, with *An Béal Bocht* being especially representative of what Peck describes as the "silent hunger" or "dissociative stage" of collective trauma memory from 1900-1960 (155, 166), in that it mimetically restages many of the conditions of that trauma, such as continuing poverty and colonial violence without ever directly addressing the historical legacy of that suffering, deflecting and displacing it, in fact, through an absurd comedy of Bónapárt's errors, including the sudden death of his wife, Nábla, and his son, Leonard, an infant who despite his given name, lacks leonine fortitude. *An Béal Bocht* is essentially a (post-)Famine narrative largely devoid of The Famine itself, but instead filled with its continued, long-term dire socioeconomic and cultural consequences. Similarly, in *My Dream of You*, Curly Flannery, a ninety-two-year-old man and local hero during the Irish War for Independence claims that, "There was no famine in these parts," and Kathleen and Bertie discuss the long-held belief that Mount Talbot is cursed:

> They often deny there was a famine, the old people, Bertie said softly. They don't want it talked about. It's better to stay silent about misfortunate….They knew at the time that a curse had been brought on the place, [Bertie] went on. It was always said that the night Mrs. Talbot was put out, the old nurse that lived in the house that was a bit of a witch said, The crows will fly through the rooms of this house yet! And there you are—
>
> He pointed up on the slope. The lone bell from the Mount Talbot stable yard stood gaunt against the sky.

The crows do fly through it, he said. (O'Faolain 480-1)

Like the lore, looting, and the eventual razing of most of Mount Talbot for the locals of Ballygall, Prospero's[6] circus offers a kind of controlled chaos and affective release for the performers, the audience, and Gabriel because "[l]ike our audiences, [he] also wanted to dream" (Banville 112), that is not otherwise available to other Famine victims, which is also embodied in their circuit of travel with Gabriel that brings them back to a now almost-unrecognizable Birchwood.

In its tripartite *bildungsroman* structure, the novel is comparable to Bacon's triptychs, "These figures, not absorbed by their surrounding forces, are rather amplified by them, resonating with them, even at the cost of their own dissolution. They form a circuit more than a line; they address something that moves through them, a torsion, as it encounters and transforms the body" (Grosz 23). Gabriel peripatetically moves around the countryside and ages (though how much exactly we cannot say for sure), but time itself is undefined and non-linear, non-chrononormatively resistant to any sense of progression, as the text is recounted with the benefits and detriments of hindsight from a site of profound paralysis. As Eve Walsh Stoddard observes, "The space of the estate serves as a focal point for relations between the past and the present" (10). Such circularity figures the recursiveness of the past in the present in the novel, the past that "exceeds [its] bounds" (Grosz 14), much like the faminized and Baconian body itself and the futility of Gabriel's desire to escape his family and shirk his duty as a landlord.

[6] Prospero is obviously named after the wicked sorcerer *The Tempest*, who holds a mystical island in his thrall, in this case, Ireland. Just as Shakespeare's Prospero (with)holds the answers to his daughter Miranda's past, so Banville's unseen magician Prospero is presumed to hold the keys to Gabriel's, as the supposed possible father of Michael. Apropos to Gabriel's time of famine, Sbakespeare'sShakespeare's Prospero also uses his spirits to set a feast before his exhausted enemies that ultimately disappears when Ariel descends like a vengeful harpy (III.iii).

Although his initial defection from Birchwood with the circus might at first indicate that Gabriel functions as Albert Memmi's "colonizer who refuses" he nonetheless fundamentally cannot experience the "erasure of unconscious attitudes and assumptions which frequently surface and reveal the 'refuser' to share many of the fundamental assumptions of the class of one's birth", to which, Gabriel ultimately returns to take up his inheritance and all the emotional colonial baggage and remaining property attendant with it (qtd. Stoddard 14). And while the torsions of the famine may not completely destroy Gabriel's body, it erodes all of Ireland, specifically Birchwood, which acts as "a deformation [or marking of] the outside that transforms it inside" (Grosz 26). The landscape alters, in addition to Gabriel's mind and perception—but whether "sane" or not—his transformation ultimately reinforces his sense of obligation to the estate itself and all it represents within the disappearing Anglo-Irish community and for him personally as a haven.

The (de- and re-)formation of place and space in the context of the trauma of Famine gestures toward the discourse of the gendered body, as suggested by Margaret Kelleher's excellent study, *The Feminization of Famine* (1996), which addresses depictions of women in literature from the Famine period itself in the 1840s through the sesquicentennial as well as the literature surrounding the Bengali Famine of the 1940s. Kelleher follows feminist critics like Alice Jardine and Jacqueline Rose as acknowledging the frequent representation of the feminine body as the vehicle of the inexpressible or unfathomable, "the Lacanian *'pas tout'* or 'point of impossibility' in any system" (6). Naturally, Kelleher also ascribes to a Kristevan position on the sheltering body of the mother (and implicitly Mother Nature) as an ostensible source of protection

and succor that instead becomes tied to the abject or "'the unthinkable', extending from the mother's inability to feed her child, to cases of abandonment, desertion, even infanticide" (7).

What's more, the political and cultural *mythoi thus relate* the suffering of women to the feminine State and a horrifying vision of both the *cailleach* as well as the *spéirbhean* iterations of the Irish mother-goddess. As Athanasiou claims, "...dispossession as a way of separating people from means of survival, is not only a problem of land deprivation but also a problem of subjective and epistemic violence; or put another way, a problem of discursive and affective appropriation, with crucially gendered and sexualized implications" (*Dispossession* 26), most especially as they relate to the historical, textual, oral, and iconographic repertoires of femininity and Irishness that I have addressed throughout this work. Kelleher further notes the presence of "'walking dead'...children prematurely aged" and emaciated by starvation or with their mouths contorted in a rictus and "stained green from eating grass" (8). This is a motif evident throughout historical Famine lore, as in the account of Ned Buckley (i.e. Ua Buachalla) from Cork: "She was found dead…on the roadside with a miserable child trying to suck at the dead breasts of the mother and the mouth of the poor corpse was smeared with green slime to show that the poor woman was existing on grass and weeds" (qtd. Póirtéir 95). Woman as a signifier of Ireland in the context of *An Gorta Mór* is at once foundational and forsaken, productive and destructive, conquerable and permeable yet nonetheless incomprehensible and untouchable (in the sense of bodying forth and manifesting a landscape that is the site of otherwise inexpressible taboos).

O'Faolain's own psycho-political gendering of famine as inherently feminine,

which in the Lacanian or Freudian sense of the feminine is defined by lack—whether that be of a penis or in this instance, sociopolitical autonomy. "To be colonized is to be feminized, is to be a body acted upon, a category always already dependent on the inferior status of women. To be feminized is to be passive, relieved of agency, of political leadership, and voice" (Stoddard 13). Such fundamental absence is not purely figured in psychoanalytical terms by Kathleen's imagining and thus re-enacting Marianne Talbot's victimhood, but it also occurs because of the cultural prohibitions of de Valera's Ireland, concerning democracy and the rights regarding one's own body for author/protagonist Kathleen Burke/de Burca. Indeed, "de Valera's Ireland" operates as a "necessary condition for the...self-constitution of 'contemporary Ireland'" and its emergence as the antithesis and rebuke of the former (Cleary, *Outrageous Fortune* 6). Kathleen, even more indiscriminately and reductively, employs "Ireland" as a signifier of generalized conditions of socioeconomic and psycho-cultural depression and oppression, generally with little regard to temporal or other relevant historicizing nuances, as if there have been almost no such epochs or minimal shifts since the watershed of the (post-) Famine period.[7]

As a result, Kathleen perpetually finds herself wanting in all aspects of her life and invests or projects that same *ennui* and longing, which is ultimately a failure of belonging, in/on-to her portrayal of Marianne. As Marina Warner asserts, "On to the

[7] In this spirit, I will also strive to unsettle the pervasive and overdeterminative autobiographical tendency throughout criticism on O'Faolain's novels as variations on or extensions of her two memoirs (Stoddard, inter al.). While there are certainly overlaps between O'Faolain's life and de Burca's, this seems to me an all-too-simplistic paradigm of protagonist of meta-narrative as automatically equivalent to and inherently inseparable from the author, which is as reductive and problematic a conception as single or monolithic Truth, especallyespecially in the context of the events of *My Dream of You* itself with regard not only to Kathleen, but her approach to the personage and figure of Marianne Talbot.

female body have been projected the fantasies and longings and terrors of generations of men and through them of women, in order to conjure them into reality or exorcise them into oblivion" (qtd. Kelleher 8). In spite of the fact that Kathleen has long been physically absent from Ireland through her work as a travel writer for a British-based TravelWrite service, she remains psychologically grounded— as in buried or mired—in the predominant and restrictive mindset regarding the role of women (or lack thereof) in the public discourse and milieu of the Ireland of her youth. She continues to be confounded in her efforts to write a full novelization of Marianne Talbot's presumed life as a desperate and lonely erotic being during the Famine because she herself cannot overcome the oppressive class and sexual mores of the mid-twentieth century during which she came of age, even as the new millennium beckons. Thus, she reflexively figures both Marianne and herself as neurotic casualties of patriarchal culture, never to feel pleasure free of guilt, condemned to adulterous and thus unsatisfying liaisons, forbidden from experiencing sincere contentment for more than a moment.

Fr. O'Leary's *Mo Scéal Féin*, on the other hand, is a well-respected factual autobiography written at the turn of the last century well-before even the term "memoir," much less the term "postcolonial," had become *en vogue*. It bears no discursive preoccupations with either established gender norms nor concerns about the (in)fallibility of anyone's narrative but that of the Pope himself, certainly not the possible imperfections of a personal history functioning as an *ex cathedra* cultural and linguistic one. Nonetheless, much like O'Faolain and Banville, O'Leary employs meta-narrative framing and the invokes the power of orature to tell stories-within-stories about the Hunger, the kind of sorrowful tales O'Brien would later mercilessly mock in *An Béal*

Bocht to wide acclaim. Whereas O'Faolain and Banville's respective fantasies use projection and doubling to focus on the woe-begotten, O'Leary's approach is forthright, but also with its pieties undercut by a bleak humor—as real historical privations are figured as jokes from the mouths of babes—than O'Brien's wicked satire of the Irish-language memoir as a purely didactic genre seemingly credits "An tAthair Peadar," as he is widely if somewhat derisively known.

O'Leary's slip of a chapter recounting the Hunger combines the darkly comic and the Gothic, beneath the macabre mockery remains the genuine horror of real displaced, disfigured, dismembered, and otherwise unremembered bodies from a distraught community coping with massive losses. Peck notes in her assessment of the emotional and behavioral "defenses of the oppressed" that these include "persistence of a separate language," "[a] great capacity to endure suffering", and "humor used as indirect anger", all of which are pertinent to my reading of both *An Béal Bocht* and *Mo Scéal Féin* (149). All four of the main texts in this chapter exploit the overlap of various kinds of appetites, notions of predestined pain or retribution and Divine salvation (or the lack thereof), as well as the Manichean and (in Banville's case, anti-)Cartesian dualities in the overarching cultural narrative of *An Drochshaol* to reconfigure mimesis, the relations between oral and written storytelling, and richly evoke the landscape as means to negotiate the abject—or as I will argue, the "abhuman" *faminized* body. They also struggle with the irony of trying to speak for silenced subalterns.

Abhuman[8] is a term from Gothic studies that describes a body already changed or

[8] On the term "abhumanity" see also the essays that appear in the collection, *The Abject of Desire: The Aestheticization of the Unaesthetic in Contemporary Literature and Culture* (2007), edited by Konstanze

in a state of transition between the human and the monstrous, typically a vampire, werewolf, shapeshifter, or other fantastic and horrific being—but most relevant for my purposes, someone who in Irish would be "*creátúr aimlithe nó creátúr bocht tarcaisneach*"—"a bedraggled, miserable-looking creature or a poor abject creature," amongst numerous other phrases. The language itself inherently accommodates such a regression to being only vestigially identifiable as human, that both includes and exceeds the typical semantic range of the English expressions "poor thing" or "unfortunate creature"—because the processes of Famine break down the body to its raw elemental parts and the mind to its pure as well as base survival instincts. Kelly Hurley's definition suits my usage best because she clarifies that the "abhuman subject is a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other" (3). It is my contention that the theories of criminal anthropology, social medicine, and biologically-based and anthropomorphically-influenced racialized discourses that she traces throughout numerous British *fin-de-siècle* texts in the nineteenth-century in fact relate to or evolve from many prevailing prior cultural attitudes, language, and imagery surrounding the pre-Famine, what I refer to throughout as the faminized, and post-Famine Irish as subjects and objects of scrutiny and (post)colonial hegemony. Such tropes obscure and question the humanity of the body in systemic peril and social turmoil that continue to inflect the self-perceptions and depictions of the Irish in art and literature. At the same time, countervailing discourses of religion and fabulism or myth-making as well as historical accounts of recovery, regeneration as opposed to degeneration, compassion, self-sacrifice, commemoration, and

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Kutzbach and Monika Mueller. For more on discourses of Gothic monstrosity in Famine reportage throughout Britain and America, see Robert Smart's essay in *The Great Hunger Volume II,*

endurance strive to palimpsestically rewrite these bodies as human once more.

For example, during her travels, sex work in Manila appalls Kathleen but other than the exploitation of in this case, children, and the exchange of cash, couldn't it not be a way of describing her own albeit consensual anonymous encounters, typically in hotel rooms in foreign places rather than her dingy basement flat in London? Rather than freeing her and providing the thrill and escape she seeks, Kathleen, avowed believer in passion, actually undergoes a kind of Passion when experiencing rejection by these men, and she pities herself all the more for it, as the novel catalogues in detail the slights of racism and misogyny she endures on a daily basis. Furthermore, her revulsion at being offered sex by a young girl and that "there are children living in the middle of the road" results in being scolded by her Filipino taxi driver and told, "We don't need no fuckin' grief from some old bitch" (O'Faolain 11). Kathleen is acting out her own neocolonial fantasy in these remembrances in which she, Othered by her gender and her ethnicity as an Irish expat in London, subconsciously adopts the quasi-anthropological diction in her accounts of travel. While Kathleen vociferously and rightfully resents about being treated like a foreigner in Britain when she has lived there for over twenty years, referring to it as "my own personal Anglo-Irish war" from being mistaken for a tourist when approached for a television fashion interview on the street to discovering her session with a psychiatrist is being monitored without her permission by a trainee, to which her the doctor replies, "They do it in your country, too!" The police also search Kathleen and her luggage for fear that she is a member of the IRA when in the Peak District (O'Faolain 264, 16, 20, 265).

In spite or perhaps as a result of this, Kathleen's narratives from Asia and Africa

to continental Europe involve what we would now describe as "first world problem" of making a show of supposedly sympathizing with underprivileged locals or at their worst, "sexualized poverty tourism". Her evening in Harare, for example, revolves around pleasing men, during which she and an unnamed woman perform "a parody of excitement, and wiggled our bosoms" while serving stew (O'Faolain 12). This parody lacks both humor and sensitivity, only demonstrating Kathleen's desperation for some form of validation and a connection whose language, despite her claim that she and this woman shared "our life stories" further exoticizes her Zimbabwean acquaintance even further beyond the pale of not giving her the dignity of a name: "She took down a plastic carrier bag from a nail on the wall and showed me her treasures. Her radio that got two stations. Her conical pink bra, for best occasions" (Ibid). Kathleen is in essence inverting her experience of emotional colonialism and then reduplicating it inadvertently under the guise of charming local color in her travel recollections and articles. It begs the question of whether there is any fundamental difference between the alienization enacted in these recollections and the disturbing accounts of many British and American visitors to Ireland, not to mention the Anglo-Irish landed gentry themselves about their Catholic tenancy, as well as racist responses to Irish émigrés prior to and even during the early twentieth century?

Desirability to men is always already the coin of Kathleen's realm, and with it, the attendant anxiety that she will come up wanting instead of wanted as she wishes to be "on any terms, by anybody" (O'Faolain 12). Then, the neocolonial double-bind ostensibly shifts again when her elderly married English landlord Mr. Vestey, offers to trade the cost of her deposit for a sexual favor, to which she submits, "I didn't have to do anything

except lie down" (O'Faolain 37), and during the act, she reflects, "You couldn't call him English, at that moment, or me Irish. This person and I were just slabs of flesh held in by skin, one sandwiched on top of the other" (O'Faolain 38). The repulsiveness of the experience and the troubling nature of her detachment from her being as a person as opposed to an object is only underscored by the parting well-wishes exchanged between the former tenant and landlord as seemingly as perfunctory for Kathleen as the previous exchange of fluids. Her services are rendered in lieu of payment as she must manually assist her partner in achieving his satisfaction. The bald facts are, although she never speaks, Kathleen does not just get to lie down, and her claim that "lying down for him in silence was the only way to tell him absolutely nothing about myself" only further effaces her individuality and her autonomy, emphasizing her complicity in her own oppression.

Kathleen demurs; she opts to metaphorically lie down rather than stand up, no matter how she wishes to present herself upon exiting the flat as "Orpheus ascending" (Ibid 41), she remains in a psychocultural Underworld created by her alterity as an Irishwoman. The situation in the basement merely reverses the gender paradigm of the Talbot scandal of an English lady of the manor being serviced sexually and otherwise by her male Irish tenant to the more archetypal version of (semi-)colonial sexual abuse. Because regardless of protestations to the contrary, her body and Mr. Vestey's— not only in her own mind but evident from the racialized language surrounding letting the apartment that leads to his indecent proposition—still thoroughly imbricated within this (neo)colonial and patriarchal system. In Britain, she is never not Irish, permanently an outsider, a tourist, a subjugated woman who actively participates in or at least refuses to directly contradict the processes of her own Othering beyond the occasional cutting reply.

This is further underscored by the sexual manipulation Kathleen experiences with Sir David, the father of her English best friend, Caro(line), as well as with Ian, Caro's repeatedly unfaithful lover and the father of her child.

O'Faolain and Banville try to cast their historical protagonists as subalterns when they are in actually privileged if disturbed members of the Ascendancy. O'Faolain uses the real historical past of Mrs. Marianne Talbot's so-called madness to portray her as a rejected, misunderstood, and thus wretched figure in her narrative of feminine dispossession, comparable to another colonial Other, Bertha Antoinette Mason-Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (originally subtitled as *An Autobiography* upon publication in 1847), or even more accurately as she is presented in the reimagining of the character in Anglo-Dominican author Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). However, Kathleen de Burca, thinking of herself as "like Grace Poole" (O'Faolain 66), becomes self-appointed guardian of Marianne Talbot's cathected interiority and eternal flame. De Burca selectively narrates and consciously re-imagines the life of an actual personage through a fictional viewpoint that is deliberately set at odds with Marianne's depiction in historical documents and trial transcripts in an effort to redress what Kathleen sees as an untenable and gross miscarriage of justice in how Marianne and William Mullan are depicted:

> *The witnesses both say they saw Mullan and Mrs. Talbot lying down together in the straw in one of one of the stalls. You have it that he was in his stable clothes , and a witness calls him a dirty, filthy-looking person; and that—that does not alarm her. Now, when you talk about the impossibility of a lady allowing an act of sexual intercourse in a stable, where, as it is said, the beasts copulate, that may sound very well, but you are to recollect that if a groveling passion of this kind engrosses a woman towards a menial servant, how is it to be gratified? Opportunities will not always occur; they must be sought….* (*Talbot v. Talbot* [1855], qtd. O'Faolain 4)

As a self-professed "believe[r] in passion the way other people believed in God" (Ibid 5), Kathleen's early interest and eventual determination to writing about the Talbot scandal arise not merely from her righteous indignation about the racialized and socially-stratified portrayals of the lovers, particularly the opprobrium heaped on Marianne, but because, she views their alleged affair as a kind of powerless submission to chaotic forces of desire beyond their control. Her views develop as a result of the shocking, almost modern brazenness of the earthy details of their acts in the testimony itself and from the paradoxical contrast of the richness within the estate and the barrenness of the landscape (outside the demesne) when the affair began in 1848 after the height of the Famine and continued for three years afterward.[9]

Stoddard claims that "Kathleen's reading [of Marianne Talbot] bears no resemblance to her own subject position as exiled Catholic Irish woman" but does also note how she conflates herself with Marianne. However, Stoddard neglects to address Kathleen's simultaneous and inconsistent vision of Marianne as liberated or revolutionary in terms of sexuality and as a helpless, naïve victim of patriarchal culture, roles in which Kathleen alternately presents herself. While Stoddard demurs by describing O'Faolain's protagonist as initially "Anglocentric" but eventually developing more sympathetic responses to other Irish people, she fails to observe the ways Kathleen generally adopts the neocolonial viewpoint I described above in anecdotes from her travels. Despite

[9] *My Dream of You* is primarily set in 1998, which is the hundred-and fiftieth anniversary of the Great Hunger's "last" year though of course, its repercussions obviously continued far beyond 1848 and as will be suggested by the fiction and the historical material in this chapter, it wasn't as if there was a clear understanding or delineation of a definitive endpoint for its victims and survivors (indeed most historians would consider the last year of the Great Famine period to be 1852), particularly in light of the pervasive threat of recurrence and the later *An Gorta Beag* or mini-famine of 1879, which was significantly less severe.

Stoddard's claims that Kathleen succeeds in what I would consider reactionary efforts to be a cosmopolite "citizen of nowhere," Kathleen nevertheless experiences what Stoddard identifies through Oliver's work in *The Colonization of Psychic of Space* (2004) as "social melancholy" or "the inability to mourn the loss of a loved and lovable self" (qtd. 185). However, Stoddard pivotally neglects the ways in which Kathleen's melancholia pathologizes her perspective concerning not only herself but others. Furthermore, Kathleen's social interactions in Britain and especially in Ireland are frequently the result of narcissistic responses couched in the language of sympathy or pity that nonetheless remains fundamentally about *her* reactions as a means of gaining validation. Instead of considering the needs or experiences of others on their own terms, De Burca regularly externalizes her own sorrows, longings, and grievances through them or what is commonly now known in feminist blog circles as "concern trolling". Moreover, "The Talbot Book" is just such an exercise, offering equally one-dimensional or conflicting portraits and interpretations of the motivations of Marianne and Richard, William Mullan, and the surrounding community that begins as an historical recovery project, which as Nan Leech rightly points out, is at first largely devoid of facts, specifically those that would dispute Kathleen's own romanticized viewpoint.

Thus, de Burca eagerly transforms the work into fiction, re-telling a variation on D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1929) in an Irish setting that still remains in many respects ignorant, insensitive, or paradoxical with regard to its haphazard approach to myriad differing cultural nuances and historical particularities created by that Irish setting and the context of the Famine period, such as language, socioeconomic status, and gender norms. All of which, as I will show, make its narrative deeply problematic.

Kathleen's invention of the subjectivities of these real personages out of whole cloth ultimately necessitates leaving the novel incomplete as a result of the inherent internal contradictions of its shifting fantasies as well their repeatedly refutation in the admittedly aporetic record. De Burca sees the couple ahistorically as a kind of more gratifying mirror of her own experiences, as is this case regarding their supposed assignations in the Mount Talbot orchard:

> They must have seemed like luscious fruit to each other. Their bodies must have ripened on each other.
>
> I'd half an hour on the juicy grass at the edge of a sweet-smelling orchard once myself, at someone's wedding, on a hot autumn evening, somewhere in Kent. I remembered the orange moon through the branches with black apple shapes on them, and I remember the man putting a gold sandal back on my foot—I even remember the tickle of the blades of grass on my sole and then the firmness of his fingers. That wasn't making real love, of course, it was just a party thing. His wife watched us coming back up the lawn to the lights of the terrace.
>
> The memory made me stand up, uncomfortable. (O'Faolain 101)

What Kathleen is unable to fully acknowledge to herself is that Marianne Talbot's life offers the alluring possibility of intense, authentic passion that she believes has thusfar eluded her and also made her urgently seek it out as often as possible.

Kathleen seeks to stage the dream of love beyond borders of class, ethnicity, and religion, even superseding boundaries of monogamous or marital fidelity:

> William Mullan and Mrs. Talbot had been builders—they had made love in the literal sense of "made"—had manufactured love. Their passion led to love. The *Judgment* was full of her acts of care for him. And he—the three years he was with her were the years in which his own world convulsed and expelled its people, but he had stayed with her when there could be nothing in it for him but punishment. All the more because it was a journey I had failed to make, I believed that the body was the way to the heart, and the heart was the way to the soul" (O'Faolain 67).

De Burca takes it upon herself to write and "preac[h]" her gospel from the Book of

Talbot—moderation in nothing—which she ironically develops, despite all her complaints about unjust, inaccurate suppositions and hostilities based on her ethnicity and her gender— through reliance on the same feminine (and in William's case as an Irishman, feminized) servility and taboo sexuality inherent in earlier deeply reductive historical paradigms like Matthew Arnold's (over)emotional Celt, who lacks a measured temperament (1867); (pre-) Freudian hysteria throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Betty Friedan's "problem that has no name" from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), reductive stereotypes against which she would presumably argue. In O'Faolain's novel, sensitive, lonely women, those poor creatures, i.e. both Marianne and—one-hundred-fifty years later—Kathleen, who lest we forget, is doubly pitiable as a fervent native Celt, are subjected to and abjected by ruling, uncontrollable strange fits of passion that whether fulfilled or repressed, breed bedlam in their lives, particularly in Marianne's case as she is institutionalized.

O'Leary refuses the rhetoric of helplessness which O'Faolain invokes throughout and instead depicts the hearth during the Hunger as a Third Space where desperate comedy can enter to diffuse the terror of starvation and death portrayed a mere paragraph earlier. For example, O'Leary's family shelters some neighbors, the Ua Buachallas, in their stable before they can move to a cabin of their own, and he remembers a conversation between their serving-boy, Con(chubar) and the young Síle Ua Buachalla:

> *"A Chon,…Níl aon chaint agam-sa anois," ar sise.*
> *"Airiú,*[10] *cad eile cad 'tá agat, a Shíle?" arsa Con.*

[10] *Airiú*—ah, sure—an interjection for emphasis either positive or negative, most often indicated by the Hiberno-English given here as well as "sure and", "sure now", or simply "sure" within a clause. Although widely considered one of the clichéd verbal markers of folksy stage Irish idiom today, nonetheless in this case, and in general, it serves as a clear indication of the generational shift in speech patterns but would still be easily recognizable to those even passingly familiar with Irish, as it is left un-translated throughout by Ó Céirin.

"Tá Béarla," ar sise.
"Airiú, cad é an Béarla fhéadfá-sa bheith agat?" arsa Con.
"Béarla Pheadair agus Sheághainín Philib," ar sise. Duine bocht a bhí i mbothán i n-aice na h-áite ab eadh Seághainín Philib.
"Agus ar nóin is caint Béarla, a Shíle," arsa Con.
"Caint Béarla!" ar sise, agus iongnadh uirthi.
"Ar nóin," ar sise, "dá mbeadh, do tuighí é!"

'Con,…I have no speech now,' she said.
'*Airiú*, what have you got, Síle?' Con said.
'English,' says she.
'*Airiú*, what English could you have?' Con said.
'[Peadar's, i.e. O'Leary himself, who was bilingual] English and Seáninin-Philib's English.' (Seáninin-Philib was another poor person who lived in the cabin beside the place.)
'But surely English is speech, Síle?'
'English speech?' she said in amazement. 'If it was, surely people would understand it!' (O'Leary 40-41; *MSF* 48)

Language in general, or more aptly, Irish, is the intimate medium to convey horror, but English in particular is mocked as what is truly absurd or unfathomable. Catachrestic misapplication or re-association exposes at once the failure or limits of language and resists the codification or reification of those limits, using it as a tool of subversion.[11] Síle's childish misunderstandings become a way to subtly introduce through humor but not completely elide larger issues like the decimation of the Irish-speaking population or even more provocatively, what would later become the dire straits of the starving:

Bhí máthair Shíle lá agus mám gairbhéil aici sa chorcáinín tón-leathan go ndeineadh sí an císte do bhácáil ann, bácús a tugtar air. Bhí sí ag sgiúradh agus ag sgiomar an bhácúis bhig, istigh ann, leis an ngairbhéal.
"Ó, a Mham!" arsa Síle, "an amhlaidh a chuirfir an gairbhéal sa chíste?"
"Is amhlaidh, a Shíle," ars'an mháthair.
Siúd amach Síle. Chonaic sí Con.
"Ó, a Chon," ar sisi, "cad a dhéanfaimíd? cad a dhéanfaimíd i n-aon chor?"
"Cad 'tá anois ort, a Shíle?" arsa Con.
"Tá," ar sisi, "gairbhéal glas a bheith agam' mháthair 'á chur sa chíste dhúinn,

[11] See *Dispossession* 141-146, and passages from *Who Sings the Nation State?* cited throughout.

agus ní fheadar an tsaoghal conus fhéadfaimíd an císte dh'ithe. Brisfear ár bhfiacala go léir. Tá cuid des na clocha sa ghairbhéal ana mhór. Ní fágfar fiacal i gceann aoinne againn. Ach is cuma do Dhiarmuidín é. Ní'l aon fhiacal i n-aon chor aige fós."
Dritháir beag óg a bhí ag Síle ab eadh Diarmuidín. Siúd isteach Con go bhfeicfeadh sé cad a bhí ag máthair Shíle 'á dhéanamh. Nuair a chonaic sé cad é an gnó a bhí de'n ghairbéal bí spórt acu.

One day, [Síle's] mother had a handful of gravel in the little broad-bottomed pot [in which she used to bake the cake, the griddle-oven they used to call it], as she was going to bake a cake; she was scouring and scraping the inside of the griddle-oven with the gravel.
'Oh, Mam!' [Síle] said, 'Is it how you'll put gravel in the cake?'
'It is,' said her mother.
Out went [Síle]. She saw Con.
'O, Con,' says she, 'What'll we do? What'll we do at all?'
'What's on you now, [Síle]?' Con said.
'That grey-green gravel my mother's putting in the cake for us and I don't know how in the world we'll be able to eat it. All our teeth'll be broken. Some of the stones in the gravel are very big. Not one of us will have a tooth left in his head. It's all right for little [Diarmuid] who hasn't got any teeth at all yet.'
Little [Diarmuid] was Síle's small. young brother. In with Con until he'd see what Síle's mother was doing. When he saw what the gravel was being used for, they had a great laugh. (O'Leary 41; *MSF* 48-49)

The use of the personal possessive in both O'Leary and O'Faolain's titles (most especially with emphasis in O'Leary's Irish) establish a clear link among intimacy, ownership, authority, and narrative. Using all four works as paradigms for twentieth-century cultural accounts of the (post-)Famine, I will further examine the relations between personal accountability and historical accuracy, invoking Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou's theorization of "aporetic dispossession" to explore the disturbed and disturbing formation of one's subject-position in the face of subjection and the dynamics of constructing an audience in a decidedly self-conscious story. In the case of Banville and O'Faolain it is in earnest and for O'Brien and O'Leary (somewhat) facetiously; the main protagonist or other figures repeatedly protests or "poor mouths" (perhaps too much) his or her lack of agency as s/he endeavors to "perform the political" while

addressing this fraught moment in Irish history. Athanasiou insists we must also foreground dispossession in alliance with Derridean "ontopology" or located- or situatedness (or the lack thereof) as "practices that produce and constrain human intelligibility" (*Dispossession* 18), particularly relevant as I relate them to a (neo- or post-)colonial context in Ireland and how that context contributes to the "precarity" of "those whose proper place is non-being" (Ibid 19). Their desubjectivization occurs as a result of the Famine or its lingering effects, such as the lack of a socio-juridical context for one's language or desire—what she and Butler follow Achille Mbembe in terming the "necropolitics" of human value versus human disposability.

Such accounts of precarity are often the result of long-term political and socioeconomic dispossession, such as the aforementioned sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Penal Laws that denied Catholics the rights to "lease land with more than one cabin or own more than two acres. They could not purchase land and if they did own land, when they died it had to be inherited either by a Protestant heir or divided equally amongst all their sons, so as to render a large estate smaller and smaller through the generations" (Stoddard 35). These prohibitions continued until the Catholic Emancipation of the 1820s, were effectively reinforced by Famine era evictions, and were not officially, fully, and completely repealed until the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. Representing the dispossessed traumatic body in the text is a essential gesture of memorialization in the same way that many public Famine memorials and later representations of the period in contemporary art[12] mark the disfigurement of

[12] I am thinking specifically of the gaunt and decapitated bodies exposed to the elements in Edward Delaney's Famine Memorial statues at St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, obviously informed by the deformed, distorted, and transfigured figures throughout the *oeuvre* of mid-century Irish-born painter Francis Bacon.

malnourishment that occurs not only to victims' physiognomies but also represent the breakdown of codified social structures and the starvation of forms of community. Such collapses are figured textually as the absence of adequate language to express or contain these losses—the respective narrators' need to, as Gabriel Godkin claims, "invent necessarily" or compensate with humor from children or an *amadán savant* like Bónapárt Ó Cúnasa, in order to negotiate through elision the violence, poverty, privation, fear, and ultimately, imprisonment or death that occur in each of their experiences.

In bringing the comparable abjection of faminized Irish bodies forward into the twentieth century of lingering deprivation throughout the *Gaeltachtaí,* the temporal space of historical distance permits O'Brien to make room for even more outrageous humor, because, however blighted the conditions in Corca Dorcha, at least it's not the Potato Blight. Furthermore, Kelleher points out the continued threat recurrence and smaller famines throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (114), which I would insist are always a specter throughout *An Béal Bocht*, including a specifically referential, if ahistorical rather than merely idiomatic interpretation of its full title: *An Béal Bocht, nó an Milleánach: Droch-scéal ar an Droch-Shaol—The Poor Mouth, or The Blame: A Bad Story About the Hard Life*, with *An Drochshaol* also being a general Irish-language term for the Famine period in particular. The rhyming titles of the original Irish also suggest a logical progression from one epoch of crisis to the next, and the tremendous blame as such, is attributed to the outrageously misfortunate lot of all Gaels. Both the particularity

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The oxidization or verdigris of the "lost-wax" bronzes not only show the decay and mutuationmutation of the body when suffering the *extremis* of starvation but cause the more disturbing abstract figures with distended limbs to appear to be deteriorating, and regressing back into the landscape itself, as if they are mouldering like the potatoes during the Hunger, as opposed to Delaney's nearby cast of Anglo-Irish leader of the 1798 Rebellion, Wolfe Tone, who still possesses a noble bearing, a discernible countenance, and all of his appendages, seemingly in working order.

of immediate experience and the post-hoc perspectives of these narratives—however far they may be removed from the Famine period—allow the narrators to both process and abrogate the past, sometimes simultaneously through the use of meta-narrative framing, which allows the breaks of time and the fallible or fanciful nature of memory (both collective and individual) to bear, de- or in-flect, as well as re-assess their respective traumas or tragedies.

The language surrounding the locations of the Famine focuses repeatedly on the images of suffering femininity as well as a kind of tainted mother love or rejection from and by the Earth itself, expressed in the privation and hunger of the disenfranchised as well as the human toll of others' lust for land and greed for power. It is also worth noting that many of these twentieth-century texts adopt not only their vocabulary of disaster but borrow representational figures from both classical and Shakespearean dramas. The distress of Hamlet, for example, presages in foreboding miniature the moral dilemmas of the Famine period in the terms of agricultural crisis that reaches back even further to The Fall in *Genesis*:

> …O God, God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
> Fie on't. ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
> That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely.
> ….
> As if an increase in appetite had grown
> By what it fed on…. (I.ii.132-136, 144-145).

The overlap of physical, sexual, and social urges is self-evident, hunger (for power) and lust in various forms, act in concert. If as Eve Walsh Stoddard claims, the language of the Penal Laws barring interfaith marriage presents seventeenth-century Ireland as a new

Eden to the (re-)enfranchised Ascendancy, wary of Catholic "seducers", echoing the language of Milton's Protestant epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667), I would further insist Ireland in general throughout the works I discuss in this chapter and with regards to the Famine of the 1840s specifically, is linked to a (post-)Lapsarian viewpoint illustrated equally well in the above quotation (36).[13]

For instance, Kathleen implicates her nationality in being "expelled from that Eden" of her London apartment for her repeated infidelities to first beloved, a wealthy Englishman, Hugo, and she employs rendering his posh accent to transform her ethnicity and homeland into a kind of sexualized plaguing of the body as well as a location dense—even unweeded—with displaced desire but also woe, "Ahrash, he made it sound like. Ahland" (O'Faolain 3). *Ah-"rash"* especially prefigures the text's preoccupication with haptics or modes of communication through the skin. *Ah-land* functions as both the locus of the sigh of despair and the expression of Kathleen's discontent: "Ah, land." From Hugo's introduction, Kathleen uses perceived differences in language in a way that shows her own self-consciousness regarding and alienation from her Irishness, for instance his use of "supper" for "when [she]'d only just got used to the meal in the evening being called dinner" instead of "tea" (2). What she emphasizes as "*embarrassment*" at his diction and accent underscore her own insecurities, "In the Ireland I grew up in...[t]he only time we ever used 'supper' was The Last Supper" (Ibid 2). Marianne Talbot is also said to have used Lapsarian language about a Catholic seducer in the transcripts in describing her affair to a nurse while confined in Dublin:

[13] In the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus advances the theory amongst the cohort at the National Library that *Hamlet*'s adultery plot is the result of Shakespeare's personal fixation on his wife Ann Hathaway's infidelity. He also employs the Catholic doctrine of circumincession (discussed at length below) in an effort to prove that Hamlet is his own father.

> *Mrs. Talbot told me how it commenced and the way it commenced was this. She went into his room, and a part of his body* [implicitly, his penis] *came into contact with hers, which caused a thrill to run through whole frame, and that was the commencement of her fall.*
> ….
> *Did she say, 'commencement of my fall'?—Yes.* (qtd. Ibid 108)

Similarly, Tóibín describes first-hand historical accounts of the Famine period as having a tone comparable to the great Victorian poets: Tennyson, Arnold, Hardy, Hopkins, and Emily Brontë; one "of pure, flat statement which is lifted, surrounded with a shot of awed, hidden, raw cadence so that you're never quite sure where the emotion is coming from" (40). Although this may at first appear to be a rather desultory sampling of "relevant" source material, each exhibits the precarious balance between deliberately elliptical reportage and deliberately chthonic, cathartic revelation that is found in the memorial accounts of O'Leary's *Mo Scéal Féin* and both O'Faolain and Banville's novels, as well as the genuine ignorance, deception, theft, violence, deprivation, and prejudice underlying the absurdity of *An Béal Bocht*. Developing in response to some of the earlier works cited above and throughout this chapter, these (post-)Famine texts blend folk memory, historiographic revisionism, and in Banville and O'Brien's novels, what at times becomes a fatalistic magic or mythic-realist fantasy to contrast the otherwise oblique impersonality of factual specifics. As a priest, O'Leary naturally relies on the dogma of Catholicism. In O'Faolain's case, the circumstances of the Talbot scandal in the historical record are considered inadequate in and of themselves by Kathleen to necessarily require invention on her part. All of these instances attest to what Tóibín rightly characterizes as the use of an unexpected "shot" of pathos and offer profound grasp of tragedy as expressed in Hamlet's aforementioned soliloquy.

At this point, it is essential to qualify that my use of the term "revisionism" or

variations thereof within this chapter do not refer to the Historical Revisionism practiced by some British and Irish scholars—most notably Theodore William Moody, Robert Dudley Edwards, and Roy Foster—with regard to exculpating or minimizing the role of British imperial infrastructure or the lack thereof during the Famine period,[14] but rather that these works, particularly the fiction of Banville and O'Faolain, stand in sharp contradistinction to this school of thought because they refuse to discount or discredit the fundamental significance that the Famine times hold in the collective *innenwelt* of both the Irish and the Irish diaspora and therefore, the enduring role it continues to play in their cultural imaginaries as a form of "counter-memory". This is particularly so in O'Faolain's case, as she writes about its recurrent effects at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Conor MacCarthy also places Banville's work as a critique of the so-called neutrality of the revisionist debates through a "self-critical aesthetic [which deliberately] troubles the truth-claims of both fiction and history" (qtd. McNamee 34). Instead, it becomes vital to acknowledge that these are works of what Linda Hutcheon describes in *The Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), as "historiographic metafiction" that deploy actual past events as the means to reconsider or reconfigure the nature of reality (as in terms of Gabriel's fantastic visions in *Birchwood*) and the limits of supposedly factual truths (the use of excerpts from the Talbot case and other period sources in *My Dream of You*). I would argue that even the parody of *An Béal Bocht* is presented in such a way that it demonstrates the relevance of Kathleen de Burca's thoughts about the Famine, "I used to wonder whether something that had happened more than a hundred years ago,[15]

[14] See Kevin Whelan's "The Revisionist Debate in Ireland" *boundary 2* 31.1 (Spring 2004): 179-205 and Joe Cleary's *Outrageous Fortune*.

[15] Although technically *An Béal Bocht* was published in 1941, just before the centenary of the Famine.

something that was almost forgotten, could have been so terrible that it knocked all the happiness out of people" (O'Faolain 6). Historiographic metafiction serves as an ideological challenge (*Birchwood* was published in 1978), to what were, at this point in history, the received notions of the Famine for many in academe as a Malthusian corrective that resulted as a natural consequence of overpopulation, notions promulgated by historians primarily trained in Britain, who claimed objectivity even as they embraced the rhetoric of dismissing their critics out of hand and disparaging their work with the charge of republicanism in the face of escalating violence in Northern Ireland post-1969. Many scholars later qualified such dismissals and their views on the role of imperial Britain in the epistemic crisis of the Famine after the Good Friday Agreement.

In actuality, the historiographic metafictions of Banville and O'Faolain (who published *My Dream of You* in 2001 in the midst of the paramilitary decommissioning of the IRA under Strand 3 of the Multi-Party/Good Friday Agreement of 1998, the year in which the present sections of the novel are set) strive to further complicate "nationalist" conceptions of the Famine as a strictly Catholic travail largely orchestrated by the machinations of a Protestant government by consciously blurring or undermining the religious and class distinctions that served as the backbone of plantation or tenant farming and ultimately led to Partition. After visiting Somalia in 1998, Irish President Mary Robinson claimed that the best mode of honoring the Famine period was to "tak[e] the folk memory of this catastrophe into our present world with us and allo[w] it to strengthen and deepen our identity with those who are still suffering" (qtd. *IGH* Vol. I 13), and I would insist that Banville and O'Faolain's novels do just that. These texts employ the historical past in a way that is not far removed from Yeats's use of the

mythical Otherworld for catharsis and affective discharge. For Gabriel Godkin and Kathleen de Burca, both their own personal and "received" national history[16] offer perspectival pivot points that enable reconsideration and reinvention as the metaphorical children of their individual necessities. Such narrative pivots offer occasion to dispel, negotiate, or perhaps even reaffirm their status as victims of trauma and what Elizabeth Grosz explores as "the imperceptible forces" of chaos and suffering in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Francis Bacon (1).

I interpret Bacon's (in)famous, often reduplicated figures as warped images of the abhuman or "faminized" body shaped by the turmoil of profound starvation. In the sampling of English-language lore surrounding the Famine gathered from the Irish Folklore Collection at UCD, the introduction to Chapter 6, aptly titled "Mouths Stained Green", which contains remembrances of Famine death, Póirtéir presents a useful catalogue of the many and varied pains the bodies of Famine victims frequently underwent:

> Direct starvation was not the major cause of death during the Famine period. A minority of the one million excess deaths was solely due to starvation and dropsy (hunger oedema, with its familiar signs of swelling organs as a result of acute starvation), but general nutritional deficiency left people particularly vulnerable to a range of deadly diseases.
>
> Purely nutritional diseases, which affected people in the absence of the nutritious potato, included widespread scurvy…[which] caused anaemia, swollen and bleeding gums, swollen, painful and discoloured joints, bleeding beneath the skin and a purple discolouration. In infants it caused the malformation of bones and teeth.
>
> Lack of vitamin A caused xerophthalmia, which caused excessive dryness of the cornea and conjunctiva, damaged the sight and could end in blindness. This particularly affected children and was rife in workhouses. Other dietary

[16] Whether unjustly or not, Kathleen compares the Famine to the Holocaust (O'Faolain 86-87).

> deficiency diseases included pellagra…which is characterized by a burning or itching, often followed by a scaling of the skin, inflammation of the mouth, diarrhoea and mental impairment. Starvation and malnutrition also left people more vulnerable to typhus, relapsing fever, and cholera. [All of which fall under the broad category of the so-called "Famine fever"]. (85)

The accounts included in "Mouths Stained Green" emphasize the absence of proper nutrition and the frequent failure of subsisting off the land that was itself failing to produce crops of sufficiency; the Irish people often consumed diets of desperation that consisted of grass, nettles, and other weeds—the only options available. As the proverb has it, "*Rud ar bith leis an ocras a mhaolú, mar a dúirt an damhán alla agus é ag ithe na míoltóige*."—"Anything to lessen the hunger, as said the spider while eating the gnat." The details above re-enforce what Maud Ellmann has rightly deemed the "*spectacle* of hunger that deranges the distinction between self and other" (qtd. Kelleher 7).[17] Bacon's work offers a visual referent to what occurs narratologically within the work of O'Leary, O'Faolain, Banville, and even to some extent, O'Brien, as the former stability of the body shifts into Artaud's unstable "body-without-organs," that is "no longer organized by the hierarchy of organs but by and as sensation" (Grosz 14), such that it responds or is imbricated within the chance horror of circumstances that result from widespread privation. "Inner experience is not the domain of psychology but of physiology, as if the raw experience of pain does not make it to the mind but is dispersed throughout the body in lesions of shape or colour," which Luke Gibbons connects to the "Gothic imagination of the nineteenth century" (*The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* 138), which I would insist in an Irish context is particularly applicable to Bacon's art as an echo of the unstable landscapes and bodyscapes of the Famine era as well as those portrayed in the

[17] For more on the specularization of the suffering, hungry female body, see my discussion of Ní Dhomhnaill in Chapter 2.

literature and collected in the orature.

Without privileging a discourse of able-bodiedness, "Acted upon, and yet acting, bodies-in-place and out-of-place [I would insist in this sense, spatially, temporally, and epistemologically as well as physically being "out of sorts" or "out of joint"], at once embody and displace the conditions of intelligible embodiment and agency" (Athanasiou, *Dispossession* 22). Crucifixion, then, to address a familiar trope for Bacon, does not always require a literal, visible cross but instead, we must examine the metaphorical crosses borne and the crux point at which the body shifts into or is at least forced to cope with its deterioration, attendant anguish or despair, and thus its crucial abhumanity. What is questioned by Bacon's series of images explicitly engaged with notions of crucifixion and the so-called "screaming popes" is the relationship between forms of suffering and the (in)adequacy or (im)possibility of spiritual succor. What happens to a body when it is transformed but not transfigured? Biblically, Christ's Passion enables his Resurrection; affliction facilitates sanctification. But Bacon's paintings, his deliberately fragmentary bodies, like many of those faminized figures I address in these texts, present pain or mortification as transformative in themselves, suffering *qua* suffering, without shining halos or dazzling garments suffused by golden light. Degeneration does not always already result in regeneration—it requires the imaginative leap of the viewer, a kind of faith in what has been otherwise irrevocably broken, humiliated, and destroyed. Alterity in itself implies alteration, either in terms of excess or reduction, a reconfiguration of forces that can deform figures as well as subjectivities and reconstitute them in new ways. This emphasizes, to borrow deliberately from the title of Grosz's seminal 1994 work, a vision of the volatile body, porous and permeable, fluid and flexible, but also

constantly in danger based on its essential viobility, its susceptibility to myriad forces from without and all manner of hungers from within. The proverbial "veil" of the temple of the body is torn as a form of strategically displaced revelation onto the viewer or the reader (Cf. *Mark* 15:38; *Matthew* 27:51; 1 *Corinthians* 6:19); we are thus moved and effectively reconfigured by encountering the reconfigured Other, in its most elemental state, exposed before us.

Exposition and exhibition are not only terms related to literature and visual art, but in Catholicism, they are used with regard to the blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist in which Christ's transubstantiated body in the form of the host is placed in a monstrance on the altar for ceremonial adoration and supplication. The practice is considered a *latria* or devotion particularly reserved for the True Presence of God and ideally, is as much concerned with the external rites (continued genuflection, repetitive communal call-and-response prayer, bells, incense) as it is with acts of personal prayer and meditation. In each of these instances, the performative aspect or the Foucauldian discursive or non-discursive practice: writing, painting, worshipping—presupposes a witness or an audience and a codified response: reading, viewing, praying—particularly in the last of these, for the sacrament in the monstrance is meant to be perpetually attended. A codified response, it should noted, is not the equivalent of a pre- or over-determined reaction. Spectatorship and engagement on a physical, intellectual, and affective or spiritual level are part and parcel to these experiences.

However, the change(s) wrought is(/are) equally about impact on our individual nervous and imaginative systems as on those of the bodies displayed. Transformations are thus designed to radiate out of them and into us, which demand a visceral

comprehension of or belief in forces both imminent and immanent (in whatever taxonomy one chooses to define them), amplified to the point at which one must consider or at least can no longer ignore or deny the particular or distinctive experience of pains, faults, hungers, and longings so raw that they are at once familiar and disorienting. As Bacon himself claimed, "When I see grass, I sometimes want to pull up a clump and simply plant it on the canvas. But of course that would not work and we need to invent techniques by which reality can be conveyed to our nervous system without losing the objectivity of the thing portrayed" (qtd. Grosz 5). It is telling that the artist wishes a tuft of grass could mark his canvas, because, as Peck points out in her headings, Famine memory is not only "deep in the bone" but in the landscape itself, "In Ireland, people still talk of the 'hungry grass,'[18] the sod that covers the forgotten victims of the Great Potato Famine of 150 years ago. Those who tread on this grass are supposed to feel the wrenching of those who perished" (D.C. Daly, qtd. *IGH Vol. I* 162). Such subterranean hailings as described above also arise from contact with or awareness of the natural world itself, whether it be the dissolved traces of a figure in Bacon's seascapes and the hazy, inscrutable figures in his landscapes to Birchwood, Corca Dorcha, Mount Talbot, or Clondrohid parish to a post-Lapsarian Eden, Gethsemane, or Golgotha—at once objective geographical locations and (re)constructed subjectively on a textual or visual level, to work at the nervous system, to provoke a response. (Re)constructed or real places and the interrelation of location and the body's place and mobility (or lack thereof) that occur within or across those frames (in)form agency, subjectivity, and perspective on an individual and an ecosystemic level. Bacon's paintings indicate that the blur of the

[18] See discussion of *an fód bháis* below as well as discussion of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" in Chapter 2.

vanished figure, its field of energy, not only reflects but inflects the scene. It leaves an indelible mark. It has an undeniable force. The same is true of the sea itself, as Joyce's Buck Mulligan quips, "The snotgreen sea. the scrotumtightening sea" (*U* 1.117) I chose this specific epithet because it succinctly stretches back to some of the earliest forms of orature and literature in its direct and perverse echo of Homer's refrain in *The Odyssey* of "the wine-dark sea" and Mulligan goes on, "Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother" (*U* 1.119), all of which suggest a network of sensation between bodies and spaces that is foundational to understanding human experience of and effect on the environment within the context of what are considered foundational Western cultural productions in what would now be known as "anthropocenic" discourses of impact or influence.

Although Kelleher like Eagleton and many other critics before her vehemently assert the so-called absence of the Famine in Joyce, as I have already demonstrated through my interrogation of figures like Old Gummy Granny and even the milkwoman, Anne and Flo, and Mrs. Dedalus herself in *Ulysses* in Chapter 1, the Famine is demonstrably not absent but often present as a kind of psychocultural affliction and dis-ease in the mind of Stephen Dedalus. The emotional or physical barrenness of women, which embodies the persistent intellectual, sociopolitical, and agricultural barrenness of Ireland itself recurs again and again. This isn't a simple allegorization but evidence of the plaguing and pernicious emotional pathology of colonial occupation[19] that Stephen feels all the more acutely after returning home from to Dublin from Paris to witness his mother wasting away from cancer only to guiltily refuse her last request that he pray with and for

[19] Cf. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961).

her. Coming back crushes his hopes of "flying the nets" of provincial Ireland and Catholic orthodoxy that ensnared and blocked him as an artist and an individual in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Out of despondency and penury in *Ulysses*, Dedalus takes a low-paying, part-time position as a teacher and reflects on his students, who struggle hopelessly with their Pyrrhic history and their Milton in addition to their sums: "secrets, silent, stony sit in the dark palaces of both our hearts: secrets weary of their tyranny: tyrants, willing to be dethroned" (*U* 2.170-172) He fails to recognize a kindred reflection of his own awkward youthful experience at Clongowes. The history in his head, like the one he chooses to focus on the classroom is "genealogical" in the Foucauldian sense, a work of "counter-memory" that holds fast to bitter disappointment, even in its supposed humor (e.g. a pier as a disappointed bridge), rather than tales of victory, reflected in the boredom and incomprehension of his students, with whom he repeatedly cannot connect. The exercise of educational power inscribes Dedalus over and over in the minuscule, despite his supposed status as a figure of authority, marking both Stephen himself and the boys as remnants within colonial pedagogical enterprise. His riddle of the fox burying his mother, likewise fails at riddling or at least fails to have a workable or satisfactory solution, much like his student Sargent's skill at sums. Stephen is preoccupied by the recurrence of revenant castoffs of history, with which he largely feels himself to be out of joint, a disembodied sleepwalker wandering through the detritus that remains after failure upon failure.[20] His thoughts and unsuccessful teaching methods become the psychic and pedagogical equivalent of the trash he will later encounter on the

[20] See also discussion of Halberstam below.

strand in “Proteus”, the flotsam and jetsam, the residues of the Famine period, which albeit, may sink under the waters of the collective subconscious, but will never be fully excised. They linger on like piers to be lapped at by the tides of Time, Stephen himself remains especially incapable of building the bridge or answering the riddle required for passage and permission to move over and beyond them.

These residues have thus served as part of his apostasy concerning not only Catholicism but Ireland, the violent and vehement disruption of both his faith in religious and nationalist discourse. As such, Stephen sees his students as naively, inevitably doomed to endure similar lives of mediocrity and frustrated potential, forced like him to be forever terrorized not only by the unspeakable “secrets” of personal shame. Joyce's use of “tyranny” also subtly implies the collective imperial past and present in Ireland, aligning it with anxieties over an imperial future as suggested by Stephen’s troubling conversation with his employer, the loyalist Mr. Deasy. Dedalus will then proceed to link this disturbing lineage and progression (or rather, the lack thereof—regression and stasis) to the Plum Hags in “Aeolus” and trace it back further to a clearly feminized vision of the Famine in Old Gummy Granny, who materializes out of absinthe to haunt and harass Stephen in the “Circe” episode.

We must recognize as Bacon, Joyce, and these other authors do, the perichoretic interplay and dynamism between body and space. *Perichoresis*, or in Latin, *circumincessio*, is the term for the simultaneity of Jesus’ two natures: human and Divine, as well the continuous, uninterrupted union of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and their joint existence or procession from within one another. From the Greek prefix *peri*- “around” and *chorein* meaning “to make room for”

"go forward" or "contain", it is the same root as "chorus" and "choreography" leading many theologians to draw connections between bodily movement and the movement or inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Perichoresis also refers to the omnipresent intervention or intersection of God as a mediating force in both the human or social and the tangible or natural world (see *Acts* 17:28). The Triune Godhead itself is dismantled and reconfigured throughout many of Bacon's triptychs, especially *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1962), a visual fracturing and then a refashioning of the Trinity in both body and spirit which blends oils with the Earth itself in the form of sand.[21]

This particular theological term provides a necessary context for situating both the body and its movement in space with respect to Grosz's "imperceptible forces," in this case the catastrophe of the Famine and the mindset of many evangelical Protestant providentialists in the nineteenth century, including government officials, such as Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Wood; Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, and Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, Charles Trevelyan, who explicitly read it as an act of God, whether purgative, retributive, or both together. The last of whom described the Famine in October 1846 as "a cure" for Ireland's so-called Papist idolatry and social ills, wishing: "God grant that we may rightly perform our part and not turn into a curse what was intended for a blessing" (*IGH* Vol. I 20). These texts consider the "blessing" and the curse or more aptly, the circumincession of both together, when the continuity of spatial and bodily (not to mention theological) perichoresis is interrupted or permanently damaged.

[21] See also Kristeva's discussion of the centrality of the maternal body or "chora" throughout her oeuvre.

In addition to being one of Stephen Dedalus' chief theological quandaries in *Ulysses*, most notably as he wanders the strand in the "Proteus" episode, *perichoresis diakoptómeni* (or in Latin, *circumincessio interruptus*), if you will, is also illustrated in Banville's utilization of both Christian and Greco-Roman belief systems and histories, disjointedly linking the reluctant decline of a pagan empire in Rome to the rise of a new conflicted Christian hegemony in Ireland (the largely Protestant Ascendancy versus their Catholic tenancy) and its subsequent embattlement and decay to an embrace of or harkening back to classical decadence and corruption among the upperclasses, and even in the disrepute and desperation of Prospero's underclass misfit circus. It is also evident in terms of sexual education, as Gabriel recalls Michael's uproarious explanation of his Catholic schooling and the nuns and priests' views on eternal torment caused by lust:

> It appears that if we follow the dictates of the nature that god has given us, our reward will be to fry eternally in a lovingly prepared oven, whereas if we persist in denying the undeniable truth about ourselves we will be allowed to float for all time through an empty blue immensity, the adoration of our lord the only task. A most extraordinary concept, which we found screamingly funny… (Banville 48)

Michael then recalls a visiting priest during mission who evidently masturbated by pulling the cross in his belt and then " '…said if we did things to ourselves we'd be put in a special part of hell. I suppose he meant we'd have devils sticking forks in our mickeys. He was funny.'"[22] It is unclear whether the priest is funny as in humorous or funny as in strange, or both, at least suggesting the possibility that the priest may have knowingly encouraged the boys' sexual experimentation (and thus, according to the Church,

[22] Cf. The sulphorous, blistering retreat Stephen Dedalus attends in Part V of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist of a Young Man,* during which the spiritual director speaks in great, graphic, and gory detail about tormented and rotting corpses including worms invading eyeballs, images drawn from actual nineteenth and twentieth-century Jesuit pamphlets. See the additional materials including illustrations in Riquelme's Norton Critical Edition.

corruption) or implicitly abused them, because Michael in turn secretly ejaculates into fiery dustbins until he "'*nearly put the fire out*'"—the fire, is of course, ironically meant to burn away or purify rubbish (Banville 49). The seeming absurdity of damnation and Michael's flouting of dogma coupled with Gabriel's seemingly naïve confusion over "it"—the penis—and "wondering what [Michael] could mean" in terms of these acts, e.g. manually stimulating one's genitals for pleasure—show both the intense sexual repression of nineteenth century Ireland through surreptitious behaviors and conversations and the confusion created surrounding the expression of these desires for an otherwise untutored Gabriel, whose only teacher has been his "Aunt" Martha. This in turn effects all his future sexual encounters as he will only experience and reciprocate manual sex, an attitude that is reinforced by the masturbatory habits of the circus strong-man, Mario, who prefers the attentions of his own hand to all else.

Furthermore, the epigram to *Birchwood*, Catullus' "*Odi et amo*"—"I love and I hate"—speaks of being forever divided, "torn in two" by incomprehensible emotion, both for another, but also equally characteristic of, especially in Gabriel's case, the competing forces within oneself that can lead to psychic disintegration. Catullus prefigures evocations of duplicity and duality both within Gabriel himself and the oppositional, deeply ambivalent nature of his views on sexuality, his divided personality, and of course, the unrest and upheaval amongst the tenancy and the landed gentry during the Famine and the Land Wars. Birchwood's repeated references to Roman profligacy in the midst of decline equate the British Empire with the Roman through lust, incest, gluttony; emotional (e.g. Gabriel's quasi-erotic connection to the estate and his general stuntedness), geographical/spatial (e.g. the "crippled" birch wood and its "maimed"

house), and physical "perversions" or oddities (e.g. the unnatural number as well as the frequently "uncanny" or "unnatural" appearances of the sets of twins), the augury of various signs and wonders Gabriel witnesses, and of course, the circus itself as an mode and arena of public performance.

As in Petronius' *Satyricon*, the lavish house (for Banville, Birchwood) becomes a placeholder for the lavish tomb, and Gabriel outrageously performs his father's funeral at the estate solely for his own amusement just as the guests at the feast act out Trimalchio's burial. Gabriel is known to Silas as "Caligula," the child of incest and embodiment of imperial excess. Such allusions not only foresee the inevitable failure of the colonial enterprise in Ireland as Rome itself ultimately fell from overextending its territorial grasp but to the moral erosion attendant with such a breakdown. Silas uses Trimalchio as an emblem of better days, which are themselves a lie, a myth, a fantasy to deny the failure of the potato crop:

> 'I remember a feast which my good friend Trimalchio once laid for me. Such delicacies! Listen. Around the fountain, with the soothing sound of water in our ears, we ate olives, dormice smothered in honey and poppyseed, dishes of fragrant little sausages. Inside, where a hundred perfumed candles burned, we reclined on silken couches set so that we could look down on the twilit city, the hills. There were goblets of sea-red wine with orioles baked in pastry. Next, the gleaming Nubians carried us trays of capon and sowbelly, a hare with wings like a tiny pegasus[…] And now? To what am I reduced?' He puckered his mouth in distaste. '*Rabbit stew*!'
>
> Angel paid no attention to him. She counted off on her fingers silently the ingredients in the pot, paused a moment, pondering, and suddenly gave one of her frightful guffaws.
>
> 'No spuds,' she said, greatly tickled, 'No spuds!' (Banville 129)

Silas re-imagines at length the relevant passages of feasting from *The Satyricon* in first-person the same way the other performers also use exaggeration as a means to combat the

bare existence they eke out as itinerant performers, especially in light of the limited resources in the mountains. Angel's demented laughter and simple, undeniable exclamation, "No spuds!" instantly diffuse all of the ringmaster's lavish oratory of decadence. These are the indicators of a civilization on the wane and the desperation of its citizens in the face of cultural, and in this instance, socioeconomic conflict and agricultural collapse that causes their imminent physical collapse as well as their deaths, not to mention the death of any hope or sense of spiritual immanence or sociocultural order as opposed to chaos and crisis.

These images are also Banville's echo of the enchanted, vanishing banquet where a harpy-like Ariel and other disturbing spirits torment Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, and Francisco with a hunger and confusion that incites them to plot murder at Prospero's behest in Act III, scene iii of *The Tempest*. Like Gabriel and Michael Godkin, the would-be usurper of Birchwood, Sebastian plans to kill his brother, Alonso, who is King of Naples, and Prospero himself has been banished from his rightful position as Duke of Milan by his brother, Antonio. Like the apparitional feast in *The Tempest,* Silas' words are nothing more than the hot air of salivation, meant to bewitch himself out of starvation, using hunger not as a fine sauce but as an intoxicant to dull the pain of pointed and gnawing losses that are all too real but steeped in classical and Shakespearean magic-realist precedent. Fittingly, *Birchwood*'s final section is called "Mercury" a play on Gabriel's own name and role as a traveler and a Divine messenger, in this case heralding the displeasure of the Roman gods as well as the Christian one, and notably, also a heavy metal, exposure to which can result in madness, foretelling the continuation of Gabriel's own hallucinogenic experiences that continuously alienate him

again from his own body, deliberately compromising and confounding the reliability of his vision as well as his narration.

Bodily and spatial *perichoresis diakoptómeni* are also evident also in each of the other specific locations I cited above that characterize and become characterized by the figures that inhabit them or the weight of their absence. This can be traced from the ruins and shambles of Mount Talbot upon Kathleen's visit to the "broken kingdom" of Birchwood upon Gabriel's return home in "Mercury" to the seemingly ceaselessly rainswept fields of Corca Dorcha and the Ó Cúnasas' smoke-filled barnyard of a cottage and the semi-abandoned and derelict hearth in the cabin of the Ua Buachallas or the bog itself in *Mo Scéal Féin.* O'Leary, like Bacon, endeavors to "slow chaos down and contain it enough to produce something new, a new concept or sensation, a new 'fact', something distilled from the overload of forces that comprise chaos, which provides a balance between tension and collapse, between the forces of chaos and those of the body" (Grosz 1). He accomplishes this by describing the stilling of time in his Famine recollections, the first several presented sequentially from when he was aged eight: a starving, panting woman with swollen feet below the knee "*chómh mór chómh ramhar le galún*"—"as big and as fat as gallon cans" (O'Leary 38; *MSF* 47); a wild-eyed, almost feral boy who gobbles a piece of bread so quickly and voraciously "g*ur dhóich leat go dtachtfadh sé é féin*"—"that you would think he would choke himself" (O'Leary 39; *MSF* 47); and an elderly neighbor man wandering out in search of food and ending up astray in the bog:

> *Chuireadar 'n-a sheasamh ar an úrlár é. Is ar éigin a bhí sé ábalta ar sheasamh….Bhí a bhéal ar leathadh agus a bheóil taraingthe, síos agus suas, i dtreó go raibh na fiacala, an méid a bhí aige dhíobh, nochtaithe. Chonac an dá*

> *starfhiacal mhóra fhada bhuidhe 'n-a bhéal agus an sgeón 'n-a dhá shúil agus an sgannradh 'n-a ghnúis. Chím anois iad chómh maith agus do chonac an uair sin iad*.
>
> They put him standing on the floor—he was hardly able to stand….His mouth was wide open and his lips, upper and lower both, were drawn back, so that his teeth—the amount he had of them—were exposed. I saw the two, big, long, yellow eye-teeth in his mouth, the terror in his eyes and the confusion on his face, I can see them as well now as I could see them then" (O'Leary 39; *MSF* 47-48)

This progression illustrates the "overload of forces" and is only further emphasized in the horrific visual of the destitute man lost in the bog. The tangibility of all of these recollections and their combined horrific force is emphasized by O'Leary observing after each, a total of three times, as another kind of triptych or trinity, a variation on the fact that these images have stayed with him viscerally over sixty-five years after they occurred.

The enduring phantoms of the Famine time can be conjured still "*sé os cómhair [a shúile] anois chómh gléineach agus bhí sé [ansin]*"—"before [his] eye[s] now every bit as clear-cut as it was [then]" because "*d'fhan an radharc [ina] aigne, agus fanfaidh an dá lá 's 'n fhaid a [mhaireann sé]*"—"the sight has stayed and in [his] mind, and the two days will stay as long as [he] live[s]" (O'Leary 38, 39; *MSF* 47). These phenomena are what Anthanasiou refers to "the uncanny presence of absence" or what she terms "hauntology", delineating the relation of the spectralized and specularized body in space as it relates appropriation and dispossession:

> ...the lexicon of the specter here is not meant to conjure away corporeality...the specter involves a return to some sort of bodily presence, be it displaced, dismembered, enclosed or foreclosed. As Derrida writes at the beginning of *Specters of Marx*: "For there is no ghost, there is never any becoming specter of the spirit without at least the appearance of flesh, in a space of invisible visibility like the disappearing of an apparition. For the ghost, there must be a return to the body, but a body that is more abstract than ever." (*Dispossession* 16-17).

These bodies, re-membered through remembering, carry the same poignant emotional valence and are part of an essential act of communal mourning and recollection like other accounts from the historical lore. The Famine victims' fleshy softness, their malleability and vulnerability as bodies "at the point of becoming something else" in the face of privation is reduplicated in the treacherous landscape which envelops and consumes (Grosz 2), in the same way in which profound starvation causes the body to devour itself from the inside out, breaking it down to weakened component parts as one effectively loses the ability to communicate beyond primal groans of pain. Becoming a "body-without-organs," thus "makes the organism take on [what Deleuze describes as] 'an excessive and spasmodic appearance, exceeding the bounds of organic activity'" (Grosz 14). Chaos may be slowed, but it cannot be stopped.

As such, O'Leary next creates a further remove through Mrs. Ua Buachalla and Con's aforementioned "joke" about Síle's concern over eating a gravel-cake instead of a griddle-cake. The "overload of forces" that would otherwise be unbearable is temporarily mediated, if not entirely mitigated (for the reader would most likely know that Famine victims in extremis often consumed rocks, insects, grass, dirt, etc., or whatever was available, whether considered edible or not), by their humor, which is presented as a brief respite, a temporary façade amidst hardships and "*an bhuile ocrais*"—"the frenzy of the hunger" (O'Leary 38; *MSF* 47).[23] That humor which

[23] "*Buile*" or "frenzy/madness" has a particular historical and mythical resonance that would undoubtedly be familiar to O'Leary as a reference to the Early Irish epic *Buile Shuibnhe* or *Frenzy/Madness of Sweeney* (which as I noted in my introduction was notably (mis)translated by Seamus Heaney as *Sweeney Astray* in 1983*)*, a pagan king who is cursed in a dispute with St. Ronan after killing a psalmist with a spear and attacking Ronan with one, shattering his bell. As a result, any chime or sharp sound causes Sweeney to go mad: wandering naked, living as a bird, and doomed to perish at spear-point after his ultimate conversion to Christianity so that he can make a final flight heavenward. Sweeney's lays are particularly relevant as they link his plight and the natural world around him. The notion of frenzy in this context poignantly

constitutes the family's humanity also simultaneously and proleptically limns the eventual deformation and debilitation of their physical beings. After the "joke", O'Leary reveals that the family was completely separated at the workhouse in Macroom,[24] where Síle and Diarmuid each perish because of dreadful conditions, either malnourishment itself—since the workhouses were vastly overcrowded and little sustenance was actually provided—or the contagion of typhus or relapsing-fever.

Then, grieving and still starving, Pádraig Ua Buachalla and his wife, Cáit, who is now stricken herself, reunite and proceed to slowly walk the six miles home to Derryleigh as a kind of prochronistic funeral procession or macabre death march. They are given water and a little food but offered no shelter on their journey because they are ill. Pádraig carries Cáit because she is overcome, they are found by a neighbor the next day in their cold and empty cabin, clasped in a last embrace:

> *Chonaic sé an bheirt istigh agus iad araon marbh, agus dhá chois a mhná istigh 'n-a bhrollach ag Pádraig, fé mar a bhéadh sé a d'iaraidh iad do théidh. Do dheabhróch' an sgéal gur mhothuigh sé lagachar an bháis ag teacht ar Cháit agus a cosa fuar, agus gur chuir sé na cosa isteach 'n-a bhrollach féin chun an fhuachta do bhaint asta.*
>
> He saw the pair there and they both dead, and the feet of the woman in [Pádraig's] bosom, as if he had been trying to warm them. It would seem that he had felt the weakness of death coming over [Cáit] and her feet cold, and he put her feet into his own bosom to take the cold from them. (O'Leary 44; *MSF* 50)

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demonstrates the overlap between the human and the animal with regard to a vicissitudinous faminized and exposed body, and its dependence as well as its vulnerability to the environment, as in O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht* as well as his *At Swim-Two-Birds* in which Sweeney himself features as a character. Sweeney is also the subject of several poems and a verse drama by T.S. Eliot, and current recent Ireland Professor of Poetry Paula Meehan has more recently concerned herself with the fate of *Mrs Sweeney* (1997) by chronologically transposing as well as relocating her drama to the flats of inner-city Dublin in the 1990s and apropos to of the spirit of the original narrative, making Sweeney into a devout pigeon fancier.

[24] The remains of the Macroom workhouse became the regional hospital, and the mass grave mentioned by O'Leary is part of the current cemetery.

As Bacon does in his art, O'Leary "directly addresses the forces of destabilization that convert a body to its most elementary ingredients, that show the body confronting the forces that make it into meat and bone, falling, sliding, slipping and twisting the body into its raw" form (Grosz 10). The force, in this case, is the Famine, that just as it destabilizes bodies, similarly works on a macrocosmic level to destabilize conceptions of community, place, and language. We witness Irish itself disintegrate. However, O'Leary makes a point to compensate for the victims' abhuman status as "bodies-without-organs" by contrasting wordless agony that in a Baconian sense evokes or works on the nervous system with moments, such as the gravel-cake "joke" or O'Leary's recognition of Pádraig Ua Buachalla's tremendous strength and the nobility of his final tender gesture, that attempt to reinstantiate subjectivities and thereby recuperate their respective personhood.

Such rehabilitation or reclamation is achieved by urging the reader in a deliberately instructive manner to consider the Ua Buachallas in the context of suffering of the Irish people at the time and I would insist, humanity in general:

> *"Ba mhaith, agus ba dhílis, agus dob' uasal an fear é!" adéarfaidh duine éigin b'fhéidir, "agus dob' uasal an gníomh a dhein sé!"*
>
> *Is fíor. Ach deirim-se an méid seo leat. Do deineadh na mílte gníomh de'n tsaghas chéadna san ar fuaid na h-Éirean i gcaitheamh na h-aimsire sin, agus níor dhein aoinne puínn iongnadh dhíobh mar gheall ar a bhfeabhas de ghníomharthaibh. Dar le gach aoinne níor dhein Pádraig ua Buachalla ach an rud a dhéanfadh aon fhear gur bh'fhiú é Críostaidhe thabhairt air.*
>
> 'He was a good, loyal, noble man!' some person might say, perhaps, 'and the deed he did was a noble one!'
>
> It is true. But I will tell you this much. Thousands of deeds of the same kind were done in Ireland during that period, and nobody was one whit amazed at the excellence of the deeds. According to everyone, [Pádraig Ua Buachalla] had only

> done a thing that any man, who was worth calling a Christian would have done. (O'Leary 44-45; *MSF* 51)

Bodily disintegration and suffering valorizes and sanctifies the purity of the Famine victims' spirits as Christians, whose plights in O'Leary's estimation, are indeed noble, but also necessary to attain the promises of heaven. Such contretemps reinforce that these narratives operate "against" or resistant to chronological or what I have already noted Freeman would call chrononormative time, as well as anti-Foucauldian "progressive" theories of history or language acquisition or monolingual Anglophone dominance. These texts are filled with "scenes of uptake, in which capitalist modernity itself looks like a failed revolution because it generates the very unpredictabilities on which new social forms [or alternative affiliations] feed" (Freeman 172). Arguably in O'Leary's own vision of *An Gorta Mór*, at first seemingly an instance of *perichoresis diakoptómeni* actually offers the hope of wholeness and satiety accomplished not in this life but the next, of not chronological time but *kairotic* time:

> *Ní ró fhada, tar éis dul isteach dóibh, agus tar éis sgaramhaint le n-a mháthair dó, go dtáinig an bás ar Dhiarmuidín. Do caitheadh anáirde ar an dtrucail an corp beag agus do rugadh suas go dtí an poll mór é, agus do caitheadh isteach ann é i dteannta na gcorp eile. Ach ba chuma do'n leanbh é. Bhí a anam thuas i láthair Dé, i n-aoibhneas, abhfad sar ar caitheadh a chorp sa pholl. Níor bh' fhada gur lean Síle Diarmuidín. Chuaidh a corp óg sa pholl, ach chuaidh a h-anam suas mar a raibh Diarmuidín, i láthair Dé, i n-aoibhneas na bhflathas, mar a raibh sólás aici agus cómhluadar naomh agus aingeal, agus cómhluadar na Maighdine Muire, agus caint a bhí níos fearr go mór 'ná "Béarla Pheadair agus Seághainín Philib."*
>
> It was not too long after going in [to the poorhouse at Macroom] and his separation from his mother, that death came to little [Diarmuid]. The small body was thrown on the truck and taken to the big hole, and it was thrown in with the other bodies. But it was all the same to the child: [his soul was in the presence of God, in the joys of the heavens long before his body was in the hole]. It was not long until [Síle] followed little [Diarmuid]. Her young body went into the hole, but her soul went up to where little [Diarmuid] was, in the presence of God, in the joys of the heavens, where she had the solace and company of the saints and angels, and the

> company of the Blessed Virgin Mary,[25] and speech that was better by far than '[Peadar] and Seáninin-Philib's English'. (O'Leary 42-43; *MSF* 49)

For O'Leary, it is not the pain of the body in itself that is his primary concern, but rather his certainty that grace not only assures the redemption of the Síle and Diarmuid's souls, but that they transcended pain, existing in a sanctified state because of it. Long before they die, in his view, the Lord was with them, which is emphasized by the repetition of the phrases "the joys of the heavens" and "in the presence of God".[26] O'Leary employs a simple but powerful dichotomy in structuring the sentences between earthly terror or abasement [the gaping mass grave of the hole] and spiritual ascension, which lifts Ua

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[25] Among her myriad honorifics in Catholicism, the Blessed Virgin Mary is also known as "Mother of the Dispossessed".

[26] This evocative vision in *kairotic* time follows in the tradition of those in Dante's *Divina Comedia*. In Dantean terms, hunger or famine-fever becomes the "fire that refines" identified in his encounter with Arnault Daniel—"*Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*—Then he hid himself in the fire that refines them" (*Purgatorio* 26.148; Cf. Eliot's *The Waste Land* V.428). As a consequence of Dante's comprehension that he must pass through initially terrifying, sacrificial burning that occurs on the seventh terrace in *Purgatorio* XXVI and XXVII serve as the final, essential stage of the souls' transfiguration before they are at last liberated from any and all corruption or vice. The paramountcy of this transition reinforced by Dante's prophetic dream of Rachel and Leah, Dante has now achieved independence, in the words of his guide, Virgil:

> *Non aspettar mio dir più né mio cenno;*
> *libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,*
> *e fallo fora non fare a suo senno:*
> *per ch'io te sovra te corono e mitrio.*
>
> Await no further word or sign from me:
> your will is free, erect, and whole—to act
> against that will would be to err: therefore
> I crown and miter you over yourself.
> (*Purgatorio* XXVII.139-142; trans. Barolini)

The pilgrim poet's at times anguished journey from fear to faith finally gives him the strength and autonomy of ascending to the Earthly Paradise; on an allegorical level, I would contend that the burning of intense hunger or fever is also structured by O'Leary to signify a cleansing emptiness that results in purity and redemption, the essence of being worthy of one's Christianity. From a state of humiliation and want emerges the necessity of commemoration and the possibility of transcendence, the rhythmic balance between marking death and imagining eternal life, not only spiritually, but through the material corpora of the texts themselves, which endure, even as Dante's sinners' and O'Leary's Famine victims' physical corpora decay, often in an unmarked grave in the case of the latter. Similarly, Dante created the lyrically Trinitarian *terza rima* as a kind of beatific Italian for the *Comedia* and the Irish language itself is effectively resurrected in O'Leary's motivation to publish *Mo Scéal Féin* as a historical and educational tool for learners during the Revival so that they could study lucid, "good" Irish. The *Paradiso* naturally ends with Dante's vision of the Triune God and his soul's union with Divine love, much like what Síle and Diarmuid experience.

Buachalla children beyond such indignities and is intended, in turn, to elevate our understanding of their plight beyond the banalities or clichés of mere human speech (particularly English), even his own—which always already fails to capture the essence of events—to the eternal consolation offered by the Divine. Though both Nietzsche and Foucault would clearly repudiate the theological elements and emphasis of O'Leary's history, he still engages in the practice of what Foucault calls "counter-memory"—from "the obstinate 'placing of conclusions at the beginning,' of 'making last things first'"(*Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice* 160; inset quotations from Nietzsche).[27] I would further insist that history, in this instance, does indeed "become a differential knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes, its task to become [like medicine] a curative science" or an affecto-spiritual panacea (Ibid 156). Though Banville's Gabriel Godkin makes similar efforts in his own largely apocryphal history of *Birchwood*, they largely fail to sustain him because of the chimerical and oblique qualities of both his language and his memory.

Inasmuch as these (post-)Famine accounts are driven by the language of sensation and viscera and Bacon's paintings offer a correlative to their depictions of Famine victims' abjected bodies, in regards to O'Leary and O'Faolain, whose protagonist Kathleen attempts to reconstruct the life of Marianne Talbot, they also seek to "confront the forces of the universe, forces that are capable of deforming as much as forming" (Grosz 5). Borders become less geopolitical or spatial constructs and shift to the realm of the spiritual and the idea of suffering as a continuous threshold state that situates one

[27] This is obviously also a Biblical reference to *Matthew* 20:16, "So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." (Cf. *Matthew* 19:30; *Mark* 10:31).

between this life and the next. In turn, territory becomes minimal and unfamiliar, neither national nor local as it is depopulated, but also all-encompassing as an abscess, a fallow and carceral void. The self is realized or fails to be realized in geography that is at once named and also falls away as amorphous, unmappable and uncontained, like the faminized body itself, somewhere in particular but also relegated to a deliberately ambiguous nowhere as a result of various blights: agricultural, cultural, political, linguistic, and physical. Whereas O'Leary sees the "deformation" of the body as integral to metaphysical reconstitution of the spirit, for O'Faolain, it is the undeniable power of such forces, whether sociocultural or imperceptible and physical (i.e. time and space), that drives Kathleen's impulse to create the narrative but also ultimately leads to the incompleteness of "The Talbot Book". De Burca cannot undo the lapse of time within Marianne's life, much less her own, nor ever satisfactorily redress or mobilize the gaps that remain in the historical record. Kathleen and Marianne's subjectivities, one largely fictionalized and the other purportedly "real," exist in a Nietzschean world[28] of

> …competing forces, wills to power, everything organic and material, all the ingredients that make up each thing are nothing but relations of forces or wills to power, whose provisional alignments make all things, including living beings, possible. The universe is a sea of wills, wills to command and obey, wills that are active or reactive…. (Grosz 7)

Therefore, try as she may, Kathleen cannot reset or undo the "provisional alignments" of heteropatriarchal forces that resulted Marianne's fall from grace and exile, and as such, will not to strive to realign those that exist in own life. Kathleen functions as a strictly "reactive will" that is eventually outmatched in her effort to create an alternative

[28] For more on the Nietzschean heritage of Yeats, Joyce, Beckett and (post-) Revival print culture, see Jean-Michel Rabaté's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*.

narrative by the pre-existing "facts," and since she believes that Marianne is victimized by these facts and mores, she over-identifies with her subject and believes herself to be victimized by similar forces.

The organic failure of over one million bodies and the systemic failure of the potato crops around Mount Talbot and across Ireland during the Famine are metonymized in Kathleen's inability to craft a satisfying ending and in the dilapidation of the big house and its outbuildings. It is also reinforced by the economic collapse of the Talbot holdings post-Famine since as Póirtéir notes:

> A disproportionate amount of taxation to pay for the cost of relief schemes fell on the landlords and large farmers, especially those with greatly sub-divided estates, The charging of the cost of relief schemes to local taxes, and the steadily growing arrears among badly hit small farmers and middlemen, gave landlords a double burden to carry. For many landlords, the loss of rents during the Famine and the burden of taxation imposed on them by central government was their final ruin and saw many of them lose their traditional wealth, power and lands. (197)

As David Lloyd observes, "The ruin is that part of the past that lives on to find its place and meaning in a relation with the present" (qtd. Stoddard 27). Because "matter has a kind of life, a kind of will—or many of them—that makes it an agent, or many" (Grosz 7), The imaginative sensorium of Kathleen's textual world is hampered and forced to reduplicate or anticipate the conditions of material deterioration:

> Already, this early in the year, ramparts of nettles guarded the breach in the wall, and twisted saplings bent from where the earth had lodged between loosened stones. There was fallen masonry everywhere under the drenched grass. […]
> Bertie stopped.
> Here you are, he said.
> Where?
> The house.
> Where's the house, I said, looking around.
> Here.
> All there was ahead of us was a wide platform, stretching away. A broad, level, stone platform covered in black moss and twigs and bird droppings.

(O'Faolain 105)

Kathleen discovers that much like the gaps within the narrative of the Talbot scandal, the estate itself (or rather, the little of it that remains) exemplifies absence, loss, the lack of fulfillment with naturalized in images that reinscribe Mount Talbot's inevitable decay: funereal black moss, dead tree detritus, bird feces.

While she had hoped to chart what she refers to as "the seven stations" of Marianne's encounters with William Talbot like praying the Stations of the Cross, other than the long-dormant and weathered stableyard, there is no house or orchard remaining, excepting one stray arbutus, in order to undertake this cartography (Ibid 107). She is sorely disappointed and laments that no map can be made. Furthermore, Kathleen recognizes the space of the Mount Talbot becomes for all intents and purposes a Famine graveyard beyond the demesne, as when she has the Rev. McClelland tell Marianne, "'In the end, at the worst,' he said, 'they used to knock a few stones out of the bank at the side of the road, and push the corpse into that declivity, and then they replaced the stones'" (Ibid 304). This anecdote is also reflected in the copious amount of historical lore concerning the absence of proper and individual burials without funeral rites across all of Ireland, including this example, also from County Roscommon, where Mount Talbot once stood:

> My father was only a little fellow during the Famine but I often heard him tell that he saw a whole cart of corpses and the bodies all swollen, and they brought the cart of corpses to the graveyard and made a big hole and put the corpses in the hole as they were, They put a big mat over the corpses and then filled in clay over the mat, and that's how they were buried. (Mrs. Peter Reynolds, qtd. Póirtéir 184)

Kathleen herself reflects on the "pauper" Irish who lived and died around the exterior beyond the walls, whose turf dwellings "had melted back into the fabric of landscapes

like the one before me":

> I tried to remember the worst attacks of dysentery I'd had—the shiver of cold flesh and bone, the whole of me so sick and so feverish that my head lolled on its stem and my knees buckled. But it would have been more awful than that. To lie on wet earth, under rain-sodden straw, your face greasy and gray with sweat, while hot, yellow, poisoned stuff trickles out from between your dirt-encrusted buttocks and streams down your legs…Did the dying people writhe and call on God? *A Dhia! A Dhia!* Or were they dumb? …the ones who caught the cholera swelled up and turned black—their faces turned black—and they died lying on the roads heading into town, because they came out of places like the valley before me and tried to crawl to the workhouse. But they all knew that the death rate in the workhouse was terribly high, too. They must not have wanted to die alone. Or wanted to die fed. (O'Faolain 74)

The arrestingly primal mortification of Famine deaths, the victims' loss of dignity and control of even the most basic bodily functions, create and sustain what Kathleen considers the "genetic material of trauma" (O'Faolain 76).

When she recalls her father's boiling rage at England and his choice to legally re-Hibernicize of their surname from "Burke" to "de Burca", Kathleen presumes to speak for him in the same way she speaks for Marianne, "There was no pity in him. [My father] didn't imagine to himself the people who stumbled out of this watery, secretive landscape, squelching along the edge of the marsh, mud bubbling up between their thin toes. Old men's feet with blackened nails. Soft children's feet. Brown feet, white, purple and misshapen," contrasting this graphic image with the clean and pristine faces of keening girls in red flannel in her convent school pageant for the centennial of Black '47 (O'Faolain 76). For all her father's investment in the Irish language movement, his lack of communication with, as well as abuse and neglect of the family, in addition to what she perceives as his self-important concerns about his reputation as a civil servant, Kathleen assumes he ignorantly lacks historical understanding and sympathy because he

displays little affection in their home and never decides to discuss Famine history.

On the other hand, Kathleen fondly recalls her paternal Uncle Ned, who was jailed briefly for agitating for the small farmers and never married, weeping at the Famine display and treating her often bed-ridden (implicitly pregnant and/or depressed) mother with compassion by bringing her tea and conversing with her, which she automatically attributes to Ned's unrequited and of course unexpressed love for his sister-in-law rather than simple kindness, which he also shows by caring for his brother's children throughout their lives, such as teaching Kathleen how to ride a bicycle. As far as Kathleen is concerned, all relationships involving the possibility of sexual desire—even the unconsummated and largely unsubstantiated ones of Uncle Ned and her mother and Bertie, the widowed owner of her hotel, The Talbot Arms and the long-unwed Ballygall librarian Nan Leech, who is dying of cancer and counts among her chief enjoyments the sharing of a sardine pizza with her cat—are basically disastrous and destined for fiasco. As a result, nearly every relationship in the novel is painted uncritically with the same sweeping brush and thus object of an overtly indistinct, morose perspective that Kathleen's expands and expounds upon, pertaining to: her own parents; her various relationships over the years: including she and Hugo, whom she cheats on simultaneously with both their French neighbor and a black janitor at her cleaning job; her best friend Caro(line) and boyfriend Ian, whom Kathleen sleeps with once; she and her boss, Alex, who, after a pathetic one night stand eventually reveals he's a Protestant lay brother; she and Shay, who like many of her other partners is married; her colleague and best friend Jimmy's anonymous series of male lovers; her alcoholic brother and her careworn sister-in-law; Marianne Talbot and Richard Talbot; Marianne Talbot and William Mullan; and

lastly, Marianne Talbot and her unknown, hypothetically Anglo-Irish second lover. As Foucault explains, "We want historians [or in this case, writers of historical fiction] to confirm our belief that the present rests upon profound intentions and immutable necessities. But the true historical sense confirms our existence among countless lost events without landmark or point of reference" (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* 155), like the single unattributed tabloid page Kathleen receives from Nan Leech. De Burca wants Famine history to explain her own personal history as well as all of the Irish national history that followed it, and the quest for grand passion to explain Marianne's life, just as she believes it explains her own. The knowledge of lost or profoundly unclarifiable or inexplicable events, the unbearable lacunae of the records, is what causes her to forsake "The Talbot Book".

Moreover, Kathleen frequently and paradoxically intertwines her own romantic entanglements with Marianne's, such as when she claims, "Maybe she did indeed have a passionate affair with Mullan, and—like me when I was with Hugo—her sense of her own sexual power made her reckless, and the [unidentified] man kneeling between her legs [according to the tabloid], was the equivalent of my [French neighbor] Sasha" (O'Faolain 469). Furthermore, Kathleen insists that Jimmy, her parents, and the forbidden lovers themselves are all "tragic ghosts listening to me and waiting for me to free them" (O'Faolain 22). Although they do not appear visibly like the ghost of Hamlet's father or O'Leary's faminized visions, it is their voices which compel her to research the Talbot case and return to Ireland after the sudden death of Jimmy. To put a fine point on it, de Burca willfully elides the cultural, historical, or social complexities and idiosyncrasies of these individual relationships under the common banner of her own

frustrated and devastating passion, which she problematically ascribes to almost everyone else she encounters.

Unlike in *Mo Scéal Féin*, for Kathleen, and implicitly O'Faolain, there is little possibility of transcendence in *My Dream of You*, which can only occur when one is able "to wrench something from the teeming chaos of the world...[by] creat[ing] a space for ourselves, a virtual space, in which to enable forces, chaos, to be temporarily contained, that is, framed and made to have an effect in a given way" (Grosz 8). Bound by the limits and destructions of history in her efforts to create deconstructive historiographic metafiction, Kathleen cannot fashion a pleasing frame that can contain her dreams of Marianne's life in relation to generations of innuendo and her dreams for her own beyond the canvas of the sky while in flight.

Indeed, there is no "virtual space" on the page for an alternative passionate narrative to successfully exist in relation to the historical record, except perhaps when Kathleen imagines the death of Marianne's lover, William Mullan, whose whereabouts are unknown after he seeks Marianne in vain at Coffey's Hotel in Dublin to supposedly persuade her to flee to America with him. So, de Burca has him emigrate to live in a cabin in the birchwood and work at Saratoga Racetrack:

> And the deer turned their flanks to him as they rolled and jumped away—white flanks, dun flanks. When they did, he saw in his mind's eye [Marianne's] naked side, as she turned languidly beneath him, on a bed of her dress and petticoats….[29]

[29] "In my mind's eye, Horatio" (I.ii.185), is of course where and when Hamlet affirms that he's seen the ghost of his father or what his friend had initially doubtfully punned as the castle's "mote…[which] troubles the mind's eye" (I.i.112). The "mote" is also possibly an oblique reference to Christ's call to avoid hypocrisy and reserve judgment, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (*Matthew* 7:3-5; Cf. *Luke* 6:41-42 *KJV*). It should also be noted that Geoffrey Chaucer is credited with coining the phrase "…eyen of his mynde/with whiche men

> William Mullan was not alone when he died….When the men from the stable found his body, it did look lonely. But he had seen her dolphin body above him—the white torso twisting and turning in a most beautiful way—at the very end. And the deer did not move away until he was dead. (O'Faolain 527-528)

How can love without constraints and freedom not limited by social hierarchies exist and be sustained in the reality when O'Faolain suggests they can only be attained in death? Perhaps this is based on as an intrinsically Irish understanding of the realities of one's mortality because in the Irish language, the idiom is *ag fail báis* or literally, "to obtain death" as if the act of dying is a form of accomplishment or achievement, related no doubt to lore surrounding *an fód bháis*, or "the sod of death," the specific spot where an individual will meet his or her fate. What we witness here "at the very end" of both William Mullan's life and *My Dream of You* is the demise of earthly passion, its consignment to the fading memories of the newly-departed, which also describes Kathleen herself who is now en route to England, leaving Ireland behind.

In O'Faolain's estimation, the motherland must inevitably be rejected by some because it ultimately cannot effectively support them, what is for her a corollary of conditions of profound ecosystemic, biogeographical, and affective estrangement during and after the Famine, literalized in what Kathleen Hurley recounts hearing from her father in the 1940s Folklore Survey:

> People worn out with untold hardship, badly clad staggering for want of food, or any kind of nourishment, wending their way back to satisfy the hungry gnawing with a drink of a hot water or a mouthful of fresh grass or herbs they gathered by the roadside. My father said he saw people dead on the roadside, such sights,

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seen, after that they ben blynde" in the hagiographic *The Man of Law's Tale* as Hermengyld of Northumberland cures a blind man at the command of the shipwrecked and exiled Christian princess Custance, who has converted Hermengyld from paganism through prayer (*The Riverside Chaucer* ll 552-553). With this act of healing coupled with Custance's explanation of Christianity, she then converts Hermengyld's husband the constable "…er that it was eve" (Ibid ll 573).

> their bodies all skin and bones, with bunches of green grass in their mouths, the green juice of the grass trickling down their chins and necks. (Póirtéir qtd. 88-9)

The tainted image of the grass inverts its sanctifying and transformative power it holds in Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" discussed in Chapter 2, but once again reinforces the at times troubled and troubling connection between the Irish body and the land itself. Because it cannot restore and relieve one's suffering as the holy eucharist does for Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker and the girl from the tale of famous West Kerry *scéalaí*, Cáit "an Bab" Feiritéar, that serves as the introduction on which the poem is based, the land instead illustrates the breakdown of the body, and Hurley employs the same long-held, color-coded shorthand not to highlight the fertile green of hope or renewal, but rather, to invert the fertile green of hope and renewal into a harrowing image of despair and decomposition.

Fitting to this specifically Irish context, there is little verdant green in Bacon's *oeuvre*, seemingly nothing grows naturally unmarred by tinges of putrefaction. Instead, we, like the figures, are often essentially trapped within claustrophobic and stunted interiors, mostly variations on red and black, emblematic of blood and rot, not only represented through the torsions that the body itself undergoes but also to chromatically externalize the sense of an equally damaged and cathected interiority. The contorted and agonized mouths of Bacon's "screaming Popes" are also an expression of the void of appetite, a disfigured, anxious, and surreal reinterpretation of Diego Velázquez's and even Titian's somber portraits. There are limits within limits as figures like the Popes are not merely enclosed by but brutally bound within their surroundings; others twist or cower in corners and desperately return to a tortured version of the curled fetal position—but in an alien space critically devoid of the protective aspects of the womb. Bacon's triptychs

don't draw the eye with fluid movement but serve to abrogate, interrupt, or question the continuity of time and space by preserving the figures and containing them within specific, precise moments of agony that only serve to amplify their pain, pinned in the visual field like mounted insects, but in a state of fundamental disarticulation. The confining and regressive optics conveyed in the works' frame of reference, often achieved by blocks of color inundating the body and striping to subtly imply bars, are then bound yet again in the paintings' literal frames.

Even in Bacon's landscapes, specifically in *Untitled (Two Figures in the Grass)* and *Study of a Figure in a Landscape* (c. 1952; 1952), the grass operates as a kind of carceral cage: the prison of the material world replicates the prison of the flesh itself. Likewise, the blacks and blues of the bruised and bruising ocean subsume, overwhelm, and blur what might be a figure in *Untitled (sea)* (c. 1954); "the figure is in the process of merging with the sea and its rhythmical movements: here the body is on the verge of disappearing, taken up entirely by outside forces, the image is less and less constrained, and the sea itself is the active force that absorbs the figure" (Grosz 20). This vision recalls Hamlet's lamentation in his first soliloquy, "O that this too sullied flesh would melt,/Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!" (I.ii.129-130),[30] and comparable to Irish bodies during the Famine times and figures within the Baconian universe, it does so, whether on sea or on land. In it's a-rhythmical breaking or devolution, the flesh often transmutes and mingles with the elements,[31] a becoming or entering into another state or

[30] From the textual notes for *The Riverside Shakespeare* edition's *Hamlet*: "many editors prefer the F[olio] 1 reading, *solid*," also relevant to my interpretation here of Bacon's images as well as these textual representations of Famine victims (Note for I.ii.129).

[31] See discussion of Lexie Madison's body in Chapter 3.

plane of existence.[32] Similarly, throughout his *oeuvre*, Bacon's trees are gaunt and bare, much like the single tree that is the centerpiece of the set in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953), and the body in Bacon appears to be a wound upon the earth exposed to our field of vision as he presents his vision of a field. At the same time, the earth itself, through its recurrent encroachment upon that body or those bodies, is enacting the wounding and debilitating of the exposed and vulnerable figure(s), placing the body under unbearable pressure by violating its boundaries, violently rendering it indistinct and amorphous to the extent that its agency and individuality are for all intents and purposes crudely and cruelly denied.

Thus, the physical form, compelled by forces from within and without, becomes a rude instrument of transformation and transmission. Its utter debasement telegraphs by means of the interplay of the static and the convulsive, disjointed, and disrupted or disruptive, torment beyond intelligible speech as well as radical change that can at times test the capabilities (i.e. starkly distinguish the failures) of linguistic description. As Grosz so aptly insists, the raw images function at the level of "the nervous system". I would add that, with a grotesque palette and a depiction of the agonized body in delimited space or inverted, subverted, and arguably, perverted space or place, Bacon's corpus of the corpus is meant to unsettle, disturb, provoke, or idiomatically "work" or "get on one's nerves", not just drawing the eye in but also actively forcing it back out or away: using aversion as an active tactic within the viewing process. His paintings in their immediacy, as with the faminized bodies that appear in these texts, demand that we struggle to meet and truly see others' pain with compassion and understand the nature of

[32] In both the transformative and the ontological sense.

our ethical obligations to them in their state of profound alterity, even as we may, at the first blush of guilt and distaste or disillusionment, or perhaps, shame and comprehension, attempt to disengage from or disavow it.

For Gabriel Godkin, the necessary "wrenching" forth of a narrative from "teeming chaos" is of course, through an encounter with the self and an acknowledgment, in a truly Baconian and Deleuzian sense, of the forces of chaos within one's mind, particularly the mind under duress. His creation or containment of "virtual space" on the page coincides with his attempts at preservation of the physical space of Birchwood; the chaos within Gabriel is likewise represented by the chaos of the estate: an appropriately mad house for a now mad man. I dispute McNamee's contention that returning to Birchwood heals functions "as an act of healing, of self-completion (inasmuch as this is possible)" for Gabriel (48). The return does indeed provide Gabriel with solace, but that temporary, essentially deluded and diluted solace does not in fact in any way force him to more fully exist in the chaos of a "time-ridden" world of grief and pain (McNamee 47), but rather better enables him to try to exculpate himself from it. As long as the Big House stands unchallenged, however derelict its condition, everything and everyone outside of it are tacitly deemed irrelevant, wholly subordinate to Gabriel's memories of the past, which always already supersedes the present and the future, as the whole narrative is backward-looking. Birchwood is both imaginative prison and palace, filled only with reverberations, "changed and yet as it always was" (Banville 165). The house itself is necessary materially but nevertheless a space of the fantastic and fragmentary for Godkin to more thoroughly retreat from rather than reconcile "the real" and all its attendant obligations or concerns with his mythic- or magic-realist phantoms. Birchwood exists

memorially like a great Trimalchian tomb, as "a mosaic" that "refused to be real, even while [Gabriel] stood among its ruins" (Banville 13, 12). Gabriel admits that it "was not Birchwood of which I had dreamed, but a dream of Birchwood, woven out of bits and scraps" (Banville 12) As he attempts to refurbish the latter domicile with hammer and nails, Gabriel struggles to capture the former vision through pen and paper.

In contrast to Kathleen's account, the forces of "received" history or a sense of obligation to "reality", which Gabriel's frequently and adamantly rejects out of hand, do not impel his narrative. Within a tripartite novel that I've already described in the terms of a Baconian triptych, Banville presents the audience with further variations or triptychs-within-triptychs: two figures, identical "twins" Gabriel and Michael, on the opposite ends, with the Famine itself operating as the force of the middle canvas that separates one into two. Furthermore, if Michael can be situated as the novel's appositely belated equivalent of what Grosz and Deleuze call the Baconian "dark precursor[s]" or personae of rivenness and alterity within his triptychs and within the viewer (Grosz 28); we, as readers of Gabriel's account, also occupy the third place and finish or leave transfigured. As Grosz convincingly argues that the chaotic forces of Bacon's series resist any sense of serialized narrative or progression, so too, does Gabriel's personal Famine history resist the traditional realism readers might expect from a text that purports to be a history or the linear development which he struggles to impose upon it. His narrative is structured from its opening assertion as a reversal of Descartes, "I am, therefore, I think" (Banville 1), to place the very nature of Gabriel's existence as a subject into question and offer his tale from its outset as a regressive glance from a place/state of destruction and a time (arguably in the sense of both *chronos*, historical time, and *kairos*, Divine or appointed

time) of disarray.[33] This line also recalls the insistence of Hamlet, "…for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so./To me it is a prison" (*Hamlet* II.ii.250-251). The pronoun "it," lacking a clear referent, is generally taken to mean Denmark, but truly, thinking itself becomes confining, maddening.

So, too, is the act of reflection and cogitation a kind of crucifixion for Gabriel, just as Birchwood itself is as much his prison as his psychic palace or refuge, albeit among the refuse, mould, and dust, that after much shouting and crying over the years now only reverberates with his thoughts.[34] As such, *Birchwood* as a novel and a place is not only filled with bodies that as Grosz would have it "exceed their bounds" (14), such as Granny and Granda Godkin, Ida, Sibyl, Angel, and even Gabriel's own mother, Beatrice, in the sense that she puts on the role of mad matriarch by donning Granny Godkin's black bombazine dresses after her mother-in-law's demise, not to mention Gabriel himself in regard to his representations of Michael's phantasmagorical existence throughout the *Birchwood*, most clearly at its conclusion, but also, the events themselves exceed the bounds of reality, succumbing to Gabriel's need to "invent necessarily" as a form of deliberately elliptical exegesis of traumatic and dehumanizing experiences that would seemingly transgress or defy the limits of language itself to "bec[o]me [his] own Prospero, and [ours]" (Banville 168). Since he insists, **"**I do not speak the language of this wild country…Intimations abound, but they are felt only, and words fail to transfix them" (Ibid 170-1).

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[33] *Kairos* is also used throughout modern Christian theology to connote historical epochs that require pivotal ethical and existential choices, most obviously the coming of Christ, but also anti-apartheid liberation theology in South Africa, such as the *Kairos Document* (1985) , and I would insist, the Famine period marks just such an epoch.

[34] See T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* specifically V.322-330.

For example, consider Gabriel's account of the death of Angel, the circus' Fat Lady and cook who dies in the final confrontation amongst the circus folk and the Molly Maguires, who are fighting one another and Gabriel's usurping maternal relatives the Lawlesses, to seize control of Birchwood:

> Angel began to swell, I cannot explain it, she filled the doorway until the posts groaned under the strain, and her massive trunk poured itself into every nook of the caravan, and soon the whole thing was packed and rocking on its wheels. She cried out, and rose up in an arch on her heels and head, and upside down her face gaped and turned purple and her hands scrabbled furiously, scampering over her [bullet-] wound like animals. She shuddered and coughed, and all that shook, that flesh, fat, hair, teeth, blood, and she died, snarling and laughing, and the spell broke, and I crawled out from my hole. (Banville 160)

The eschatological tenor of the novel's last battle is coupled with the explosion of Angel, who represents the descent of the *cailleach*-form of Ireland itself in the face of the vicious internal conflict of the land wars, as its people are similarly bloated with and overcome by rage, land-lust, and strife. Swelling and distension are also, of course, what occurs to the frame of those beset by famine.

In the context of this period of Irish history, Gabriel Godkin functions as an absentee landlord whose departure is the result of the incestuous degeneration of his family. Gabriel's absence deranges him as a result of experiencing starvation, brutality, and pervasive death and destruction amongst the peasantry as an outcast in Prospero's circus. As expected, his absence ultimately leads to the dysfunction and decline of the Birchwood lands—or what little of it hasn't been sold off by his forebears—and the Lawless-Godkin lineage itself. Though Banville's synecdoche serves as an indictment of Ascendancy ideals and infrastructure, it still quite poignantly, and somewhat counterintuitively, depicts Gabriel's primary inability—more than that, his willful

disinterest—in forming meaningful human bonds or lasting connections with anyone, much less feigning interest in his tenants beyond how they can service him (sexually, in the case of Rosie, agriculturally in the case of the rest of the community). Gabriel's apathy becomes not merely a representative, class-based attitude but a peculiar quirk of his own damaged character and affectionless background that should engender sympathy, if only because that is all Gabriel has ever known. His lack of compassion and feeling of alienation, as far as the villagers are concerned is mutual (Banville 59).

Instead, Gabriel chooses to fetishize the space of the big house and its grounds. The true object of his affections is always Birchwood itself. Women outside of his family, Rosie and later Mag the milkmaid, are but a series of orifices, which he tentatively probes with his fingers. Gabriel's technical virginity underscores his unwavering devotion to the estate itself and emphasizes the impossibility of any further issue, and thus any heir after himself. Despite his prophetic visions of Sybil and Angel, or perhaps because of their warped and horrific nature, Gabriel is most certainly not Ireland's "rightful mate" and savior in the manner of the *aislingí* tradition. He produces nothing but misery, and implicitly, with him will perish not only the Godkins but an entire way of life in Ireland.

For *Birchwood*'s characters as well as Marianne Talbot and Kathleen de Burca, as Grosz claims of Bacon's triptychs, "are bodies contained by their worlds, unable to move beyond themselves, weighted down by what and where they are" (26). While Gabriel equivocates as Birchwood moulders and dilapidates around him, Kathleen adopts what she perceives as the victimization of Marianne Talbot as reflective of her own experiences with the repressive social mores of mid-century Irish Catholicism, the

insidious bigotry toward Irish émigrés in Britain even at the end of the twentieth century, and her feelings of listlessness and rootlessness upon returning home to Ireland to take up the Talbot project. The historical voyeurism and revisionism de Burca undertakes through the book is comparable to Judith Mayne's explanation of the quasi-transgressive woman-to-woman gaze in film:

> On the one side of the corridor is a woman who peeks, on the other, the woman, who is, as it were, on display…The history of women's relationship to the cinema, from this side of the keyhole, has been a series of tentative peeks, the threshold…crossed with difficulty. (qtd. Kelleher 65)

Mayne's description of the cinematic "keyhole effect" in Famine narratives is refigured in O'Faolain's text as Kathleen functions as "the woman who looks" or more accurately, the woman who reads between the lines of the historical documentation to project onto Marianne Talbot and subject her to a retrospective gaze in addition to a muddling of a past and present imperfect imaginative tense in which Kathleen tries to transport herself through narration *through* the keyhole. The now-derelict Talbot estate operates as the threshold between two times and Marianne's body further reduplicates this metaphysical and metaphorical threshold, as she becomes the abjected object of scrutiny in both eras.

While Kathleen's efforts are explicitly to undo or mitigate Marianne's history by rending the metaphorical "veil"—to borrow from my earlier usage of that term with regard to the Baconian body—between herself and the past neatly in two, they end up repeating the process of Marianne's specularization, veil essentially *intacta* or in which the keyhole/threshold ultimately remain impassable. To mix my metaphors slightly, the "keyhole" is never opened nor the "veil" lifted because of the almost eschatological nature of the Famine epidemic. Kathleen, and thus we, are denied full knowledge or

vision and the lacunae of the events sustain multiple rumors or silences: in the legal record and her Uncle Paget's pamphlet in her defense, in the lack of newspaper accounts other than the single scandal sheet, in the surviving community in Ballygall, in the demolished stones of Mount Talbot itself that only speak of chaos and oblivion. The inherent "difficulty" Mayne and Kelleher identify in the crossing of these thresholds of time and space for women is also indicated when Kathleen decides not to finish her novel, emphasizing that the goals of historical and ideological revisionism are in this case no match for the enduring forces of public opinion (both in the present as well as the past) and the aporia of the Famine experience. As I have already suggested in regards to Bacon's landscapes, the Famine times resist description and attest to the limits of language as a progression or arc, particularly when one looks back on them as Kathleen does through the veiled or blinkered gaze of a distorted keyhole or warped frame with the intent to impose her own narrative agenda.

Marianne Talbot's alleged affair with her stablehand violates taboos regarding social hierarchies and religious mixing during the nineteenth century, making her at first the ideal heroine of Kathleen's recovery project as she struggles to give the lady of the manor the agency and voice that Marianne appears to lack in historical accounts. This is an agency Kathleen herself largely lacks with regard to her own failed romantic entanglements with married men, which are repeatedly forestalled by her own guilt and shame regarding sexuality and her own body as they are inescapably bound to what she herself considers to be provincial, middle class Irish Catholic values. This is dogma that Kathleen was raised on, and as a result, cannot ever fully transcend, and which, she largely ahistorically—especially considering all the class and gendered prohibitions in

Victorian England where Marianne was raised and in colonial Ireland where she resided—considers her subject to be mostly free from as a Protestant and a member of the Ascendancy. Kathleen figures Marianne as a beneficent but isolated sexual revolutionary, who, like Kathleen, is ultimately destroyed by the patriarchal culture of her time and place, both socially and geographically.

De Burca even echoes Mayne's language in reflecting on her own past and future with her lover, Shay:

> My needy flesh would have walked me into another trap. I would have manipulated my life until it mimed my mother's, as exactly as Danny's mimed the spring of her hair. We would never be out in the world together, Shay and I, any more than my mother and father had been. We would hardly need to speak. We would have made our own Windsor, our own Shore Road. We would die to time, yes, when we reached for each other. But time would get in through the lock of the door. (O'Faolain 509)

For both O'Faolain and Banville's protagonists, those who hope to re-imagine their own as well as others' histories become locked in a p(h)antomimic re-enactment thereof that largely fails to sustain them. These are not playful and exuberantly transgressive in the Bhabhian sense I've discussed at length throughout various chapters, but particularly in Banville's case they offer a morbid novelization of a an eerie pantomime or "panto," a holiday tradition in Britain and Ireland since the Restoration. Gabriel's circus life, like traditional "pantos" offers fantastic characters, tomfoolery, adventure, innuendo, cross-dressing, songs, illusion, mystery, riddles, and even a bit with a monkey, but it supplants slapstick mock violence with the real thing and encourages audience participation by permitting us to recognize what Gabriel vehemently refuses to recognize about himself, his family, and the end of his way of life. The horrors of which are bolstered succinctly when he accidentally eats Albert the monkey with Cotter.

Through a kind of literary equivalent of pantomiming, O'Faolain and Kathleen present Marianne Talbot as desperately starved for attention and affection further reinforced by her frequently physical and sartorial communiqués with William Mullan, while Gabriel's repression of familial incest turns him into a cipher largely devoid of affect to the extent that he must ultimately project his own gloom and aggression into an agonic struggle with the possibly imagined shade of Michael. Michael's allegiance to the Molly Maguires and desire to wrest(le) Birchwood from Gabriel as his own birthright transposes the sociopolitical conflict preceding and including the Land Wars into a sprawling, tangled, but still decidedly intimate psychodrama (since Michael may not exist outside of Gabriel's mind), that quite literally pitches brother against brother. We are left to wonder which of the Archangelically-named named twins has a better nature or if maintaining any sense of fraternal loyalty, heritage, or conscience is even possible in the face of the harrowing events of the family and the nation's in-fighting, duplicity (both in the sense of deception and literal doubleness of Gabriel/Michael as twins and the stratification or bifurcation of class and ethical boundaries as well as the family unit through oppositional and divisive political instability), land-lust, and moral and economic degeneration.

My earlier claim from Chapter 3 that contemporary women writers like Tana French frame their narratives as "deliberately personal" (Fogarty) to counteract the traditional silencing, controlling, and objectifying of women in colonial, nationalist, and contemporary public discourse to raise what is hidden, forbidden, and supposedly shameful into the light of communal experience as a conscious form of subversion and resistance to the myth of a universal Irish history is cannily reversed by Banville. The

cultural impact of both the tenant unrest and the Famine period shifts from the register of the sociopolitical conflict to become an intensely, deliberately personal turmoil that is quite aptly, in regard to its doppelganger twin plot, truly cathected or psychologically burdensome from both ends. From his position of privilege, however far he believes himself to have supposedly Fallen, Gabriel is automatically writing individual history as national history and vice versa. The burning out of unjust landlords becomes the spontaneous combustion of a despotic matriarch who is an Ascendancy perversion of Caitlín Ní hUallacháin that must be purged. Feeble and violent Granda Godkin is the loyalist male equivalent of Joyce's Old Gummy Granny right down to his dentures that take a large death-bite out of the birchwood bark, in an endeavor to permanently claim his territory and the Irish landscape in general, in much the same way that the Yeats circle's initials remain carved in that copper beech on the land of Coole Park. The fitful psychoanalytic fable immediately serves as fitting political allegory in which patriarchal class hegemonies as well as time itself become asynchronously punctuated and ruptured by tremendous forces beyond their control, the undeniability of death as both a symbol and a reality.

By contrast, Kathleen's putting on the poor mouth regarding Marianne's and thus her own victimhood (at least with regard to many of her consensual assignations) is a conscious rhetorical and political positioning that indicates an extremely reductive understanding of the nature of "deliberately personal" feminist critique and the motivations behind a work like the Talbot history and then novel-in-progress. As she reflects early on in the project, "It is Kathleen you mourn for, I said to myself" (O'Faolain 51). De Burca fully acquiesces to the idea that because she cannot "save" or effectively

reclaim Marianne Talbot by correcting or overwriting the silences within Famine history and the public record preceding and absence or conflicts within it following the divorce from Richard, that there is, as such, no point in rescuing herself by completing the work. Her efforts now become redirected to act as kind of *dea ex machina* savior for her boss, Alex, as he grieves the loss of his mother and appears to be further entangled with a cult-like Protestant lay ministry that wants to claim their home. By equating her own inertia and melancholy with what she assumes must have been Marianne's, Kathleen further falsely assumes that similarly, her future has already been overdetermined by her past, already written like Marianne Talbot's, and therefore, her sense of displacement is a permanent state, an inevitability. The palimpsestic rewriting of the female body and feminized space that occurs in Ní Dhomhnaill, French, and even in the *aislingí,* Yeats, Joyce, and Banville, can never come to full fruition because Kathleen's believes that Marianne's as well as her own identity is entirely contingent upon her desirability to and approval from of the opposite sex.

I want to pause here for a moment on Eve Walsh Stoddard's claim in *Positioning Gender and Race in (Post)colonial Space* that the specificity and particularity of each individual nation's political conditions with regards to gender advocacy requires her to hesitate from espousing any particular feminist theory outside of its original context in her study because she identifies as a white, middle-class US feminist, "I cannot legislate for the others I engage with through scholarship" (17). While this is strictly true, the subtitle of her study is *Connecting Ireland and the Caribbean*, and would imply the necessity of a comparative framework that embraces multiethnic, transnational, global feminisms rather than a de facto demurral from or qualification of when doing so. I do

not equate scholarship and advocacy, but my understanding of the core tenets of a feminist project is that the former should not be prohibitive of the latter and vice versa, whether one is capable of influencing legislation or not. It is an utter misprision that informed critique is tantamount to policy-making and should thus be dismissed out of hand or left in the hands of governments. I am not pointing this out to deny the caution and sensitivity with which such comparative frameworks should be undertaken and the necessary historical situating required to do so, but rather to indicate a failure on her part to openly and effectively embrace such interdisciplinary modes of study, study that hopefully informs this work throughout, and is especially relevant to my discussion of Kathleen's feminism or beliefs concerning gender issues in the context of *My Dream of You* and her views as they relate to her representation of Marianne as well as the Famine and post-Famine periods in Ireland.

Kathleen's understanding of the futility of women's roles in Irish public discourse, for instance, is in sharp contradistinction to the conscious political positioning and embrace of the mythic title "Woman of the *Sídhe*" by a historical Anglo-Irish contemporary of Marianne Talbot, Maud Gonne, who attributes her own will to act as savior and servant of Ireland's true queen or national spirit, Caitlín Ní hUallacháin, rather than cow-tow to—as she condemned the monarch first in an article in the *L'Irlande Libre* in 1897 that would later appear in *The United Irishman* in 1900—"The Famine Queen" Victoria.[35] Gonne's speeches and autobiography address the necessity of her "courage"

[35] For more on Gonne and further useful context on women's individual and collective post-Famine public engagement, see Part II of Innes's *Woman and Nation in Irish Literature and Society.* Despite enormous amounts of popular lore, including an incident in response to a speech by Charles Stewart Parnell, decrying that Queen Victoria only donated £5 to Famine relief efforts, she actually made one of the largest contributions to Famine relief efforts by donating £2,000 from her personal reserves as well serving as patron of the charity that raised funds. However, exponentially more than her donation was spent during an

and the obligations of Irish protofeminist sisterhood that is "allied to the mysterious forces of the land" (qtd. Kelleher 124, 122). The rhetoric of Maud Gonne inexorably hearkens back to the representational and iconographic legendary dichotomy I explored in Chapter 1, and permits her and Yeats, who considered her his great muse and praised her efforts widely in the press, to exploit their respective socioeconomic privilege and status as a (wo)man of the people. The emphasis, in Gonne's case, as Kelleher and Yeats each suggest, is also predicated on a deliberate emphasis on her gender, that enables her to express, in a way that men supposedly cannot, what he calls "the logic of the heart" (qtd. Kelleher 113).

While I would inherently reject the implicit sexism in what Yeats characterizes as Gonne's "curious power" to "unconsciously seiz[e]" rather than her ability to knowingly craft and make relevant "salient incidents", this linking of the feminine and the uncanny is not only the rhetorical, ideological, and aesthetic stance throughout the majority of the Yeats's *oeuvre* as discussed in Chapter 3, but it also offers useful insight into the way Gonne herself employed and manipulated the cultural conventions of gender to her advantage. These subverted conventions enabled her to more effectively bridge the divide between paragon or archetype and autonomous speaking subject, the kind of role Kathleen hopes to fashion on a much less grand, largely apolitical, and more localized, or even an individual scale ex-post-facto for her Anglo-Irish heroine, Marianne McCausland Talbot. And yet, whereas Gonne most definitely and frequently spoke for herself, Kathleen presumes through the privilege of fictional tableaux to speak for and through

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1849 visit to Dublin that was intended but largely failed to boost morale during this period of intense distress (Cf. Ferriter and Tóibín; Kelleher; Kinealy and Valone; Póirtéir).

Talbot under the premise that she is a figure who was blatantly misrepresented in the juridical and cultural history of Ireland that was, of course, predominantly written by men and determined by patriarchal as well as colonial values. Kathleen's unfinished novel about Marianne's history functions less as O'Faolain's titular "dream" borrowed from Kathleen's translation of Eugenio Montale's poem in Italian (O'Faolain 62), but more as Stephen Dedalus' oft-quoted "nightmare from which [one is] trying to awake" (Joyce, *U* 1.377), in which de Burca's fantasies are repeatedly undermined by the conflicting facts as presented in the Talbot *Judgment,* the Paget pamphlet in Marianne's defense, and the obscure tabloid article that accuses Mrs. Talbot of having had a second lover.

In these instances, as well as in Banville, the geopolitical and ecosystemic realities of the past act as a continually oppressive force to which one's only response can be imaginative, and which, I would contend, for Gabriel, Kathleen, and Stephen, at least, unlike Yeats and Gonne, this response fails to sufficiently provide them with success, solace, satisfaction, or satiation. This failure is further charted through and allied with the transformation of rural space prior to, during, and after the Famine period:

> The layout and appearance of the Irish landscape underwent a series of radical changes; first in the eighteenth century under the Penal Laws as land-ownership shifted to Anglo-Irish landlords and native Irish became impoverished tenants at will; second, in the wake of the Great Famine of the late 1840s, as the countryside was cleared of tenants' presence because of death and emigration and a concomitant shift to grazing lad; and third in the redistribution of land back to native Irish farmers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centur[ies] as the country went through decolonization. (Stoddard 27)

I would add to this the construction and real estate boom and bust cycles of Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger economies, with which Ireland continues to struggle concerning interest rates, mortgage crises, and the austerity measures of the twenty-first century.

In *An Béal Bocht*, however, Bónapárt's very victimization by everything from the state apparatus (e.g. teachers and policemen) to the ecological one (i.e. the weather) actually permit him the time and space, albeit in bondage, to create his tragicomic narrative of a life full of incredible and also, purposefully incredulous adversity. O'Brien demonstrates that as Gonne claimed, "If you come to my country, every stone will repeat to us this tragic history [of the Famine]" (qtd. Kelleher 112). By illustrating the extension the historical privations of *An Gorta Mór* as described by O'Leary to a lesser extent into the abject scenes of Bónapárt's life in Corca Dorcha in the mid-twentieth century, O'Brien is able to infuse what is rightfully in *Mo Scéal Féin* pure agony, fundamental terror, and profound grief abated only by O'Leary's own belief in a merciful afterlife with a comedy that is most deliberately grounded in the material world, bound to the natural vicissitudes of the physical environment of a specific, if technically imaginary[36] place that figures earthiness in both senses—as opposed to nebulous metaphysical pieties. From its title, *An Béal Bocht* is as facetious and outlandish as O'Leary's biography is devout and genuine.

Nonetheless, both O'Leary and O'Brien's works—however disparate in intent and tone, since the latter is designed as a parody of the former—share an explicitly Catholic understanding of individual and collective suffering not as particularly extraordinary but instead par for the course of existence, indeed the very essence of the human condition which will eventually prove redemptive (at least for Fr. O'Leary) in the next life. O'Leary insists, "*Tuigim go raibh an sgéal ar an gcuma gcéadna díreach mór-thímpal na*

[36] The name "Corca Dorcha" is based on the actual Gaeltacht of *Corca Dhuibhne*, County Kerry, the region from which Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill also hails.

h-Éirean go léir—I understand the story was exactly the same all about the whole of Ireland" (O'Leary 47; *MSF* 52), and Bónapárt too repeatedly notes that he comprehends misery as a function of being a Gael. For although conditions may not necessarily improve, especially for Bónapárt, they can always get worse. Both Ó Cúnasa and O'Leary are fully cognizant of that and thus grateful for their tribulations, the crosses they bear. They each employ parody, despite its often theological or moralistic tone and content, that is, in Foucault and Nietzsche's sense, "directed against reality" to effect "a transformation of history into a totally different form of time" and see what they call "genealogy" as "history in the form of concerted carnival," albeit only a temporary one. that includes O'Leary's joke about the gravel-cake or O'Brien's exaggerated deadly *feis* (*Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice* 160-1).

De Burca and Godkin, on the other hand, despite the latter's role in a carnivalesque circus, ultimately remain trapped in the miasma of their respective pain and loss, unable or unwilling to allow it, in Mary Robinson's aforementioned terms, to "strengthen and deepen" either their own identities or their sympathetic or empathetic responses to others. In essence, the force of trauma effaces the status or sense of belonging that would facilitate their subject position and permanently fractures their individual subjectivities, experiences, and the conditions of possibility that they feel can result from what Stoddard follows Oliver in characterizing as "social melancholy" or Deborah Peck's description of the (post-)Famine "borderline society". Both protagonists (in addition to Marianne Talbot in Kathleen's portrayal) are deeply unsettled and displaced in the affective and geographical senses. Kathleen's closest confidante, Jimmy, as well as her subject, Marianne, and most of Gabriel's friends as well as his entire family

are all dead, and their narratives center as much on useless attempts to resurrect them in an almost masturbatory fashion, a kind of pornography of prolonged maudlin memories that naturally, produces no pleasure but only exacerbates their individual sorrows. The haunted, introspective and yet projected and self-abusive nature of their efforts only further deadens any hope of new significant relationships in the future.

If Banville and O'Faolain, then, illustrate the magnitude of the Famine to the point that it creates unbreachable gaps as well as unbroachable subjects (in the ontological as well as topical sense) in our understanding of both personal and national history, O'Leary and O'Brien present new modes or registers, spiritual and comic, respectively, that allow words to transubstantiate, to truly resurrect and preserve as the only viable means of survival. As Samuel Beckett would write to conclude *The Unnamable* (1953), "I can't go on. I'll go on." John Banville himself observes "the note of solitude, of stoic despair which great art always sounds" by citing this same line (qtd. McNamee 48). Seemingly impossible goings-on, then, also serve as a distillation of O'Leary and O'Brien's respective credos regarding the Irish language itself, which transfigures from the plain-spoken, natural style the former to the complex, multidialectical, transhistorical hybridization of the latter that deliberately toys with conventions, idioms, and reader's expectations. As Kevin Whelan explains,

> There could be no easy partitioning of the past from the present in Ireland. The landscape itself [and I would add, the languages were] palimpsests, containing contested narratives of history and culture, Its monuments and [physical as well as linguistic, e.g. place-names] traces reached from the present down into earlier layers from which they derived their power and presence, their aura.
> (qtd. Stoddard 4)

This is what I would further describe as the "psychic space" or dimensionality of place

that differentiates it from space.[37]

When Banville's protagonist, Gabriel Godkin, reclaims the crumbling family manse, he remains fixated on the past, which he claims to remember with crystalline clarity and which evidently has more resonance for him than the nebulous, initially unmentioned and largely unmentionable present. Gabriel recalls his first memory of witnessing his "parents" having sex in the "cripple[d]," "twisted" (Banville 23, 24), dark, and mysterious wood where it occurs, the primeval forest outside the bounds and strictures of society, metonymically figuring the horrific unfathomableness of their act, which even as he remembers the event in rich detail, Gabriel claims it still exceeds his understanding and sounds a distinctly Beckettian "note":

> …among the ferns that flourished there, a woman's pale hands clutched and loosed in languorous spasms a pale white arse bare below a hiked-up shirttail. She cried out softly under his thrusts, and, as I watched, a delicate arc of briar beside them, caught by a stray breeze, sprang up suddenly into the air, where two butterflies were gravely dancing. Lift your head! Look! The mirror's pale, unwavering, utterly silent gaze sent something like a deep black note booming through the wood's limpid song, and I felt, what shall I say, that I had discovered something awful and exquisite of immense, unshakable calm. (Ibid 23, 24)

What critics have consistently neglected to notice is that the "mother" whom Gabriel witnesses in *flagrante delicto* could refer to Martha, his biological mother and aunt, as opposed to Beatrice, who he has previously believed to be his mother. In his vision of the verboten in the wood, what O'Connell describes as the revelation of a "secret" knowledge that sexual numinosity serves to reveal the order of things out of chaos (76), I maintain actually reiterates the notion that in their incest, Joseph and Martha Godkin

[37] See de Certeau, Lefebvre, and Bourdieu on the semiotics of space and representational space, also Foucault on "heterotopia" in "Of Other Spaces" and Kristeva and Oliver's use of the term "psychic space" throughout their works.

compound and reinforce for Gabriel a doubly secret knowledge of "perversity", in which the only ordering principle is chaos and that any supposed notion of what Gabriel calls "harmony" (Banville 33) is always already discordant. In retrospect, the elision of this initial scene without precise identifiers is key to unraveling the novel's incest plot, which becomes increasingly apparent as the novel progresses and both family and tenant relations (pun definitely intended) at Birchwood continue to deteriorate alongside Gabriel's psychological stability. His "mother" is frequently presented as precious and precariously fragile, at the mercy of the whims and entirely subject to the approval or rages of her tempestuous spouse and sister-in-law as well as her irate mother-in-law.

The malformation and awkward slope of the land is reflective in the exceedingly contentious dynamic amongst the Godkins, particularly in the acrimonious arguments of Gabriel's elders and Gabriel's own isolation from everyone, most especially his "cousin," Michael, who would "naturally" be his companion and friend as they are the same age. Instead they are sworn enemies from Michael's arrival. The frailty of the Godkin women other than spiteful Granny is figured with damaged blue butterflies and bruised yonic primroses. Gabriel even recalls fantasizing about destroying the butterflies, even though he does not do so, which the reader later realizes would involve confronting his "mother" with the unsettling events he should not have witnessed amidst the trees. O'Connell only extends this by raising the specter of additional, possibly frustrated incest between Gabriel and Michael figured especially through the failed penetration with a phallic dagger in their last encounter. These images of intergenerational Oedipal tension foreshadow Gabriel's disturbing relationships with women in general and his wish for a gentle, kind twin sister (instead of Michael, his cruel twin brother). Femininity is an

intriguing mystery but also primarily, a deformity, a weakness, as he describes the vagina of his young peasant love, Rosie, as a "wound"—the same way he later describes the genitals of a local farm girl he encounters, Mag. He only remembers Rosie bodily and insists, showing his misogyny and narcissism: "Try as I will, I cannot see her face. Her other parts, or some of them, I vividly recall, naturally….Our affair then was founded on mutual astonishment at the intricacy of things, my brain, her cunt, things like that" (Banville 68).

His remembrances of his grandmother depict her a monstrous amalgamation of Dickens' Miss Havisham and Hitchcock's Mrs. Norma Bates, who endeavors to emotionally (and possibly even literally) castrate her (grand)children and thereby control the household. Gabriel's father is the distant "young" heir, and his "mother", Beatrice, who goes mad, appears only in fleeting images, as if she were no more substantial than "vapour" (Banville 19). And apropos of his grandmother as evocative of Mrs. Bates, the increasingly disturbed Beatrice opts to dress in her dead mother-in-law's old, voluminous, ill-fitting Victorian widow's weeds and other strange, discarded frocks from bygone days as an "economy" after Granny's suspicious internal explosion to save on new clothes but also as an attempt to establish herself as the new matriarch. Beatrice's efforts to claim her power and status as lady of the manor is necessitated because Gabriel eventually reveals that his paternal aunt, Martha, has already incestuously superseded the place of his "mother" in her husband's bed. Beatrice strives to circumvent not only the loss of the estate but her own shame and eventual institutionalization in addition the very passage of time itself, by literalizing Freeman's "temporal drag" in putting on old-fashioned garb to try and disappear into the Birchwood of a more prosperous era, not

merely an era before she had knowledge of her husband's transgressions, but indeed a whole generation before the family was formed as such, in order to re-write history through sartorial choices that could somehow will them all out of existence or anachronistically re-place them in time.

When Gabriel, tormented by knowledge of the incest and other familial tensions, including the threat of being sent away to school, flees his Birchwood and joins Prospero's Magical Circus on the road, women remain the repositories of the trauma and grief the nation experiences as a result of the Great Famine, specifically the aptly named Sibyl, one of the circus performers. Another female performer, Ida, another one of the novel's many twins, is raped and beaten to death by British soldiers. The baby daughter of a pair of performers disappears before the circus caravan returns to Gabriel's homeplace. As a result, the caravaners journey to the mountains in an endeavor to save themselves from suffering, harassment, potato blight, and the attendant general unrest in the valleys, which also seems to be the motivation driving Bónapárt's trip to the White Bens in *An Béal Bocht*: "*B'fhearr duine marbh ón uisce-spéire agus ón gcruatan ar an gCruaich ná beo ar an ngorta sa bhaile í lar na míntíre taise*—It were better for a man to die on the mountain from celestial water [and the hardship of the (Hunger)stack] than to live at home famished in the centre of the plain" (*ABB* 92; *TPM* 103).

When the circusfolk eventually return to Birchwood and its outlying community, they are besieged by "peelers", who want to drive the caravan and them out of the village. Gabriel narrowly escapes the fracas, after Magnus the Clown saves him at the expense of his own life, leaving Gabriel to wander starving and astray through the countryside like Lear or Sweeney, frenzied by the piercing reverberations of funereal bells that toll for his

sweetheart Rosie's and the voices of the quasi-Edenic past Rosie represented as echoing in his own mind. When he reunites with what's left of the circus and its animals after his temporary desertion,[38] the fat lady Angel, who has cooked for all the performers as mentioned above, dies too in the skirmishes with his mother's people, the Lawlesses.[39] They have taken possession of Birchwood with the aid of Cotter the cottier, squatter, and poacher, who had previously mortally wounded and impaired the family patriarch, Granda Godkin, by beating him about the head with a pheasant. These previously exiled maternal relatives also face a simultaneous attack from former tenants and the Molly Maguires, led by Gabriel's "cousin"/brother, Michael to try to claim the remainder of the estate in an absurdist enactment of Land War agitation and violence.

Gabriel, like his "mother" before him, is undone by the dilapidation of the house, the selling off of the grounds of the estate, the family's poverty in the face of these rebellions, and as he a at last directly admits at the novel's conclusion, his family's shameful secret that Gabriel's "mother" claimed him as her own child, despite the fact that Gabriel was the "chosen" progeny of Joseph's incestuous relationship with his sister because he and Michael were not any kin to the Lawlesses, in an effort to maintain the "purity" of the Godkin bloodline and primogeniture. The ongoing incest drives Beatrice to take revenge by sending her sister-in-law Martha to her death in a burning summer-

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[38] The novel's entire circus plot may be an homage to Yeats's famous phantoms from "The Circus Animals Desertion" with Gabriel himself frequently raving and seeing every woman as "the…..slut/who keeps the till." For more on the poem and the supposed futility of art in the face of trauma and death, see Chapter 3.

[39] This surname is particularly notable because Emily Lawless of County Kildare was a significant Anglo-Irish poet, essayist, and novelist of the Big House genre in the nineteenth century, including *Hurrish* (1886), which is believed to have influenced Gladstone's policies in Ireland and was widely criticized by the nationalist press and writers, Yeats among them, who was otherwise an admirer other works. Lawless also wrote *Grania* (1895), a tragic protofeminist *bildungroman* that explores misogyny in a fishing village on the Aran Islands, and ironically, considering her intense unionist sympathies, one of her volumes of verse, *Wild Geese* (1902), became incredibly popular in republican circles.

house[40] as Martha searches for Gabriel's missing "cousin"/twin, Michael. This same secret is also what apparently causes her mother-in-law, Gabriel's Granny Godkin, to spontaneously combust from rage at this and other evidence of her son Joseph's corruption and incompetent mismanagement of the estate.

The revelation that Michael is Gabriel's twin and not his cousin is anticipated by Gabriel's unreliability as a narrator and the fact that he does his utmost to ignore his father and Martha's implied sexual shenanigans throughout the first third of the novel. As O'Connell remarks regarding Banville's protagonists as a whole,

> They are unreliable not just as narrators, but as selves: the term 'reliable' derives from the Latin word *religare*, meaning 'to bind together forcefully'. Like Narcissus, who fails to achieve a union with himself, these unreliable narrators, despite their attempts at narrative self-composition, fail to bind themselves together" (208).

Beyond and even within the walls of Birchwood, Gabriel Godkin's account is unaccountable, his very being fractured and resistant to any semblance of coherence. As the story unfolds, he frequently claims to paradoxically remember the family history and dynamic with perfect clarity but not to have comprehended various fraught occasions at the time they occurred. The "past-presentness" of the presentation of Gabriel's life is obfuscated by his asynchronic "future-past" knowingness of the novel's ex-post-facto narration.[41] Gabriel refers to himself as a "riven thing, incomplete" (Banville 130). The fracturing of his psyche through repression and denial fuel Gabriel's quest, the phantom female twin serving as the visionary Platonic *spéirbhean* that does not really exist—"there is no girl, there never was" (Banville 168) —and his Granny Godkin as the all-too-

[40] For more on the summer-house as emblematic psychic and physical space of colonial terror, bloodlust, and just plain lust in the poetry of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, see Chapter 2.

[41] See discussion of Yeatsian time from Howe and Valente in Chapter 3.

real, monstrous *cailleach.* The transposition or displacement of the latter to the former that occurs in the poetic corpus of Ní Dhomhnaill, Joyce's *Ulysses* and of course, in the *aislingí* themselves can never be achieved but is instead permanently diverted.

Sybil herself also appears as a perverse, famine-crazed version of the *spéirbhean*, foretelling the doom of the nation:

> Something had happened to her face, a minute but devastating change. Her left eye seemed to droop a fraction lower than the right, and this imbalance gave to what had been her cool measured gaze a querulous, faintly crazed cast. Her cheeks too had sunk, and their former bloom had now become a silvery sheen. Her fits of fury were more frequent, less comprehensible….Her rages fell asunder in the middle, the words dried up and she was left trembling, leaning out to one side, hiccupping speechlessly, her hands clenched and a red stain spreading slowly across her forehead….There was a flurry and she was back again, staring at me wildly. Her [red] hair was laced with raindrops. She fell to her knees and threw her arms around my hips, and with her head against my stomach she wept, such bitter tears, such black sorrow.
> 'I'm so unhappy,' she sobbed, 'so unhappy!'
> …
> I hardly dare to voice the notion which, if it did not come to me then comes to me now, the insane notion that, perhaps it was on her, on Sybil, our bright bitch, that the sorrow of the country, of those baffled people in the rotting fields, of the stricken eyes, staring out of hovels, was visited against her will and even without her knowledge so that tears might be shed, and the inexpressible expressed. Does that seem a ridiculous suggestion? But I do not suggest, I only wonder. (Banville 137-139)

Like her oracular Greek namesakes, Gabriel consults with Sybil like Aeneas before his journey into the Underworld. But unlike the immortal Cumaean Sybil who originated the Sibylline books or prophetic texts written in Greek but promulgated by the Romans throughout their empire, she does not predict that a savior will come as her Cumaean counterpart does in the Virgil's *Eclogues.* Thus, neither the noble feminized peasantry that Sybil embodies, Birchwood, nor its Ascendancy legacy can survive unmarred when the Hunger comes upon them. Sibyl is the iconography of the female State gone mad, fractured from the inside out in both mind and body: red, red rotten with famine fever and

then famine pallor expressed as vituperation for every one and every thing, most especially herself.

Gabriel's portrayal of Sybil explicitly genders the legacy of trauma, much like what Banville's literary predecessor, Yeats achieves in the doubly Oedipal drama *Purgatory* (1938), in which the Old Man narrates killing both his own father and then circumincessantly repeats the act on his son, the Boy, with the cycle implicitly repeating endlessly through the echoic hoofbeats of the grandfather's wedding-night approach and the (grand)mother who dies in childbirth, all of which inextricably binds birth to death in a recursive, eternal return to the family manse. As McNamee insists, "Yeats saw [the Big House] as a symbol of the ideal made real, and virtually all fictions treating the Big House theme realistically are stories of its rise and fall, as fall it did, historically speaking. Banville reverses this and begins, rather than ends with the fall, thus lifting the story to the level of Christian myth—[as Biblically] it is with the Fall that the human story begins" (42-3). *Birchwood* also shares an obsession with impotent heritage, frustrated regeneration, and the grotesque but inevitable fetishization of place, space, and property expressed in terms of critiquing both Christian theology, Continental philosophy, and histories of empire, including the social relations of domination and cultural relations of oppression that occur in Samuel Beckett's own perverse homage to the Big House genre, *Watt* (1953), including the incestuous Lynches. Gabriel cannot save Sybil nor himself and continues to deny his brother Michael, inventing the search for a missing female twin in his ague delirium to avoid the horror of the truth. His personal past and the historical past writ large are pristine yet "incommunicable" (Banville 21), distorted by Gabriel's deliberately partial, suspended vision in his

"blinking game" (Ibid 122), in an attempt to achieve stasis in the midst of flux, further evident in refracted *phantasimagos* of himself as Michael and vice versa in the strange cheval- and pier-glasses at Birchwood and its out-buildings when Gabriel finally observes that he "might have been looking at [his] own reflection" (Banville 169).

Mirror-images, in turn, hearken back to the scene in the birch glade where Gabriel recognizes "the woman" i.e. Martha as his true but repugnant mother. Gabriel seemingly remains in a permanent narcissistic Lacanian Mirror Stage of (under-)development that limits the formation of an individual consciousness or subjectivity apart from his relation to his twin, Michael, who may or may not exist.[42] Equally debatable is the existence of Gabriel's own ethical or moral conscience. Michael appears only as Gabriel's reflection in "a grimy sliver of mirror" or a distorted apparition that emerges from beneath the lilac bushes as if rising from a grave, wearing or shedding a white dress, a dress being the camouflage of choice for the Mollies but also representative of ghostliness as well as Gabriel's initial desire that Michael was the female twin "Rose", upon Gabriel's return to the big house in "Mercury" (Banville 163-6). We must remember too from Yeats and the *aislingí* that "the Rose" is also an emblem Ireland. The novel's conclusion reinforces that Michael's reality is even more dubious, as Gabriel stabs the air and recites his own name seven times, which causes Michael to vanish "glid[ing] backward…into the shadows" (Ibid 166). This leaves Gabriel alone—whether or not he was technically ever otherwise after the defeat of the tenants, the Mollies, and the Lawlesses and the departure of the circus—in the shell of Birchwood house, where he disavows the entire story: "It may not have been like that, any of it." (Ibid 170).

[42] See Chapter 3 for more on the Mirror Stage.

Gabriel argues for the failure of language in the face of a history of both individual and national intergenerational horror. Godkin thinks: "at last I had discovered a form which could contain and order all my losses. I was wrong. There is no form, no order, only echoes and coincidences, sleight of hand, dark laughter. I accept it" (Banville 174). There are no words for the utter abjection of the Hunger, or for Gabriel's own individual hunger for love and acceptance that is never sufficiently sated or simply put, "Violets[43] and cowshit, [his] life has been ever thus" (Banville 126). Hutcheon claims in true Derridean fashion, that there is never a single capital-T Truth, but multiple truths, based on the individual perceptions and needs of a narrator—verisimilitude and multifocal perspectives, rather than so-called "authenticity." Gabriel would concur; named after God's own messenger and narrator, the Archangel of the Annunciation, he narrates, but the truth, like his faint and distorted reflections on his mother, is the stuff of "vapour." Unlike his seraphimic namesake, Gabriel's words are not a performative utterance. They are not the Word—they do not become flesh; even though they do conjure the phantom of an avenging Michael to supposedly wrestle in a Biblical grudge match in an effort to gain control of the estate. Michael's shadowy reappearance indicates that whatever darkness resides within Gabriel himself has wrest control of his tale to as recompense to offset the incalculable loss of his entire family as well as most of his surrogate circus family. Ultimately, for Gabriel, his language, however lyrical, heartrending, and suffused with ironic whimsy, remains profoundly unable reconstitute

[43] In *Ulysses*, Gerty MacDowell grieves that she must eat griddlecakes and Queen Anne's pudding instead of "…something poetical like violets or roses" (*U* 13.230) The flower itself is another emblem of joy and regeneration in Molly Bloom's soliloquy,"…springing up even out of ditches primroses and violets…." (18.1562-63). It also the unique color of her Molly's new garters, which her husband notes as part of his initial fantasized romantic panorama, briefly stepping into the overcast morning outside their abode at No. 7 Eccles Street, dreaming of mystical twilights and dulcet tones from dulcimer strings (*U* 4.50-58). See Chapter 1.

the numerous material bodies of all those who have fallen in the wake of his lifetime during the Famine times. Words alone are unable to bear the enormous burden of the family's incestuous shame nor manage to contain or transcend the atrocities Gabriel has witnessed and endured. Gabriel himself cannot ascend any further (i.e. into the afterlife) while Birchwood declines. Banville ties both individual and cultural survival to whether this synecdochal microcosm of the nation itself is figured as emerging from its harrowing history in terms of production: bearing fruit[44] not only in agricultural terms but human ones—or failing to thrive with the bodily, affective, and sociopolitical collapses that result in the wreckage of *An Drochshaol*.

At this point, I want to once more draw a sharp distinction between personal fasting as an informed choice of spiritual abnegation, as in Ní Dhomhnaill's "*Féar Suaithinseach*/Miraculous Grass" discussed in Chapter 2, and widespread starvation as unavoidable socioeconomic and physical state as a result of one's class, religion, and/or geopolitical location or position. Although both radically alter the landscapes of the body, the body politic, and the topographical body of the land itself, the former is ultimately valorizing and restorative or recuperative, while the latter is permanently traumatizing and destructive. By the end of the poem, Ní Dhomhnaill's speaker resituates her place within the community and re-establishes her identity and feelings of belonging. Whereas for Marianne Talbot as imagined by Kathleen de Burca who is imagined by Nuala O'Faolain in *My Dream of You* and for Gabriel Godkin's entire circle as recounted by him as imagined by John Banville in *Birchwood*, the loss of their families

[44] There is one final successful blackcurrant harvest before Gabriel's departure, and he returns to Birchwood's fallow fields after the potato blight has ravaged them and the community. See also Chapter 1's discussion of the inversion of *Genesis* 1:28; 9:1, 19; and 35:11 in relation to Joyce's Plum Hags.

(which entails for the former: her divorce and expulsion from polite society as a result of the scandal of her alleged affair with the groundskeeper, and for the latter, the sum total of all his family and friends' deaths, disappearances or absences), as well as the deterioration or loss of their material possessions, specifically their homes in the aftermath of the Irish Famine period, explicitly demolishes each character's place of privilege within their respective Anglo-Irish communities and thus their respective abilities to maintain a functional or cogent sense of self.

Despite their presumptive positions of power, both Gabriel—as Anglo-Irish male heir and abstemious absentee landlord of Birchwood—and Marianne—as mistress of the domestic sphere of Mount Talbot—are robbed of their agency, even as they endeavor to write (speculatively and fictionally in the case of the former) or are written into (quite literally and actually-though-fictionally in the case of the latter) post-Famine history. Gabriel is the end of the Godkin line and his narrative offers the last traces of their ruined estate; Marianne is largely be decried and shut away as a deviant and a madwoman prior to her divorce from Richard.

In both *Birchwood* and *My Dream of You*, as in Yeats's "The Mask" and French's novels that I discussed in Chapter 3, the narrator's experience refracted or redoubled psyches in the Lacanian or Freudian sense to compensate for the trauma they've experienced. O'Faolain's Kathleen uses the her fantasy of the "true" story of real historical individual Marianne Talbot to address religious- and class-mixing that was forbidden during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like that which Uncle Simon March describes regarding his ancestor in *The Likeness*, with equally dire consequences for the woman in both accounts: alienation of affection, rejection by the

community, and suicide for the unnamed pregnant Glenskehy girl, and a similarly negative trajectory of divorce, public shaming, destitution, insanity, and confinement for Marianne. So, too, Banville's Gabriel not only attempts to escape his toxic Ascendancy heritage by repeated although not vaginally-sexual liaisons with the peasant women (relatively comparable to the aforementioned March ancestor) but also figures his "cousin" Michael as the fantastic shade of the Godkins' long-unspoken (albeit frequently implied) flouting of the incest taboo made manifest as his dark double. Such conceptual and contrapuntal redoubling extends even further through (in Banville's case, consciously narcissistic) tendency of readerly or artistic identification with the subject that Grosz following Deleuze identifies in Bacon as "dark personae" or

> a tangle which makes the creation of a narrative or logic to link the two figures impossible [like the fevered and fantastic substitution of Rose for Michael], a kind of anti-figure, a figure bursting out of itself to connect while also separating….In Bacon's work this figure is or functions as a demon, a marker, a figure, a shadow, the force that keeps the two panels from being collapsed together, or from being thought too far apart" (30, 28).

This demonic shade is exactly the role Michael takes on, but pivotally, he and Gabriel fundamentally seem to collapse into one another, even as Gabriel narrates Michael's ostensible and ghostly withdrawing backward into the shadows after their final agon.

The collective *innenwelt* of the psychological dis-ease of the family, which cannot otherwise be acknowledged becomes part of the novel's magic realist *umwelt,* embodied in both Gabriel's seemingly illogical memories and his fantasies of a virtuous twin sister transformed into a wicked, estate-hijacking twin brother and the supposedly spontaneous combustion of Granny Godkin. This recursive, explosive primogeniture becomes indicative of the spread of famine-based disease or fever throughout Ireland, in terms of both physical and mental breakdowns of not only the body but socioeconomic, cultural,

and family structures at Birchwood. Kathleen's own psychological dis-ease with her position as a woman and lack of fulfillment in not only her professional life as a lonely journalist/would-be novelist but is reiterated in her personal life through a fleeting, half-hearted attempt to reconcile with her semi-estranged brother, Danny, after a brief visit when she gives him a thousand pounds as an investment in his so-called plans for cross-breeding sheep without consulting her sister-in-law Annie. Kathleen then discovers that Danny spent the money on a(nother) drinking binge that resulted in his temporary hospitalization. Her recurring dissatisfaction is again stressed when she cannot find an appropriate long-term romantic partner. This leads to Kathleen to deploy the language of exploitation regarding not merely her own history of oppression in the de Valera era and the discrimination she faces as part of the Irish diaspora but also Marianne's plight at Mount Talbot during the Famine times.

Again and again, Kathleen refuses to accept responsibility for the consequences of her actions, continuing the trend that she establishes in her youth when Kathleen admits to her sister Nora while cheating on Hugo that she has little interest in or understanding of self-respect: "What's it for, lovemaking, if you love each other already? If you know the other person? I couldn't imagine sex that wasn't trying to find something out—that wasn't a venture, an exploration" (O'Faolain 228). Long before she becomes a woman of means who can dash off a thousand pound cheque to her brother as a guilty (and ultimately ill-advised) *mea culpa* for her absence from his life, Kathleen repeatedly uses her body to "barter her way forward" with other men (O'Faolain 252), refusing agency and accountability for her actions, a quality with which she also repeatedly imbues her vision of Marianne Talbot and William Mullan's affair.

"Neither of the lovers knew what did start it," Kathleen writes, but then presumes to seemingly attribute the first move to Mullan on the following page,

> She said something, and without the slightest premeditation his ungloved hand, almost of its own volition, lifted, and delicately touched her mouth....And without fear or daring, but as in a trance, he, who had been little more to her than one of the human presences in the place, dropped his hand and delicately sketched the curve of her, in at her waist, out again at her hip" (O'Faolain 197-8).

The imagined force of their desire effectively renders them as merely gendered pronouns in this section, bodies with appetites and without names. The existing social hierarchy implied by the assertion "without fear or daring" is in Kathleen's account, at least, rendered irrelevant and effectively superseded by heterosexual notions of male supremacy; merely a woman, Marianne is as such a passive figure literally being acted upon—much like in her relationship with her husband—she is only made visible, brought into relief, only by the touch of a man. Thus, Marianne is rendered as unable to react or respond beyond a sharp exhalation, meeting her would-be lover's gaze, and choosing, for that moment anyway, to wordlessly end the encounter by walking away. Kathleen ascribes to them both seemingly little control in the matter, as if they, Marianne, in particular, are overcome by the force of *frisson*, "her skin where he had delineated it felt as if a magnet had passed over it" (Ibid). Verbs such as "sketched" and "delineated" indicate that as in Kathleen's view of herself, Marianne is reified and (over-)determined strictly by male desire, a sort of sensate *objet d'art* made manifest through touch as opposed to ink, charcoal, or paint. Both lovers are all body, quivering, reactive masses of nerves, dissociated hungry parts: mouths, hands, the flair of a waist at the hip. To invert and repurpose the (in)famous Lawrentian formula applied to the Bloomsbury group, which is apt because both Stoddard and Kathleen herself compare Marianne's life to

Lady Chatterley's Lover, the enraptured lovers are, for all intents and purposes, "dead from the neck up" in terms of sense and thought, functioning entirely on sensation, which in turn fittingly becomes their sensationalized history in the courts and the community. What was, for the time, an almost unspeakable transgression and taboo, is represented almost entirely through unspoken longing and intuition.

Body and place become the loci of *ennui* as well as the loci of *eros*—in Kathleen's account of Marianne, her body is evocative. In her affair with William Mullan, their bodies communicate in ways speech cannot and their closeness to the earth, figured through a symbolic economies of appetite, such as lying in the fields or amidst the grain stores hidden in the small buttery, that enable Marianne to be vital, make her capable of feeling. Her various states of dishabille: unhooked stays or buttons, removed pantalettes or petticoats, convey and emphasize the chaotic overlap of pain and pleasure, secrets and exposure, like the bruises she begs for, which serve as the marks and signs of the aches and longings within her made visible and tangible, figured as she and William explore and chart the map of her physiognomy in ways for which they lack a vocabulary beyond the sartorial, tactile, the physical. Primal passion transcends and refuses language as the estate itself succumbs to chaos and the lovers succumb to carnality.

Marianne is "held in an atmosphere as thick as smoke" by her desire, her vision clouded, opaque, and her reverie only briefly interrupted when starving people approach the dining room as she and Richard eat (O'Faolain 297). What is presented for Marianne initially as a *felix culpa* is distinguished by the void of suffering that surrounds her, which she mostly denies until confronted by the malnourished, desperate bodies on display, lurching before the couple in the dining room window or a skeletal hand reaches into the

moving carriage, the echo of a voice crying out for sustenance from beyond its shade. The divide between the middle classes and the so-called paupers during the Famine period is also troublingly thin and becomes equivalent to the survival divide, illustrated in the simile of an illustration in this passage from *Birchwood* about the starving and dispossessed:

> We entered an empty crooked [town]square. Here the houses along two sides were fine bright edifices, wine-red brick and white windows curtained with lace, while their counterparts facing them were low thatched shanties, ruined, most of them, with their walls breached as though by cannonshot. Shattered fireplaces hung in mid-air, Even the worst of these wrecks were inhabited. One, its front wall gone completely, was like a grotesque cutaway illustration of the times. On the lower floors an emaciated mother was cooking something frightful in a black pot while her brood of rickety children scuttled around her, and upstairs the father, tended by a dutiful daughter, lay on a pallet made of sacking, doing his best to die. (Banville 144)

The simulacrum is made real and then re-simulated without being ameliorated or assimilated through narrative comparison. Even more unsettling than these images that also persist throughout Famine literature, lore, and history, particularly regarding the deliberate juxtaposition of proverbial "lace-curtain" Irish who put on airs of respectability with the "shanty" Irish who are utterly destitute, Kathleen's version of Marianne (mis)appropriates their anguished cries into one of lust while lying with William:

> "You know the word the Irish people say when they are begging?" she said.
> "Urkish?"
> "*Ocras*," Mullan said, "Hunger."
> "Well, I am urkish for a night in a bed with you. I want you to come to my bed when Richard is away. No one will know." (O'Faolain 302)

Although Kathleen Burke/Caitlín de Burca is a seemingly successful Irish ex-pat, by returning to Ireland and effectively becoming temporarily repatriated, despite the Anglicization of her name, she automatically re-assumes the mantle of oppression which she attributes but also at times, refuses to attribute to Marianne Talbot, as evidenced by

the tasteless invented statement above. Kathleen can no longer be sole subject and author of her own story but must (re-)present her own feelings of victimization through the historical figure, who in her novel seems to share all of de Burca's insecurities and foibles, particularly her sense of alienation, her self-doubt about her purpose in the world, her *ennui*, and her total dependence upon the opposite sex for self-worth, which leads to promiscuity.

As I have shown regarding Yeats's refracted, bejeweled *imago* in "The Mask" and the doppelgangers from French's *The Likeness* in Chapter 3, Kathleen further transposes onto Marianne her fixation with mirrors and deceptive exteriors.

> The only companion Marianne had was her body. She petted and stroked it, and palpated herself, and turned this way and that in front of the mirror, kneading herself, and slapping herself. She looked at her hands, looked at her nails, gripped the white underside of her forearm to watch the site blanch and then redden. She had little use for the hours of the day, but to wait for them to pass. (O'Faolain 304)

For both of the novelist and protagonist, any reflective surfaces highlights the disparity between the well-dressed public persona and the ravished, disarrayed, possibly disappointing (or even disappointed) body on display, if only to oneself. Both frequently delight in further specularizing the respective bodily signs of their illicit lovemaking.

Kathleen writes, for example, that Marianne even enjoys aggravating the marks where Mullan had picked sheep-ticks from her skin with his "thick and horny" fingernails after they had made love in the grass because "[a]s her hands [re-] made those mild hurts on her own body, she saw him again as he had been then—a quiet man on his knees before her. The shafts of light that came in under the canopy [of the carriage] and hit the planes of his face. His intent head, bent close to her skin" (O'Faolain 299). This scene is

symbolically paralleled when Kathleen later marvels at her own bruises after Shay's exit, reluctantly referring to her "pride in these stigmata":

> But as I reached for the towels, I caught a glimpse of my bottom in a mirrored wall. A soft yellow bruise was beginning to develop across one cheek. And my breasts? I spun around. Yes. The mark of his mouth, and on the white flesh, fading pink lines where his fingers had clung. Deep down where nobody knew me and I hardly knew myself, I was gratified as an animal standing over a kill. I could have growled under my breath, I'm his, these are his marks on me, he owns me, I am his woman…What makes me feel smug, as if these were decorations I that I *won* fair and square? There is nothing honorable about them. I can say that our lovemaking was as honest as it can get, that we were as honest as animals. But not that we are honest people. His lies. His fooled wife. My secrets.

If one were to replace the phrase "his fooled wife" with "her [or my] fooled husband" these passages could easily have been lifted from her narration of "The Talbot Book" itself.

Kathleen connects her own wounds of love and disgrace not only to Marianne's and Christ's but to the unexpected memory of her own mother's experience of rough (implicitly violent and abusive) intercourse:

> I saw the marks on Mammy's upper arms. Livid bruises. Yellow and purple and black. She followed my gaze and saw where I was looking, and immediately turned behind the curtain. I looked at my own marks, discoloring so quickly. I stood rapt, remembering the grip of him. My head bowed of its own accord as if in obeisance…A grotesque picture had presented itself to me, and I wanted to make it go away. My mother silently held out her bruised arms to me, and I, with my arms at my side, mutely matched her with bruises of my own.
> (O'Faolain 426)

This primary trauma is what compels Kathleen to repeatedly mime her mother's shame not only through herself but in her depiction of Marianne. Mother and daughter, like Mullan and Marianne in "The Talbot Book", communicate with one another wordlessly through the body, which reveals the inexpressible, the inescapable attitude of shared

social, psychosexual, and spiritual bondage. The abject revulsion of Kathleen's memory is also almost a moment of subconscious contentment or at least conscious compassion, a joining of the now-grown daughter's body with her now-dead mother's in a way that was otherwise only achieved in *utero*. However, they are each exposed and vulnerable, a kind of perversely redoubled *Pietà* in which both parent and offspring remain broken or an imperfect inversion of The Madonna and Child in which they cannot truly embrace, cradle, or reach one another. Nonetheless, this moment marks the rare occasion in which Kathleen does not feel alienated from her distant mother, when she, as I have already mentioned with regards to Gabriel in *Birchwood*, disturbingly collapses time both through the "past-presentness" of her own personal experiences with the "future-belatedness" of her account of Marianne Talbot, as well as the theological notion of *kairos* or Divine time as it relates to preordination and eternal life for Christ and all humanity.

For O'Faolain, these women, who are by and large devoid of individualizing physical features thus become problematically further conflated with one another, irrespective of varying sociocultural and historical contexts as martyrs to the cause of passion. Marianne in particular serves a refraction of Kathleen, her dark double: "My eye was caught by the reverse image of my gestures in the wavy old mirror. When there was movement in its aquarium depths, I had often imagined that Marianne was on the other side of the glass, trying to reach me" (O'Faolain 356). What Grosz describes as the "dark personae" of Bacon's triptychs is also enacted through Kathleen's mirror-vision of Marianne. As with Yeats's reflection in "The Mask," Madison and Maddox in *The Likeness*, and Michael and Gabriel in *Birchwood*, Marianne serves as a lingering,

repeatedly transmogrified shade of Kathleen that haunts her fragmentary novel and her even more fragmentary sense of self that is never reconciled. De Burca remains in the liminal airplane space in the midst of travel at the conclusion of the novel, just as "The Talbot Book" itself will remain unfinished. Well before the term was coined, Kathleen strives unsuccessfully to write an erotohistoriography of another's body, but cannot finally transmute or fully commute its pleasures to her own.[45]

Kathleen de Burca's narcissistic impulses and ideological positions are relevant precisely because every event, specifically Marianne Talbot's life, is *a priori* viewed almost exclusively in the context of de Burca's personal experience and beliefs, not as discrete events in a still-ongoing process of history-making, but rather in a false teleological progression that ultimately and absolutely produces Kathleen's own present and future (Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice*). Kathleen's biases are the basis of the text. While I am not disputing Freeman's point about the necessary function of the body as historicized instrument in an erotohistoriography, Kathleen finds what I would now call a vulgar or abortive (not to mention fundamentally displeasurable, for her) approach to that model unsustainable in practice, even in terms of fiction, because Marianne does not and cannot be made to conform to Kathleen's "dream" or confirm her pre-existing, overdetermined ideologies. To be sure, Marianne barely functions as an historicized body; instead, she is a cipher for Kathleen in period dress, and Foucault expressly warns against an impulse toward reaffirmation or "rediscovery of ourselves" (Ibid 154). In neglecting larger sociocultural contexts beyond the Famine as a pivotal epoch or "event"—in Foucauldian terms—or rebutting them without much

[45] See discussion of Freeman's notion of "erotohistoriography" in relation to Yeats in Chp. 3.

evidence, Kathleen is only willing and able to situate Marianne in the monomaniacal context of (Kathleen) herself, thereby dooming "The Talbot Book" to failure. As Foucault observes, "The body manifests the stigmata of past experience and also gives rise to desires, failings, and errors. These elements may join in a body where they achieve a sudden expression, but as often, their encounter is an engagement in which they efface each other, where the body becomes the pretext of insurmountable conflict" (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* 148). This is precisely how Kathleen's approach, even in the fiction, functions to further efface rather than recover or rewrite the "proper" history of Marianne McCausland Talbot, because her quest in and of itself develops from a fundamentally misplaced and misguided "search for 'origins,'" i.e. her own as well as a confirmation bias concerning her own foregone conclusions that is ultimately and disastrously refuted by a single key document (Ibid 140). As Nan Leech points out in O'Faolain's meta-narrative wink, "this story does exactly what a lot of the highbrow fiction coming into the library these days does—it keeps changing as you look at it. You don't know what to believe. Our readers hate that, of course. They're forever complaining about it…" (Ibid 449-50; ellipsis original).

While some might interpret the novel as a postmodern, poststructuralist commentary on how female subjects remain free to write and rewrite their own narratives, as I did in my post-Lacanian reading of French in Chapter 3, ultimately, O'Faolain moves from the ambiguity of Kathleen's uncertain future on the plane to London and the incomplete text of the Talbot Book to end on a definitive note of deadly paralysis, with Marianne's exiled lover frozen in the grip of death in far away New York. *Ag fail bhais*—"obtaining death" seems to be the only way to obtain release from the

intense sociocultural and religious strictures that have hindered Mullan (as well as Marianne herself) since birth. By abandoning the project *in medias res*, Kathleen likewise abandons all hope of satisfaction and pivotally, satiation. She knows that her hunger for what she perceives to be the fundamental truth within Marianne's narrative will never be met as the competing narratives (including de Burca's own) contain contradictory and partial views of Marianne: a thwarted but devout lover, a blameless and traumatized victim, a recidivistic[46] and recalcitrant adulteress. Both women begin disenfranchised and delimited, ending dispossessed of the very essence of their individuality, as bleak as the ruins of the Mount Talbot itself, as blank as its long-untilled fields.

However, Kathleen does consider that Marianne may have been dissembling her lunacy after her confinement and confession in an effort to exculpate herself and be sheltered by her relatives. Also, according to the pamphlet published in Marianne's defense by her Uncle John Paget, Kathleen acknowledges that Marianne's abrupt and permanent separation from her only child, Mab, as well as the abuse Marianne suffered during her detention at the estate may have actually caused her to become disturbed, regardless of whether she was an adulteress, not to mention the high probability of mistreatment and violence at the asylum in Windsor where the Rev. McClelland ultimately abandons her:

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[46] Recidivistic is an especially apt phrase here precisely because it derives from the Latin "*cadere*"—"to fall" and the prefix *re*- meaning "back" or "again" in light of O'Faolain's preoccupation with deliberately Lapsarian language and imagery, including the instances previously noted. Kathleen's fall and her hand being stung with nettles while visiting Mount Talbot is also relevant as is her later assertion, "Even when we seem to be gathered safe into the fold of marriage, we can be driven by a dream of fulfillment and completion that leads us—like sheep hunted over a cliff by a wild dog—to a terrible fall" (O'Faolain 105, 375). While the former has subtle hints of the crucifixion and the aforementioned Stations of the Cross, the latter reminds us of Christ as shepherd, in this case, seeking a perhaps terminally wayward sheep.

> *In the middle of the day, without the slightest warning, this weak, childish, innocent woman is suddenly charged by her husband, in the presence of three menservants, with adultery; her child, who has never left her side from the hour of its birth, is torn from her; she is locked up in the charge of her accuser; attempts are made to induce her to leave the house with the alleged adulterer; Halloran, Finnerty, and Mullan all get drunk and Halloran offers violence to her person. She passionately protests her innocence, and struggles with violence to obtain access to her husband; she is prevented by force, she attempts to throw herself out of the window. This state of agony continues for eighteen hours when at last Mr. McClelland, the rector, makes his appearance, and—as he states—at once "upbraids her for her criminal intercourse with Mullan."* (*Talbot v. Talbot: A Statement of Facts*, Queen's College, Leicester; qtd. O'Faolain 351)

Marianne Talbot is in this version is not "juicy with health" (O'Faolain 336), nor even ripe fruit gone rotten as a result of institutionalization and impropriety. John Paget categorically refutes Kathleen's imaginings by presenting Marianne as neglected by Richard, frail and delicate, instead of hale, hardy, and lusty. She is starved and kept in penury at gloomy Mount Talbot, then shut away to be divorced. In these testimonies, Marianne is not "*a strong-minded woman; she was generally in low spirits*" and is the object of "*A FOUL CONSPIRACY*" by a husband in want of a male heir, a condition to fully inherit the estate (qtd. O'Faolain 339, 334). Paget insists that Richard is evidently willing to go to any lengths to break his wife's spirit and compel her to falsely admit unfaithfulness. His case relies on equally racist assumptions—like those concerning Mullan in the Talbot *Judgment*—about many of the Irish servants lacking veracity, including witnesses whose very countenances betray "*habitual cunning*", alleged thievery, and dissolution (qtd. Ibid 344). Kathleen notes that Paget strongly implies (gang?) rape when Halloran is "seen by a maid beside [Marianne's] bed, holding her feet" (Ibid 350).

Per Peck's theorizing of "borderline society", Marianne's allegedly transgressive behavior and supposed, though disputed contravention of class- and religious-based

values transport her from a position of incredible socioeconomic privilege to that of a subaltern and from respectability, dignity, and sanity as a lady to an infantilized, degraded madwoman. Her relatives insist that she could not even understand her confession for "*no trace of levity*[47] *or impurity has been discovered among the ruins of her intellect, where all is pure, simple and childish*," and she is also physically transported by the Rev. McClelland across the border of the sea from her home in Ireland to an asylum in England (Paget qtd. Ibid 355). As Butler explains, "… both spatiality and location have to be reconceived once we consider the departure from within, the dispossession that demands immobility. This seems to be the case for one who is newly, and at once, contained and dispossessed in the very territory from which one both departs and arrives" (*Who Sings...?* 18), which Marianne experiences both in Ireland and England on juridical, affective, bodily, and spatial levels. The very possibility of rape and violation are both elaborated within and effaced from Paget's text.

This version of Marianne is maligned, misrepresented, and betrayed by her supposed beloved, like Shakespeare's Imogen, Hermione, Hero, Ophelia, or Desdemona; she is violently accosted and in spite of numerous accusations to the contrary, evidently did not lie near the beasts of the stable gleefully creating "the beast with two backs" with her husband's servant (*Othello* I.ii.126-127). Marianne's mind and thus her physical form, become addled, vacant, like the aforementioned "unweeded garden"—not from lust as my earlier quotation from *Hamlet* regarding Gertrude suggested—but from the pollution and horrendous undeserved punishments of a society that has otherwise

[47] Levity, as in wantonness or unchastity. e.g. as Portia quips to Bassanio when he invites her "to walk in absence of the sun" in *The Merchant of Venice*, "Let me give light, but let me not be light; For a light wife doth make a heavy husband" (V.i.144-146).

forsaken her as better off dead, much like the eventual literal fate of the grounds and house of Mount Talbot itself.

The spaces of both Mount Talbot[48] and Birchwood are painstakingly reconstructed imaginatively only to be completely annihilated by the characters' respective despair and the vagaries of "sluttish Time"[49] that betrays both Gabriel and Kathleen (Shakespeare, "Sonnet 55"). Gabriel muses about growing old in total isolation, and in her malaise, Kathleen repudiates her body as ravaged by age, misshapen, and unlovable. While French's Cassandra Maddox is awed by the fact of wearing "Lexie Madison's" face as the years go by, Yeats's speakers in "The Mask" share de Burca's Lacanian apprehensions over and fascination with distorted reflections, as she (re- and de-)forms Marianne Talbot in her own image through the novelistic equivalent of a permanent Mirror Stage. As Leopold Bloom observes regarding his personification of the Dead Sea as a "bent hag" crossing the road in the "Lotus Eaters" episode, "Now it could bear no more. Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world. Desolation" (*U* 4.59-61). While Kathleen bemoans her physical being as initially undesirable and Gabriel implicitly regrets his lack of progeny, the novels' numerous famine-ravaged bodies with sallow skin, sunken faces, and hideously distended, malnourished bellies represent exaggerations of the characters' respective discontent and

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[48] O'Faolain's figuring of the Big House of Mount Talbot as a series of suffocation or obliteration rooms for Marianne and a terrifying space of devastation for Kathleen gets transposed across history into narratives concerning unoccupied "ghost" housing estates in Ireland, such as those depicted in French's *Broken Harbour* (2012). According to the Irish Department of Environment, there are over 120,000 complete or near-complete empty homes in almost 3,000 distinct largely-derelict developments throughout the Republic as of 2011. *Ghost Estate* is also the title of a 2011 collection by Irish poet William Wall and the title of a forthcoming novel by Irish-born Australian writer, John Connell. For more on the problematic legacy of the Big House in Anglo-Irish women's fiction, see Ruth Frehner's *The Colonizer's Daughters* (1999).

[49] For more variations on Shakespeare's theme in Yeats, see Chapter 3.

disgust at the female form. These faminized or peculiarly wretched or wasted bodies (like Granny Godkin and her foremothers, Caitlín Ní hUallacháin, Mrs. Dedalus, and of course, Old Gummy Granny, inter alia)[50] are beyond abject; they functions as monstrously "abhuman," indicative of the larger cultural and political decay in Ireland as well as the literal decay of the potato crop itself as a result of the blight caused by the oomycete, *Phytophthora infestans*.

As Terrence Dooley points out that in the words of Elizabeth Bowen, big houses were "built in the ruler's ruling tradition" and implies that they operate as a kind of architectural reinforcement of existing class and social mores:

> Even the houses of lesser gentry were big in comparison to those of the largest Irish tenant farmers in pre-Famine Ireland, huge in comparison to cottiers' mud cabins and labourers' cottages…these houses were built to inspire awe in social equals and, indeed, deference in the lower social classes. (qtd. Stoddard 11)

The psycho-geography of both Birchwood and Mount Talbot, both encountered in various states of dereliction, signal the weakening and ultimately, in the late-twentieth century, the total failure of plantation in Ireland, and thereby, the stagnation, claustrophobia, frustrated desire, and *ennui* that exist(ed) within those walls, or in the case of Mount Talbot by the time Kathleen visits, those ruins, marked fittingly with what Nan Leech ultimately identifies as a buried statue of Cupid (O'Faolain 436). While Gabriel clings to Birchwood as his last defense and refuge against the depredations of violence, starvation, and death, Kathleen presents Marianne as being overwhelmed by the expanse of her house and its emptiness, which also represents her distance and isolation from both her husband and their far-away neighbors in location and in emotion as an

[50] For more on crones in Joyce et al., see Chapter 1.

outsider from England. According to Kathleen, Marianne herself never quite fits in because she was raised without a mother or other close female companions.

Furthermore, the Palladian style in the colonial context functions as a "cosmological center" that fortifies—visually and spatially through its structural features—social hierarchies and the hegemonic dominance of the ruling classes (Stoddard 41-2). James Ackerman views of the Palladian estate as a simultaneously modern and mythic ideological "paradigm" that removes the feudal obligations of landlords to their tenants through the re-arrangement of space in order to "render invisible" the laboring classes and separate the estate house itself from the modes of production and oppression that created and allowed it to flourish, especially through the clear division between the big house and its demesne and the fields or outbuildings (qtd. Ibid 43).

In addition, the neoclassical façades of Mount Talbot and presumably Birchwood, though we never get an exact description of their exteriors, "seem meant to suggest the house is actually much larger than it really is as colonnades and pilasters imply that residential space is concealed in the wings rather than stables and kitchens" (Ibid 41). The manipulative and illusory optics of Palladianism also lend themselves to viewing Birchwood itself as integral to the Godkin family's goal of maintaining a façade of respectability in the midst of financial and moral bankruptcy and also anticipate Gabriel's particular fascination with deceptive appearances through his aforementioned "blinking game". The misrepresentation, occlusion, and repression apparent throughout his account of his life experiences both in and beyond the house, like the edifice itself, are constructed upon the assumption of a "model of the world in which there were those who dominated and those who were dominated" (Bentmann and Muller, qtd. Ibid 42).

Kathleen imagines that the Palladian interior of the estate is both constricting and liberating for Marianne, who, during her affair,

> …walked the corridors and climbed the flights of stairs with new energy. For the first time, she began to learn the house. If she had dared, she would have asked Benn for the great ring of keys to the household, that she had never taken into her charge. The drawing room and the big dining room and all the reception rooms were more and more dusty. But down where she prowled, at the level of the storerooms and cellars, it seemed to Marianne that life was pulsing through the house (O'Faolain 290).

Marianne's descent to the unseen underworld of Mount Talbot marks her fall in the Biblical sense, while Gabriel ascends to Birchwood's abandoned loft amidst past detritus that perhaps exists as a sort of treacherous liminal passage between this life and the next, a Purgatorial terrace in the Dantean sense —but it seems that Gabriel is destined to remain there indefinitely. Arguably, for both Banville and O'Faolain, the ironically suffocating expanse of the big houses' interiors, open but also restrictive, enclosed and stratified both spatially and socially, effectively condition their occupants to suffer emotional turmoil as they, in the manner of the manors' structures, bear or fail to bear the weight of past as well as present (and in Kathleen's case amidst Mount Talbot's ruins, future) angst.

Through Kathleen's perspective, O'Faolain frames the historical sections of the narrative in such a way that Marianne's reaching out to William seems an inescapable conclusion, if only in terms of proximity and her use of the carriage and the horses with Mab or by herself. Also, Marianne seemingly never travels with her husband after their arrival in Ireland, as well as having a lack of regular meaningful contact with almost anyone else beyond that immediate family circle, her female housekeeper and maid, and occasional visits from the minister and a single visit from her father while at the estate.

Over time, estates as well as the physical and emotional states of the narrators are in similar disarray and dysfunction. In what are largely futile, Sisyphean, and eventually redundant or moribund efforts to rewrite the past, Gabriel attempts to efface his own furtherance of colonial oppression, and Kathleen's yields to the notion of both her own and Marianne's inferiority as she re-stages the drama of the Talbot scandal.

Kathleen can barely bear the grief resulting from the death of her beloved best friend Jimmy coupled with the failure of her latest romantic entanglement with the married Shay and the miserable facts of Marianne Talbot's confinement. Kathleen's own misery is compounded the possibility that the passion she imagines between Marianne and Mullan is undermined by a second affair with an unknown man, so she leaves the Talbot novel unfinished. Both her real life and that of her historical heroine are thus deprived of the romanticized happy ending she craves so desperately to write for them, as Kathleen cannot strike even a belated, half-hearted blow against the pervading cultural forces of Irish male dominance. De Burca finds no succor or answers in the shattered remains of Mount Talbot. Gabriel can only look backward on the tainted history of his beloved Birchwood as it goes to wrack and ruin around him and he, quite crucially, psychologically goes to wrack and ruin within it. As figures who categorically refuse to accept historical reality and the deplorable sociopolitical, cultural, and material conditions with and from which they struggle to produce their respective art, Kathleen and Gabriel are doomed to mimic deficient fantasies and self-fulfilling doomsday prophecies *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseam,* without gaining relief or fulfillment, much less joy.

The faux memoir of O'Brien's *The Poor Mouth* and O'Leary's brief account of the Famine in *Mo Scéal Féin* also rely on an effect of displacement to survive terrifying

poverty and hunger, but this is achieved through a tonal shift toward humor. In situating themselves at a temporal remove with the use of the past tense from the otherwise direct accounts of deprivation, filth, and starvation, they critique both the systemic failure of the Anglo-Irish infrastructure in regards to the Famine as well as its later unwitting and dismissive treatment of native Irish speakers implicit in their "jokes" by simultaneously exaggerating their misfortunes to the point of the respective high comedy of a fool or the amusing literal-mindedness of a child. These "jokes" then become a disturbing and often violent reality, allowing each author to reconstitute the psychoanalytic geography of the spaces they occupy as no longer tragic but uncanny sites of deliberate subterfuge and play, such as Bónapárt's first and only day at school:

> *"Phwat is yer nam?"*
> *Níor thuigeas an chaint seo ná aon chaint eile bítear ag cleachtú ar ag gcoigrích gan agam act an Ghaeilg amháin mar ghléas labharta agus mar dhíon ar dheacrachtaí an tsaoil….Chuala cogar ar mor chúl:*
> *"T'ainm tá uaidh!"*
> *...D'fhéachas go cneasta ar an mhaistir agus d'feaghair é:*
> *"Bónapárt Mícheálangaló Pheadair Eoghain Shorcha Thomáis Mháire Sheáin Shéamais Dhiarmada…*
> *Sula raibg ráite ná leath-ráite agam tháinig tafan conafach ón mháistir agus ghlaodh sé orm aníos chuige lena mhéir. An uair a thábac fad leis bhí maide ramha fálta aige 'na ghlaic. Bhí rabhartha feirge ag gabháil de fá'n am so, agus bhí greim chun gnótha aige ar an mhaide lena dhá láimh. Tharraing sé thar a ghualain é agus thug anuas orm go tréan le fead gaoithe, gur bhuail buille tyvausteacg sa chloigean orm. Thuiteas i laige ón mbuille sin acht sular cailleadh na céadfaithe ar far orm chuala scread uaidh:*
> *"Yer nam" ar seisean, "is Jams O'Donnell".*
> *Jams O'Donnell? Bhí an dá bhriathar so ag gliogeaireacht im cheannn nuair tháinic mothú arís ann. Fuaireas mé féin sinte ar leatoibh ar an urlár, mo bhríste, mo ghruaig agus mo phearsa uile ar maothas ó ba slaoda fola a ag stealadh ón scoilt bhí fágtha ag an mhaide ar mo chloigean.*

- Phwat is yer nam?
- I did not understand what he said nor any other type of speech which is practiced in foreign parts because I had only Gaelic as a mode of expression and as a protection against the difficulties of life….I heard a whisper at my back:

- Your name he wants!
  …I looked politely at the master and replied to him:
- [Bónapárt], son of [*Mícheálangaló]*, son of [Peadar], son of [Eoghan], son of [Thomáis]'s [Sorcha], grand-daughter of [Seán]'s [Máire], grand-daughter of [Séamais], son of [Diarmaid]…
  Before I had uttered or half-uttered my name, a rabid bark issued from the master and he beckoned to me with his finger. By the time I had reached him, he had an oar in his grasp. Anger had come over him in a flood-tide at this stage and he had a businesslike grip of the oar in his two hands. He drew it over his shoulder and brought it down hard upon me with a swish of air, dealing me a destructive blow on the skull. I fainted from that blow but before I became totally unconscious I heard him scream:
- Yer nam, said he, is Jams O'Donnell!
  Jams O'Donnell? These two words were singing in my ears when feeling returned to me. I found that I was lying on my side on the floor, my breeches, hair and all my person saturated with streams of blood which flowed from the split caused by the oar in my skull.
  (*ABB* 24-25; *TPM* 30-31)

By recuperating tales of post-Famine abjection and dejection and those of *An Drochshaol* itself as part of a legacy within the orature (e.g. O'Leary's figures of the joking mother and her children)—which is then explicitly made part of the literature—with a wink and a sorrowful nod to the reader who knows these tales to be a comic figuring of the factual, O'Brien and O'Leary offer seemingly ludic responses to anomie that respectively permit affective discharge that is never fully achieved in either Banville or O'Faolain's novels.

Horrific abuse, violence, and privation are the stanchions beneath these situations: bellies are empty, blood is spilt, and in the case of O'Leary, the children and their parents die tragically. The naïveté and innocence of all these children's perspectives magnify the suffering. Firsthand accounts lend immediacy to experiences that are often at a chronological remove; this chronological remove also allows the reader to contextualize events within a broader narrative and historical context. In *My Dream of You*, Kathleen fails to finish her story about Marianne and thus fails in her attempt at catharsis. In *Birchwood*, Gabriel repeatedly and finally dismisses the veracity of his own narrative and

therefore its potentially healing authority. Instead, in *Mo Scéal Féin* and *An Béal Bocht*, one can choose to laugh rather than weep, at least laugh and *then* weep, or perhaps weep from laughing, so one does. Neither O'Leary nor O'Brien requires the solipsistic magic- or mythically-real universe of Banville or the meta-narrative dissociation of O'Faolain. Rather than self-consciously reinterpreting individual histories to suit their own needs, they instead invoke fictionalizing repetition and ironic cliché (e.g. O'Brien's title, *The Poor Mouth)* as a way to show the at times subversive continuity achieved in works of sociocultural and topographical historicization, effectively offering a strategy to cope with what would otherwise be profoundly detrimental to both persons and places.

In Chapter 1, I addressed the difficulties Emer Nolan identifies in setting out to write a subaltern history to raucous, bawdy effect in Joyce's *Ulysses*, here as well, the fraught comedy of *An Béal Bocht*, as well as the moments of laughter in the other texts are underwritten with the keening edge of regret, denigration, and of course, confinement and death. Material poverty and hungers: physical, sexual, and/or emotional, must be combated by the force of immanence in terms of theological or imagination in terms of the secular. Such discourses can only be developed through writing about and reading the Famine sites heterotopically[51] in terms of both literal and affective geography and history. As I have with *My Dream of You* and *Birchwood*, the pivotal role and nature of Famine historiography and reclamation in *Mo Scéal Féin* and *An Béal Bocht* must also be addressed. For O'Leary, his personal account extends outward to encompass the wider community as a form of site-specific "counter-memory" linking bodies and landscapes, which in turn, reshapes both through spiritual mimesis and invocation of *kairotic* time.

[51] See discussion of *heterotopos* in Chp. 4 and Foucault's "Of Other Spaces".

For O'Brien, counter-memory becomes severed almost entirely from linear history and the Famine proper by undergoing a translocutory mythic mutation, the recrudescence of what has not yet and possibly will never be settled. Oppression and depredations cross temporal, speciational, and biogeographical bounds through language in order to briefly formulate and temporarily realize the ascendance and transcendence of the abhuman. Not merely as subject/object of horror and terror that lingers on from *An Drochshaol* into the twentieth century, such a representation of abhumanity serves as a conscious mode of comical (and essentially futile) resistance and mocking dissent regarding the historical positioning and devaluation of the Irish-language population and its cultural practices post-Famine, across varied sociopolitical domains, including by Irish-speakers and Irish-speaking communities themselves.

For example, in the appendix on placenames in *Mo Scéal Féin*, Ó Céirin insists,

> Only during the famine did [the Irishman] ever leave his home willingly, if sorrowfully. All too often, his English-speaking descendant, whose homeplace possesses no meaning for him, looks on it as something to escape from as soon as he is able. It is very much a matter of language. Reading Canon O'Leary's litanies of placenames, when recalling the days of his youth, one senses for him there is enshrined in these the history, the myths, the longings, the hopes, the *raison d'être* of himself, his family, his *muintir* [literally "people" but not simply strictly in the immediate familial sense but with regard to a more expansive and historically-connected understanding of kinship ties]. But no translation can do justice to the poetry of placenames (MSF 155).

I would further suggest these recitations bear a strong relation to the litany of the Mass. The placenames are as sacred and integral as the individual or family (nick)names because they delineate the borders of the community, the place equally marked by *An Gorta Mór* as its population. They are rich with context that Ó Céirin's appendix briefly provides, but their names contain larger descriptive significance in Irish, a significance that only amplifies the resonances for a local like O'Leary who uses them to chart not

simply his own personal past but that of the region. Ó Céirin's use of "homeplace" in the Irish sense always already implies that the conception of "home" extends semantically and culturally to the wider environs and the network of people and associations within the area.[52]

An understanding of this network is essential to how O'Leary close his chapter on *An Gorta Mór*. Following all the other deaths, he tells of a hound with the bone of one of the young O'Learys in his mouth, because the makeshift garden grave was too shallow. Tadhg O'Leary, the eldest son of that family is then tried and transported for slaughtering and stealing a cow to nourish his starving parents and siblings (presumably all relations of the author in some way, but this notably goes unmentioned) and Tadhg's family subsequently takes to the roads begging. This harrowing chapter-ending anecdote not only renders the Famine visible in the equivalent of the Biblically "numbered" bone but yet again, intimate, showing how O'Leary's own wider family group is not left unscathed, not without losses of its own. However, in a way this trauma is also anticipated when presented in retrospect: *de rigueur* for that historical period in Ireland in the context of privation and disease.

The experience is thus both remarkable and unremarked upon with regard to the bonds shared; they are particular but also obvious as from the aforementioned quotation*: "Sin mar a bhí an sgéal an uair sin, go grána agus go fuathmhar agus go déistineach, mór-thímpal na h-áite 'nar tógadh mise. Tuigim go raibh an sgéal ar an gcuma gcéadna díreach mór-thímpal na h-Éirean go léir.*"—"That was the way things were then, ugly

[52] O'Leary's own homeplace was Liscarrigane (*Lios Carracháin*: Fort of the Rough Ground). Ó Céirin points out in Appendix I on placenames that "Canon O'Leary recalled there was nothing in their farm but bad land" (*MSF* 158). The surrounding parish of Clondrohid (*Cluain Droichead*) is site of the ruins of the MacCarthy castle on an island in the River Lee, the place where Boetius MacEagan, Bishop of Ross, was hanged for refusing to persuade Irish Catholic forces to surrender to the Cromwellians in 1650 (*MSF* 157).

and hateful and loathsome around the area in which I was reared. I understand that the story was exactly the same all about the whole of Ireland" (O'Leary 47; *MSF* 52). It is why this instance, as not only personal and local tragedy but as representative of a greater cultural moment of crisis, becomes the inspiration and preamble for a theological anti-English polemic posed in the Socratic and catechetical question-and-response style:

> *Agus, donas an sgéil ar fad, ní le toil Dé, i gceart, a bhí an sgéal ar an gcuma san. Le toil daoine iseadh bhí an sgéal amhlaidh. Do sgaoileadh amach a' h-Éirinn an bhliain sin oiread arbhair, ní h-eadh, ach a dhá oiread, agus chothóch' a raibh de dhaoine beo i n-Éirinn. Bhí cuanta na h-Éirean lán de loingeas, agus na loingeas lán d'arbhar na h-Éirean, ag imtheacht as na cuantaibh, agus na daoine ar fuaid na h-Éirean ag fághail bháis leis an ocras.*
>
> *"Cad 'n-a thaobh nár coimeádadh an t-arbhar?" a déarfaidh duine, b'fhéidir.*
>
> *Níor coimeádadh é mar níor bh' fholáir é dhíol chun an chíosa dhéanamh, é féin agus an t-ím agus an fheóil, agus an uile bhlúire eile de thoradh an tailimh, ach amháin an práta. Do rug an dubh an práta leis, agus ansan níor fhan aon bhlúire bídh le n-ithe ag na daoine.*
>
> *"Cad 'n-a thaobh," adéarfaidh duine, b'fhéidir, "nár deineadh dlígh chun na ndaoine do chosaint ar an éagcóir sin a chuir fhéachaint ortha an t-arbhar do dhíol agus gan aon rud le n-ithe do choimeád dóibh féin?"*
>
> *Mo thruagh do cheann gan chiall! "Dlígh chun na ndaoine do chosaint," arsa tusa. Airiú, dá dtráchtfá an uair sin le h-uaislibh Shasana ar dhlígh chun na ndaoine do chosaint, déarfaidís gur ar buile bheifeá.*
>
> *Ní chun na ndaoine chosaint a dheineadh muíntir Shasana dlighthe an uair sin i n-aon chor. Chun na ndaoine do bhrúth síos agus do chreachadh, agus do chur chun báis le gorta agus le gach aon tsaghas éagcóra iseadh dheineadh muíntir Shasana dlighthe an uair sin. Is ait an sgéal é, ach bhí sórd seanfhocail ag muintir Shasana an uair sin. Sidé an seanfhocal:—"Éagcóir ar an máighistir iseadh ceart do thabhairt do'n tineóntaidhe."*
>
> And to make matters worse, it was not really by the will of God that things were so, It was that way because of the will of people….The harbours of Ireland were full of ships and the ships full of Irish corn: they were leaving the harbours while the people were dying of hunger throughout the land.
>
> "Why wasn't the corn kept here?" some will say, perhaps.

> It was not kept because it had to be sold to pay the rent, it and the butter and the meat, and every other bit of produce from the land, excepting the potatoes. The blackness took away the potatoes and then there was no food left for the people to eat.
>
> Someone will say, perhaps: "Why wasn't a law made to protect the people from the injustice that that forced the people to sell the corn and not keep anything for themselves to eat?"
>
> I'm sorry for your want of knowledge! 'A law to protect the people,' you say? *Airiú*, if you had spoken to the gentlemen of England at that time of a law to protect the people, they would have said you were mad.
>
> It was not at all for the protection of the people that the English laws were made at that time. To crush the people down and to plunder them, to put them to death by famine and by every other kind of injustice—that's why the English made laws in those days. It is a strange story, but the English had a sort of proverb then. Here's the proverb: 'To give the tenant rights is an injustice to the landlord'.
> (O'Leary 46-47; *MSF* 52)

O'Leary addresses the divide between the landed gentry and government and the tenant class that is still a major point of contention in contemporary discussions of the Famine (as suggested throughout my discussions of Banville and O'Faolain's novels and the debates amongst Irish historians). In addition to very pointedly contradicting the views of the aforementioned Providentialists in power by attributing the calamity not to God but the corrupt failure of man, O'Leary's work limns the damage to the wider *milieu* in a the context of social justice. While many Christian theologians note the coming of Christ or The *Logos*/Word in *John* 1 as the moment when "Eternity irrupts into time," O'Leary's reading marks the Famine as an event or epoch when time irrupts back into Eternity." His use offers a countercurrent to a sense of historical notions of linear "progress" (such as the views of the Providentalists) that represents a dramatic non-chrononormative stilling of time, allowing for the condensation of forces, both human and Divine that enables O'Leary as a narrator and readers to mark the irrevocable lacunae of loss, but also, to

contextualize it in an ideology that attempts to offer solace and consolation.

This catechistically didactic turn

> collect[s] and remobilize[s] archaic or futuristic debris as a sign that things have been and could be otherwise. That capitalism can always reappropriate this form of [anachronic or unbounded] time is no reason to end with despair: the point is to identify 'queerness' as the site of all the chance elements that capital [or the failure of capital and the socioeconomic apparatus] inadvertently produces, as well as the site of capital's potential recapture and incorporation of chance. (Freeman xvi)

This accounting for "queer" chance opens to the possibility of Divine intervention, or what O'Leary sharply disputes as the limited Providentialist views of the nature of such predestination and the presence of only a certain kind of Divine order, or simply put, contradicting the notion of what we now consider the Smithian Invisible Hand of Market Forces as inherently same as the hand of God. As Anthanasiou claims when discussing contemporary Egyptian "street politics":

> The aim here is certainly not [I would hasten to qualify with a "merely" for O'Leary, in particular] to forge an iconography of 'exceptional' or 'heroic' martyrdom, but rather to think about how relational and corporeal forms of...politics [such as his assertions above in the context of recognizing these largely-silenced Famine bodies] emerged as a result of people's exposure to, and resistive engagement with, pervasive forms of socially assigned disposability (*Dispossession* 145).

This functions as what Foucault describes throughout his *oeuvre* as a material, disciplinary, or "non-discursive practice" in which the body becomes a recalcitrant site of resistance, a mode of what Butler refers to as "plural performativity" by "articulating the voice of the people from the singularity of the story and the obduracy of the body, a voice at once individual and social; [and]...the reproduction of community or sociality itself..." (Ibid 175). Thus, this indicates the simultaneity of O'Leary's work as not only *Mo Scéal Féin* (*My Own Story*) but linguistic and cultural history as well as memorialization.

O'Leary demonstrates how such erasure of the Irish language through the loss of so many of its speakers and the disintegration of families and communities during the period of *An Gorta Mór* rendered through the individual narratives of his own experience indicate the Famine's enormous role in shaping the consciousness (including prejudices and misinformation[53] about net food exports) and conscience of survivors. It demonstrates how necessary it became for many to bear witness as they remember or try to comprehend extraordinary circumstances made all-too-ordinary, to account for and be accountable to the memory of the dead, particularly in subsequent generations through the historical lore and (auto)biographies like his. He seeks not simply to commemorate and sanctify the deceased but deliberately strives to (re)animate their language and lifeways. O'Leary practices a Foucauldian "'effective' history" of *An Drochshaol* that "deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy to a millennial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity" (*Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice* 154). It is counterintuitively achieved in anti-Nietzschean and anti-Foucauldian fashion not apart from the theological, but in using the theological premise as a means to unsettle history around the period itself through O'Leary's own remembrances and acts of counter-memorialization of those who would otherwise remain completely anonymous.

O'Leary, Ó Cúnasa, and even Gabriel Godkin, then, in their respective acts of witnessing and giving an account of (post)-Famine suffering, necessarily illustrate

[53] This misinformation, as a not-so strange story in itself, is acutely relevant because it clearly illustrates the at times diametrical opposition between folk memory and historical fact.

Athanasiou's point that, "The 'I' articulated, claimed, or defended by those dispossessed of self-determination—those constituted as an impropriety—bears the burden and the responsibility of injurious and unjust genealogies alongside its aspirations to freedom" in performing the political through what Butler emphasizes as "counting" or matter[ing]" (*Dispossession* 99-101). O'Leary particularly stages a kind of physical and visual manifestation and representation of the Famine victims' material bodies to performatively designate them as more than (ab)human matter, acknowledging their precarity while also asserting their preciousness in the theological sense. An tAthair Peadar faithfully renders the heart-rending incidents mentioned above to show that survival must never be taken for granted and to proselytize the obligation of those who do live to show both their gratitude to God and their respect to the dead through memorializing them in the manner he insists they deserve. These victims are always individuals, specific threads plucked from the interwoven in the fabric or interconnected nodes on a particular emotional layer of the communal map, whose presence was felt and whose absence is as such duly noted. It is why these stories are ascribed to places: Carriginanassey, Macroom, Derryleigh, and his homeplace, Liscarrigane itself. In remembering the victims of the Famine in this deliberately located and localized way, he affirms their worth to both God and their fellow man as per *Luke* 12:7 and *Matthew* 10:30: "But the very hairs on your head are numbered," even though they die, they are not anonymous, as otherwise uncounted bones in unmarked graves.

All of these works also further instantiate what I've already described as French and Yeats's[54] respective dialogical understanding of the big house as inherently corrupt

[54] See especially *The Tower, The Winding Stair,* and of course the drama, *Purgatory.*

and the cottage, particularly its hearth, as sacrosanct or redemptive. In spite of the dire circumstances of the Famine times, de Burca pictures that the former site of the semi-abandoned cabin of William Mullan's deceased mother outside of the estate was previously faithfully undisturbed out of respect for their unofficial station as "the leading family among the people who lived on bits of land out in the bog and on the far side of the bog," in what's still known, according to librarian Nan Leech, as the *Goirtín Uí Mhulláin* townland. Kathleen believes William often sentimentally returned there to speak to his mother's spirit for counsel: "The piece of mirror ["famous in the locality because it was the only such thing in the bog"] was worth money, but though terrible things had been done by hungry people, nothing had been stolen from the Mullan house" (O'Faolain 191-2). Implicitly by seeing himself, William can also see his mother in his reflected resemblance and remember the music from her concertina, her "big old sow" whose indentation still remains "in the soft ground [made] with the constant rolling of her back", and the precious fruit and bean plants now gone wild so that they've become "bushes profuse with white flowers" around the fallow potato field (Ibid). De Burca depicts how the home was and the land itself is still marked by the richness of pre-Famine culture[55] from the continuation of the townland's name down through the centuries even in spite of the Mullans' technical dispossession well before William himself "sometime after the battle of Aughrim" to the specific "strange bush…covered in

[55] Nan Leech avidly asserts that the Irish were "perhaps the happiest people in Europe, for a while. They had an unbroken heritage of language and traditions that went back hundreds and hundreds of years. And the faith. They had the old faith. It was a whole civilization…" (O'Faolain 83). Before Kathleen interrupts her by pointing out thatout, "No onbe ever thinks of them as civilized…Any more than they do ragged Malians", the elderly librarian's soliloquy could almost have been lifted verbatim from Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland*.

white flowers" that Leech notes having seen recently when she brings Kathleen there (Ibid 191-2, 83).

Despite the fact that in *An Béal Bocht*, the hearth is shared with the family's pigs, cottages and cabins remain spaces of community and offer frequent respite and nourishment to those in need. The scenes with the pigs and the other animals function as O'Brien's satirizing play on frequent racist observations about the Irish throughout the British press as well as by government officials, the Anglo-Irish, and foreigners, before, during, and after the Famine times, including numerous cartoons in *Punch* and other publications, that exemplify the words of Friedrich Engels, supposed advocate of the working proletariat, "Filth and drunkenness, too, they have brought with them….The Irishman loves his pig as the Arab loves his horse, with the difference that he sells it when it is fat enough to kill. Otherwise, he eats and sleeps with it, his children play with it, ride upon it, roll in the dirt with it" (qtd. Tóibín and Ferriter 12).[56] O'Brien reflects, well ahead of his time, an anthropomorphizing sympathetic tendency or what contemporary theorists of human-animal dynamics would surely characterize as an abiding interspecies affiliation through the Ó Cúnasas relationship with Ambrós, Sorcha, and her other piglets, an extreme version what de Burca imagines as Mullan's mother's relationship with her sow and both William Mullan's and her own protective love of dogs (and horses too, in his case). It is a syncretizing of both the old Fenian tales (like "Mis and Dubh Ruis" that I addressed in Chapter 1) and the classical Apuleian satire of *Metamorphosis/The Golden Ass* that endeavors to recuperate the abhuman post-Famine

[56] Keith Booker also notes that Joyce's Leopold Bloom mimics the fate of the shipmates of his mythical predecessor Odysseus' in becoming a pig in the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, and that in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Pozzo repeatedly refers to Lucky by the humiliating epithet "pig" (77-78).

not as a state of debasement or degradation but as a mythic re-situating of the conditions of possibility presented through such representative gestures.

These are tales of transformation that address the politics of value in a time of otherwise unmanageable paucity, exploring and exploiting the limits of both animality and humanity for which the Famine served as a watershed or tipping point but hardly an end:

> *Nuair bhí Ambrós beag, bhí boladh beag aige. Nuair thosaigh toirt ag teacht ann, mhéadaigh an boladh dá réir. Nuair bhí sé mór, bhí an boladh mór. I dthosach ní raibht an scéal ró-olc againn i rith an lae, óir bhí na fuinneóga go léir ar oscailt againn, an doras gan dúnadh agus roisteacha móra gaoithe ag séideadh isteach ar fud an tighe. Acht nuair thuiteadh an dorchadas agus nuair thagadh Sorcha agus na muicíni eile isteach le h-aghaidh codlata, b'shin é go firinneach again an réiteach ná fuil aon innsint ná scri air, Uaireanta i gcoim na h-oíche b'fhacthas dúinn nach mbeirfeadh an mhaidin beo orainn. Is minic d'éirigh mo mháthair agus an Seanduine agus chuaidh amach gur shiúil deich míle san fhearthain, ag iarraidh éalaithe ón mo mbréantas dóibh.*
>
> When [Ambrós] was little, he had a little smell. When his size increased, his smell likewise grew accordingly. When he was big, the smell was likewise big. At the first, the situation was not too bad for us throughout the day, because we left all the windows open, the door unshut and great gales of wind swept through the house. But when darkness fell and [Sorcha] came in with the piglets to sleep, that indeed was the situation that defies oral and written description. Often in the middle of the night, it seemed to us that we could never see the morning alive. My mother and the Old-Fellow often arose and went outside to walk ten miles in the rain trying to escape the stench. (*ABB* 19; *TPM* 23)

Language itself is exceeded in this description, as one is left to function at the level of the sensate and the imaginary, simultaneously alien and familiar (to an individual who has experience with pigs), but also amplified to nauseating extremes through repetition and exposure to the elements. The material barriers between the outdoor and the indoor vanish in a haze of excreta and a feeble shield of the Old-Fellow's pipe smoke, as Ambrós continues to crowd the fireside and grows ever more enormous as months pass.

Ambrós's girth leads Bónapárt's mother to threaten to set fire to the cottage, is thus tainted by the specter of death as she despairs and "[*tug] aghaidh ar an tSíoraícht"*—"[sets] her face toward Eternity" (*ABB* 22; *TPM* 26), after the pig cannot be pushed through the doorjamb, causing the despondent family to seek relief by sleeping outside in the rain order to save themselves from the noxious "*bhí gal ag éirí uaidh a chuirfeadh i gcuimnne dhuit corpán a bheadh mí gan cur*"—"vapour that arose from him reminiscent of a corpse unburied for a month" (*ABB* 22; *TPM* 25). Concerned neighbor Máirtín Ó Bánasa eventually seals the house's doors, chimney, and windows, so poor Ambrós is suffocated by his own foul odor. The hearth, previously figured as an emblem of safety, warmth, simplicity, and tidiness in the other texts refracts the experience of those with Famine fevers walling themselves away to die in isolation, prevalent throughout historical accounts, including *Mo Scéal Féin*. Contagion and desperation subtly shift from putrid potatoes to putrid pigs, as suffering and struggle are frequently emphasized as a de facto occurrences throughout the Ó Cúnasas' titular "bad story about the hard life", but with this shift tragedy pivotally becomes an exaggerated mime, and what was once pure horror and devastation is suddenly absurd, laughable. This opening event functions in the Foucauldian sense of "effective" history as a "systematic dissociation of identity…[which is in itself only a parody: it is plural; countless spirits dispute its possession; numerous systems intersect and compete" (*Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice* 161), a parody that continues throughout the whole novel and reflects the interstitiality of Irish-speakers in Ireland after the Famine period, demonstrating the ways in which numerous ideological, sociopolitical, and juridical systems will displace them, Bónapárt in particular.

Since it is the pig who perishes, Ireland functions as a literalization of the prior Joycean refrain of "the old sow that eats her farrow" (*U* 15.4583). but to comic effect, as the farrow Ambrós is confined by his own monstrosity and effectively consumes himself in a grotesque fog of gas. Most importantly, for everyone but Ambrós, the ordeal is rendered survivable. The base instincts of man and beast in what Butler follows Giorgio Agamben in calling "bare life" (Butler and Spivak, *Who Sings…?* 5), are shown by O'Brien to be fundamentally similar, in order that the traumatic historical experience of the Famine isolation is circumvented and also tacitly grieved, thereby either repressed or subconsciously processed through the use of spectacle and displacement involving the pigs in a transposition of both species and time (a little less than a century's remove from *An Gorta Mór*).

In the Power translation, the primitive, almost childlike lines and chiaroscuro-heavy, charcoal-style of Ralph Steadman's illustrations of *The Poor Mouth* echo the cover of the Dolmen Press editions of *An Béal Bocht* and the rudimentary map of Corca Dorcha and Ireland in relation to the rest of the world by Irish portrait-painter and designer Seán O'Sullivan. Steadman's images muddle black, white, and grey reinforce the frequent intersection and obfuscation of the human, the animal, and the weather, as well as continuous encounters with refuse, waste, and misfortune both "within" and "without", though such distinctions are almost arbitrary. The lack of light reflects an absence of clarity or understanding for the individuals in the text, particularly Bónapárt.

Strikingly, the dressing and deception through Sorcha's other piglets to dupe the British government inspector by Bónapárt's grandfather, The-Old-Grey-Fellow, compel us to consider the dire conditions for Irish-speakers compelled to learn English in

colonial Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They beg the question: what is the real difference between a person and a pig? Much like the notion of the Gothic abhumanity of the faminized body as fact as well as verbal and visual representation of physical and cultural decompensation and dissolution—in the *Gaeltacht* of the period, the pig's "English" become mocking substitute for what would have previously been the King's English. This substitution is officially sanctioned with a considerable subsidy for the twelve piglets from the (albeit short-sighted) eyes of Anglo-Irish authority and governmentality through the census-taker or inspector. This incident raises the issue of whether or not, according to society at large, there is even any substantive difference between man and beast, considering what the Old-Fellow cannily observes as "*géar-chosúlacht idir a gcroicean*"—"a close likeness between their skins" (*ABB* 29; *TPM* 36), and all being clothed in the same customary grey-wool breeches. Since the wool is notably un-dyed, this even more clearly suggests the ironic play that Sorcha's brood is effectively able to become dyed-in-the-wool citizens through the inspector's unwitting approval.

Furthermore, the rendering of the Ó Cunasas' accented address of the inspector as "*sor*" is also the Irish for "louse," continuing to further advance the subversive intent of the text. And later for the wandering piglet who stumbles on a German folklorist/ linguistic anthropologist with a gramophone on a dark and stormy night in an extremely dim cottage — the pig's "speech" becomes presumably drunken, extremely difficult Irish. The errant one is then rewarded by the German scholar with a white pipe, a bit of tobacco, and a small bottle of spirits since "*an Ghaelig is fearr beagnach do-thuigse*"—"the best Gaelic of all is well-nigh unintelligible" (*ABB* 36; *TPM* 44) and reportedly

acclaimed by the linguist's German colleagues as unparalleled "*co fónta, fileata do-eolais*"—"so top-class, so poetic and so uncharted" (*ABB* 36; trans. mine). As Foucault maintains in his discussion of "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History," what he terms as "effective history" (as opposed to "theological or rationalistic" history):

> deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations. An event, consequently, is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle but the reversal of a relationship of forces, a usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked "other" (*Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice* 154)

Through the incidents with both the German linguist and the government inspector, both Hiberno-English and Irish are slyly marked as incommunicable but also rendered powerfully resistant in their abhumanized status through acts of (mis)appropriation or what Booker describes as form of "cultural/linguistic jujitsu" (77). The pig's "language" itself is literally off the map, reforming the post-Famine Irish language as beggaring description and its inexpressibility indicates that it is astounding and extraordinary. Such nuance tends to be overlooked by either exclusively focusing on the novel's mockery of Gaelicism or its representation of (post-)imperial domination.

These events lead the young Ó Cúnasa to inquire of his grandfather sincerely, *"An bhfuilir cinnte", arsa mise, "gur daoine na Gaeil?"*—"Are you certain the Gaels are people?" (*ABB* 89; *TPM* 100). It functions as Bónapárt's naïve echo of the *crie de coeur* soliloquy of Shylock's alterity:

> …I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?…(*Merchant of Venice* III.i.57-67).

The word "Gael" could easily replace "Jew". This coupled with Old-Grey-Fellow's reply that the verdict[57] is still out speaks not only to the climate of the times and O'Brien's genuine concerns regarding the nature or limits of both their status socially in an predominantly Anglicized, effectively still-colonized (or at least ghettoized within the) state and their subjectivity ontologically, concerns which pervade the entire text. The existential tipping point Shakespeare examines primarily through the racial identity of the Jew or the Moor, the aged or the Fool/Clown, or the "girl" dressed as a boy, in O'Brien's case returns to a Caliban-esque, tempestuous examination of language, persecution, and civilization—whatever that means—depicted through vignettes and incidents within chapters and the text as a whole that are temporally-compressed and episodic like theatrical scenes not only in the manner of Jacobean plays, including of course, Captain MacMorris (along with his compatriots Capt. Jamy, a Scotsman and Capt. Fluellen, a Welshman) in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, widely considered to be the first stage Irishman, despite his loyalty to the British crown, but also prevalent throughout Restoration, Victorian, and even the Celtic Revival comedies of J.M. Synge or Sean O'Casey that use the figure to further lampoon or slyly subvert the type.

Declan Kiberd has persuasively argued that the Old-Grey-Fellow satirizes the figure of the impecunious and wily stage Irishman while Bónapárt critiques the other extreme: the naïve purity of the Gael in an increasingly treacherous Anglophone world as immortalized throughout Britain, America, and Australia in the pathetic figures in the melodramas of renowned Irish actor and playwright, Dion Boucicault, such as *The*

[57] Long notes a problematic translation by Power of the final clause of The-Old-Grey-Fellow's reply, "*is inchreidte gur daoine sinn*" as "it's unbelievable that we're human" as instead the more accurate "it's plausible that we're human" (*Flann O'Brien and Modernism* 78, Note 3).

Colleen Bawn or The Wives of Garryowen (1860),[58] *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1864), and *The Shaughraun* (1874) (*Inventing Ireland,* 497-512). However, as Kiberd notes, most of the novel's humor is derived from scenes of extreme suffering and violence, from a hearth that fails to sustain with its lingering toxic smells and dirt, including Bónapárt's development amidst turf-smoke, pipe-smoke, and befouled rushes in a repetition of cliché from Máire, "*ina thachrán ar fud an ghríosaigh*[59]—"a child among the ashes" (*ABB* 13; *TPM* 16). The landscape and animals that inundate and not only encroach upon their fellow beasts, but also the human inhabitants in the "*tóin*"—literally "rear-end [or backside]" of the humble, lime-walled cottage, effectively blur the distinctions of species or rather, reinscribe the abhumanity of the Gael as Sorcha's piglets are passed off as Anglophone youngsters to the decrepit, semi-blind, Anglo-Irish government inspector. With Ambrós perishes the hope of truly satisfactory interspecies interaction (beyond the Old-Grey-Fellow's monetary gains from the other piglets) and foreshadows that Bónapárt and the Ó Cúnasas will consistently become Othered and encourage their own and anyone else's exploitation for profit—as if the taint of the hog's ordure still clings to

[58] Brian O'Nolan/Ó Nuallain/Flann O'Brien's other nom de plume Myles na gCopaleen under which he published *An Béal Bocht* is a corrective re-Hibernization of the name Myles na Copaleen or Myles of the Ponies, Boucicault's character from *The Colleen Bawn*. Furthermore, Garryowen is the tetchy Irish setter-bard who attacks Leo Bloom in Barney Kiernan's pub in *Ulysses* and is undoubtedly named after the area of Limerick City but perhaps equally likely, for a poet-pup bred in the musical imagination of semi-professional tenor, James Joyce, is that the he may also share his name with the widely popular traditional quickstep tune and carousing song with lyrics by Thomas Moore, often sung by the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, since the regiment was based there. The "Garryowen" air was further notably adopted in the U.S. Cavalry as a march and can be heard in that context throughout the scores of several of John Ford's westerns: *Fort Apache*, *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*, and *The Searchers*, all of which star John Wayne and feature various other actors from Ford's unofficial retinue, including Bond, McLaglen, Natwick, and Shields, all of whom, of course, perform in *The Quiet Man*, which is discussed in Chapter 4.

[59] Power points out in his notes that this a cliché O'Brien borrowed from Máire (Séamas Ó Grianna). *Griosaigh* as a verb is also used idiomatically to mean urge, incite or enkindle passion, much like stirring the embers of a hearth, implying that the Old-Grey-Fellow hopes young Bónapárt will become similarly inspired by following in his grandfather's sooty footsteps.

them—by the non-Irish-speaking bureaucracy and hegemony as well as the even more foolhardy *Gaeilgeóirí* from Dublin.

M. Keith Booker insists that through *An Béal Bocht*, O'Brien is advocating a Bakhtinian dialogic that strives to accept and respond to English cultural imposition "with a polite 'Thank you, sor'" (84), and his tongue-in-cheek glibness is certainly in the Mylesian spirit. However, such an ostensibly hybridized *via media* largely neglects that the novel is not merely invested in languages as representational constructs but in the real, if exaggerated, social conditions following *An Drochshaol*—or according to the novel's subtitle reference, non-chronormatively shifting its temporal boundaries or at least acknowledging its lingering sociocultural effects—in which this admixture occurs: absence, misunderstanding, silence, violence, and death. The conclusion of *An Béal Bocht* is far from triumphant and even as the novel teases out the language and sociopolitical issues of Celtic Revivalism, it also seeks to preserve and acknowledge Irish-language orature, literature, and cultural practices. The inherent idealism advanced by such a simplistic Bakhtinian (or even a strictly positivist Bhabhian) reading is undercut and haunted by tremendous privation and suffering, albeit both put-upon the Irish-speakers from without and acting out or encouraging that very put-uponness from within the community (as suggested by its title).

Keith Hopper extends this dynamic by noting that the Mylesian canon plays with, in the poststructural sense, or critiques monologism, and its humor lies in an understanding of the subjective nature of all humor for different readers, "Language itself and reader participation are celebrated, and the centrality of authorship is undermined and reconstructed" (31). Regarding O'Brien's *oeuvre* through the lens of "the Carnivalesque"

as Hopper and Booker respectively suggest, also means that sympathetic identification as well as mockery (of Bónapárt in particular as well as the Gaels in general) are simultaneously part of one's engagement with the text. *An Béal Bocht* balances on the hyphen's edge between the modernism of Joyce and as a forerunner of later post-modern Menippean works that also include scholarly artifice, such as Nabokov's *Pale Fire* or Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince*. However, Booker is mistaken in his assumption that the Irish "does not deserve" to be accorded the status of Dante's vernacular Tuscan Italian for the *Divinia Comedia* or Chaucer's Middle English (66). An *a priori* dismissal of the quality of a minor language one may not speak performs the same misprision as the government and school officials in *An Béal Bocht*. Further, it ignores both O'Brien's influences from throughout the Irish canon, including the life-writing genre and his impact on later Irish writers, both in Irish and in English.[60]

As Richard T. Murphy points out in an essay which appears in *'Is it about a bicycle?': Flann O'Brien in the 21st Century* (2011), *An Béal Bocht* exemplifies an understanding of Irish naturalism post-Famine as "ground[ing] its political critique in fundamentally aesthetic rather than historical terms; individual, nation, and novel alike fail to develop into representative models of their respective genres" (70).[61] While I and several other critics have noted the novel's treatment of the Irish canon is more nuanced than Richard Murphy allows, its content is structured as prescriptive more than descriptive, relying generally upon the familiar events of the life-writing genre to

[60] In contrast, for a remarkably detailed and rich approach to the Irish-language intertextual networks of parody and homage in *An Béal Bocht,* including references to O'Leary's *Séadna*, and especially its inversion of and engagement with tropes and motifs from the *Immram Curag Máel Dúin,* see Neil Murphy's essay in *Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies*.

[61] See Cleary.

negotiate and question canon-formation (Ibid 73-74), but not as Murphy suggests to merely to relegate or dismiss the Irish-canon as a static and backward entity, inherently retarded and recidivistic. Repetition in general on a linguistic and structural level illustrates the novel's ties to oral tradition and its use of a guileless, idiotic narrator to add another dimension of engagement, a polyvocal tale of the absence of comprehension or intelligibility and expressiveness that signifies a post-hoc re-imagination of the past and comments on fallibility of both personal and national history as they irrupt from canonized "tradition".

It is a fundamental misprision to declare the work strictly anti-canonical merely because it vehemently eschews through ironic mimicry the realism of life-writing like O'Leary's work on the Famine by suffusing it with earlier modes. As anyone familiar with the corpus of Irish literature from its Earliest iterations, a familiarity which O'Brien most certainly demonstrates throughout his *oeuvre*, would be well-acquainted and grasp its expansiveness in terms of "porous generic boundaries, anarchic satire, [and] grotesque fantasy" (Ibid 80). Murphy's argument relies on the fallacy that the Revival effectively created Irish-language literature, a supposition that O'Brien adamantly undermines at every turn. Although those works exist now in the Deleuzian sense as a "minor" literature in a minority language—a minority language which the Famine itself through death and emigration made so—its key role within Irish-speaking communities abides as the varied narratives remain a vital and evolving part of *seanchais* or local-lore storytelling practice, which like Bónapárt's own narrative, naturally, albeit not necessarily in the manner of naturalism, per se, depends on the teller's own nuances, vicissitudes, and style (or the lack thereof, which is arguably a style or form of foolery in itself). Although

enacted through comedy, and perhaps all the more poignantly so because of this, the attentions of the reader are focused time and again on the efforts to either aggressively eradicate or obsequiously revivify Gaelic culture (e.g. Irish as unspeakable and incomprehensible to the schoolmaster in the classroom but also as the mellifluous "language" of pigs and object of fascination and fetishization by misguided, idiotic Revivalists at the *feis* or celebration and moronic German "scholars" of linguistic anthropology). Both of these approaches result in and are the result of the historical and habitual deprivation and degradation of the people who speak the Irish language as their mother-tongue.

The first coming of the *Gaeilgeóirí* the is initially marked as a sign of Apocalypse by the Old-Grey-Fellow who returns home in a state of near-collapse and dread:

> *"…tá tuairim agam nach bhfliuchfaidh fearthain na h-oíche seo atá ag teacht anocht éinne de bhrí go mbeadh deire an domhain seo ann níos túisce 'na an oíche chéanna. Tá na tuartha ann go flúirseach ar fud na formaiminte; Chonnac iniu an chéad ghath gréine a thánic riamh go Corca Dorcha, loinnir neá-shaolta cead uair níos neimhní ná an teine, ag spalpadh anuas as na spéarthaí orm agus ag teacht le faobhar snáthaide ar mo shúil. Chonnac freisin feothán gaoithe ag dul treasna fear na páirce agus fileadh arias nuair shrois an taobh thall. Chuala préachán ag piobarnái sa ngort lé glór muice, bhí lon ag damhghaire agus damh ag longhaire.* […] *Dá olcas iad áfach, d'airios rud eile uabhás ifreanta ar mo chroí..."*
> […]
> *"[Chonnac duine-uasal galánta gallda deá-ghléasta ag aircis ar an mbóthar amach ó Fhiontrágha] De bhrí Gaeal múinte mise, isteach liom sa díog go mbéadh an bóthar go h-iomlán [aige]….agus gur labhair liom!*"
> […]
> *"Acht," arsa'n Seanduine, ag cur lámh chreatha ar mo phearsain, é beagnach balbh co maith acht ag iarraí buadh na h-urlabhra ar a dhícheal "acht…fan! Labhair sé Gaeilg liom!"*
>
> - …I don't think that the coming night's rain will drench anyone because the end of the world will arrive before this very night. The signs are there in plenty through the firmament. Today I saw the first ray of sunshine ever to come to [Corca Dorcha], an unworldly shining a hundred times more venomous than the fire and it glaring down from the skies upon me and coming with a needle's sharpness at my eyes, I also saw a breeze going

across the grass of a field and returning when it reached the other side. I heard a crow screeching in a field with a pig's voice, a blackbird bellowing, and a bull whistling….[Evil] and all as they were, I heard another thing that put a hell of a fright in my heart…
[…]

- [I saw a strange, elegant, well-dressed gentleman coming towards me on the road out of Ventry.] Since I'm a well-mannered Gael, into the ditch with me so as to leave all the road [to him]…*[and] didn't he speak to me!*
[…]
- But, said the old Old-Fellow, laying a trembling hand upon my person, dumb but also making the utmost to regain his power of speech, but…wait! *He spoke to me in Gaelic!* (*ABB* 39-40; *TPM* 47-48)

The crack of doom, however, does not arrive as predicted. And though they are at first mistaken for "peelers", the *Gaeilgeóirí* eventually become the true sign of the advent of spring in the area over the years, but they and their money are eventually lured away to other areas, much to the disappointment of the Old-Grey-Fellow:

> *"Cad chuige agus cad uaidh", ar seisean, "an bhfuil an lucht fóluma ag imeacht uainn? An amhlaí go bhfuil an oiread sin airgid fágatha acu again le deich mbliana anuas go bhfuil fóirthin déanta aca ar oracht na dúiche agus ar an ábhar san go bhfuil meath ag teacht ar ar nGaeilg?"*
> *"Nee doy lum goh vwil un fukal suinn 'meath' eg un Ahur Peadar", arsa'n Gaeilgeóir go béasach.*

- Why and wherefore, said he, are the learners leaving us? Is it the way the they've left so much money with us in the last ten years that they have relieved the hunger of our countryside and that for this reason, our Gaelic has declined?
- I don't think Father Peter had the word *decline* in any of his works, said the Gaeligore courteously. (*ABB* 41-42; *TPM* 49)

This merits no direct response from the Old-Fellow and is both a subtle dig at the work of An tAthair Peadar through the learner's misconception that O'Leary's *oeuvre*, which, though admittedly substantial and extensive, is somehow representative of the whole of the Irish language and in its style and diction offers a critique of O'Leary's emphasis on a more plain-spoken, and thereby in An tAthair's Peadar's estimation, "good" and superior

form of Irish as well as the pitiable, well-nigh incomprehensible accent in the transcription of the speech of the *Gaeilgeóir*, which O'Brien mercilessly mocks.

The Old-Fellow is dismayed to discover that, as far as Corca Dorcha's hopes of success as a center of Irish-language education:

> 1. *doinean na dúiche ró-dhoineanta;*
> 2. *bréantas na dúiche ró-bhréan;*
> 3. *bochtanas na dúiche ró-bhocht;*
> 4. *gaelachas na dúiche ró-ghaelach;*
> 5. *seanchas na sean ró-sheanda.*
>
> 1. The tempest of the countryside was too tempestuous.
> 2. The putridity of the countryside was too putrid.
> 3. The poverty of the countryside was too poor.
> 4. The Gaelicism of the countryside was too Gaelic.
> 5. The tradition of the countryside was too traditional.
>
> (*ABB* 42; *TPM* 50)

After a great deal of pondering, the Old-Fellow decides his only recourse to woo back the language-tourists and their income is to start a college or Gael school like those in the other *Gaeltachtaí* and hold a *feis* to raise the necessary funds by renting out his land at an exorbitant sum to do so for " '*…ní raghair i bpeaca na sainnte má tá an t-airgead go léir ar do sheilbh féin agat'*—…you won't sin by covetousness if you have all the money in your own possession" (*ABB* 43; *TPM* 51). The Ó Cúnasa patriarch also sacrifices the lives of others by instructing them from the cottage-doorway in the midst of a thunderstorm to build a platform for the *feis* under which they are buried as martyrs for the Irish language. As well as the local beggars, the honored guests of the *feis* come from far and wide, many mistakenly dressed in kilts, and ascribe to themselves a whole host of nonsensical nicknames that indicate the limited extent of their Irish, including amongst others: *Mo Chara Droma Rúisc***,** *Róisín an tSléibhe, Popshúil Mairnéalach, An Chiaróg Eile, An Crann Gégach, An Ghaoth Aniar, Ochtar Fear* **—**[the untranslatable

geographical placename pun of My Carrick-on-Shannon]/My Friend Drumroosk, Roseen of the Hill, Popeye the Sailor, The Other Beetle, The Branchy Tree, The West Wind, Eight Men," and of course, *An Tuiseal Tabharthach*—The Dative Case (*ABB* 44-45; *TPM* 52-53), as well as a number of other epithets not included in the Irish version as well as the strangely omitted *An-Fear-Is-Fearr-i-nÉirinn*—The Best Man in Ireland—in a woeful but generally euphonic attempt to adopt the familiarities of Irish-language nomenclature, both practices which Bónapárt mistakenly assumes make the outsiders true, noble, and authentic Gaels.[62]

O'Brien's own use of Menippean satire in the Bakhtinian sense allows the "novel" to be a polyvocal collection of "new things" or at least new approaches to "old" things or forms—to function, like its predecessor *At Swim-Two-Birds*, as a Carnivalesque, heteroglossic "baggy monster" (albeit a slim, but abundantly-plotted textual equivalent of overstuffed Ambrós himself) that defies, exceeds, but also manipulates the form and conventions of the realist tradition as it existed in the English novel throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or more aptly, the naturalism of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Irish life-writing genre after The Great Famine, such as the work of Máire (Séamas Ó Grianna), Peig Sayers, and Tomás Ó Criomhthain. O'Brien creates an at once atavistic but also proleptically malleable (post)modernist text that suits the plight of the Irish, specifically Irish-speakers, as liminal citizens outside the symbolic order. The Gaels are also outside or prohibited and exploited by educational,

[62] Roseen of the Hill is a geographical play on *Róisín Dubh*/Dark Rosaleen (see Chapter 1); Popeye the Sailor is a famous cartoon character, who first appeared in 1933; The Branchy Tree evokes *An Craoibhín Aoibhinn*/The Delightful Little Branch, the nom de plume of Douglas Hyde, founder of *Conradh na Gaeilge* and first President of Ireland. The Other Beetle obviously derives from the proverb: "*Athníonn ciaróg chiaróg eile*" or "One beetle recognizes another" or like recognizes like. See also all three variations of Long's essay in *Flann O'Brien and Modernism, Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies,* and of course, her own book, *Assembling Flann O'Brien*.

socioeconomic, and juridical systems, ever on the margins, as the number of native speakers continues to decline in the present despite the status of Irish as an official, protected and funded language of both the Republic and the European Union.

Butler contends such liminality as a function of the state:

> And if the state binds in the name of the nation, conjuring a certain version of the nation forcibly, if not powerfully, then it also unbinds, releases, expels, banishes. If it does the latter, it is not always in emancipatory means…it expels precisely through an exercise of power that depends upon barriers and prisons, and so, in the mode of a certain containment. We are not outside politics when we are dispossessed in such ways….This is not bare life, but a particular formation of power and coercion that is designed to produce and maintain the condition, the state, of the dispossessed. What does it mean to be at once contained and dispossessed by the state?....These spectral humans, deprived of ontological weight and failing the tests of social intelligibility [including language and socioeconomic status]…are *produced* as stateless at the same time that they are jettisoned from juridical modes of belonging. This is one way of understanding how we can be stateless within the state, as seems clear for those who are incarcerated…they are, significantly, contained within the polis as its interiorized outside. (*Who Sings…?* 4-5, 15-16).

Or as the Old-Fellow sardonically quips during the *feis*, "*Ni saoirse go Seorise!"*—[literally,] "No freedom without [King] George!" (*ABB* 48),[63] which indicates how the *polis* also operates to render its colonies, or in the case of the constitutional Republic (founded in 1937), its outliers, particularly the rural and non-Anglophone ones, not in terms of unifying regionalism but ghettoization as separate and Other, especially after the Famine period. Ireland still orients itself in relation to England, of which it is due West, like the direction of each and every one of the compass points illustrated as part of the frontispiece of every edition of the novel. As those in text are frequently unbound from and dispossessed of their humanity, *An Béal Bocht* continually morphs its shape under the

[63] Power largely neutralizes this effect in his admittedly more euphonic with regard to the sense of the original in his translation as "No liberty without royalty!" but does add a footnote supplying the necessary context about the specific reference to King George (*TPM* 55).

guise of an autobiographical, linear narrative through prefaces, chapter-heading-summaries, footnotes, interpolations and emendations, dialectical variations in Irish and Hiberno-English, and digressions that permit it to remain in flux and avoid categorization, not simply in terms of simple periodicity in terms of chronology or genre as a parody, but also in with regard to its style (especially regarding diction, spelling, and idiom) and tone that embraces the misery that followed *An Gorta Mór* to the point of ridicule.

What Adrian Naughton describes as a Poundian economy in O'Nolan/O'Brien's translations of Irish nature poetry in his Master's thesis as relying on the immediacy of first-person and avoiding verbal excess in favor of "'*gontacht cainnte'* or 'terseness of speech'" using intuition rather than belaboring the point, as he writes, "[the Celtic poet]...instead of tardily discussing these flowers and conveying for the reader the contrast they form with the greenness of the field, he says, 'the world is dappled' and we understand immediately'" (trans. and qtd. *Is It About a Bicycle?* 86, 87). I would argue the same style is taken concerning presumptive knowledge in regard to representing the landscapes of Corca Dorcha and environs in *An Béal Bocht* as immediately familiar to both Bónapárt and his readers, as a deliberate contrast to what Naughton explains as Eliotian "excesses" (Ibid 97) or more likely, the excessive floweriness, if you will, and O'Brien's low opinion of Robin Flower's translation of Ó Criomhthain's *An t-Oileánach* or The *Islandman*. O'Brien's "novel" is postmodern in the sense that it is committed to revealing the often suppressed anti-modern tendencies of modernism, in making the new through what Kristeva describes in *Desire in Language* (1980), as the "semiotic" dimension of experience; language that focuses on prosody, instinct,

connotation, and aporia, presenting an alternative to merely denoted meaning. Further, I would insist *An Béal Bocht* offers a parallel, genealogical reading of history that must be produced when faced with the corruption of the Platonic *chora*. This not only refers to Bónapárt's own mother who largely fails to nourish him or his wife and son who die soon after childbirth, but in this instance, the feminized space of the no-longer nourishing body of the nation post-Famine: its mouth slack, a long-desiccated void of appetite and complaint; its womb now a death-chamber from a smothering and smoldering hearth to a raw, rainswept valley to the barren prison cell where Bónapárt is condemned after an upbringing in the oft-quipped *Gaolteacht*.

In his essay in *Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies* (2014), Neil Murphy also points out the deliberately disorienting and oftentimes impossible geographical positioning of Corca Dorcha as a place: ”For example, from the windows of Bónapárt's house he can (impossibly) see the Western coast of Donegal, the peninsula Bloody Foreland, Gweedore, Tory Island, West Galway, Kilronan on the Aran Islands, the Great Blasket and Dingle town on the west coast of Kerry” (150). In an essay in the same volume, Maebh Long uses P.W. Joyce and Fr. Dinneen to establish an etymology of Corca Dorcha as “secret race, malignant race” or “dark” race, playing on a racist slur to show how Irish-speakers stand as exceptions, as embodiments of “racial difference, inferiority, and immaturity” suggested by its analogue to “nigger” (Ibid 188). Just as Corca Dorcha itself is geographical exception, every Gaeltacht and none, peopled by myriad textual representations from across Irish-language literature as well as their Anglophone counterparts, so too, do Irish-speakers stand as exceptions under the law, a dark race of alterity, aligned with swine, effectively without language in that context.

The double-bind regarding appropriation and (auto)oppression created by Booker's aforementioned recommendation of adopting the attitude of the quip "Thank you, sor" is adamantly refused by what Murphy explains as the novel's radically deconstructive approach to history after or during another kind of *An Drochshaol* "without offering a replacement narrative" (155). I would add that this makes O'Brien's long view of Irish literary and cultural history including the Famine as not being reducible to clichés and yet remaining fully aware of disturbing stereotypes, just as its setting is not constrained by or concerned with literal or realist geography. *An Béal Bocht*'s engagement with its wide-ranging influences and linguistic repetitions largely unmoor the narrative itself from chronological time, irrespective of dates and allusions, such as King George or the Revival, showing the vast scope of the novel's intertextualized universe and how it offers a narrative that—other than a few signifiers of the early early-twentieth century--could just as well serve as an non-chrononormative account of specifically "Gaelic hardship" from the early post-Famine period forward to 1941, when it appeared.

Long, for example, readily juxtaposes O'Brien's fiction alongside earlier Irish historical events, linking the trial of Bónapárt Ó Cúnasa as Jams O'Donnell to the controversial 1882 Maamtrasna murders to demonstrate that as an Irish-speaker, Bónapárt/Jams is "not before the law, he is beneath the law; beneath its notice as an individual but nonetheless under its control. His position in relation to the law can only be negative [as it does not deign to speak his language nor bother to read differentiate one Jams from another]: he can transgress but he cannot be protected" (*Flann O'Brien: Contesting Legacies* 183). Through Aristotelian and Foucauldian biopolitics, Long

points out that Agamben applies the designation of "bare life" to "the slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner" as what she critically emphasizes "as *figures of an animal in human form*" as well as Carl Schmitt's "state of exception" (qtd. Ibid 185). The Gaels status as "humanoid animals" is concretized throughout the text (Ibid 186), and I contend that while for Sitric Ó Sánasa that designation becomes a mythic-realist *modus operandi* of transformation in which he becomes the Foucauldian "masked 'other'" previously mentioned, Bónapárt/Jams is offered no such escape. By reading "Jams O'Donnell" as O'Brien uses it as a common noun for a generic caste designation for Irish-speaking peasants, Long raises another tragic dimension to Bónapárt's tale. Perhaps the supposed-patriarch Jams O'Donnell that he encounters at the novel's end is not his father at all, not merely implying his own delusions but possibly that the trial and conviction of so many so-called Jams O'Donnell(s) erases individual lineage under the law, and the Gaels' use of the term as a self-identifier indicates that "[t]he inhabitants of Corca Dorcha and the Gaeltachts thus become a homogenous, incestuous mass" that permits the aforesaid elision of geographical and genetic difference (Ibid 192-4). Such a perspective functions to critique atavistic, abhuman representations of Irish-speakers as a whole throughout juridical and bureaucratic systems both in that particular moment and historically even preceding the events of the Famine era.

However, O'Brien and O'Leary's respective decisions to write *as Gaeilge* likewise demonstrate that although the *An Gorta Mór* marked an epoch that consigned millions of Irish bodies to unmarked graves with coffins "bottomless" and otherwise for the fortunate, or for many of the more fortunate survivors, the immigrants' proverbial

coffin-ship,[64] it neither silences their native tongue nor suspends their senses of humor. The fragmentation of language in *An Béal Bocht* represents shifts in Gaelic culture post-Famine, a quasi-*Finnegans-Wakean* experimentation in terms of spelling conventions (or the lack thereof) modeled to deride The Irish Spelling Reform's attempts at standardization. The language of *An Béal Bocht* strategically presents the obverse of The Spelling Form: a hybridized, often abbreviated, dialect and dialectical vocabulary accompanied obsessive, rote, inclusions or at times semi-nonsensical variations on rhetorical commonplaces and benedictory exclamations from Irish-language life writing,[65] in order to stress the real struggle toward and seeming impossibility of ameliorating the diversity within Irish orthography and diction itself over time and its subordinate status to English during and following its decline in the Famine period.

When Long continues her argument from the earlier volume and her own book, *Assembling Flann O'Brien* (2014) in *Flann O'Brien and Modernism* (2014), she explains that the sweeping categorization of the male Irish-speakers as Jams O'Donnells or "the 'natural' namelessness of the [local *Gaeltacht*] Irish is supplemented by a prosthetic title, self-chosen and self-appointed, which reflects not the attributes of the individual

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[64] The perilous journey on such a ship to emigrate from Ireland (in this case, to Canada) during the ninettenthnineteenth century and the painful discrimination faced there by many Irish immigrants is fictively charted in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996), based on the historical accounts of notorious (house)maid and convicted murderess, Grace Marks. . For more on Irish emigration to Canada during the Famine and post-Famine periods see Michael Kenneally's "Representing the Famine, Writing the Self" in *The Great Hunger Vol. II* and especially Stoddard's discussion of the records of those sent from the Strokestown Estate, the last remaining Big House in the area, that also serves as part of the the Famine Museum in near where Mount Talbot was in Rosscommon (194-195). Even more information is available in the recently digitized archives of Grey Nuns through a joint partnership between NUI Galway and the Quinnipiac University in Connecticut: faminearchive.nuigalway.ie. For more on the legacy of the Famine in an Irish-AnericanAmerican context, see Mary C. Kelly and E. Moore Quinn's essays in *Ireland's Great Hunger Vol. II*.

[65] The most obvious of these would be in references to the weather and the seasons throughout, such as: "*Tháinic mí nua darb ainm Márta ar an saol bhí againn go cionn míosa agus d'imigh aríís.*":—"A new month called March was born; remained with us for a month and then departed" (*ABB* 32; *TPM* 39).

[*Gaeligeoir*], but the traits he wishes he had" (83), *reductio ad absurdum.* She further problematizes Power's Anglicization of names because it fundamentally misses the point that O'Brien's use of Irish orthographic conventions in what would otherwise be a variety of foreign names like Bónapárt (French), Sitric (Norse), and Mícheálangaló (Italian), "thereby assimilat[ing] the otherwise ignored and destitute in Corca Dorcha into a wider history of empires and aristocratic culture" (*Flann O'Brien and Modernism* 84), as what I would characterize as a syncretic response or conscious (re)placement outside or beyond an Anglophone context. As Long observes:

> The tension between the language in which the text is written—Irish— and the language of education, biopolitical control and the law—English—is lost when the entire text is written in English, particularly if the names are altered....The vital linguistic shock of the eradication of the [proper] name [through the attribution of "Jams O'Donnell"] in the native tongue is lost.[66] (Ibid 88)

O'Brien thus equates both Anglophonic repression or misrepresentation and Hibernophilic appropriation in the name of acculturation with strident, useless fanaticism, not simply at the level of the sentence but the level of the noun. As Athanasiou insists, "...naming is not only a site of trauma, but also a strategy of subversive mimesis. At the site of the name [or I would contend also in its absence], tragedy cannot be willed away, but it can certainly be embodied differently" (*Dispossession* 139). The text and the community's parody is allied with the embodiment of linguistic opacity and recursiveness or excess, all while being glorified at every turn by many and varied posturing outsiders as "pure Irish". These gestures anticipate and reconstitute Bónapárt's own numerous disasters in terms of accurately assessing not only social situations and the motivations of others whether *i mBéarla*—in English or *sa Ghaeilge*—in Irish even in retrospect, but

[66] It is with this in mind that all my translations are emended as necessary to include the names as given in Irish.

also, even more pivotally, failing to glean so much as the plain facts of life concerning procreation.

Communication and comprehension often profoundly fail, only to fail again, fail better, in increasingly outlandish and hilarious ways. As many critics note, it takes a clever author to write a guileless fool who strains the limits of credibility as a shrewd evocation of sympathy as well as a situational comedy. Failure coupled with foolishness or stupidity strategically impel the narrative; thus, lucidity and simplicity must be eschewed by O'Brien in to borrow from Freeman, an "a-rhythmical" or asynchronous folly of excess verbiage as a contrast to emphasize that his protagonist may never fully grasp the fundamentals of being, both in the ontological sense and in terms of successfully functioning as a responsible, adult member of society. Bónapárt appears from birth to be metaphorically trapped in, permanently stunted and overwhelmed by the miasma of ash and smoke-like filth that supposedly evaporated from the cottage's rotting interior after the death of Ambrós, a miasma that also makes so much of the world inscrutable to him, even the conception of his son. These circumstances are of course, always already subject to the greater discernment of his readership, whom, one would hope, are in on O'Brien's jokes at his narrator's expense.

How are we changed by grief, privation, and longing? What toll is exacted not only by individual pain but epistemic collapse at the cultural level? Both *An Béal Bocht* and *Mo Scéal Féin* examine and engage with other forms or means of achieving psychological compensation for the Famine and the many decades of oppression following it beyond the discourse of the self in religious collectivity or in the dissolution, disintegration, or displacement of the "human" ego into the animal opposed to Gabriel

and Kathleen's respective narcissism. Death itself is a transformational shifting of energy, especially for Sitric Ó Sánasa**,** who decides to reject begging and his hole-home dug out in the side of a hill to repair to a coastal cave, where he lives out the remainder of his days, despite the initial protestations of many in the district, amongst the seals. Ó Sánasa ultimately garners the approbation of both the locals and the admiration of the Dubliners for "*ar fheabheas a bhochtanais agus iomad na gorta abhí breachta 'na phearsain*"—the excellence of his poverty: the amount of famine which was delineated in his person":

> *"Nior bhraitheas aon phráta le seachtain", arsa Sitric [ag Máirtín] fhreagairt "agus tá mí ann ó bhlaiseas blúire éise. Ní bhíonn aon ní leagtha romham um tráth bídh acht an ghorta féin agus ní bhíonn fiú amháin greim salain agam mar anlan chuici. Is amhlaí a chaitheas smután móna aréir agus ní abróchan gur ró-mhaith a chuaidh an dubh-bhiatachas san i bhfastó ar mo ghoile, go bhfóiridh Dia orainn! Bhíos folamh aréir acht anois, pé scéal é, tá mo bholg lán de phianta. Nach mall, a chairde, bhíonn an bás ag teacht fá dhein an té atá ag dúil leis?"*
>
> - I didn't taste a spud for a week, replied Sitric to [Máirtín], and it's a month since I tasted a bit of fish. All that's laid before me at mealtime is hunger itself and I don't even get salt with that. I ate a scrap of turf last night and I wouldn't say that this black feeding agreed too well with my belly, God save us all! I was empty last night but now, anyway, my belly is full of pains. Isn't it slowly, friends, that death comes to him who desires it? (*ABB* 77, 79; *TPM* 89, 90).

Sitric embodies the real fears of famine recurrence even into the twentieth century and replicates the desperation of the Famine starvation. The faminized and destitute body is here made into something extraordinary, utterly abhuman, transformed like a selkie[67]:

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[67] The word "selkie"—or human-seal hybrids that are common in Celtic and Faroese mythology—is derived from the Scots *selich* and the Old English *seolh* for seal. Typically in these legends, the selkies, both male and female, shed their seal pelts once every seven years to come ashore as beautiful humans, when, where, and as which they often fall in love with a mortal man or woman. The selkie appears on shore only briefly but cannot return to sea without its skin, and their mortal beloved will often burn or hide the hide it to bind their selkie-lovers to them. Upon restoration of its pelt, the selkies immediately return to the sea. Nora Roberts uses this lore in her *Three Sisters Island* trilogy, as one of a trio of accursed ancient "white magick" witches hurls herself from a cliff in despair when her selkie-husband recovers his sealskin and departs from her and their children for its oceanic abode. Ní Dhomhnaill similarly uses the imagery of mermaids throughout her *oeuvre* to show how the primary traumas of the Famine and losing the Irish

D'fhágadar ann [Sitric] agus is ann dó ón am sin i leith. Chonnachthas ar bhárra taoide cor-uair ó shoin é, féachaint mhongach fhiáin aur ar nós ba rón féin, agus é ag soláthar uasc go rábach i gcóluadar na muintire ar ghlac sé lóistín leo. Is minic a chuala-sa na comhursain â rá gur mhaith an bheart an Sánasach do sheilg, mar gombéadh sé fá'n tráth sun fásta 'na bhreac bhlasta agus go mbéadh solus geimhrí ann. Ní dói liom, áfach, go raibh sé de mhiseanach ag éinne dul sa tóir air. Go dtí an lá si tá sé beo-adhlactha [san uaimh faoi uisce] agus sásta, slán ó ocras agus ó fhearthain, thair sa Chloich.

They left [Sitric] there and there he has been ever since then, At times since then he has been seen at high tide, wild and hirsute as a seal, vigorously providing fish with the community [of seals] with whom he lodged. I often heard the neighbors say that Mr. [Ó Sánasa] was a skillful fisherman, because he had, by this time, grown into a tasty fish and that a whole winter's oil was within him. I do not think, of course, that anyone has had the courage to chase him. To this day he is buried alive [in the underwater cave] and is satisfied, safe from hunger and rain on the Rock [i.e. Skellig Michael].
(*ABB* 87; *TPM* 98)

It is not simply for dying that this local pauper is lauded but for his total renunciation of the trappings of humanity beforehand. Do his actions represent speciational regression or progression? Is Sitric truly transfigured by eventually shuffling off this mortal coil as a kind of selkie-in-reverse?

In *The Tempest*, Ariel describes metamorphosis or what Deleuze and Grosz would characterize as a shifting of energies or forces within the environment (or in Bacon's case, the visual field) made perceptible, as a miraculous corollary to death in the second verse of Ariel's song to charm Ferdinand after the shipwreck:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange… (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* I.ii.560-565)

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language are figured as the loss of the merfolk's home beneath the waves, the evaporation of water or the recession of the seas mimics the evaporation or recession of language and their helpless abandonment on (topographically and spiritually) dry land.

Central to O'Brien is that such a transmogrification into what Shakespeare characterizes as the "rich and strange" (an oily seal-man) offers a carnivalesque, optative mode of *egression*: anywhere, be it heaven, hell, sea cave, ocean, or even prison cell, is evidently significantly preferable to Corca Dorcha proper for some. In this instance, one must abandon both home and oneself, to become in essence and in substance something else, to shed like a pelt the burdensome Famine heritage that according to O'Faolain's Kathleen de Burca, is inherently encoded in Irish DNA, and according to Maud Gonne, is singing out from every ruined stone of the rural Irish landscape to the ocean whose tides envelop and shift as symbolically unbound or at least in flux in a way that is able to wash away history. In doing so, Sitric sets himself apart, dissociates from the historical past and offers a model by embracing the mythic one. As David Kelly insists regarding O'Brien's relation to the high Modernists, he "represents a kind of generational shift away from those who experience trauma...to those who simply deal with it (even *comically* deal with it) because it has become manageably familiar" and this is equally apposite to O'Brien's handling of the history of the (post-)Famine period also at a generational remove that amounts to "a comically inspired accommodation of the modern condition" (*Flann O'Brien and Modernism* 75), which is also pertinent to *An Béal Bocht*'s repeated attention to and negotiation of specifically "Gaelic hardship". Butler's raising of the issues of monstrosity or what I have referred to as abhumanity and the human animal as well as companion-species relations in the context of dispossession, for Anthanasiou, "offers a necessary means of comprehending being-in-common, beyond communitarism and anthropomorphism, as a condition of new possibilities for politics—a politics that involves engaging with the biopolitical condition while also revisiting the humanist

premises of the (bio)political" (*Dispossession* 37), which accords with my reading here. O'Brien foregrounds his development of a mythic-realist response of extraordinary trans-speciational affiliation and recognition in Sitric the Self-Made Selkie (and the alternatively noxious outcome of his correlative, the tale of Ambrós the house-pig) to counter the pervasive hegemonic Anglophone discourses that have long de-personalized and racialized Irish-speakers as others.

Likewise, Banville's Gabriel Godkin tries to spin a chrysalistic, compensatory narratological cocoon with his words, but try as he may, can neither achieve metamorphosis in the manner of those delicate blue butterflies he often dreamed of smashing to smithereens in the birchwood glade nor escape the legacy of the Famine and its aftershocks. Returning to Birchwood becomes a sort of failed effort at a claustrophobic return to a now-blighted womb, impeding his ability to move on from the past. It is unclear whether Gabriel would even wish to do so, because the house itself is all he and the reader have to gauge and delineate reality, an architectural affirmation of his lineage as a Godkin and some presumably variegated version of his account, however polluted by incest and in-fighting and distorted by delusional ideations they each may be. Although it may not be able to aid Gabriel in transforming, Birchwood still protects him from total existential dissolution; it concretizes the crumbling thresholds between the landed gentry and the peasant tenancy, self and other, historical Ireland and its mythic Otherworld, occupying the otherwise largely indistinguishable borderline between (be)longing and taboo, sanity and madness, as well as life and death. The estate house serves as Gabriel's torpid stopgap to halt or even reverse time on a grander scale than the blinking game. The estate is a constructed and artificial womb or in the terms he prefers

concerning Rosie's and Mag the Milkmaid's respective vulvas and his probing hands, a "cunt" or "wound" that unlike his mother's and comparable to the narrative itself, he can re-enter and imagine that it will never expel him, one which he can actually succeed in refusing to share with his twin, Michael. Without Birchwood, Gabriel would be more than dispossessed; he would cease to be entirely.

Whereas O'Leary is able to achieve a feat of transcendence only by possessing a conviction in things unseen (Cf. *2 Corinthians* 4:18; *Hebrews* 11:1), a faith in the eternal through the valorization of self-sacrifice and tropes of resurrection and communion with the mystical body of Christ in the Pauline tradition. Though all four works have a profound sense of the absurdity underlying the realities of Famine and post-Famine existence for the dispossessed (not to mention the dead), only O'Leary and O'Brien can effectively and affectively merge that with a sense of mordant pleasure and sardonic triumph, even—perhaps most especially—for poor Bónapárt Ó Cúnasa, whose conviction and imprisonment—though undeserved—preserve him from the harshness of life in Corca Dorcha. Most importantly, these seeming tragedies also furnish him with enough sustenance and time to faithfully set down his tale, albeit at the expense of all he has ever known or loved. Bónapárt's tribulations are anticipated as well, as Power and Neil Murphy respectively note, in the novel's reference to the famous protagonist of the early Irish sea-voyage romance, *Immram* (or Voyage of) *Maíle Dúin* that leads Maíle Dúin to a multitude of strange, marvelous islands and Christian conversion, which helps him to forgive rather than slaughter the marauders who murdered his father.[68] Furthermore, his

[68] The *Immrama* genre has also been adapted by contemporary poets Paul Muldoon and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, among others. Seamus Heaney's "Station Island" sequence serves a similar function in a more modern context of religious and literary-cultural pilgrimage.

addition of a surname not only plays with the original *Immram* but also Ó Pónasa's surname, like the other first names mentioned by Maebh Long, is a Gaelicized loan transcription of the Latin for punishment—*poena*, emphasized in its spelling in Power's translation as "O'Poenassa", as well as euphonically similar to the English for poet to reflect the classical Middle Irish vocabulary and meter in which Bónapárt's vision/version of Maíle Dúin speaks.

In addition to the rich Irish intertextual history of *An Béal Bocht*, I would also insist that Bónapárt Ó Cúnasa is not merely a parodic take on earlier writers of Irish-language hardship autobiographies or their imitators like Tomás Ó Criomhthain, or Peig Sayers, or Máire (Séamas Ó Grianna), [69] but that he also bears a strong relation to wise fool or clown figures from Shakespeare, specifically Feste, who also bestrides the boundary between the comedic and the tragic. Like his Shakespearean counterpart before him, Ó Cúnasa is frequently befuddled and beset by the difficulties of the human condition or state, particularly the notoriously moist climate of Ireland, where it seems that as in Illyria "…the rain it raineth every day" (*Twelfth Night* V.i.386).[70] Bónapárt does seem to be perpetually enduring both a literal and a metaphysical Jamesian dark night of the soul. *Twelfth Night*'s preoccupation with trickery is echoed in the Ó Cúnasa clan's encounter with the aforementioned ridiculous Dublin *Gaeilgeoiri*, over-eager Irish-language enthusiasts, whose focus is on language as aesthetic and historical object,

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[69] See also Louis De Paor's essay *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* and his useful situating of the Blasket autobiographies in the context of the anti-modern tendencies of modernism and the works' construction and dissemination for an international audience (often through translation and expurgation) as well as the ultra-modern shift of Gaeltacht narratives from oral to written traditions, as De Paor endeavors to shift the standard chronology of Irish-language modernism as arising well prior to World War II.

[70] See the numerous references to and thick descriptions of torrential rains. pitch-dark, ominous nights; wind, and inclement weather of myriad variety throughout *An Béal Bocht*.

preferably as removed as possible from the sociocultural, material, and practical conditions in which it is produced and spoken. For the urbanite sophisticates, the rural world of Corca Dorcha is essentially found to be too real in its incredible poverty and outrageous squalor, such that they prefer discussing grammar and usage to the exclusion of all else.

Those at the *feis*, for instance endure ten lengthy, self-indulgent speeches from the *feis*-officers including, the President, whose preferred appellation is *Nóinín Gaelach*/The Gaelic Daisy:

> *"A Ghaela", adúirt sé, "cuireann sé gliondar ar mo chroí Gaelach a bheith annso iniu ag caint Ghaeilge libh-se ar an fheis Ghaelaí seo i lár na Gaeltachta. Ní misde dhom a rá gur Gaeal mise. Táim Gaelach óm bhathais go bonn mo choise—Gaelach thoir, thiar, thus agus thíos. Tá sibh-se go léir fíor-Ghaelach mar an gcéana. Gaeil Ghaelacha de shliocht Ghaelach sea an t-iomlán againn. An té atá Gaelach beidh sé Gaelach feasta. Níor labhair mise (ach oiread libh féin) aon fhocal acht Gaeilg ón lá rugadh mé agus, rud eile, is fa'n nGaeilg amháin abhí gach abairt dár ndúras riamh. Má táimid fíor-Ghaelach, ní foláir dúinn bheith ag plé ceist na Gaeilge agus ceist an Ghaelachais a le chéile i gconaí. Ní h-aon mhaitheas Gaeilg bheith againn má bhíonn ar gcóra sa teanga sin ar neithe neá-Ghaelacha. An té bhíonn ag caint Gaeilge acht gan a bheith ag plé ceust na teangan, níl sé fíor-Ghaelach 'na chroí isti: ní h-aon tairbhe don Ghaelachas a leithéid sin mar gur ag magadh faoi'n Ghaeilg a bhíonn sé agus ag thabhairt masala do Gaelaibh. Níl aon ní ar an domhan co deas nó co Gaelach le fíor-Ghaeil fior-Gaelachacha abhíonn ag caint fíor-Gaeilge Gaelai i dtaobh na Gaeilge fíor-Ghaelaí[....]"*
>
> - Gaels! he said, it delights my Gaelic heart to be here today speaking Gaelic with you at this Gaelic feis in the centre of the Gaeltacht. May I state that I am a Gael. I'm Gaelic from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet—all truly Gaelic. We are all Gaelic Gaels of Gaelic lineage. He who is Gaelic, will be Gaelic evermore. I myself have not spoken a word of Gaelic since the day I was born—just like you—and every sentence I've ever uttered has been on the subject of Gaelic. If we're truly Gaelic, we must constantly discuss the question of the Gaelic revival and the question of Gaelicism. There is no use in having Gaelic, if we converse in it on non-Gaelic topics. He who speaks Gaelic but fails to discuss the language question is not truly Gaelic in his heart; such conduct is of no benefit to Gaelicism, because he only jeers at Gaelic and reviles the Gaels. There is nothing in life so nice and so Gaelic as truly true Gaelic Gaels who speak in true

> Gaelic Gaelic about the truly Gaelic language[....]
> (*ABB* 46-47; *TPM* 54)

This speech and its focus on the issues of grammar and the absurd repetition of variations on Gael/Gaeilge (32 times in the 208 words I cited in Irish and 32 times in 195 words I cited in English) capture the heights of The Gaelic Daisy's enthusiasm which is matched and contrasted with the poverty of his actual grasp of Irish. The line regarding being Gaelic from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet is also a subtle mockery of the familiar prayer most frequently attributed to St. Patrick, also referred to as "The *Lorica/*The Breastplate" also known as the "*Fáeth Fiada,"* which is typically mistranslated as "The Cry of the Deer," since that is what legend claims Patrick and his fellow monks appeared as to protect them from the advance of the forces of King Lóegaire Mac Néill. Whereas the *Lorica* combines the influence of pre-Christian addresses to various parts and aspects of the environment mediated through the Triune God (e.g. "I arise today/through the strength of heaven:/light of sun,/brilliance of moon,/splendor of fire,/speed of lightning,/swiftness of wind,/depth of sea,/stability of earth,/firmness of rock…"), a litany-style that "Patrick" ameliorates into Christian invocation, particularly well-known for its use of ritualized repetition and inclusion of prepositions (e.g. "I arise today", "God's *x*"; "through…", "in…", "against…"; "Christ with me,/Christ before me,/Christ behind me…" etc), The Gaelic Daisy and his colleagues, meanwhile, can only reiterate variations on Gael *ad nauseam*.[71] Typical of pandering figureheads, the diction used by the Gaelic Daisy and the other speakers is a

[71] *Fáeth Fiada* generally means "mist of concealment" when it appears elsewhere in Old Irish mythology and clearly refers to how Patrick hides himself and his acolytes through God's miraculous transmogrifications. The *Lorica* appears in MSS known as the *Liber Hymnorum* published in 1903 as the *Thesaurus Paelohibernicus* and also mimics the style of *Ephesians* 6:10-17.

vacuous clutter of empty "applause" references that actually does little to justify the resurgence and essential preservation of the Irish language in Ireland.

The Gaelic Daisy and his cohort's redundant yet overblown rhetoric has an at once hypnotizing and stupefying effect on the crowd, several of whom swoon from exhaustion as the rain beats down upon them, and one of whom even drops dead on the spot. This evidently does little to dissuade them from blathering on perseveratingly for hours, yet again divorcing human compassion for those attending the *feis*, especially the locals, with ideological fervor for the language as a strictly aesthetic object, devoid of any sense of perspective or practical usage, deliberately detached from the populations who coherently speak it in daily interactions, and ridiculing them for even daring to do so without concerning themselves with the "true Gaelic Gaelic" of "true Gaelic Gaels," as perorations that would ideally assure the officers' *bona fides* ironically undermine them and harshly demonstrate the difference between a living, vibrant language in the context of a community and a droning, literally stultifying verbal cudgel that overwhelms them. Like their nicknames, the addresses of the *Gaeilgeoiri* invert the spirit and intent of popular, enduring Irish-language idioms like those I mentioned in Chapter 4: "*tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*—a country without a language [is] a country without a soul" and "*is fearr Gaeilge briste, ná Béarla cliste*—Broken Irish is better than clever English". The dreamed of *colaiste* is never founded, but instead, the Old-Grey-Fellow, the group's treasurer, acquires a new watch.

Similar repetitions, substitutions, and inversions occur throughout *Twelfth Night or What You Will,* in particular, with its plot centered on doubling and twinning; it is also relevant to my discussion of *Birchwood*, which bends the play's use of its fraternal twins,

Viola and Sebastian, from figures of comedy to ones of tragedy, as Michael Godkin like Viola is mis-gendered and/or misidentified as well as presumed-dead in Gabriel's quest for his twin "sister", Rose, perhaps not unexpectedly in Gabriel's account, by ultimately eliminating the female twin altogether as merely a fever-dream delusion to repress the truth about his bond with Michael. *Twelfth Night*'s natural Epiphanic resonances are transposed—most likely via the influence of Joyce— to Banville and thus Gabriel's understanding of the Word's, the word's, the world's, and his own doubleness.[72] Although Shakespeare's play is only briefly haunted by the specters of censure and silence, wanton cruelty, lust for revenge, and madness, these are the themes that drive Banville's *Birchwood* from start to finish. Magnus the clown, whose stories we never hear directly, in particular seems to embody aspects of the darker side of Feste, as well as presumably the ribald, chauvinistic Lavache from *All's Well that Ends Well,* and of course, the existential crisis figured through The Fool of *King Lear.* Gabriel explains that:

> Magnus was a born clown. He had a long wedge-shaped head topped with a flat mat of furry fair hair. His thin blue-veined nose with a knob at the tip, was almost painful to look at in its austerity, and his pale moist eyes, peering out from concentric circles of tired brownish flesh, seemed permanently on the point of overflowing with a flood of tears. That long sinewy frame, the mournful grin, provoked immediately in an audience the kind of laughter on which jesters thrive, that uproarious hee-haw with a seed of misgiving lodged at its root. He kept us entertained through all our trials except one, perched on the stool, [playing the harmonica and] spinning his elegant tales.
> (Banville 114)

Whereas *Twelfth Night* is essentially a narrative of excess, bounty, and feasting—implied by the surfeit of lovers, love letters, and declarations of love—both genuine and forged or misdirected—as well as multiple marriages, misnomers, including a transvestite twin and

[72] See Chapter 1.

a clown disguised as a priest, and the fact that as Sir Toby pivotally attests, there is more than enough cake and ale to go 'round. The play serves as joyously fitting counterpoint to all these sobering narratives of privation, paucity, and famine. However, as Bónapárt reflects, "*Ar bhealach ar bhealach eile bhiomar ag leigint an tsaoil dínn agus ag fulaing na h-aindise, práta againn cor-urair agus cor-urair gan faic 'nár mbéaliabh acht milis-bhriathra na Gaeilge.*"—"In one way or another, life was passing us by and we were suffering from misery, sometimes having a potato in our mouths and at other times having nothing in our mouths but sweet words of Gaelic" (*ABB* 88; *TPM* 99). The motley circus crew's only feasting comes through fantasy by way of the Trimalchian reference as they nomadically subsist on nuts, nettles, grasses, herbs, and the occasional wild fowl or hare, whatever can be scraped together by Angel.

Also notably distinct from the rich and varied female and female-as-male perspectives in *Twelfth Night* which fully endorses my contention in Chapter 3 that the appeal of androgyny lies not in abstention but rather the active presence and fluid negotiation of a mutable gendered identity,[73] the lack of any known female survivors in the Godkin clan or from the circus other than the child twins Justin and Juliette or as Magnus and Gabriel like to call them, the hybrid unit of "the two-headed monster…Justinette" (Banville 113-114), which also echoes Sebastian and Viola or if you prefer, "Sebiola" or "Violastian," as well as the aforementioned female twin ("Rose") turned male ("Michael"), or the conception of woman as lack or aporia that gets culturally transmitted to Kathleen and thus informs her understanding of the person of Marianne and her *milieu* or rather the dearth of community for her at Mount Talbot and

[73] See *Twelfth Night* I.iv.1-5.

environs. *Twelfth Night*'s meta-theatricality also links it to Kathleen's meta-narrative attempt to write not only her own past but also her version of the divorce scandal in "The Talbot Book" within *My Dream of You*. I suppose one could argue that the de Burca's novel is deliberately unfinished as a way of pointing out that there can be no satisfying closure both within her life and that of her subjects, as well as the notion that an authentic Famine narrative never can end in satiation. Since Kathleen never sees the success in merely being a survivor of oppressive cultural constraints, she cannot complete "The Talbot Book" because Marianne's personal history after her divorce is indeed far from triumphant, and in this case, rather than refuting it, O'Faolain merely reinforces the aphorism, "History is written by the victors," not by the victims. More to the point, for Kathleen, her whole conception of Marianne as a victim is totally undermined by discovering that her protagonist most likely had a second Anglo-Irish lover in the copy of the tabloid from the National Library of Ireland archives given to her by Nan Leech.

Indeed, in the four (post-)Famine works, all manner of revelry is generally prohibited by forced renunciation suffused with longing, even for Bónapárt, whose cherished buried gold and brand-new boots with their hilariously misfortunate missteps as the tracks of the mythical Sea-Cat eventually send him to prison, as do his counterpart Malvolio's own misunderstandings before him. This serves as an expedient in both cases to the creation and ultimately the conclusion of the respective narratives, as Feste would have it:

> A great while ago the world begun,
> With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
> But that's all one, our play is done,
> And we'll strive to please you every day. (*Twelfth Night* V.i.399-402)

Godkin, de Burca, and Ó Cúnasa's tales each recursively end back at their beginnings (with the revelation of Bónapárt's "father", Kathleen's return to Ireland, and Gabriel's return to Birchwood) and begin as a result of endings: destruction, imprisonment, and naturally, death, though Famine Ireland is hardly an Arcadian or Edenic Paradise, at least not of the pre-Lapsarian variety. Their playing to the implied audience is essentially an act of self-pleasure that achieves nothing for the characters but more words, which Banville and O'Faolain respectively claim fail to plumb the profound depths and capture the variations of their protagonist's individual experiences. And through each of these works, *Twelfth Night* included, we remember that with The Fall comes gender difference, deceit or intentional misrepresentation, exile, as well as de-individuation, heteroglossic and polysemous languages, and knowledge. But unlike *Twelfth Night,* in the (post-) Famine narratives I discuss, knowledge comes at tremendous mental and emotional cost, the literal expense of lives meted out in spoiled fields, followed by unmilled cornmeal and sacrilegious soup or hardtack, before these millions of souls would return to the dust from which they came. *Et in Hibernia ego.*

Thus, the faminized or terrifically impoverished body must be understood as a testament to continued mortal existence rather than feared or demonized for all its abhumanity, from its closeness to the unforgiving Earth and acceptance of the unrelenting weather to its embrace of the beasts of the field, all of which in fact enable that existence. My use of the term emphasizes the Latin prefix *ab*- meaning away or apart from, suggesting that the abhuman faminized body is not merely isolated from its natural human condition by the potentially-deadly forces of *extremis*, but becomes at once regressive and evolved. Not dependent on its ecosystem as per usual, its evolution is

such that the profound failure of that ecosystem often necessitates the recession of the most basic conventions, mores, and social expectations in the interest of self-preservation and the primacy of finding nourishment, any nourishment whatsoever. This phenomenon becomes particularly evident in Ó Cunasa's pilgrimage to the middle mountain of the White Bens, known as The Hunger-Stack, in search of the fortune of famed voyager, Maíle Dúin Ó Pónasa:

> *Nuair tháinic an lag-sholus déireóil abhíonn mar lá againn i gCorca Dorcha, is iontach an* sight *a nochadh ós mo chóair. Fuaireas mé féin beagnach ar bhár na cruaiche, mé idir gorm agus dearg ó dhortadh-fola agus treascairt-oíche agus gan fiú amháin aon ribín éadaigh ar mo cholain. Bhí bár mo chinn beagnach buailte le néalta fíochmhara dubh-bholgacha agus tuile mhór fearthana asta, tuile abhí co trom san go raibh mo chuid gruaige á piocadh asam go glic. D'aimheóin gach dichil agus tréan-iarachta dá ndearna mé, bhí an fhearthain chéana á h-ól agam agus bhíos bolg-aitha go milteanach, rud nár chuir feabhas ar threoir mo chois. Thíos fúm, níor bhraitheas faic acht ceo agus galmaidne. Ins an treo anáirde, bhí bár na cruaiche le mothú go fánach agus ní raibh aon ní láimh liom ach carraigreacha, salachar, agus síor-fhliuchras shéideáin. Bhogas liom. B'iontach an áit i agus ba ró-iontach an aimsir. Ní dói liom go mbeadh a leithéidi arís ann.*
>
> ….
>
> *Bhí an t-ocras ag baint 'cigilt' as mo phutóga, agus an tuirse dó-innste ag cur suainis nach raibh foláin ar mo chnámha.*
>
> When the puny semi-illumination which passes for day among us in [Corca Dorcha] arrived, what an amazing sight was revealed to me! I found myself on the summit of the mountain, my colour alternating between red and blue because of the nocturnal buffetings, whole my body was stripped of the last scrap of cloth. The crown of my head almost touched the black-bellied fierce clouds and a great deluge of rain issued from them; a deluge so heavy that my hair was being plucked rapidly from me. In spite of every effort and stout endeavor on my part, I was drinking the very rain and became dangerously belly-swollen, something which did not improve my control of walking. Beneath me, I noticed naught but mist and morning vapours. Above, I saw the mountains occasionally, while around me was nothing but rocks, filth, and continual moist gale. I moved on. It was an amazing place and very amazing also was the weather. I think its like will not be there again.
>
> …
>
> Hunger tickling my intestines and an indescribable fatigue filling my [bones] with unhealthy drowsiness. (*ABB* 94-95; *TPM* 105-106)

Bónapárt's journey to the mountain results in his literal regression, stripped bare by the elements, cast down and out, exposed like a Fallen Adam, slack-jawed with awe at an experience and from gaining riches that will only bring him further "*an t-anró Gaelach*"—"misery of the Gaels" (*ABB* 94), instead of prosperity because the "peelers" assume he committed murder to obtain that wealth. Greed divides him from all he holds dear. Although he technically survives his trek to and from the peak, it just as surely ends his life, because the trip ultimately results in his conviction and imprisonment. The use of the English "sight" indicates that his time in jail has helped him gain a few words of the language, as do other transcriptions and typically misspelled insertions throughout the text, but Bónapárt ends the paragraph by returning rotely to the "*Ní dói liom go mbeadh a leithéidi arís ann*" commonplace that bespeaks a case of profound exceptionalism yet again rendered quotidian and *de rigueur*.

Moreover, after reaching the summit like Moses and various other Biblical and saintly pilgrims, he does not reach enlightenment or greater comprehension of any kind. He does not gain the Law, only participating supposedly accidentally in the flouting of it, believing his own poverty entitles him to steal gold from a corpse—possession being nine-tenths of the Law, after all. As Long has already demonstrated, the Law proper is in English and Bónapárt, as an Irish-speaking Gael, always already exists outside of it—and loses his own self-possession as a consequence, in terms of both his liberty and his dignity. For O'Faolain and Banville, all forms and senses of communal warmth or personal comfort turn cold on an empty stomach in a hollowed-out body astride a yawning mass grave. The abhumanity of the these bodies, then, like the body in pain—discussed at length in Chapter 2 on Ní Dhomhnaill—does not merely create and sustain

aporia or silences as in the novels, but also creates the unique, recuperative positions from which O'Brien and O'Leary develop their narratives of survival, however desperate.

Through what I consider subversively putting on the poor-mouth, as both O'Brien and O'Leary do (particularly in the sort of exaggerated firebrand sermon at the end of the chapter on the Famine), they utilize a narrative technique that always already refuses or fails in the bid it ostensibly makes for sympathy. Theirs is not the language of sincere abasement that is at the heart of both *My Dream of You* and *Birchwood*, or rather it is, but such that what amount to excessive laments of "*Ochón!*"—"Woe is me!"— subtly belies all the actual piteous poor-mouthing done by Marianne as written by Kathleen, Kathleen herself, and Gabriel's cadre of circus-freaks and his freakish family as written by him, as well as his own frequent demurrals of both narratological and sociocultural understanding, responsibility, and authority. Whereas those with socioeconomic capital waste it by casting themselves as forever the walking-wounded, infected and imprecated by their particular circumstances of Ascendancy privilege, delimited by evaporating wealth and ravenous appetites of all kinds. Despite the fact that in the case of Bónapárt his inability to acquire the dominant language of English hinders him from mounting any defense at all, much less an effective one, against a mistaken prosecution and undeserved incarceration, O'Brien and O'Leary demonstrate that those with hardly any socioeconomic capital use mockery to re-emphasize the relevance of a vanishing culture, because they possess nothing more than the ability to manipulate and reinvigorate a marginalized language to make us laugh,[74] to help us continue to learn, hope, and carry on.

[74] O'Leary's memoir was explicitly written to encourage new Irish-language learners in what is widely considered clear, precise, and practical "good Irish" at the outset of the Revival. I can speak to its efficacy

The cottage in [Mount] Mellary where Kathleen stays in Cork when The Talbot Arms is full, recalls similarly fond and enduring memories that inspire her anew:

> Bertie was right…I would be happy there. I went in through the porch and stood in the room. It was from my childhood that the distant slow sob—a disturbance of the air, more than a noise—was the sea on the stony shore. This was a white room with two small windows, a pot of pink geraniums on one deep sill. A cooker and a sink in one corner. A small fireplace. An armchair. Sisal matting and an old rug over in front of the fire. A table and two chairs. A picture of the Sacred Heart[75] and a little red lamp on the wall. A bathroom down a step broken through the thick rear wall, and electric space heaters, weird signs of the modern world: otherwise, this was a house outside time…Making tea was like repeating a ritual from childhood. Letting the tap run till the water was clear and cold. The little sigh of flame of the butane gas under the kettle before it caught light from my match. Pulling open the milk, and finding a mug. And turning to look again at the room. So thick-walled and crouched and low. Such a harbor of peace. (O'Faolain 126-127)

The sturdy, sparse simplicity of the cottage combined with the comforts of tea and the chipper geraniums stand in stark contrast to the dourness of Kathleen's former basement flat in London, and the noise of the sea echoes her own house on Shore Road in Killcrennan. The space itself recalls Uncle Ned's tidy cottage on the nearby family farm, which she briefly tended for a week while her uncle was briefly imprisoned during a protest, earning the fleeting approbation of her father, and where her brother and his

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with some authority as it is one of the first historical Irish texts I read, despite the innumerable irritations of the old script. O'Brien, meanwhile, uses a deliberately pidgin-like amalgamation of all three Irish dialects, including some Middle Irish, in the visionary speech of Maíole Ddúin Ó Pónasa, to achieve high comic effect by subverting the technical aspects of the language O'Leary and other proponents of the Irish endeavored to promote, including common-place phrases from the memoir genre and the jokes predicated on knowledge of the nororious Spelling Reform. In *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1929), O'Brien had already deconstructed the reliability of first-person narrative by employing meta-fiction and the Irish language's tendency for extravagant description in his translation, mis)appropriation, and/or rendering of numerous passages of Early Irish literature, most notably the epic lays of Sweeney from the *Buile Shuibhne*.

[75] The significance of the Sacred Heart made manifest to Catholics and the import of receiving the true presence, especially during duress is underscored in this story of the Famine period from Enniskeane, also like Mount Mellary in County Cork: "There was an old man dying. All belonging to him were buried having died with either the hunger or the sickness following it. A neighbor found him in his little cabin and all he asked for was to send the priest to him. The priest came and found that the poor fellow had eaten the greater part of an old painting of the Sacred Heart, fearing he was going to die without receiving the Blessed Sacrament" (Séamus Reardon, qtd. Póirtéir 96).

family now live in largely the same fashion. In her time at Mellary, she is soothed by contented, even sacrosanct recollections and thrilled by the deceptively easy imitation of domesticity after her chance meeting of Shay, who is not only also capable of making tea but brings her breakfast in bed and does the dishes after dinner.

Kathleen simultaneously emotionally and physically relaxes with him, "His hand had been resting comfortably on my belly. He gently pinched the fold of plumpness there. I usually pulled the muscles in, automatically, to disguise the fat. But with him, I let everything about myself be" (Ibid 282). Alas, it cannot last, because he leaves twice to return to his wife with nothing more than a note and the affirmation, "You are Ireland to me, he said, looking at me sadly from across the room, his bag in his hand. Your curly hair and all. And that it breaks my heart to leave you," which causes her to weep and bitterly retort, "So I just wait around, do I?...Is that all I can do?" Shay admits dejectedly, "That's all", and leaves while she remains immobile in the armchair long after he has departed. Kathleen glances at the tousled bed in grief, when she notices the false teeth Shay had evidently removed to suckle her breasts, morosely deciding that since she is forty-nine, she will never have a child and he will probably be her last lover, "Now I pinched my nipples to make them more sore. To make the memory of him last longer" (Ibid 284-5). As in Kathleen's vision of Marianne, the tenor of all her own affects reflect and must be reflected by the vehicle of the body and enacted in its terrain. Acts and spaces become burdensomely inflected by this haptic focus; reality is only comprehended performatively through the materiality of flesh as place and flesh within place: wrinkled skin, wrinkled sheets.

Necessarily, self-arousal becomes a means to assuage but also multiply or embody suffering in order that Kathleen and Gabriel can truly feel it. Much like his aforementioned connection to the material site of the Birchwood big house, Kathleen cannot express emotion without a kind of primary physical and environmental processing that precedes and often precludes or re-places appropriate or effective psychological processing:

> The bedroom seemed full of light that came and went…I went out again, and around the back of the house, fighting the breeze, and across the grass the wind kept shaved and dense, to where the ridges of an old potato bed began. I squatted down, and with my eyes closed, the better to feel, I ran my hands along the rough edge of the furrow. As if there might be consolation for me in the sweep of time. As if, if I could see myself small enough in the scheme of things, I might not care about losing the sweet lover I had found so late. (Ibid 285)

Thus, after her integral contact with the land, Kathleen begins to compose "The Talbot Book", just as Gabriel composes his history of Birchwood, in a torrent in an attempt to (dis-)place the rejection and longing they respectively experience within themselves, rejection and longing that Kathleen relates to the foundational trauma she sees expressed in the neglected potato-drill that hearkens back to Marianne and the Famine times. Barrenness (or failed births in the case of her mother) and abandonment (even if by her own choice, as in leaving her family in Ireland or eventually, Shay) are the phantom behind each of Kathleen's unsuccessful relationships, and all she ever wishes to produce are words that prove to be empty signifiers of so-called true passion. As such, Kathleen must eschew the cottage as a place of repetition where she deliberately falls into old habits rather than moving forward.

When Shay comes back to her for what Kathleen eventually decides is their last time together, since the Talbot Arms is again full, she has relocated to the home of

Bertie's friend, Felix, who is a travelling architect away on a project in South America. The pastoral retreat in the Ghery-esque home at first offers a panacea, a seemingly viable alternative to the modest cottage and the expansive big house, both of which are haunted by repressive histories. The home's open design plan as well as its large windows, skylights, deck, and dock on the lakeshore allow it and thus Kathleen, who spends much of her time there out of doors, including sleeping and making love, to fully appreciate her environment in Ireland as summer begins for the first time without emotional baggage.

Felix's house also highlights the real estate and construction boom of the Celtic Tiger period, which it becomes difficult not to read it as a kind of prolepsis of the later (economic) bust, because that is the ultimate outcome of Kathleen's adulterous relationship with Shay. He offers to make her his mistress and insists:

> You really are a beautiful woman.
> [Kathleen thinks,] That was the fourth time in my life that I believed it [when someone told me I was beautiful].
> I walked ahead of him into the house, with the walk of a queen (O'Faolain 414).

This is Kathleen's conscious play on the final lines of one of two of Yeats's plays that bears her name, *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, and an echo of the *cailleach*/*spéirbhean* dichotomy I addressed briefly here with regard to *Birchwood* and to a greater extent in Chapter 1.

O'Faolain's Kathleen has been, temporarily at least, transformed by sexual union with the right partner, until Shay leaves her desolate for a third and final time to go back to England, at which point the idyllic weather turns:

> I did take the phone out onto the deck but it was getting cold out there. Clouds were massing with silent speed on the horizon. I tried to follow just one of them in its career from the first drift of vapor to a huge puffball that lost itself in the widening canopy, but the movements in the sky were too mysterious and fast. I went back in. The pathetic fallacy, it's called—the idea that nature sympathizes

> with our human dramas. That at the hour of the Crucifixion the sky went black. That just because Shay had gone again, the light went out of the day. (Ibid 417)

Once again, O'Faolain uses pathetic fallacy to compare cogitation and love or at least, cogitation about love to crucifixion and herself to an agonized Christ. The "soppy" fantasy that a moment later has O'Faolain's author-protagonist sentimentally imagining her bright future with Shay and reciting Pádraic Colum's "An Old Woman of the Roads" (1920) is not meant to endure; it is a dream space, a castle, or if you will, a cottage in the air, just as it is for Colum's speaker (Ibid 418). As much as each valiantly strives to conjure that blissful image of wholeness and happiness, neither will ultimately be protected by "a little house—a house of my own/Out of the wind's and the rain's way" (ll 23-24), and be able to busy herself by spending the day tidying the hearth and cleaning the delph. For even Kathleen reproaches herself with a tinge of bitterness, "Did anyone ever hear of an intelligent fantasy?" (Ibid). She further laments when recalling her encounter with her best friend Caro's lover, Ian, and cheating on Hugo: "..sex was only a gateway to the state I really craved…I pulled the happy house of my life with Hugo down around my own head. Because I should live among ruins" (Ibid 458). In this spirit, her sister-in-law, Annie, rationally points out that Felix's house cannot the "marvelous" haven Kathleen initially imagines it to be, "It would be no good to me, [Annie] said, if it wasn't *my* house" (Ibid 458-9).

Whether in Ireland or England, Kathleen is unable to truly find contentment or anything but the slightest satisfaction in domestic life; it ultimately rings hollow as she finally chooses to remain a "woman of the roads" of unfixed abode. Her struggle with doing so demonstrates the ways in which patriarchal socialization both places has impacted her, turning Kathleen into a "p(h)antomimic feminist." To this day, for

example, Article 41 in the Irish Constitution insists on the inviolate status of the Family as well as women's sacrosanct and valued place in the domestic sphere that must not be disrupted even by any "economic necessity" that would cause her to "engage in labour to the neglect of [her] duties in the home" remains an integral part of the national ethos. And though Stoddard insists that such prohibitions bind Kathleen not because she refuses the paradigms of marriage and motherhood as well as repudiating conventional mores about casual sex, this renunciation has brought her no pleasure, her aforementioned "social melancholy" (as a member of a "borderline society") demonstrates that she is in fact still utterly bound "by the Joycean nets of religion and nation" (185; 188).

As Stoddard has already established the *Paradise Lost* paradigm with regard to views about transgressive female sexuality, it is essential to note that Milton describes "[…Tree/of] prohibition" as "root of all our woe" (Book IX.644-645), so arguably, the mere knowledge of having "sinned," which has been at the center of the moral discourse of Kathleen's upbringing from birth, becomes inescapable for her, despite nominally rejecting it. The very existence and her comprehension of these prohibitions on a primary level, at the root of her being, sours the forbidden fruit and contributes to her nagging sense of despair. Regardless of having read Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, subscribed to radical British feminist magazine *Spare Rib* and "[being home alone]…by [her]self, but chanting along with the rest of them—on women's marches" (O'Faolain 263)—Kathleen is still conditioned her to feel guilt and shame over her choice to avoid marriage and motherhood, as if her numerous travels are a vain attempt to flee the antiquated doctrine of separate spheres.

It is necessary to emphasize once more the connection between physical deprivation and political, material, and specifically for Gabriel Godkin, Marianne Talbot, and Kathleen de Burca spiritual dispossession. As Butler explains, "...dispossession can be a term that marks the limits of self-sufficiency and that establishes us as relational and interdependent beings. Yet dispossession is precisely what happens when populations lose their land, their citizenship, their means of livelihood and become subject to military and legal violence" (*Dispossession* 3). She further notes that grief, love, rage, ambition, ecstasy, and passion often act as forces to dispossess one from the self and forms of social or political dispossession shows that we are similarly dependent on others and regimes of biopolitical and sociocultural power or "interdependency establishes our vulnerability to [other] forms of deprivation" (Ibid 6). What Butler would surely term as "being constituted relationally" is precisely the issue when Kathleen attempts to pray the Rosary with the crowd at a republican town event in Mellary to commemorate the bicentennial of the 1798 Rebellion that she stumbles into while returning to the cottage. The Novena seems to bring up all of her guilt, in the same way she remembers going to Mass with Hugo after cheating on him so vividly after so many years. Kathleen will not to permit the sacramental forms to expiate what she, in some fundamental, if unconscious way, seems to believe to be her sins—though she probably wouldn't refer to them as such. Nevertheless, she repeatedly fixates upon and lingers over them the same way the others work the beads—and most of which attempts to justify as the natural consequences of her nationality in regards to her self-expatriation in Britain. "I was not unconscious" is a deflection, a cop out (O'Faolain 263). She frequently eschews any notion of personal accountability within or outside of an explicitly theological moral framework. And yet,

this framework and its attendant guilt are also paradoxically figured as inherently responsible for her rebellion against them and the many and varied difficulties of what she chooses to call her sexual "availability" rather than "promiscuity" as well as the complicity of that behavior in the ethnic discrimination she faces throughout her over two decades as an Irish émigré.

While I am not in any way discounting that neocolonialist or religious patriarchy are not forces with which Kathleen must resist and protest, particularly in the case of her mother who has repeated miscarriages and ultimately dies after being denied cancer treatments or palliative care to protect her unborn child. However, Kathleen never considers the possibility that her mother perhaps would have refused treatment of her own accord or that her father could have been respecting his wife's wishes—however misguided—not just what Kathleen herself views as unjust and abstract chauvinistic dogma in a predominantly Catholic state. The logical extension of which is that Kathleen's own masochistic tendencies seem to arise from what she views as her mother's suffering and martyrdom, which resulted in the repeated neglect of the living, growing de Burca children, Kathleen herself and her three siblings, including Sean who died tragically of an illness as a young child, in favor of those unborn and implicitly sexually servicing her husband.

Despite distraughtly trying to pray a "woman-to woman" garbled blend of "The Memorare" and the "Hail, Holy Queen" to the Blessed Virgin Mary (O'Faolain 333), Kathleen continues to feel purposeless because she is "motherless in every direction" (O'Faolain 372), mourning both her neglected childhood as well as the children she never had, reflecting maudlinly on the following page, "Somewhere buried deep inside that

flesh, I imagined, there was a shriveled organ. Tear-shaped. Wombs are tear-shaped." She has accepted another cultural false equivalence that as a woman in addition to being defined by her desirability, her value is established by fecundity. So, this too becomes her curse, both in the sense that women use that term as an idiom for menstruation and as a kind of biologically-overdetermined ideology typical of patriarchy that she cannot escape, regardless of her insistence on being "not unconscious". Indeed, being "not unconscious" is predicated on Kathleen failing to recognize her own negative capability to redefine her perception and context. "Not unconscious" is decidedly not the same as being conscious or aware in the sense that she can actively militate against the shaming force of these so-called lacks in her life.

Regardless of Kathleen's claims of being an adherent to the women's movement in England in the 1960s and '70s, she reductively misunderstands feminism or is unable to recognize the influence it could have on her own choices and behaviors or the notion that it also not only tolerates but encourages her mother's ability to do likewise. Marriage and motherhood, not to mention ideals such as self-sacrifice, are not necessarily oppositional to feminism, nor does a monolithic singular Feminism exist, as I have argued throughout this work. As Nan Leech points out, "…I must say all you feminist types are very weak on class politics. You're well able to analyze the relations of men and women in great detail, but you never seem to move on from that. You never seem half as acute about power in public life as power in private life" (O'Faolain 433-434). Kathleen's insincere parroting and preaching such misrepresentations of strictly theoretical feminism, such as "always telling Caro, who was no more than vaguely interested, about the women's movement" (O'Faolain 263), is judgmental in addition to being inherently adversative to

the ethics she supposedly professes, comparable to unequivocally renouncing her parents because they dissent with her views. "The women's movement", as its name suggests, requires equality in action; Kathleen is no less hypocritical than her father or the Catholic hospitals that advocate reverence for life but do not treat her mother's cancer because of her pregnancy.

Kathleen finally acknowledges her obvious misconceptions at the end of the novel: "I was the most confused and wayward feminist you could imagine. I did take note of injustice, of course, but I would not allow my own life to respond to it" (O'Faolain 499). She has previously comprehended the women's movement on a purely intellectual and philosophical level but has largely failed to practice it as suggested above, in the same way she cannot effectively practice her Catholicism. Neither of these ideological systems, whether it be her supposed embrace of the former or the rejection of the latter, offer her the satisfaction she seeks because of her stubborn, willful passivity. De Burca fails to enact either one in her own life, much less a model as suggested by my discussion of the poetry of Ní Dhomhnaill in Chapter 2 that these systems might not be strictly antithetical and instead offer a useful syncretic mode of belief to combat said patriarchies or at the very least, as means to exist productively or proactively within them.

The purgative, redemptive, and freeing aspects of Catholicism or feminism, much less in tandem, are therefore not quite fully realized or experienced and for Kathleen, they can never be achieved in Ireland. These views also illogically impact her vision of Marianne, who is of course, neither a Catholic nor a feminist, but seems strangely afflicted by similar guilt and shame. Kathleen's account of herself ends with her refusal

to wait around for Shay by flying back to London intent to rescue Alex who has evidently "fall[en] for all that faux-gay, sub-Iris Murdoch stuff"[76] from his cult-like lay brothers (O'Faolain 428), who hope to extend their monastery into Alex's dead mother's house:

> On my way to England. Like Marianne. No home, like Marianne. No child, like Marianne. No lover. No occupation….The land was green as jade from horizon to horizon as we angled up and away. Then we broke into the cloud, and were lost in pure gray radiance for a few moments, and then we were born again into the perfect blue of the high sky. Between places. (Ibid 526-27)

Kathleen, though ostensibly uplifted by her fleeting happiness with Shay and her new friends in Ballygall, remains at heart like Pádraic Colum's "woman of the roads", unmoored, perpetually on-the-go and "between places" as if the transience of her plans to liberate and travel with Alex are in themselves are a kind of continual emigration, the only mode of escape O'Faolain suggests for the post-Famine Irish. Kathleen envisages a rebirth in "the perfect blue" of the air as a way of rewriting Marianne through herself, a sense of the unknown and possible that William Mullan, in her view, is only able to obtain in the paroxysms death in his final memories of Marianne's body poised above him while he lies on the ground in the grip of death amidst the birchwood trees of Saratoga, New York.

While Kathleen's efforts at historiographic revisionism cannot change or save the lovers in the past, Kathleen herself hopes, whether reasonably or not, that it can perhaps change if not save her future as she remains at the novel's end in ecstatic liminal space,

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[76] This is a reference to Anglo-Irish Murdoch's novel, *The Bell* (1958), which deals with a seemingly Edenic Protestant lay community in Imber Court, Gloucestershire near an abbey of cloistered Benedictine nuns in the 1950s that is still disgraced by the sexual impropriety of a novitiate in the 14th Century who drowned while escaping the abbey to meet her lover and a cursed ancient bell christened Gabriel that falls into the lake before it can be installed, its underwater chime foretelling death, while its namesake successor bell meets a similarly misfortunate fate in a disastrous ceremonial installation thanks to the unscrupulous machinations and manipulations of a visitor to Imber Court, Dora, who does not believe. Like the broken bells, the community is ultimately corrupted and disbanded as a result of widespread doubt and deceit, envy, infidelity, in-fighting, insanity, insecurity, pedophilia, and suicide.

no longer grounded anywhere, especially not in Ireland—unconfined by anything other than the airplane itself. Kathleen finally appears to accept her ethical responsibility to herself as well as well as her friends, even if she must ultimately repudiate her homeland once again to do so. In *My Dream of You*, O'Faolain does not exorcize the ghosts of times past or reassure the present moment with futurity, but rather the present functions as at once a fictive terminus of Kathleen's personal history and a suggestion that the long-nightmare of national history in the form of the Famine is carried forward. Though ostensibly flown away from, *An Gorta Mór* still shapes the unknown trajectory of Kathleen's radically indeterminate vision of future as a kind of caesura, figured in that she remains "between places" on the plane between Ireland and England.[77]

Neither modernity nor romanticized history can fulfill Kathleen in and of themselves, such that the unsatisfactory suspension in the midst of transit between two places ultimately becomes the reader's suspension between these two epochs or modes, aestheticized through the overlap of Kathleen and Marianne Talbot's lives, the majority of the latter being invented in the former throughout the novel in the intertextualization of historical documents and sections of "The Talbot Book" but brought to the fore most fully in the final section breaks. No clear articulation of the content or form of any future is offered as the novel returns yet again to a fantasy of William Mullan's death in the past.[78] As Cleary asserts regarding John McGahern's *Amongst Women* (1990), Jim

[77] A similar suspension occurs in Heathrow Airport for protagonist Veronica Hegarty at the conclusion of Anne Enright's *The Gathering* (2007), which also explicitly parallels repressive "de Valera's Ireland" of her grandmother Ada with her own post-Celtic-Tiger *ennui* and grief over the death of her brother, Brendan, whose name is an echo of wandering Irish St. Brendan, while Veronica notes her own name's relation to St. Veronica, who wiped the bloody face of Christ on his crucifixion-march to GolgathaGolgotha as destining her to clean up and look after the messes of others.

[78] See Cleary's *Outrageous Fortune* 156-163.

Sheridan's *The Field* (1990), and Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990):

> They all to some degree strike a psychic compromise that that reassures the reader or the spectator that the old world of de Valera's Ireland is being swept away and that some new—but never at all clearly identified—order is imminent, while at the same time the readership or audience is allowed to immerse itself once again in a non-modern aural and visual landscape still immune from the noisy routines of industrialized agricultural, let alone the roar of motorways or the cybernetic hum of transnationalized, globalized communications systems (*Outrageous Fortune* 177).

O'Faolain deploys both Kathleen's own past in de Valera's Ireland, and even more forcefully the immediate post-Famine period, against the *fin-de-siècle* setting of 1998 in exactly this manner. The compromise struck by O'Faolain, then, rings false in its equivocation. The present and the future become always-already inflected and in some sense (over)determined by the past, and conceptions of either progress or regression, remain hazily indistinct and abstracted to the point of inchoate futility.

As I suggested explicitly in my discussion of Butler, Foucault, and Oliver in Chapter 2, the process of giving an account makes one accountable—more than that, beholden—to the implied audience and the community formed by acts of verbal and written *exomologesis*. An integral part of that accountability that Kathleen may at last be able to perform, as O'Brien and O'Leary, particularly as a priest, recognize is the vow to go forth not only chastened and cleansed but changed in both our mindset and our behaviors in a way that Banville's Gabriel Godkin, confined to the attic of Birchwood never can. Confession is good for the soul precisely because it is the means by which one can expurgate and reconstitute his or her being. Confession predicates that not only that one is forgiven by God and must in turn forgive oneself, but it is pivotal that one must not

forget or fall back upon the ways of one's failings or "avoid the near occasions of sin" and not become trapped in an unending, traumatic *mimesis* of error.[79]

But such "errors" are shown to be necessary in some instances. What J. Halberstam has theorized as "the queer art of failure" in a book of the same name (2011), offers a useful way to productively critique the limits of historiographic metafiction and the rapacious individualism of Marianne and Kathleen's respective lives as imagined within "The Talbot Book" and *My Dream of You*. Failure here permits a way of reading that acknowledges the cathected and contentious nature of Famine historiography, both in terms of fiction and reality. And as Mary Jane Dougherty notably observes, "most Irish *bildungsroman*[*e*], in fact, fail: they tend to end, as does Joyce's, with the protagonist renouncing rather than integrating into Irish society" (qtd. Stoddard 226, Note 29). In my view, Halberstam's typology also provides a necessary context to establish and examine the radically queer position that the abhumanized, failing Famine body occupies in relation to notions of time, space, representation, and theology, its "past-presentness" or eternal quality in the cultural imaginary after over a century of widespread and deliberate avoidance.

The embodiment of Famine physically signifies failure and disrupture in the biological sense, but more importantly, the performers in Prospero's circus as well as the descendants of the Godkin lineage, Marianne Talbot, O'Leary's unnamed stricken of the Clondrohid parish, the Ua Buachallas, even members of his own family, or various figures I've addressed from the narratives in the National Folklore Collection or presented

[79] According to the *Syllabus Errorum* issued by Pope Pius IX (1864), the public promulgation and conscious repetition of error is roundly condemned, in what has been condensed into the maxim, "Error has no rights."

in the art of Bacon, model queerness at the intersection of so-called non-normative or alternative desirability or (be)longing as in contemporary usage and queerness in its original primary meaning of "alien" or "strange". Their phantomimic status at once stabilizes and destabilizes corporeality even further by making the departed (with regard to death, emigration, and in the case of Sitric, species-transformation) more legible, more reproducible through text, image, and (counter-)memory, not simply in terms of their literal descendants—but perhaps counterintuitively, because of what could be considered spectacular failings to thrive. Nicholas Allen echoes this argument further in a later context: "In Ireland after independence failure was inscribed in the avant-garde. Beckett, Joyce, and Yeats tuned into the possibility that the difficulty of writing was writing difficulty, their readers and society forced to rethink themselves in face of an unrecognisable art" (16-7). O'Faolain likewise writes Kathleen's writing difficulty and it arises in this case from art that is all too recognizable and strives to compensate for that reality through fractured intertextual and meta-narrative forms that result in de Burca's abandonment of her project, all the more ironic as *My Dream of You* is published and widely read at the time.

Birchwood and *An Béal Bocht* also fit into this paradigm in that what persists in the face of devastation—the numerous and tremendous lacks of sustaining human connection or practical understanding by adrift absentee landlord Gabriel or foolhardy Irish-speaking citizen-prisoner Bónapárt— facilitate the creation of magic- or mythic-realist worlds that exist only because of aforesaid failures, spaces where bodily, ecosystemic, and communal collapse or deterioration post-Famine become comprehensible or bearable in ways that would not easily be possible in the larger

cultural context of denial and repression or oppression. Intense physical and emotional suffering, absence, and (linguistic as well as literal) death itself on a massive scale can therefore be negotiated, sublimated, or in expressions that would be deeply familiar and resonant to Canon O'Leary as a priest, endured and "offered up" for the greater good and understanding of others. This approach simultaneously extends and exceeds individual subjects, as well as theoretically being spiritually beneficial to the subjects themselves, even if they, for the most part, may be unable to recognize or appreciate it. The catastrophic gaps, losses, and faults explored throughout these works are (trans)figured and accounted for through queer mappings of physiognomies and locations, (re)placed or (re)configured in the psychosocial and geographical landscape of these de- and re-formed communities. Meaning thus arises from faminized bodies beyond simplistic conceptions of biological failure, from the voids where they once were that transcend but also reinstantiate not merely a cartographic turn, but a biogeographical one.

As O'Leary would well know, in his epistle to the Romans, St, Paul stresses, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). In a way, another kind of eternal life is also achieved through the text itself in the mimetic act of writing, reading, and of course, remembering individual stories and their respective places *in situ* within specific communities and within the larger context of cultural history as Banville's *Birchwood* and O'Faolain's *My Dream of You* suggest. Other than the protection of the estate itself, Gabriel's narrative is his only means of catharsis once the circus performances cease and the only way he can relate to his past or express emotions, as he remains, at the novel's conclusion, completely alone. The only hope of futurity for him personally lies in the text itself, indicating how the Famine

period obliterated entire families as well as a larger cultural *milieu*. Even Kathleen herself, in her hypothetical plans to return to Ballygall, is able to somewhat reconcile the idea that "lovely," lyrical Irish place-names are not a mere compensation for what she previously considered the "dull reality" of its landscape (O'Faolain 53), but indicative of the depths that remain not only in the language and *dinnseanchas* but the locations themselves, as in her solo tribute of driving at the pace of a funeral procession on what appears to be a Famine relief road (Ibid 511).

Bónapárt also embodies the frequent alienation of native Irish-speakers from their names and thus their identities within history and the community (or what Kathleen characterizes as the "eating" of their names), even from one another in terms of the most primal bonds (like the dysfunction and scattering of Kathleen's family both before and even more so, after her mother's death), as he is initially unable to recognize his own drunken, broken-down father as Bónapárt is taken away to prison. Mícheálangaló is the illegible double of Bónapárt as well as the inversion of the earlier Sitrician transfiguration tale. What happens when you do not willingly shed your cultural pelt but are forcibly, permanently separated from that skin or layer of subjectivity? Mícheálangaló's muttering that he too is "Jams O'Donnell" indicate the alterity that develops as a consequence of forced, violent assimilation and thus detachment and involuntary isolation from one's heritage: from the people, the places, and the language that would otherwise orient him within a community and define him as an individual, that would enable him to maintain a cohesive and coherent identity.

Hypothetical Mícheálangaló's mindless mimicry and babble instill the sense of dread concerning Bónapárt too, regardless of his prior (over-)saturation with both

horrendous amounts of rain and the hyperbolic rhetoric of Corca Dorchanian Gaelicism at a fevered pitch that proves deadly for many of its native sons and daughters. He has unsuccessfully faced an oppressive system of authority that forcibly separates him from his family as Ó Cúnasa is wrongfully accused, unwittingly tried, and unjustly convicted of trumped up charges of murder. The book closes as father and son are divided not by hunger and thirst for revenge and death as in *Hamlet,* but by miscommunication, hunger, and thirst for drink, as well as in both cases, violence and misrepresentation by authorities. Unlike Prince Hamlet, Bónapárt lacks the necessary financial and linguistic resources to function in an English-speaking society. Is Ó Cúnasa perhaps destined to meet an equally or even more ignominious fate than his father as a result of his forthcoming twenty-nine years of imprisonment—but may one at least hope that his spelling will be truly and rightfully reformed as a result? Though he admits, "*Go dearfa, is agamsa bhí an t-anró Gaelach i rith mo shaoil—an cruatan, an gátar, an t-anás an anchaoi, an anacair, an t-anchor, an aindise, an ghorta agus an mí-á*"—"Certainly, I suffered Gaelic hardship throughout my life—distress, need, ill-treatment, adversity, calamity, foul play, misery, famine, and ill-luck" (*ABB* 111; *TPM* 125), Bónapárt nonetheless possesses from birth and maintains throughout his life a sense of morose inevitability but also a kind of thunderstruck awe about his own misfortunes and the continued misfortune of the Gaels in general that distinguishes him and accordingly the Irish people themselves as unique in their fortitude and forbearance.

Therefore, O'Brien and O'Leary are striving to further emerge from the traumatic past of the Great Famine by confronting desperation, desolation, and scarcity, and of course, (individual, collective, and epistemological) failure not as a means of erasing or

eliding them from the consciousness but to instead mourn and collaboratively develop new forms of attachment to one another as survivors, committed to an awareness of the state of each other—not just as political allegory but as emotional and social reality—and of course, to the Irish language itself, which have all endured. I have suggested what seems at first unthinkable, that we need not only accept the horror, loss, and tragedy of the *An Drochshaol* period but that we can also turn to humor and spirituality as modes of reconsidering its lingering imaginative history for both the Irish and the Irish diaspora in the interest of *rapprochement*. In *P.S. I Love You*, which I previously discussed in Chapter 4, Holly Kennedy replies to her friend Daniel Connelly's assertion of the "perversion" of eating corned-beef sandwiches at the New York City Famine Memorial, "Gerry thought it was the best way to honor the dead. You know, show them how well we're doing." So it is with *Mo Scéal Féin* and *An Béal Bocht* as O'Leary and O'Brien make the (at times uproarious) best of times out of the worst of times as a tribute to the indomitable Irish spirit, in full acknowledgment of malnourishment, sorrow, penury, injustice, and death, indeed as a deliberately radical response to the disturbing and potentially debilitating conditions of the past, not despite them, but because *faraor, ní dóigh go mbeadh ár leithéidi arís ann.* —alas, I do not think the likes of us will be here again.

Coda: The Necessity of Thinking Geologically and Globally on Irish Grounds

A 2013 forum at Duke University, *The Novel and the Anthropocene* helped me to consider anew the relevance of such terminology as I was (oxymoronically) beginning to complete this project, specifically as it relates to Ireland. The conference abstract raised the following issues concerning the emergence of the term in the field of fiction studies:

> The "Anthropocene" is a recently coined, as-of-yet informal geologic period intended to mark the moment when human activities began to have significant global impacts on earth's ecosystems. This forum…[will consider] how novelistic form, from the 18th century to the 21st, has enabled a variety of narratives about the relation between the human and the environment in an attempt to contextualize this emerging discourse….What does it mean to think geologically in the moment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [1988-present]? The term's popularizers, Nobel Prize winning atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and ecologist Eugene Stoemer, date the beginning of the Anthropocene to the geologically very-recent invention of the steam engine in 1784; "the novel" has also been retroactively deemed a geologically recent event, seen as "rising" out of the 18th century….If recent discourse on the Anthropocene sometimes seems to push us to think the human as a species entangled in an ecology (or does it?)—no longer the individual, no longer separated into an assortment of Nation-States—how does that revise the form of the *Bildungsroman,* traditionally considered as *the* form of the modern liberal individual assimilated into national culture? How has the novel contributed to the narrative genres and forms that we use to tell the story of the Anthropocene, and how—in turn—does the story of the Anthropocene ask us to reconsider what these narrative genres and forms can (or even *should*) do?

While conversation at the forum focused primarily on human impact on ecological systems and the evolution of the American and European novel, I began to reflect that the fundamental premise of *Intimate Cartographies* is that the memory of (Ire)land is infinite, its history immortalized in spindrift and soil (as well as ink, music, paint, glass, metal, stone, wood, and

film, among other materials), which has in turn inspired centuries of blood, sweat, and toil. While acknowledging the numerous ways its inhabitants have impacted Irish ecosystems and altered the topography of the colony and subsequently the Free State and the Republic as well as the North, I urge us to also consider the myriad ways in which the anthropocene—long a concern in poetics, particularly studies of the pastoral— has likewise impacted and altered human consciousness and culture as a result of environmental perceptions, sensations, and conditions. The onus of influence is most certainly mutual. For instance, both the Irish language and Hiberno-English are deeply enamored of the weather, with an extensive and rich vocabulary for precipitation, not just potatoes. Directions, in my experience, tend to be given with regard to topographical landmarks with many a seemingly arbitrary ditch, cairn, and tree having specific resonance not only geologically and geographically, but geopolitically and mythohistorically. As I have shown throughout these chapters, what I will now term an anthropocenic dialectic has been integral to Irish subjectivity, popular culture, and political sovereignty since the Early Irish period and is particularly tied to identifying as an Irish-American, whether one does so in English, Irish, Hiberno-English, or all of the above. Significant deprivation, tragedy, and disenfranchisement have only served to strengthen the Irish (or Irish diasporic) fascination with and commitment to further examining, exploring, extolling, or excoriating their surroundings; the endurance of site-specific orature, music, and literature is a result as much of Ireland's Famine declines as its Easter Risings, Bloody Sundays, and "Dirty" or "Blanket Protests".

This interdependence of place and person continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the present day. From Dublin to Derry, the land has provided both physical sustenance and spiritual inspiration, while serving as platform for ethical engagement and formal experimentation. Irish novelists like Joyce and Beckett endeavored to create their

own respective linguistic equivalents of the anthropocene, revisionist proxies of Ireland crafted from the longing of exiles through ecologies based on plethora in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and aporia in *Molloy* (1955)*, Malone Dies* (1956)*,* and *The Unnamable* (1958). Self-perpetuating, self-referential, and self-fulfilling, these flexible textual systems gyre simultaneously forward and back, entirely dependent on the reader's interpretation and knowledge of allusion to specific places and the global geography of iterated, virtual and rhetorical space, using deep time to deliberately transcend the borderland between imagination and reality. In Brian Friel's play, *Translations* (1980), the interconnection among violable political, social, and embodied boundaries is shown through the Ordnance Survey in Donegal in 1833 and the significance of placenames when lovers Máire and Lt. Yolland poignantly and pivotally substitute the words of *topos* for the words of *eros*, rendering all other forms of communication tragically insufficient. Anthropocenic dynamism between humanity and setting enable the play to dramatize The Troubles in the North of Ireland across history.

While their forebears Louis MacNeice and Patrick Kavanagh endeavored to capture the urban and agrarian shifts in the Irish landscape in the last century, poets like Ciarán Carson and Derek Mahon respectively interrogate and reinterpret the natural world at the dawn of the this century by figuring the Otherworld as a place of endless possibility, embodied in lacunae of forgetfulness and death, not only punctuated with punctuational and actual violence but all-too-real nuclear apocalypse in poems such as "Belfast Confetti" and "A Disused Shed in County Wexford". In Seamus Heaney's "Digging," the pen and the spade accomplish the same work, to discover "good turf" and to reveal "the living roots" that lie "awaken[ed]" beneath the surface of the earth and of the heart (ll 24, 27). The "Lovers on Aran" are the island and the sea, forever reaching for one another, bound in a torrid, tidal embrace, while legacies of the rough

concupiscence borne of territorial and physical desire (which is, quite often, a territorial desire for the physical and a physical desire for territory) are mapped in "Ocean's Love to Ireland" and "Act of Union". From *Opened Ground* (1966-2005) to *Human Chain* (2010), Heaney demonstrates that it is perhaps not the novel but as prior studies have suggested, poetry which can best capture the fluctuations of the Irish anthropocene, as we become both anchored to and unmoored from one another and the space we occupy in an increasingly digital age.

Consider the opening claims of Derek Mahon's "The Mayo Tao" (1999, 2011) from his *Collected Poems*, formerly rendered in prose as "The Hermit" in *Lives* (1972) that shifts the focus from the sterile urban to the fecund rural:

> I have abandoned the dream kitchens for a low fire
> and a prescriptive literature of the spirit;
> a storm snores on the desolate sea.
> The nearest shop is four miles away –
> when I walk there through the shambles
> of the morning for tea and firelighters
> the mountain paces me in a snow-lit silence.
> My days are spent in conversation
> with deer and blackbirds;
> at night fox and badger gather at my door.
> I have stood for hours
> watching a salmon doze in the tea-gold dark,
> for months listening to the sob story
> of a stone in the road, the best,
> most monotonous sob story I have ever heard. (*Collected Poems* 68, ll 1-15)

For Mahon's Zen-attuned speaker, various aspects of the universe are capable of communicating if only one endeavors to listen, from the snoring storm to the fox and the twittering blackbirds, never-to-be baked in a "dream kitchen" pie. The speaker-king gladly relinquishes the empire and affluence that kitchen represents for the privacy of humble hearth's "low fire," as well as the hidden delights of "watching a salmon doze in the tea-gold dark" in an effort to osmotically and perceptually absorb all its knowledge. In contrast to the "unquiet dreams" of Yeats's trout in

"The Stolen Child," the motionless mystery of "the tea-gold dark" just might give up its wisdom if you are willing to patiently wait for hours. As the speaker further learns to intuit the rhythmic cycles of his environment, the very stones themselves speak back to him, recounting "the best,/most monotonous son story [Mahon has] ever heard." The road represents the long and winding sweep of Irish history from the past to now, as Mahon finds beauty and "immanence"(ll 19) in stasis and repetition, which move him "almost to the point of speech" but not quite (ll 21). The stone in the road is in it for the long haul, operating on geological time that may transcend and extend beyond an individual human life but not beyond the scope of our collective imaginations.

The poem figures the fantasy of the post-Celtic Tiger landscape in which the stone in the road speaks back and carries with it the weight of history and the moment of intersection represented by the very concept of the anthropocentric discourse: the impact of the manmade road on the earth-made stone and vice versa. The focus on particularity and a long cultural as well as geographical memory embodied in stock phrases one can imagine in the stone's querulous address, such as "We're from Mayo, God help us!" This implicit plaint to the poet combines socioeconomic and emotional concerns that leave their traces on not only the speaker and the land itself, but their stone-still and stone-stilled audience. In the monotony of routine as "The Stolen Child" also demonstrates, are the rich rewards of comfort and peace, of knowing onself and one's role in the world through both familiar topographical locations without and contented spiritual locations within.

It is Mahon's sensitivity and devotion to what Nick Laird rightly described as necessarily "slow language," (much like deliberate movement in the culinary world towards artisanal "slow food" in contrast to pre-packaged, freeze-dried "fast food"), which is the product of intensive

contemplation and rumination, alert not only of its own point of view but the context from which it emerges—glittering like crystals of frost or the dappled shadow of sunlight through the last vestiges winter leaves. Like the ebb and flow of the seasons and the tides, Laird advocates and Mahon demonstrates that one should wait for the right words to percolate to the refulgent surface of consciousness—and that profound belief continues to influence the speaker as opposed to the immediacy of idle banter or chatter with someone other than the blackbirds. He limns the distinction between a mere soundbite and a fully articulated thought. Mahon's "Tao" is County Mayo rendered in miniature as a hinterland, from coastal mountain road to lakeside, where one embraces tranquility, solitude, and quiet reflection to render moments of action and human interaction more meaningful, in order to have a more meaningful impact on the place one inhabits.

These issues are further illustrated in the familiar structure of an environmentally- and globally-conscious extended metaphor of Sara Berkeley's "Architrave" (2005):

> This is a story of weight,
> borne by a load-bearing wall.
>
> The connection is not
> of water or air
>
> or even our tightly interwoven
> histories of love and fear,
> but of stone on stone.
> [….] (*The Strawberry Thief* 53)[1]

Through her conflation the bones of the body and the stones of a unnamed edifice by directly rhyming them, Berkeley clearly links the hands which support and ensure human connection through gestures of touch with the poem's title, the architrave in classical design or in more modern terms, the lintel, that bears the load of supporting doorways —both interior and exterior,

[1] The volume's title and the title poem even allude to the famous textile pattern by designer William Morris that allies the domestic and the natural world.

and in Berekeley's case, maintains and sustains the development of personal bonds. These are affectively-significant liminal sites[2] that draw upon moments of unity within the intimate space and openness to the public one at the architectural crux point where these two dimensions simultaneously intersect: the corporeal and the constructed, the building which stands across the vicissitudes of conditions, time, and human impact, and the bodies which stand in support of one another in "the light" through the grasp of "bones fitt[ing] together" (ll 15, 16).

Berkeley's alternating rhymed or half-rhymed (a-x, x-a) and unrhymed couplets that become complete sentences that mimic the joining of two palms as one unit. She transfigures the stone from elemental part of the earth to elemental building block of community that boldly and "without complaint" bears the emotional weight of a relationship in addition to the physical or historical and metaphorical weight of structural and thereby ecocritical and sociocultural connections to their world and its spaces (ln 13), just as it does as part of Mahon's more fantasticized speaking road. And thus, the still-living stones[3] sing out their stories to the ones

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[2] See my discussion of "*An Prionsa Dubh*/The Ebony Adonis" in Chp. 2.

[3] I am thinking here of the reference to Maud Gonne's remarks about the speaking Famine stones in Chp. 5 and also of the same argument that drives Simon Schama's discussion of Bernini's *The Ecstasy of St. T(h)eresa* from "When Stone Came to Life", in which he emphasizes "…as a matter of fact, the modern anachronism is not the union of body and soul that so many 17th-century poets and writers obsessed about, but its demure separation into sensual and spiritual experience. Ecstasy in Bernini's time was understood, and experienced, as sensuously indivisible" (http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/sep/16/art). The transubstantive act—though I admit the that neither Mahon nor Berkeley would necessarily describe the phenomenon in these particular or any religious terms—that brings the individual into quasi-sacramental communion with his or her environment is clearly expressed in both of their poems as well as throughout many of the other works I discuss in the prior chapters. Furthermore, this conception is supported by the contentions of Teresa of Ávila herself who found the natural world and its expression in the interior life of the human mind and body or as she called it, *The Interior Castle or The Mansions* (from the Spanish: *El Castillo Interior* or *Las Moradas*). This spiritual progression towards unity with Christ is for her the purest vision of God's universal love and the Lord Himself, in body, creation, and spirit, as representative—through mortal eyes—of the eternal Nature (in the human and the environmental sense) in which that Divine love is both contained and communicated:

> Let nothing disturb you.
> Let nothing frighten you.
> All things pass away:
> God never changes.
> Patience obtains all things.
> Those who have God

who are attentive enough to read or listen and then elects him or herself as poet/speaker to echo their refrain, a dynamic that is material and visual, as well as sensual and rhetorical.

Our beholdeness to the environment, what Patrick Kavanagh describes in "October" (1956), as "…the prayering that the earth offers" (ln 10, *Collected Poems* 218), is demonstrated not only externally in terms of the natural landscape and others around us, but through self-awareness mind and body and psychological, emotional, or metaphysical climates inside oneself, which continue to be essential concerns for contemporary authors in Ireland and of the diaspora irrespective of genre, specifically in the works of Colm Tóibín, Anakana Schofield, Donal Ryan, Claire Keegan, Conor O'Callaghan, Marina Carr, Kevin Barry, Paula Meehan, Eimear McBride, and Nick Laird himself, among others. We should devote further critical inquiry into how conceptions of a globalized Ireland mired in economic crisis, haunted by "ghost" real estate/landscapes of all kinds, and coping with austerity continues to shape ethnic and gender identity for those living and working abroad as part of the interconnected postcolonial frame or network of the "Green Atlantic" that negotiates the ties between the Republic and the North with the diaspora in North America, the Caribbean, and the global South (lest we forget Australia and New Zealand, although they are situated in the Pacific) as both former and current outposts of European empire. Furthermore, though it remains a part of the United Kingdom, questions concerning the partition/annexation, autonomy, and/or the "liberation" of Ulster (depending upon one's position concerning the benefits or detriments of the unity of the UK) continue to be relevant in light of the recently failed campaign for independence in Scotland.

Reconstituting geopolitical and geographical epistemologies enables us to engage with other intersectional discourses like pan-Celtic studies across time periods, the Black and Red

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Find they lack nothing;
God alone suffices.
(*The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Ávila* [1515-1582]; trans. Kavanaugh, Rodriguez)

Atlantics, transnational feminisms, border theory, and of course, current concerns regarding American imperialism as an ideological mode not so far removed from its transcontinental predecessors, even if the contested locations and the elements or forms of the respective conquests may have changed. This call for comparative hermeneutics and further work in translation studies illustrates the continuities and the disjunctures within occupied territories' languages and influences while remaining sensitive to both shared and local histories from which not solely or (re)strict(ive)ly nationally-resonant texts, arts, and cinemas emerge as forms of intercultural dialogue and encourage us to re-think our sense of boundaries in every sense of the word.

Verbal and visual atlases, whatever their mode or medium, add complexity and dimensionality to our engagements with the anthropocene. They enable Irish and Irish-American artists to indelibly mark the land through both language(s) and imagery and use both language(s) and imagery to show how they have been indelibly marked by the land, recuperating traumatic sites and transgressing delimiting borders whether they be psychological, sexual, or political in both chronological and *kairos* time, whether in the ordinary world or the Otherworld.

Through literature, film, drama, and art, we both endeavor to preserve and to change the environment around us, even as we are changed by it. To return to issues raised initially both Homi Bhabha and Edward Said as well as subsequently by many other scholars, the essence of the grammatical copula itself offers a deceptively simple proposition or supposition in (post)colonial language and discourse that are effectively challenged by all the texts, images, and films I address. Closely examining and reinterpreting the nuances and cross-currents of influence in specific cultural productions indicates that the work(s), and more significantly, the subjectivities or identifications, of a member or members of a particular social, religious, racial,

or ethnic group cannot merely be defined through monolithic, false equivalencies like the simple one always already supposed in the grammatical copula, i.e. expressed exclusively and entirely in the dominant language. We must simultaneously understand that place on the map—whether it be a literal or a metaphorical one— serves as a vital phenomenological and geographical claim or declaration ("I am here," for instance) of not merely where one stands but the ways in which location affects who one was, is, or hopes to be—not merely by employing a grammatical or ontological object per se—but providing the opportunity of employing a complement. Speech, image, and writing then, can (re)situate (be)longing(s) and (re)present a "state," perhaps the most intimate cartography of all.

Carneys Point-Bryn Mawr-Sea Isle-Chapel Hill-Dublin-Prague-York-Dublin-Gleann Cholm Cille-Galway-An Cheathrú Rua-Dublin-Zurich-Paris-Venice-Florence-Siena-Carney's Point-Bryn Mawr-Sea Isle-Rome-Florence-Côte d'Azur-Paris-Bruges-Carney's Point-Sea Isle-Carneys Point-Chapel Hill

2007-2017

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