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Introduction

“No universo da cultura o centro está em toda parte”

(Miguel Reale)

In July 2002 the University of São Paulo became the centre of Irish Studies for a few days by gathering a hundred and seventy nine delegates from twenty-one countries for the International Conference IASIL 2002. The monument of the clock in the central square of the *campus* witnessed the event and made real the words engraved on its circular ground evoking the image of the infinite and the universal without any privileged directions: “In the cultural universe the centre is everywhere” (Miguel Reale). The debate included different critical backgrounds and views from various parts of the world thus enriching the field of Irish Studies.

This Special Issue of *ABEI Journal – The Brazilian Journal of Irish Studies* is a selection of papers presented at the conference, entitled “Interrelations: Irish Literatures and Other Forms of Knowledge”. The articles follow interdisciplinary approaches to the study of texts and deal with issues and arguments about the relationship of Irish literary narratives and the visual arts, music and social sciences; displacements; readings of documents of the self, drama, fiction and poetry; and cultural translation.



Clock Square

The ideas discussed were reflections of the artist’s conception of the monument built in two parallel *lâminas* (plaques??) which are linked by um travamento de escadas até o topo where the clock is. The world of Humanities represented in six panels on one side and the world of Science in the other six panels on the opposite *plaque(?)* symbolize the intertwined (*estreitas? Fortes?*) integration forming the dynamic spirit of the University.

Interrelations



Interrelations: Blake and Yeats

Rachel V. Billigheimer*

Abstract: *Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. The Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the Spiritus Mundi, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.*

Dance, symbolizing destructive human passions which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of both poets. Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of A Full Moon in March. In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal roles of the Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. These archetypal images are related through their role of prophecy.

Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism, the binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Interrelations: Blake and Yeats¹

Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. Blake's Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the *Spiritus Mundi*, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.²

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For Yeats and for Blake, the conflicts between the worlds of Innocence and Experience are the fundamental element in their poetic views of artistic creativity. Yeats' Great Wheel comprising twenty-eight lunar phases and Blake's twenty-seven phases of historical thought are each seen to encompass cycles within cycles, which move forwards by the movement of conflicting forces. Thus the whole historical development of civilisation and individual experience is based on the archetypal pattern of conflict.

In Yeats' play *The Hour Glass* the wise man must in frenzy "dance in the dream" (CPI 1977, 239-40) on perceiving the hawk of abstraction and ill-omen repeatedly swooping downwards. The loud laughter and the hysterical scream are symbolic of civilisation's loss of control through the decaying centre of cyclic progression. Dance, symbolising the destructive passions of humanity which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of Blake. The dance of Los at the conclusion of *Night the Fourth of The Four Zoas* symbolises humanity's Fall from Eternity into the physical existence of the Circle of Destiny as he enters the passage of history. The tragic Orc-Urizen cycle begins:

The bones of Urizen hurtle on the wind the bones of Los
Twinge and his iron sinews bend like lead and fold
Into unusual forms dancing and howling stamping the Abyss.
(FZ, IV; Erd 338).

The opening scene of Blake's *Night the Fifth of The Four Zoas* depicts the Fall of man from the world of imagination symbolised by Albion's dance of destruction. Having fallen into the cycles of reason and passion in Nature, his "centre cannot hold" and he disintegrates into the dance of madness:

Infected Mad he danced on his mountains high and dark as heaven
Now fixed into one steadfast bulk his features stonify
From his mouth curses and from his eyes sparks of blighting
Beside the anvil cold he danced with the hammer of Urthona
(FZ, V; Erd 338)

In Blake's *Jerusalem* we meet the tragic dance of death-in-life. The Giants symbolise the primitive character of physical man, as shown in the cruel practices of Stonehenge depicted in the poem. In this allegory Blake describes the wars of Napoleon "Over France & Germany: upon the Rhine & Danube" (J, 3: 68, 46; Erd 222)

[...] the Human Victims howl to the Moon & Thor & Friga
Dance the dance of death contending with Jehovah among the Cherubim.
The Chariot Wheels filled with Eyes range along the howling Valley
In the Dividing of Reuben & Benjamin bleeding from Chesters River

The Giants & the Witches & the Ghosts of Albion dance with
Thor & Friga, & the Fairies lead the Moon along the Valley of Cherubim
Bleeding in torrents from Mountain to Mountain [...]
The Cities & Villages of Albion became Rock & Sand Unhumanized.
(J, 3: 63: 9-18; Erd 214)

Crazy Jane, Yeats' social outcast, reaching towards the consummation of her life symbolised by the top of life's mountain, lying "stretched out in the dirt" and having "cried tears down" (CP 1969, 391), had "danced heart's truth". (295) Broken in body and in mind she paradoxically symbolises the completely human. The poet's symbolic female Crazy Jane, now old and demented, has achieved the wisdom of truth. She has undergone the whole process, to "fumble in a greasy till" (120) and suffer in "that most fecund ditch of all" (267), and "some foul sty". (294) Possessing wisdom through her wrecked body and mind, she dances Albion's dance of Eternal Death through which Albion will ultimately be perfectly reintegrated. Through this interpretation of the dance Yeats agrees with Blake that man must lose himself in order to find himself and become whole again. Crazy Jane at the end of her life, looks back on the dancers who are still participating. She dreams the process of the dance which is symbolically the sexual act and sees the participants killing each other as they dance, for their love is founded on hate.

Yeats had remarked about fifteen years earlier in 1917: "'sexual love', which is 'founded upon spiritual hate', is an image of the warfare of man and Daimon" (Myth. 1974, 336) We may attribute the source of this poem to Yeats' dream in which he describes:

[...] strange ragged excited people singing in a crowd. The most visible were a man and woman who were I think dancing. The man was swinging round his head a weight at the end of a rope or leather thong, and I knew that he did not know whether he would strike her dead or not, and both had their eyes fixed on each other, and both sang their love for one another. I suppose it was Blake's old thought "sexual love is founded upon spiritual hate".
(L 1954, 758)

Harold Bloom points out, however, that in Yeats' reference to Blake's idea that sexual love is founded upon spiritual hatred, Yeats failed to see that Blake was not referring to love between men and women, but between Albion and his Sons or between what man was before his fall, and the Zoas or warring faculties into which he has broken up after his fall. (Bloom 1970, 404) On a Freudian level, however, sexual love can be seen as an Oedipal revulsion from the natural affections inherent in all men. (404) The pertinent passage in Blake, can be interpreted on both levels, sexual or spiritual; the protagonists are morally bound by 'iron chains':

But Albion fell down a Rocky fragment from Eternity hurld

By his own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in every Man
Into his own Chaos which is the Memory between Man & Man

The silent broodings of deadly revenge springing from the
All powerful parental affection, fills Albion from head to foot
Seeing his sons assimilate with Luvah, bound in the bonds
Of spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love as iron chains.
(J, 3: 54, 6-12; Erd 203)³

Both Blake and Yeats knew that love and hate were co-existent. However, in maintaining that hate is the basis of sexual love, Yeats accedes to the Blakean antithesis that proclaims the states of Innocence and Experience, depicted in the *Songs* and in the prophetic poems, as being dependent on each other. Eli Mandel, however, maintains that Blake fails to give a coherent structure of Experience when he asserts a far-reaching predominance of the primacy of art over life. (Mandel 1966, 17) Yeats, on the other hand, has come to affirm life as the basis for art. In describing the places of “joy and love as excrementitious”, Blake discloses a rejection of the Female Will and a yearning for the state of perfection:

The Man who respects Woman shall be despised by Woman
And deadly cunning & mean abjectness only, shall enjoy them.
For I will make their places of joy & love, excrementitious.[5]
Continually building, continually destroying in Family feuds.
While you are under the dominion of a jealous Female
Unpermanent for ever because of love and jealousy.
You shall want all the Minute Particulars of Life.
(J, 4: 88, 37-43; Erd 247).

In Yeats, the “place of excrement” is itself the “heavenly mansion” (CP, 294)

“Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul: [...]
“[...] Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.”

(CP, 294-5)

As the old and broken body denotes wisdom and the “place of excrement” the centre of love, the “fury and the mire of human veins” (CP, 280) in “Byzantium” ultimately becomes the creative force of the immortal legacy of human endeavour

symbolised by the golden bird. In Yeats' series of poems dealing with Crazy Jane we may see a strong affinity with Blake in the view that religious and moral institutions, representing, reason, tradition and law, forbid a fully liberated expression of the sensual life and prohibit a perfect union of the physical with the spiritual. The spiritual values of the Church are revealed as malevolent and hypocritical as they forbid a full expression of life in the physical world. Yeats, however, accepts the sufferings of human existence for their own purpose in life itself, whereas for Blake experience is the transitional process to spiritual redemption. Both Blake and Yeats, embrace those who are social outcasts, for example the beggar and the harlot, and in fact expose the truth of their love amid misery that condemns the institutions through which they have been rejected on social, moral or religious grounds.

In Yeats' play, *A Full Moon in March*, the queen is a re-enactment or variant of the "staring virgin" who tore out the heart of the god Dionysus and "lay the heart upon her hand" from "Two Songs from a Play" which commences Yeats' play *The Resurrection*, while the swineherd represents the hero god. Sexual passion, violence, fertility, rebirth and resurrection are portrayed by the dramatic conflict of opposites. Passion, rage and violence are the sources of inspiration and creativity for when the virgin bore "that beating heart away" rebirth was announced, "Then did all the muses sing [...] /As though God's death were but a play." These opposing cycles represented by alternating male and female dominance recall Blake's symbolic description of human civilisation in *The Mental Traveller* where the perpetuation of love, passion, cruelty, violence, death and rebirth are shown to be the source of human tragedy and creativity.⁴ In Yeats' *Full Moon* dramatic truth is garbed in myth. It is up to us as actors and dreamers to perceive the truth of the immortal song and dance of the eternal dancers.⁵ Yeats' play is a symbolic representation of human passion. The ritual dance celebrates creative joy arising from destruction, which is the mainspring of the emotions dramatized in Yeats' theatre: "vast sentiments, the desires of the heart cast forth into forms, mythological beings, a frenzied parturition".⁶

Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal figures of the fallen Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. In her unfallen state woman is man's spiritual redeemer. Fallen, she is Vala the goddess of Nature who seduces man to destruction. Hazard Adams sees these archetypal images as related through their role of prophecy:

Ledaean goddess, epiphanic Mother of God, and ritualistic dancing girl are related images of prophecy, intimations of a new historical period. The Ledaean goddess and Mother of God also symbolize partial attainment to Godhead – "Did she put on his knowledge with his power" – and the dancing girl is the temporal image of complete spiritual and bodily equilibrium. As archetypes, all are related to Blake's "eternal female". They represent man's goal, the base of the cone opposite to his own. (Adams 1968, 220)

In Yeats' poem "The Crazy Moon" the moon represents the archetypal goddess controlling the courses of civilisations in her ritual cosmic dances. From the perfect beauty of her virgin youth, where her dance controls an ordered and flourishing civilisation, the moon waxes and wanes. Her cosmic whirls decree the pattern of the cycles of history. In the first stanza the image of the moon, "staggering in the sky", "crazed through much child-bearing" and "Moon-struck by the despairing/ Glances of her wandering eye", (CP, 273) recalls the image of the first stanza in "the Second Coming", in which the loss of control of civilisation, as

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,

(CP, 210-1)

is finally climaxed in the terror arousing "gaze blank", "pitiless as the sun", of the shape emerging from the controlling forces of *Spiritus Mundi*. The opening image of "The Crazy Moon" also parallels the growing hysteria in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen". The violent horses

[...] wearied running round and round in their courses
All break and vanish, and evil gathers head.

(CP, 236-7)

This vision of growing loss of control is climaxed by the depiction of the dancers, "Herodias' daughters", the dancing goddesses of apocalypse who are here associated with frenzied cries and hysterical "great eyes without thought". As in "The Second Coming", where the rough beast will be born amongst a welter of blood and pain, in "The Crazy Moon":

We grope, and grope in vain,
For children born of her pain.

(CP, 273)

The crazy moon, who dances the dances of conflict pertinent to Yeats' "The Second Coming", is also Blake's archetypal goddess of Nature, Vala who manifests herself in all the Daughters of Albion. In Blake's *The Book of Urizen* the birth of humanity is announced by howlings and pangs of pain.⁷ This repeated birth-cry of humanity can be seen as inaugurating the historical-mythic cycles in Blake.

In the fallen vision, Blake's Daughters of Albion bring war to mankind through a sado-masochistic ritual dance:

[...] the Daughters of Albion Weave the Web
Of ages & Generations, folding and unfolding it, like a Veil of Cherubim
And sometimes it touches the Earths summits, & sometimes spreads
Abroad into the Indefinite Spectre, who is the Rational Power.

Then All the Daughters of Albion became One before Los: even Vala!
And she put forth her hand upon the Looms in dreadful howlings
Till she vegetated into a hungry Stomach and a devouring Tongue.
Her Hand is a Court of Justice, her Feet: two Armies in Battle
Storms & Pestilence: in her Locks: & in her Loins Earthquake
And Fire, & the Ruin of Cities & Nations & Families & Tongues.

(J, 3: 64, 2-11; Erd 215)

Los asks, “Art thou Vala the Wife of Albion [...] All quarrels arise from Reasoning” (J, 3: 64, 19-20; Erd 215).

However, while Blake deplors the possessive or fallen Female Will, Yeats on the contrary, exalts it. To Yeats, joy and even exultation are born from suffering and tragedy. While Blake subjugates the life of the senses as ancillary to spiritual freedom, Yeats demands its full involvement as a means to attaining a transcendent reality. Blake’s Urizen represents both dogmatic religion and materialistic reason. The first is superseded by the Christian religion of love while the second must be fought by imagination. Yeats’ circle images denoting love, imagination and eternity are contrasted with Blake’s circle images of Selfhood, constriction, reason and materialism in the world of time.

Both Blake and Yeats criticise the unliberated woman. (Cf. Billigheimer 1986 Female) In Blake the woman of moral tradition and religious chastity is associated with the obstruction of the imagination by materialistic reason and is characterized by the fallen vision:

The Building is Natural Religion & its Altars Natural Morality
A building of eternal death: whose proportions are eternal despair
Here Vala stood turning the iron Spindle of destruction
From heaven to earth.

(J, 3: 66, 8-11; Erd 218)

In Yeats as depicted in *Full Moon* the virgin is associated with sexual violence and cruelty, symbolically controlling man’s destiny. Her liberation signifies the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation through the contrary forces of love and war within a tragic world view. In the mythic views of Blake and Yeats the dance is symbolic of woman’s control in sexual and psychological conflict as well as of love’s fulfilment reaching inspiration and vision. It poetically conveys the Female’s eternal control and caprice in her relationship with her male counterpart divining and determining man’s destiny. Both poets, through the archetypal vision of the Female, aim to communicate a

world view beyond rational boundaries. While in Blake woman's subjugation of man as she controls his destiny through the fallen vision is a preparatory stage to his spiritual freedom, in Yeats woman frenetically carries out her prophetic role of inaugurating the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation while signifying the attainment of a transcendent reality. While in Blake's fallen vision she brings "war" to humanity, in Yeats she ushers in a new era of an essentially tragic vision of history. In both poets, through biblical and romantic allusion, woman is associated with the terror and destruction which is linked to the origin of the Sphinx and the *femme fatale* and final redemption through inspiration.

Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of *A Full Moon in March*.⁸ In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. (Cf. Billigheimer 1999 Dance.)

In the symbolist tradition the exemplary act is the individual's contemplation of his own mind, described by Denis Donoghue as "like Mallarmé watching himself in a mirror in order to think. (Donoghue 1977, 166) In Yeats, this intense act, constrained from everything extraneous, is symbolised by the artist's mind moving within its own circle bound by time and space and is embodied in the dance. The dancer, with her natural body, and sensuous movements, communicates with the metaphysical world by mentally annihilating her external surroundings and focusing the full intensity of her concentration on her own image. In "The Symbolism of Poetry" Yeats maintains that to reach "the hidden laws of the world" we should cast out the "energetic rhythms" of the external world of practical action and "seek out those wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination, that neither desires nor hates, because it has done with time, and only wishes to gaze upon some reality, some beauty. (E & I, 163) Though her mental contemplation the dancer imbibes the metaphysical into her sensuous body and unites the worlds of time and eternity through her whirling movements in her contemplated, imagined circle. Yeats recalls Symons' reading of Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*, the virgin goddess who could separate herself from the physical world through the inner contemplation of her own image:

So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart,
And all about me lives but in mine own
Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,
Mirroring this Herodiade diamond-eyed.

(A 321)

Yeats attempts to model his symbolic dancer of the theatre on Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*. Mallarmé's virgin princess *Hérodiade* opposes the natural flow and changes of normal life by her concentrated, icy frigidity. Her opposition to the normal motions of life is the projection of what Mallarmé believed to be the character of the poet. *Hérodiade* embodied the three major aspects of poetry as put forward by Mallarmé,

angelism, hermeticism and narcissism. Narcissism, as exemplified by Hérodiade speaking to her mirror, is considered to be by far the most significant aspect for the poet. Hérodiade's beauty is symbolic of the poet's inner world of beauty. As she contemplated her beauty in her mirror she reaches a oneness of being with her narcissism. Hérodiade not only seeks her self-image in isolation but also desires the acquaintance of her beauty and chastity with the actual world in order that she will be deeply involved in the full experience of life and its mysteries. The myth of the basic urge to self-destruction, believed to be repeatedly submerged by forgetfulness, is here realised as being at the root of creation and of the basic conflict in love, divine love and artistic creation. In order to create, the poet must first experience self-destruction and must break away from his solipsistic state of narcissism and, like Hérodiade, seek self-unity with the world of experience. In Dante's *Inferno* this transformation is shown by the circle of thieves being punished by having their bodies changed to serpents or intertwined with a serpent. In Blake, man's knowledge of the actual world is attained by his progression through the Eyes of God cycles where he is subject to error. Hérodiade does not merely unite the subjective with the objective. She transcends this state to a condition removed from the actual world, somewhat akin to Blake's vision of the Higher Innocence. Since pleasure and pain are inseparable the most important aspect of Hérodiade's beauty is the romantic equation of beauty and death, sadness and danger which also come to be allied with physical suffering and torture. (Cf. Fowlie 1970, 135-6) On the one hand we have the drama of hermeticism, that of Hérodiade's search into the inner occult world of poetry, and angelism, experience liberated from life by hieratic symbolism, while on the other hand we see this harmony shattered by cruelty and sexual violence, which in Nietzschean terms is expressed by the counterbalancing of Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies.

While in his drama Yeats sought to exalt human passions, in the dance he sought to unite the abstract and symbolic and physical movement and action. In his early work the dance is associated with a supernatural world and mystical cosmic forces. Later we see the dance representing the apocalyptic meeting point of the natural and supernatural. In his late middle and last poems the dance symbolises the passions and vicissitudes of the physical world. Finally in his late drama the dance represents the transcendent phase of a higher, more complete self-fulfilment of joyous ecstasy reached through suffering and tragedy. This vision of life's completeness achieved through conflict places a great emphasis on the meaningfulness of the sensuous life. Blake, whose task was "to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes/Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity, (J, 1:5, 18-9; Erd 147), presents the dance of Eternal Death, through the twenty-seven Churches of history, as a spiral ladder to the eternal city, the spiritual sun symbolising "the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic Inspiration/To build the Universe stupendous: Mental forms Creating". (M, II: 30,19-20; Erd 129). In both Blake and Yeats, however, dance is in part seen to represent the eternal conflict between life and art, time and eternity and the natural and the supernatural. While in

Blake dance is used to symbolise life in its intensity, in Yeats the moment of vision is ultimately realised amid the violence of the highest form of passionate abandonment, by embracing the world of tragedy as the basis of art. This is symbolised in the ritual dance.

In Yeats' *Last Poems*, in direct contrast with Blake, he embraces the tragic conflicts of the physical world and finds his own transcendence in the world of time. The cycles of "tragic joy", in contrast to Blake's Eyes of God cycles which are fulfilled only as a preparation for Eternity, summon men to a firm acceptance and brave endurance of a substantially tragic vision of history. While, to Blake, Eternity is the ultimate deliverance from the constricted vision of the fallen cycles, Yeats' Eternity is contrastingly constituted out of the cycles of historical time.

Yeats' poetic drama and Blake's epics speak beyond rationalist boundaries. Both want to communicate with leading spirits beyond the sphere of the masses. For this reason both were charged with obscurity by their audiences. Both advocate freedom of the imagination as the means to express great emotions, the Sublime. Blake achieves this through a grand style of language, biblical allusion and the exalted nature of his subject. Through his deprecating usage of biblical allusion, he undermines the stability of biblical tradition and religious authority and "endows" or credits the individual with prophetic attributes, while at the same time attacking his inclination towards reason and dogma. The unity of humanity, denoted by the symbolic circle of the four Zoas, disintegrates since these faculties are no longer in equilibrium. Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism in its binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Blake tries to resolve the tragic vision through redemption, opposing dogmatic religion by love and materialistic reason by imagination. In his condemnation of the earthly existence based on church dogma, his circle images convey meanings which denigrate the material and rational life based on traditional authority and custom. Yeats' circle images are distinct from Blake's through their optimistic meanings and aesthetic appeal, connotative of artistic creativity and fulfilled ideals in the temporal world. Yeats in his historical view of humanity shares Blake's denigration of the rationalistic dogmatic values of "Urizen" and his exalting of the imaginative, individualistic values of "Los". In both poets the symbolic circle, the union of the individual's faculties, is continually disrupted by conflict. A unifying principle that reconciles humanity's universe is no longer available, and yet life is meaningful. Life with its continual tragedy, fragmentation and discord, counterpoised by love and passionate striving, underlies the heroic vision

of struggling humanity perpetuating the cycles of history. Yeats can accept the paradox that, although the centre of the symbolic circle has disintegrated and the circle been broken, the circle is yet whole.

Yeats' Unity of Being, the fulfilment of sensual experience merging into the transcendent symbolised by the rose, (Cf. Billigheimer 2002 Rose) the image of the circling dancer and the dance, the sphere, the consummation of love, the visionary city of art and the conflagration of the sun and the moon, likewise presents the imagination as essentially predominant, replacing, as it were, the former stability of tradition. In the event of "Urizen" dominating the faculties, humanity is dominated by fear and his imagination is thwarted. Thus Blake advocates redemption through the individual imagination. This revolutionary system of thought is followed in the twentieth century by a much greater prejudice in favour of the inevitability of scientific and material advancement, as seen especially in the Marxist view of history as a self-determining process, in Darwin's deterministic evolution and in the Freudian teaching that church authority and divine faith are illusory. With these currents, custom, ceremony and morality are weakened in significance. The individual becomes over-preoccupied with the freedom of the self and is urged to deride authority and criticise the order of society. Humanity, however, is moved to reintegration by its striving for love. Yeats, in "The Second Coming", prophesies the danger of Blake's "Urizen" disappearing from culture, when ceremony and tradition will be abandoned, morality overturned, violence and revolution become romanticised and the centre of the circle will disintegrate to permit the birth of a new cycle:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand

(CP, 211).

Key to references/abbreviations

FZ	<i>The Four Zoas</i>
J	<i>Jerusalem</i>
M	<i>Milton</i>
CP	(1933) <i>The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats</i> . London: Macmillan, 1969.

- CPI (1934) *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats*, London: Macmillan, 1977.
- L *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, Allan Wade (Ed.). London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.
- Myth. W. B. Yeats, (1959) *Mythologies*, New York: Collier, 1974.
- Erd (1965) *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. David V. Erdman (Ed.). Commentary by Harold Bloom. New York: Doubleday, 1982.
- EW. B. Yeats. *Explorations*. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- AW. B. Yeats. (1955) *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan, 1973.
- AV(B)W. B. Yeats, (1937) *A Vision*, New York: Collier, 1972.
- E-Y Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats (Ed.). *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical*, v. 3. London: Quaritch, 1893.
- E & IW. B. Yeats. *Essays and Introductions*, 1961; reprinted New York: Collier, 1973.

Notes

- 1 Adapted from Rachel V. Billigheimer. *Wheels of Eternity: a Comparative Study of William Blake and William Butler Yeats*. Dublin/New York: Gill and Macmillan/St. Martin's P, 1990, 243.
- 2 In Yeats' own study of Blake's symbolism in the three-volume edition of Blake's works with detailed commentaries and essays, *E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic and Critical* (1893), the section most relevant to their inter-relationship, "The Symbolic System", was carried through by Yeats.
- 3 In their comment to *Jerusalem* 4, 88, 36-50 where Los' Spectre rejoices at the discord between Los and Enitharmon, Ellis and Yeats remark on "the strange paradox, continually recurring in Blake, that sexual love springs from spiritual hate." (E-Y II, 250).
- 4 Morris Dickstein in "The Price of Experience: Blake's Reading of Freud" emphasises Blake's pre-Freudian plea for the free life instinct of love and imagination without crippling repression or its turning inward in narcissism. (Psychiatry and the Humanities, v. 4. *The Literary Freud: Mechanisms of Defense and the Poetic Will*, Joseph H. Smith, M. D. (Ed.). New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980. However, Leopold Damrosch, Jr. *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth*, 216, recognises that "Blake's closest affinity with Freud lies in his deep appreciation of the difficulty of doing this." Diana Hume George. *Blake and Freud*, notes that Freud is limited by his belief in immutable nature whereas Blake rises to the affirmation of imagination. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1980, 233.
- 5 "As we watch and listen, we realize that those who are receptive to great poetry have the ultimately inexplicable and disturbing satisfaction of standing before a stake to hear the dead lips of Orpheus alive with song." (Andrew Parkin, "Yeats' Orphic Voice". *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, v. 2, n. 1, May 1976, 49.
- 6 "The Poet and the Actress" (Unpublished dialogue, 1916). See Curtis B. Bradford. *Yeats at Work*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1965, 292-3.
- 7 See stanzas, 8-9; Erd 79.
- 8 Bloom. *Yeats*, 341. Whitaker points out more emphatically, that the dance signifies for Yeats the height of passionate abandonment, "when suprahistorical man may transcend the cycles while remaining within them, when his vision may cause all things to be eternalized. The prerequisite for that moment is his acceptance of all, his learning that 'Pain is also a joy, curses is also a blessing, night is also a sun'." *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History*, Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P., 1964, 286. (Quoted from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *The Complete Nietzsche*, 396.)

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Social Coercion: The Field *Meets* Waking Ned Devine

Jerry Griswold*

*“[I] who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge”
– Seamus Heaney, “Punishment”*

Abstract: “The Field” (both the film and the play by John B. Keane) and “Waking Ned Devine” are stories about village conspiracies and social coercion told in the tragic and comic mode. Fooling, deceiving, and outwitting authorities and outsiders are featured in both. At the same time, characters are remarkably similar the community leader (Bull McCabe/ Jackie O’Shea), their companion or fool figure (The Bird/ Michael O’Sullivan), the widow (Maggie Butler/ Lizzy Quinn), the prescient boy (Leamy/ Maurice), et al. Certain scenes (of bodies flying off cliffs, of priests giving sermons, etc.) are also remarkably similar. An intertextual comparison of this tragedy and comedy yields a sociological understanding of community coercion against a postcolonial background of morality and a history of subversion.

The Field (both the play by John B. Keane and the film by Jim Sheridan) and *Waking Ned Devine* (the film by Kirk Jones) are remarkably similar stories told in, respectively, the tragic and comic modes. Both are “village stories” where an entire community schemes to cover up a death. Secrecy, lies, and (above all) loyalty to the village is paramount in these stories.

Carraigthomond, the village in *The Field*, faces a problem when the widow Maggie Butler decides to sell the plot of land that Bull McCabe has worked for years and feels is rightfully his because of his labors. Despite a plot to rig the bidding so that Bull might purchase the land, an outsider, William Dee, learns of the sale and expresses

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an interest in the property. While others try to dissuade Dee from bidding against a villager, he persists and is ultimately killed by Bull. To prevent the discovery of the murder, Bull coerces his neighbors to join together to provide him with an alibi and cover up the crime.

Tullymore, the village of *Waking Ned Devine*, conspires for happier reasons. Ned Devine has won the Irish lottery but, unfortunately, has died of the shock; and the prize of nearly seven million pounds is in danger of being lost and returned to the folks at the Lotto. Jackie O'Shea, however, comes up with a plan to have the village share the prize by having his friend Michael O'Sullivan impersonate the late Ned Devine. For this ruse to succeed, the entire village must be in on the conspiracy and pretend that Michael is the late Ned. They succeed, and the film ends happily with much winking and delight at the good fortune that has befallen them.

As different as these stories might at first seem, behind them is a strikingly similar plot that differs only in their respective tragic and comic emphases. Both feature a ringleader who might go to jail if the communal ruse is discovered. Bull McCabe, however, is (as his name suggests) a bully and coerces his neighbors by intimidation and threats of boycott. Jackie O'Shea, on the other hand, is not feared but liked and wins his village's cooperation in the conspiracy by goodwill and cooperation. To say this differently, while Bull regularly thumps his ashplant during a town meeting at the local pub, Jackie assembles his neighbors by hosting a chicken dinner.

Other characters in the casts are remarkably similar but, again, differ given the stories' tragic or comic modes. Both the ringleaders have sidekicks: in *The Field*, Bull has Bird, a sycophant that he intimidates; Jackie has Michael O' Sullivan, a friend whom he eulogizes in one of the film's touching moments. Both ringleaders also have wives and, following suit, Bull's bears him a grudge and hasn't spoken to him in years, while Jackie's spouse is concerned about his possibly going to jail and becomes a co-conspirator. And there is a romantic sub-plot in both films: Bull's son Tadgh takes up with the Tinker's Daughter and Jackie's pal Pig Finn takes up with Maggie; but, again, one story follows a tragic trajectory leading to Tadgh's death, while the other arcs to connubial bliss when Maggie accepts Finn's proposal.

A greater contrast exists in the widows of the two stories. Maggie Butler, in Keane's play, is the one with a field to sell and she finally accept Bull's low price because she is afraid of what might happen if she doesn't: "I'm a lone widow, living alone, and I do be worryin' nights. I have no one with me"; indeed, in the film version of *The Field*, she does not just worry about being made the outsider but, in fact, is driven from the village. The widow of *Waking Ned Devine*, Lizzy Quinn, however, chooses to be the outsider: if the village does not give her a much larger share of the prize than everyone else is getting, she threatens to report the fraud of her neighbors to the authorities in order to collect a reward.

The theme of the Outsider, in fact, plays a significant role in these stories about village cohesiveness and coercion. In *The Field*, the Outsider is William Dee. The play

pictures him as a man from Galway who has been living in England but wishes to return to his country and has fastened on this parcel of land in Kerry which he plans to pave over to create a factory to manufacture concrete blocks. In the film version, Dee is made even more the Outsider by being presented as a wealthy American, insensitive to the locals and sporting rich clothes and a pinky ring. He is killed.

The Outsider in *Waking Ned Devine* is Jim Kelly, the Lotto official from Dublin who visits Tullymore to meet and make arrangements with the lottery winner. Kelly suffers from allergies whenever he is in the country; and, in fact, his signature sneezing is the way the villagers can identify him. He is also an Outsider because of his luxurious modes of transportation: he arrives by helicopter and an aide soon transfers him to an up-market automobile. The natives, in comparison, often get about by motorbike; in fact, the most hilarious scene in the film involves naked senior citizens darting around to outwit Kelly.

Both stories involve deceiving the authorities. Kelly and the Lotto administrators in Dublin are bamboozled by the villagers of Tullymore. Investigating the murder of William Dee, Sergeant Leahy meets with silence and deception as the villagers of Carraighthomond provide an alibi for Bull, point the policeman in the wrong directions, and otherwise make of mockery of him and his investigation.

The Church has a role in these works as well. In the tragedy of *The Field*, the Church is in league with the Garde in encouraging the villagers to break their code of silence and identify the killer; in the film, in fact, the priest locks the villagers out of the parish church for refusing to speak up. In the comedy of *Waking Ned Devine*, the Church is not at odds with but in league with the villagers, collaborating directly and indirectly in the subterfuge: when Jim Kelly happens into a funeral in the town chapel, the young a visiting priest becomes a party to a ruse meant to fool the Lotto man; and when Lizzy Quinn heads to the phone booth to call the lottery officials and inform on her neighbors, it is the returning pastor whose car accidentally swipes the phone booth, thankfully sending the informant Lizzy over the cliff.

In a sense, the difference between these works is symbolized by the Boy in each. Maurice in *Waking Ned Devine* is matter-of-fact and worldly wise. When the young priest, a summer replacement, asks Maurice whether the regular pastor would object to the village's scheme to defraud the Lotto, the youngster breezily replies that the pastor wouldn't object "as long as it fills the collection plate on Sunday."

Leamy is the Boy in Keane's play *The Field* and its moral center. Leamy objects to bullies and wants to go to the garde to tell them what he knows about Bull's killing of William Dee. But Leamy's mother silences him, saying, "It's you who will suffer because, don't you see, it's you who will have done all the work and you'll be a freak for ever more, different from the rest of us."

Both works, in other words, raise ethical questions; and though the crimes they present are different in degree – murder in one case and fraud in the other – both communities engage in questionable morality in covering these up. How can these communal acts be excused or, at least, explained?

In Keane's play, the Bishop comes to Carraigthomond to encourage the villagers to speak out, to identify the killer of William Dee; but the Bishop also understands how a man might be murdered in an argument over a piece of land: "There is hunger for land. And in this parish, you, and your fathers before you knew what it was to starve because you did not own the land." In the film version of *The Field*, Bull's actions are somewhat explained and excused by the movie's conversion of Bull into a driven man, a tragic hero with a fatal flaw and an obsession, an Irish King Lear.

In *Waking Ned Devine*, the excuse or explanation for defrauding the Lotto is even flimsier. Jackie O'Shea has had a dream in which Ned Devine indicated he wanted the village to share his winnings. In truth, the ethical issue of cheating the Lotto and other Lotto players in the country is simply swept under the rug with a lot of winking and bonhomie.

This easy morality, let me suggest, is a colonial legacy. When the British were occupying Ireland, subversion was welcome and became a way of life; villagers banded together against the Outsider. But what happens when the colonizer leaves? What happens when the Irish, themselves, occupy positions of civil authority? What happens in a culture that has grown habituated to subversive acts and communal silence?

The Field raises that issue quite directly. In justifying his antagonism to William Dee, Bull McCabe refers to his real-estate rival as an outsider, another form of the English invader, adding, "We had their likes long enough." When the policeman invokes the law in his investigation of the murder, Bull complains that it's "the same dirty English law" and advises that, just as in the old days, a policeman could get killed. And when it seems possible that someone might break the village's code of silence, Bull threatens, "There's men around here would think nothing of putting a bomb up ag'in' a door. 'Twas done before, the time of the land division."

Old patterns take a long time to die. Subversion, the code of silence, communal conspiracy – these were acceptable forms of behavior during the British occupation. But what happens once the British have left? After this behavior has become habitual? What is the postcolonial legacy?

The argument of *The Field* is that this behavior must be abandoned and renounced; in Biblical terms, it is a case of new wine in old wineskins. Bull McCabe's facile redefinition of William Dee as an outsider like the English, his too easy appeal to colonial behavior and values, shows the bankruptcy of this old thinking and its real dangers.

Waking Ned Devine, however, shows the postcolonial legacy as a comic rather than tragic inheritance. Communal subversiveness is still accepted but redefined. Now, instead of the Irish against the English, it is the village against Dublin. Boundaries of otherness are redefined, and the wily paddy is still alive outside the yuppie enclaves of Dublin 4, beyond the (new) pale.

The Trouble with Being Borrowed: Flann O'Brien's Characters in Gilbert Sorrentino's Mulligan Stew

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Abstract: *In Mulligan Stew Gilbert Sorrentino takes one step further the concept of the narrator of Flann O'Brien's legendary At Swim-Two-Birds (1939). O'Brien's proposition that any fictitious character may be made into an author, who, in turn, may create their own fictitious characters who are authors, and so on, alerted Sorrentino to the possibility of having one of these characters write the ultimate creator of the text into another fictitious character. Within the entirely artificial universe of the novel we have the invented narrator telling his story which is the novelist's story as well as the invented novelist telling his own story which is the supposed true story. The narrative is peopled by characters borrowed from F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dashiell Hammett, James Joyce, and Flann O'Brien. One of these is Antony Lamont, an avant-garde novelist, working on a murder mystery novel entitled Guinea Red. Antony keeps writing letters to his sister Sheila Lamont, in which he expresses his concern about her engagement to Dermot Trellis (created by the student narrator as his surrogate in At Swim-Two-Birds) as well as his criticism of Trellis's writing. Other characters of O'Brien's are also alluded to in Mulligan Stew. The intention behind the present paper is to examine the process and the results of transplanting characters from one novel into the other, with an emphasis on the alterations in the characters' fictitious identities.*

Gilbert Sorrentino's 1979 (republished in 1996) novel opens in a fairly unusual way. The initial pages, where one would expect to find the frontispiece, the title, or even the blurb, contain none of these. Instead, the reader is faced with eleven pages of letters of rejection from various publishing houses. These, the reader is tempted to believe, refer to the manuscript of the very novel he is about to begin reading. The letters are addressed to Gilbert Sorrentino himself, to his agent Marvin Koenigburg, and to the

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vice-President of Grove Press (which actually first published the novel), Mr. Milo Kent. The contents of the letters are even more puzzling and, as we later realize, quite illuminating not only in regard to the real world of publishing, but also to the fictional world of the book itself.

Some editors try hard not to hurt the author's feelings and reject the novel on the grounds of their own financial incapacity which forces them to choose other works which are "not only good, but have definitive market appeal", as for instance *The Compleat Beatle Wardrobe Book*, a "necessary addition to Beatle Lore", or *Screwing in Sausalito*, a "zany, wonderful novel about life in California". Others reveal themselves to be unfulfilled authors unable to publish their own "brilliant" writings. Some editors, however, endeavor to assess the manuscript on its merits and are far more direct in their criticism. One writes: "Everything in the book has the touch of a virtuoso. Trouble is, I got bored, and so did another reader". Another: "The book is far too long and exhausts one's patience. Its various worlds seem to us to lack the breadth and depth and width as well to sustain so many pages". Or still another: "It is much too long by half, and to this eye, needlessly so – the author seems obsessed with (unnecessary) insertions, (useless) repetitions, twice and thrice-told tales, and reams of incomprehensible lists". Some editors show clear signs of irritation. One thought the "novel dismally uninformed as far as the female characters and their presentation. She thought them "fantasy figures" far removed from the reality of Woman that is all around us today". Another publisher simply refuses to "have anything to do with that work". The reader can no longer say s/he hasn't been warned.

The proper plot of *Mulligan Stew* is, on the one hand, fairly simple and could be summarized as a story of an author struggling to write an avant-garde murder mystery novel. On the other hand, its intrinsic complexity makes it virtually impossible to convey a fair impression of the novel in a summary. The simplest solution may be, perhaps, to turn to the author himself, who kept five notebooks on *Mulligan Stew* while writing the novel. The first entry date is November 1, 1971:

1. The narrator of a novel immediately identifies himself as a character in a novel.
2. The novel to be interfolded; that is the novelist's novel wherein the character is moved about in actions which the novelist invents, along of course with a whole slew of invented characters.
3. There is the activity of the narrator outside of the novelist's concerns, along with other of the novelist's characters and character's who do not appear in the novelist's novel.
4. This is a possibility out of "At Swim-Two-Birds," taking that book further, adding another integer to its basic idea. Absolute artificiality. We will have then the invented narrator telling his story which is of course the novelist's story. We will also have the invented novelist telling his story, the true story, if you will. Borrow, as Flann O'Brien's "At Swim," characters from other novels, my own as well as others. Some of these characters are to be in the novelist's novel, some could be in the narrator's novel, the true story [...]. (O'Brien 1993, 20)

After all these references to the work of Flann O'Brien, and especially to his 1939 novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*, the name of the book's novelist, Antony Lamont, does not come as a stunning surprise as we recollect him as Sheila Lamont's brother in O'Brien's novel. And *At Swim-Two-Birds* is also a book (by Flann O'Brien) about a man writing a book (a nameless student narrator) about a man writing a book (Dermot Trellis). The frame story involves the student's attempt to write a novel. His everyday experiences determine the progress of *his* work: fiction becomes criticism, criticism fiction. The dynamics of fiction-making are reflected in the way that Dermot Trellis is based on the student's uncle in 'real' life – the uncle himself is a parody of a character in Joyce's *Dubliners*. Trellis himself is writing a 'clarion-call' to the Irish people on the consequences of sin, and has some peculiar notions – inherited from his creator – about textual composition. In collaboration with another imaginary author, William Treacy, Trellis plagiarises from a vast range of genres, populating his text with characters such as the Pooka (an Irish folkloric devil), the legendary Finn McCool, cowboys of paperback Westerns, and the mad King Sweeney, hero of the medieval Irish romance *The Frenzy of Sweeney* (*Sweeney Astray* in Heaney's translation).

Trellis keeps his characters locked up in his hotel, The Red Swan Inn, but they move independently of Trellis when he is asleep. Trellis had created the beautiful Sheila Lamont in order to have her seduced by the evil Furriskey, but he grows obsessed with Sheila himself, and rapes her.

Meanwhile Trellis, in order to show an evil man can debase the highest and the lowest in the same story, creates a very beautiful and refined girl called SHEILA LAMONT, whose brother, ANTONY LAMONT he has already hired so that there will be somebody to demand satisfaction off John Furriskey for betraying her – all this being provided for in the plot. Trellis creates Miss Lamont in his own bedroom and he is so blinded by her beauty (which is naturally the type nearest to his heart), that he so far forgets himself as to assault her himself. (O'Brien 1998, 86)

To cover up his crime, he kills her off, but not before she gives birth to their son, Orlick. Orlick is persuaded by the other characters to exert a bizarre revenge by writing his father into a courtroom drama, and Dermot Trellis goes on trial for crimes against literary humanity. The whole affair goes up in smoke (literally) when Trellis's maid Teresa accidentally burns the manuscript of his novel.

In Sorrentino's novel Lamont seems to be shifted two levels higher, or shall we say closer, to the actual author in comparison with *At Swim-Two-Birds*. He occupies the place of the nameless student narrator of O'Brien's novel. Dermot Trellis is often mentioned in his letters to his sister Sheila as a one-day good friend and a writer, too, though of a more popular appeal. Trellis and Sheila are now engaged and about to get married. Oddly enough, it is Lamont who undergoes the most profound deformation on

his way from one text to the other. Even though we never actually get to see them other than through Lamont's letters and notebooks, Trellis and Sheila seem to preserve some of their identities, however artificial, they possessed in *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The Red Swan, the name of the hotel in *At Swim Two-Birds*, is alluded to as a novel of Trellis's, and we feel Lamont's concern for Sheila whom he believes to be Trellis's victim. Yet Lamont himself differs from O'Brien's character to such an extent that he no longer retains his transworld identity, to use Umberto Eco's term. Instead, we seem to be facing a case of mere homonymy as the character acts now as a kind of Sorrentino's alter ego, voicing his feelings about the very novel we are reading:

Speaking of books, my own is coming along, but to be perfectly candid, not at all to my satisfaction. I sometimes feel like scrapping what I've already done and starting all over. God knows, there isn't that much of it to scrap. The trouble is that if I scrapped what I already have I honestly don't know if I could begin anyway. I've never felt so in the dark about a book, nor so unsure of myself. The other day I wondered – I mean *seriously* wondered – if all this trouble is worth anyway. All my years of work and – let's face it! – I've produced nothing first rate, nothing, nothing at all! Oh, there are flashes of good writing in, I suppose all my novels, but truly, I have an aversion for the bulk of my stuff. Sad confession. (Sorrentino 1996, 56)

Sorrentino has an interesting theory concerning O'Brien's relation with his own work. He believes that O'Brien somehow feared his own books, or perhaps he feared his own talent that created them. He argues that *At Swim-Two-Birds* avoids its eerie logical conclusion – the “assault upon and possible erasure of its primary creator, the writer himself.” (Sorrentino 1998, 2) As for *The Third Policeman*, the novel was repressed by its author during his lifetime, appearing soon after he was safely dead. *The Dalkey Archive*, a “re-vision” of *The Third Policeman*, and published during O'Brien's lifetime opens with a dedication which, according to Sorrentino is not to be read as a joke. It goes: “to my Guardian Angel, impressing upon him that I'm only fooling and warning him to see to it that there is no misunderstanding when I go home.” Sorrentino says:

I see this novel as a non-sinister *apologia* for the unearthly terrors of *The Third Policeman*, as well as a barrier between the latter and O'Brien; and the charge to his Guardian Angel has to do with the suppressed text, for which *The Dalkey Archive* was but a surrogate. O'Brien believed that fiction is not far removed from life, that it is, in a sense, another kind of life, separate from the mundane by the thinnest of walls. (Sorrentino 1998, 2)

Likewise, O'Brien's pen name separated the author from the real person. Moreover, in *At Swim-Two-Birds* O'Brien protects himself from the dangers of his own

fiction by placing the obliteration of his narrative at two further removes from himself (O’Nolan/O’Brien/the student/Dermot Trellis).

The author of *Mulligan Stew* obtains a similar effect though in a slightly different manner. Rather than hiding his own identity behind numerous masks and disguises, he seems to lose it, firstly by borrowing someone else’s character, Antony Lamont, and stripping him of his own identity, and secondly by endowing the novel with its own voice, which represents its peculiar layered quality. Sorrentino confessed he felt surprised when “I was about fifty pages through because I suddenly realized that what I thought I wanted to do, I could do, and that was to remove myself from the novel for the first time, to invent a voice and tone that for the first time could in no way at all be identified with me. It was a disembodied voice. It was a tone that permeated the novel and seemed to be cut loose from the man who wrote it. Total fabrication.” (J. O’Brien 1981, 20)

Now, if we look at the work of both writers from a more theoretical angle, we won’t fail to notice that they offer similar answers to the basic questions concerning fiction such as what is fiction and how it works. My argument is that Sorrentino’s and O’Brien’s novels seem to go hand in hand with the theoretical work of the last century Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden. A concise introduction to Ingarden is offered by Brian McHale in his *Post-modernist Fiction*. Ingarden deals with fiction’s intrinsic ontological complexity. This complexity lies first of all in its being *heteronomous*, existing both autonomously, in its own right, and at the same time depending upon the constitutive acts of a reader’s consciousness. Secondly, the literary artwork is not ontologically uniform, but polyphonic, stratified. Ingarden distinguishes four such strata: *Firstly the stratum of word-sounds*, that is the essential phonemic configurations, which make the differentiation of word-meanings possible: *Secondly the stratum of meaning-units* which actualize parts of our concepts of objects; sentence-meanings project “states of affairs,” which are progressively and retrospectively modified by the higher units of meaning into which sentence-meanings enter. This occurs when a reader “concretizes” meaning-units, that is when they become objects of a reader’s consciousness: *Thirdly the stratum of presented objects*. According to Ingarden, fictional texts do more than carry information in articulated chains of signifiers and signifieds, they also project objects and worlds. Purely intentional objects, Ingarden says, are projected by the word-meanings of nouns, or presented or implied by states of affairs at the sentence-level or higher. In the aggregate these presented objects constitute an “ontic sphere” of their own – a world. This world is partly indeterminate:

It is always as if a beam of light were illuminating a part of a region, the remainder of which disappears in an indeterminate cloud but is still there in its indeterminacy. (Ingarden 1973, 218)

The individual objects that make the ontic sphere are cloudy, too. Compared to real-world objects, presented objects are strange and paradoxical, full of ontological

gaps, some of them permanent, some filled in by readers in the act of concretizing the text. Flann O'Brien in *The Third Policeman* has laid bare this aspect of fiction's ontological structure by putting the nameless narrator face to face with the bizarre reality of his ontic sphere. The artificial cardboard appearance of the Police Station and its crew plays overtly with the notion of ontological gaps:

I kept on walking, but walked more slowly. As I approached, the house seemed to change its appearance. At first, it did nothing to reconcile itself with the shape of an ordinary house but it became uncertain in outline like a thing glimpsed under ruffled water. Then it became clear again and I saw that it began to have some back to it, some small space for rooms behind the frontage. I gathered this from the fact that I seem to see the front and the back of the 'building' simultaneously from my position approaching what should have been the side. As there was no side that I could see I thought the house must be triangular with its apex pointing toward me but when I was only fifteen yards away I saw a small window apparently facing me and I knew there must be *some* side to it. (O'Brien 1996, 53)

As the narrator approaches the awesome building, his initial feeling of bewilderment gradually subsides and he manages to fill in the missing dimensions. This is also true of his first contact with the policemen from the station. First, he can see Sergeant Pluck's enormous back and finds its shape "unprecedented and unfamiliar", then realizes that the whole body of the policeman creates a "very disquieting impression of unnaturalness, amounting almost to what was horrible and monstrous." (56) However, as soon as they are standing face to face, the policeman assumes the air of normality. What's more, he seems to emanate "good nature, politeness and infinite patience." (57)

Sorrentino seems to follow a similar pattern when he makes two characters explore some of the cloudy features of their own 'ontic' sphere:

It is a rather odd house, to say the least. There is the living room and the den, but we haven't been able to find any other rooms. It *seems* as if there are other rooms, but when we approach them, they are – I don't quite know how to put this – they are simply *not there!* There is kitchen, no porch, no bedrooms, no bath. At the side of the living room, a staircase leads "nowhere." Oh, I don't mean to say that it disappears into empty space, it simply leads into a kind of [...] haziness, in which one knows there is *supposed* to be a hallway and bedroom doors: but there is absolutely nothing. (Sorrentino 1996, 30)

Naturally, all fictional houses are like this, partly specified, partly vague, but normally neither the reader nor the character inside the fiction notices this vagueness. O'Brien's narrator is not aware of being inside a fiction. This is why he 'concretizes' presented objects even though they initially appear incomplete and unnatural. Sorrentino's

characters realize they are entrapped inside the novel, and so find their house anomalous, with its permanent gaps. The same is true of the characters' own appearance: "[...] Lamont has no idea what we look like, nor what clothes we are wearing, since he never bothered to describe us. (Ned says that this is a modern novelist's prerogative.)" (Sorrentino 1996, 151)

The fourth stratum postulated by Ingarden is that of *schematized aspects*. He argues that presented objects and worlds are inevitably schematic, lacking the plenitude and density of real objects in the real world. What the literary artwork *can* do, though, is to duplicate the fragmentary and aspectual nature of our experience of objects in the real world, by restricting the point of view or choosing one sensory channel through which to present the object. The stratum of presented objects, mediated through schematized aspects, manifests what Ingarden calls the work's "metaphysical qualities" – the tragic, the sublime, the grotesque, the holy, and so on. Interestingly, in O'Brien's and in Sorrentino's novels, as well as in a vast majority of post-modernist fiction, irony appears to be the dominating "metaphysical quality," the fact which does not exclude other qualities such as the holy or the tragic, but rather turns them inside out. In an article about O'Brien's fiction, Sorrentino refers to *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* as "cruel at their core, and many of the most risible scenes, conversations, and set pieces are rooted in pain, anguish, ignominy, humiliation, and death." (O'Brien 1981, 21) And about his own view of how these qualities function in fiction: "A writer seizes on a particular aspect of the culture; and I believe that life is basically ridiculous. The ridiculous quality can be tragic, it can be pessimistic or dark, or it can be highly comic." (21)

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Portrait – In the Middle of Reality and Illusion: Analysis on The Picture of Dorian Gray and “The Oval Portrait”

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Abstract: *A portrait is resemblance of man and a form of painting, which retains the appearance of mortal human semi-eternally. The mysterious aspect of the portrait is used as a motif of stories by fantastic and mystery storywriters.*

In Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), beautifully completed picture mars the protagonist’s pure mind. Instead of he growing old and his vices show up in his face, they appear in his portrait. The ugliness of the picture which represents the degradation of the protagonist’s mentality, causes some kind of terror to the readers beyond the category of beauty as an art form.

A half-century before, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a short story called “The Oval Portrait” (1842). A beautiful portrait of a maiden is drawn by her painter husband in lonesome castle. The progress of painting is life-taking processes; as the portrait approaches its completion, she grows weak, and when it is done, her life ends as if it is absorbed by the painting.

The two stories of Wilde and Poe have the common element: the portraits are accomplished in a beautiful state but they destroy the life or the spirit of the model. Here, we see the two aspects of the portrait; a beautiful object as a genre of pictorial art and a mysterious object which semi-eternally retains the figure of the mortal model.

Focusing on the two stories, the first section of the essay considers their subject, a portrait, and analyse the origin and fantasy of it. In the second section, the relation between the human portrait and life is analysed. Because of its characteristics, coping and retaining human’s figure, a portrait is also considered as an object reflects the mind of the model. In the third section, a portrait is compared to the image of mirror and examined as a reflection of self. Finally, in the section four, the illusion of a portrait which interacts with the idea of gothic literature is discussed.

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Heart-smitten with emotion I sink down,
My heart recovering with covered eyes;
Wherever I had looked I had looked upon
My permanent or impermanent images:
W. B. Yeats, "The Municipal Gallery Revisited"

Prologue

A portrait is resemblance of man in a form of painting. It is likeness; however, it is not mere depiction of human face. Portrait, in some way, has been considered as an object sharing life with the subject as it retains the appearance of mortal human semi-eternally. The mysterious aspect of the portrait is used as a motif of stories by fantastic and mystery storywriters.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) by Oscar Wilde is one of the most important works which represents his aesthetical outlook. It might also be the most famous work of Gothic literature whose motif is a portrait. The picture of Dorian is so beautifully completed that it mars his pure mind. Instead of he growing old, his picture puts on years and in place of his vices show up in his face, they appear in his portrait. The way of the picture becoming ugly represents the degradation of the protagonist's mentality. He even commits murder and his abominable act is clearly expressed in his picture. It causes some kind of terror to the readers beyond the category of beauty as an art form.

A half century before *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was written, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a short story called "The Oval Portrait" (1842). The story is situated in the period when his major works appeared; "William Wilson" (1839), "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), "The Murder in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Black Cat" (1843), and "The Golden Bug" (1843). Among these short stories, "The Oval Portrait" is one of the shortest and yet is important in order to analyse the motif of portrait and human's life, and its relation to gothic literature. "T", who visited lonesome castle, found a beautiful portrait of a young woman and was amazed by its "life-likeness of expression". He read about the story of the portrait. It is a portrait of a maiden drawn by her husband, the painter, in this castle. As the portrait approaches its completion, she grows weak, and when it is done, her life ends as if it is absorbed by the painting.

These two stories have the common element: the portraits are accomplished in a beautiful state but they destroy the life or the spirit of the model. Here, we see the two aspects of the portrait; a beautiful object as a genre of pictorial art and a mysterious object which semi-eternally retains the figure of the mortal human model.

Focusing on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait", the first section of this essay will consider their subject, a portrait, and analyse the origin and fantasy of it. In the second section, the relation between the human portrait and life would be analysed. Because of its characteristics, coping and retaining human's figure, a portrait is also considered as an object reflects not only the appearance but also the mind of the model. In

the third section, a portrait would be compared to the image of mirror and examined as a reflection of self. Finally, in section four, the illusion of a portrait which interacts with the idea of gothic literature would be discussed: in the middle of reality and illusion.

1. The Origin and the Fantasy of Portrait

What is a “portrait”? What kind of genre of paintings or art is it? The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word “portrait” as follows:

Portrait (n.)

1. A figure drawn, painted, or carved upon a surface to represent some object.
 - a. A drawing, painting, or other delineation of any object; a picture, design (in general) Now rare or Obs;
 - b. spec. (now almost always) A representation or delineation of a person, esp. of the face, made from life by drawing, painting, photography, engraving, etc.; a likeness;
2. abstr. The action or art of making a portrait; portraiture.
3. fig.
 - a. Something that represents, typifies, or resembles something else, an image, representation type; likeness, similitude. (In quot. 1623 absol. A striking or impressive sight, a scene.);
 - b. A verbal picture or representation; a graphic or vivid description;
 - c. Typofr. A formal in which the height of an illustration or page is greater than the width, cf, Upright a, 5c. Often used as quasi-adj, or quasi-adv.

OED indicates the first meaning of the word, portrait, as something drawn on an object. It is the oldest original usage of the word, but the usage of 1-b, considered as a general meaning of a portrait nowadays, is also the usage from ancient times as well.

In the ancient Greece, Rome and the initial Christian world, specific individual images have already expressed on a statue, bust, herms, coin, sarcophagus, wall painting, etc. One of the typical examples is *Demosthenes*,¹ a sculptor. This sculpture, made by Poryueclitos, is regarded as a pioneering work of realistic portrayal sculpture. Another early example is a wall painting in Pompeii, *Baker's Couple*.² It is considered to be influenced by Egyptian portraits and Roman portraits of emperors and royalty. And yet, it is a very important portrait example of the one describing ordinary people.

In ancient Egypt, the likeness of royal family were depicted in their coffin when they passed away. During the period of ancient Greece and Rome, the likeness of ordinary people were sometimes drawn and buried in their grave. The idea of making the likeness shows that the concept of leaving a figure of deceased, as he/she was alive, has already recognised as important issue.

Nevertheless, the number of individual portraits became small during the medieval time. Instead of the likeness of ordinary people, the images of Christ and the Saints became the majority in paintings. These images were portrait-like likeness, though they were religious pictures. In the fourteenth century, portraits of individuals such as contributors to church or monarchs were again started to be drawn or woven in tapestries.

Likenesses of individuals were largely produced during the Renaissance. For the first time, they appeared as “contributor” for church or religious paintings like ones in the fourteenth century. One of the renowned examples is Jan van Eyck’s *The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*.³ Conventionally, contributors were depicted very small in the painting of Christ or Virgin Mary and it merely indicates that he/she is the donator of the picture. *The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*, however, is different from the previous religious paintings with the figure of the donator; the contributor, Chancellor Rolin, is portrayed as being the same size as the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. The size of him shows that not only is such a way of portraying the contributor allowed but also that the individual is becoming more valuable in society.

During the period of Renaissance, the concept of modern meaning of “portrait” was established. As John Pope-Hennessy’s studies, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, shows, painters such as Raphael, Titian, Botticelli, and Domenico Ghirlandaio produced a large number of portraits of individuals in Italy. Albrecht Durer and Hans Holbein the Younger did the same thing in the northern Germany.

The traditional genre of paintings is divided into five categories. The position of a portrait in paintings is the second, following to the history, mythology religion paintings:

1. Historical, mythological and religious painting
2. Portrait
3. Genre painting
4. Landscape
5. Still life

This order shows the hierarchy of the genre of painting. It is considered that the category of historical, mythological and religious paintings are the highest and the still life is the lowest.⁴ It represents the idea of classical hierarchy which regards that the gods are the top followed by human, animal, and plant.

Among these five divisions of painting’s genre, a portrait would strongly relate to the subject of Gothic literature as it marks the emergence of a particular person and it retains the figure of him/her semi-eternally. Alberti, one of the omnipotent men of the Renaissance, explains the character of the painting described human in his *On Painting*:

Painting possesses a truly divine power in that not only does it make the absent present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living many centuries later, so that they are recognized by spectators with pleasure and deep admiration for the artist. Plutarch tells us that Cassandrus, one of the

Alexander's commanders, trembled all over at the sight of a portrait of the deceased Alexander, in which he recognized the majesty of his king. He also tells us how Agesilaus the Lacedaemonian, realizing that he was very ugly, refused to allow his likeness to be known to posterity, and so would not be painted or modelled by anyone. Though painting, the faces of the dead go on living for a very long time. We should also consider it a very great gift to men that painting has represented the gods they worship, for painting has contributed considerably to the piety which bind us to the gods, and to filling our minds with sound religious beliefs. (Alberti 1991, 60)

A painting, Alberti says, could be regarded as a portrait. As it was written in 1435, the prime time of the Renaissance and the revival period of human power, the important subject of the painting became the human figure. Alberti also indicates that keeping the figure of mortal human semi-eternally takes one step toward the God-like immortality.

II. Portrait and Life

After the concept of a portrait was established, portraits have considered having some relation with the life of the model. During the early period when the idea of the portrait of the individual appeared, the picture originally imitated the life-like figure of the deceased. Thus, there must have been the idea that a portrait reflects the life of the deceased.

When the portrait was introduced as a motif of Gothic literature, the inclination toward the reflection of life was enforced, and it became more than mere likeness of a person. A portrait should be the model's double. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait of the protagonist completed by Basil Hallward represents the model himself more than the original. His picture also starts to grow old on behalf of the model. Dorian starts to be convinced that he would be able to enjoy his life instead of his picture getting old.

And when winter came upon it [picture], he would still be standing where spring trembles on the verge of summer. When the blood crept from its face, and left behind a pallid mask of chalk with leaden eyes, he would keep the glamour of boyhood. Not one blossom of his loveliness would ever fade. Not one pulse of his life would ever weaken. Like the gods of the Greeks, he would be strong, and fleet, and joyous. What did it matter what happened to the coloured image on the canvas? He would be safe. That was everything. (106)

The description above counterworks Alberti's *On Painting*. Alberti explains the relationship between the mortal human and the portrait which retains the appearance of the model semi-eternally. Contrary, In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait grows old and the human model, Dorian stays young and attractive.

In Poe's "The Oval Portrait", the picture is vivid and is described as "an absolute *life-likeness* of expression"(291). The relation between the model and the picture is opposite to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. As the painter depicts his wife on the canvas, she is debilitated.

And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. (291-2)

The painter steep himself in drawing so much that he does not realise that his wife obviously weakens. The fact could almost be a metaphor; the art embodied by the artist surpasses the mortality of human.

Though a portrait is a mere object, consisting of a canvas and paint, it connects to the model's life or true nature and is regarded as indistinguishable from the spirit of the model. The inseparability or even the sameness between the portrait and the model in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is indicated with subtle description in the text. Lord Henry and Basil Hallward exchange the conversation as follows:

'You really must not say things like that before Dorian, Harry.'
'Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?'
'Before either.' (29)

Here, both Basil Hallward and Lord Henry treat the portrait of Dorian and him on the same level. The conversation indicates that not only Dorian has a pure mind but also the picture of him and it is possibly effected by malicious thought. When Basil Hallward listens to the words of Dorian saying that he would go to the theatre with Lord Henry, he sadly states, 'I shall stay with the real Dorian.' (29), which suggest that the portrait of Dorian expresses the true nature of him.

A similar description is seen in Poe's "The Oval Portrait". The colour of the cheeks of his wife is directly transmitted to the canvas.

And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. (292)

As the wife on canvas is becoming animated, the model is getting debilitated. The story inside of "The Oval Portrait" suggests that the likeness on canvas and the model is one and they hold the life in common. Therefore, when the canvas nears completion, it takes the life of the model and the length of her life gets shorter. When blush to one upon the mouth was given and one tint upon the eye was placed, the painter screamed, "This is

indeed Life itself!" But at the same time, his wife is dead. The portrait that takes away her life remains in the castle as the picture retains the life of the deceased.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the life is owned jointly between the portrait on canvas and the model. Since Dorian is annoyed and suffering from the existence of his portrait which reflects the ugliness of his soul, he decides to "destroy" it.

He looked round, and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, till there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistened. As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and, without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it. (223)

Here, Dorian tries to stab his portrait with the same knife that he killed Basil Hallward. Since Basil functions as Dorian's conscience, the portrait of Dorian drawn by him also reminds the conscience and tortures him. Thus, Dorian feels that he has to destroy it and "kills" the picture. Killing the picture is not the expression of personification. The story presupposes that the portrait has a life same as human and Dorian believes it.

However, since the picture of Dorian is the mirror of him and owns the life jointly, stabbing it means the death of himself.

When they [Francis, the coachman and one of the footmen] entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was. (224)

When Dorian thrusts his painting, a scream and a sound of something collapsing is heard in the house. The knife plunged into the chest of him and Dorian kills himself in the end. This happens because the life has been shared between him and his portrait, and the latter was rather "true" Dorian. When the true Dorian subsided, the picture of him returns to the original portrait as a painting which retains semi-eternal beauty.

In both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait", a portrait not only reflects the exact figure of the model, but also represents the true personality or the life of the model. Therefore, the portrait can threaten the original and can take the life of the model.

In the next section, I would like to examine the image of the mirror, which is used as a symbol that the model and the painting are completely identical. I also would like to consider the subject of Doppelganger threatening the protagonists.

III. Portrait and Mirror: Doppelgänger

A portrait is presumed to be a likeness of the model but not completely the same. Richard Brilliant points out in his *Portraiture* that “Even the notion of likeness assumes some degree of difference between the portrait image and the person, otherwise they would be identical and no question of likeness would arise.” (Brilliant 1991, 25) As Brilliant mentions, an actual portrait cannot be an absolute sameness like the reflection of a mirror. However, when a portrait appears in Gothic literature it should be identical with its complete likeness to the model. Therefore, it has the double image with a mirror.

A mirror has occupied an important role of optics studied by Kepler, Descartes, and Newton during the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century, a mirror was given a new character and substantiality in the imagination of Gothic literature. It does not merely reflect the appearance of a person as an inorganic substance but it returns the image of someone’s mind. The background of the mirror starts to have magical power and the mirror itself leads to the image of Doppelgänger.

The image of a mirror as a reflection of self or the alter ego became popular in the nineteenth century. *Spiegelmensch [Mirror Man]* (1820) by Franz Wefel is a story about a man who establishes the relation like the one of Dr. Faust and Mephistopheles with his double from a mirror. *Dvojníc [The Double]* (1846) by Dostoevskii is another story about a double. The protagonist, who is a lower class officer, wishes to have a double and then it becomes true. His double has every ability he does not have, ingratiates himself with his boss, and begins to jeopardize his life. The protagonist, in the end, is sent to a mental asylum. Poe’s “William Wilson” (1839) has a similar motif, though the one who could remain in this world is the protagonist in the end. In the early twentieth century, Jack London wrote *The Shadow and the Flesh* (1906) which is the story of two identical men, Paul and Lloyd who constantly compete with each other and invent a medicine that wipes the appearance off by the opposite concept. The motif, which the identical double like a mirror appears and menaces with the original, could be a good subject to represent alter ego.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian is told that he is just like his portrait.⁵ The beauty initially described in the portrait of Dorian suggests “ego ideal”. In his *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, Johan Fornäs explicates that the narcissism in relation to ego ideal is indispensable process of forming self:

The narcissistic desire is necessary for the constitution of the I, but has to be reduced if one is not to get stuck in a vicious circle, like Narcissus was. The means to break the circle is the development of the ego ideal, which may form the positive parts of the superego, complemented by the negative, prohibitory ones. Instead of desiring what one is (or has been), one should search for the which one wants to be. (Fornäs 1995, 261)

The picture of Dorian first mirrors ego ideal but his egoistic narcissism could not retain his figure as such. The regression of the portrait is inversely proportional to the original

figure of ego ideal. Dorian thinks, "This portrait would be to him the most magical mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul." (106). The portrait of Dorian starts to become the ironical mirror, reflecting inside and to disclose darkness of him.

Rosemary Jackson describes the inseparability of Dorian and his mirror image, his portrait, as follows:

The painted portrait in Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* functions similarly, as an iconographical establishment of difference, illustrating self as other, and suggesting the inseparability of these devices and mirror images from fantastic themes of duplicity and multiplicity of selves. (Jackson 1988, 45)

Shortly after Dorian wished his picture grew old instead of him, it begins to show his internal change or suppressed darkness of his mind. It initially expresses in the mouth his cruel reaction against Sybil Vane who could not act well for her love of him. (90) Dorian fiercely accused her of her a poor performance, tells her he does not love her anymore, and then leaves her. Like Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian is aware of the relationship between him and his portrait. When he sees the change of the expression of his picture, he feels guilty. Nevertheless, as he is told about the news of her suicide from Lord Henry, and talks to him, he believes the death of Sybil is mere play.

Influenced by the ironic and vagabond life of Lord Henry, Dorian starts to live frivolous lifestyle. Such a shift in the protagonist is mirrored in his portrait. The ugliness of his mind, which does not appear on his face, turns up invisible. The dramatic transfiguration of the picture makes the painter astonished.

An exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! It was Dorian Gray's own face that he was looking at! The horror, whatever it was, had not yet entirely spoiled that marvelous beauty. There was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. The sudden eyes had kept something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from chiselled nostrils and from plastic throat. Yes, it was Dorian himself. But who had done it? (155-6)

The absolute beauty of the portrait when the painter completed it is damaged. The grotesque feature of Dorian in the picture is the mirror of his mind. It even threatens him since Dorian is afraid that someone will find it and his secret will be disclosed.

The protagonist begins to erase the person and thing which appeals to his conscience and disturbs his mind. First, he murders the painter of the picture, Basil Hallward. After he kills the painter, the picture of Dorian becomes more indecent and a "loathsome red dew that gleamed, wet and glistening" (174) appears on his hand. Its

grotesque figure makes him back with a shudder. Finally, Dorian believes that he can start a new life if he destroys his portrait. The picture, “mirror of his soul” (222), reaches to incorrigible status with its ignominious looks. It was disfigured with his sin that cannot be changed by his self-satisfactory hypocrisy that he did for Hetty Merton.

He went in quietly, locking the door behind him, as was his custom, and dragged the purple hanging from the portrait. A cry of pain and indignation broke from him. He could see no change, save that in the eyes there was a look of cunning, and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before – and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilt. (221)

This bloodcurdling portrait is the doppelganger embodying Dorian’s mind and behavior. Since his picture is not merely the likeness of his looks but mirrors and visualizes his spirit, Dorian is frightened at it and decides to pierce it.

A mirror in Gothic literature always reflects the truth that is not visible to human eyes. The stepmother of Snow-white is told the truth by a mirror. In Stoker’s *Dracula*, a mirror does not reflect the Count Dracula’s appearance and indicates his abnormality. Like a mirror, a “portrait” in Gothic literature is not only a likeness as an object of art, but also a reflection of true nature or alter ego of a man. The portrait in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* works as a mirror which represents the inside of the protagonist that cannot be seen on his face.

IV. In-between Reality and Illusion

The illusion of portrait should be derived in Gothic atmosphere which bewilder us whether the event occurs in the story should be recognised as fantasy. Both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and “The Oval Portrait” set up the typical background of Gothic literature. The room where the portrait is placed in or drawn is a lonesome, gloomy area of the house or castle. The portrait of Dorian was in his room when it is given to him. But since he realised that it begins to show the terrible deterioration of his mind, he is afraid that it will be seen by someone and hides it in the old dark schoolroom. In “The Oval Portrait”, the story unfolded in an old castle, one of the conventional Gothic backgrounds. There is a description of the castle in the beginning of the story: “The chateau [...] was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines”, (290) and the room where it is painted is described as a “dark high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead.” (291).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the birth environment of the protagonist is hideous and fearful:

So that was the story of Dorian Gray's parentage. Crudely as it had been told to him, it had yet stirred him by its suggestion of a strange, almost modern romance. A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad person. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Month of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man. (35)

The birth of Dorian is associated with tragedy and the smell of blood. His father is killed in a duel which the grandfather of Dorian planned, and his mother died within a year of his death. This background of the protagonist is an indispensable setting for Gothic literature in order to make the reader expect that something terrible will happen.

With this Gothic entourage, a portrait develops its illusion. Portrait is not a merely beautiful object in Gothic literature, it has special powers over man. What Tzvetan Todorov explains about one of the important characteristics of fantastic literature – the fusion of boundary between matter and mind – is suggestive in order to consider the effect of the motif of portrait;

This law [that the bonds of matter and mind were loosened], which we find at the source of all the distortions contributed by the fantastic within our system of themes, has some immediate consequences. Thus, we can here generalize the phenomenon of metamorphoses and say that a character will readily be multiplied. We all experience ourselves *as if* we were several persons – here the impression will be incarnated on the level of *physical* reality. (Todorov 1973, 116)

A portrait itself includes the aspect which marks off the border between matter and mind in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and "The Oval Portrait". The matter, portrait, expresses the mind or life of the model. "Multiplied" self can be applied to the relation between a portrait and the subject; a portrait in gothic literature is literally the duplication of the model.

Originally, a portrait is different from the other genres of painting because of its strong relation to the human.⁶ Moreover, it is considered as an object which not only shows the appearance of a particular person, but also reflects his/her mentality. The fantasy of this motif resides in such ambiguity: in between reality and illusion. Therefore, it even surpasses the category of the beautiful which Wilde assumes.

Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" mentions the definition of beauty as follows:

The only beautiful things, as somebody once said, are the things that do not concern us. As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, or affects us in any way, either for pain or for pleasure, or appeals strongly to our sympathies, or is a vital part of the environment in which we live, it is outside the proper sphere of art. The art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent. (Wilde 1996, 56-7)

“Somebody” here, means the analysis of beautiful by Kant, Book? “Analytic of the Beautiful §2 The Liking That Determines a Judgement of Taste Is Devoid of Interest” in his Critique of Judgement. Generally, the judgement of beauty is not related to the idea of true or false, good or evil, or gain and loss. Nevertheless, a portrait is in an ambiguous status since it strongly relates to the real model. Because it reflects a man, the portrait would be able to threaten him/her, like a human being.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the painting of the protagonist grows old instead of him, and his vice appears in the painting instead of his face. The protagonist is horrified by the grotesque reflection of him in his portrait. In “The Oval Portrait”, as the painting progresses, the model grows weak and dies when it is accomplished. The portrait gives “pain”, “danger”, and “terror” to the model. In addition, such characteristics of the portrait are peculiarities found in the Gothic literature: “strong elements of the supernatural” (Cuddon 1982, 382). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it would be the wicked behaviour of Dorian and its expression appears in the picture. In “The Oval Portrait”, it would be the painter concentrating to paint so much that he does not care about his dying wife. The element of beautiful uncanny illusion of the portrait gives the noticeable flavour of gothic literature.

The illusion of Gothic art is referred in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*:

There are few of us who have not sometimes weakened before dawn, either after one of those dreamless nights that make us almost enamoured of death, or one of those nights of horror and misshapen joy, when through the chambers of the brain sweep phantoms more terrible than reality itself, and instinct with that vivid life that lurks in all grotesques, and that lends to Gothic art its enduring vitality, this art being, one might fancy, especially the art of those whose mind have been troubled with the malady of reverie. (131)

The description shows the author’s view toward Gothic art which links the sense of “enamoured of death” and the “horror and misshapen joy”. The most peculiar characteristic of Gothic art takes up its position in between the pleasure of beauty and the terror resides in illusion. This contradictory element of gothic art is a core of illusion created by portraits in *Dorian Gray* and “The Oval Portrait”.

Epilogue

The origin of Gothic literature must go back to ancient times. Supernatural events appear in local legends or mythologies and they have been told beautifully, magically, and sometimes fearfully. We have to consider, however, whether they were regarded as “supernatural” unrelated to ordinary life, because they might depend on the social and historical context. For the people in ancient times, those tales might not be considered to be Gothic literature.

Set in an ordinary life with an aesthetical atmosphere, Gothic literature deals with mysterious events deviated from the everyday experience. It has been recognised as one of the literary genres in the latter half of eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century where the idea of modern science is developed and applied in daily life. As the idea of modern science spread to the public, people lose their awe of nature and consider the supernatural event as otherworldly different from their ordinary life. Illusion should be sealed as “psychotic”.

It is curious to note here that such a collapse of the limits between matter and mind was considered, especially in the nineteenth century, as the first characteristic of madness. Psychiatrists generally posited that the “normal Man” possessed several contexts of reference and attached each fact to only one among them. The psychotic, on the contrary, was incapable of distinguishing these different contexts and confused the perceived with the imaginary: (Todorov 1973, 115)

Gothic literature removes the limits between matter and mind and treating ambiguous motif between reality and illusion. It claims the restoration of ambiguity. The period of Gothic literature also overlaps with the age of Romanticism whose idea strongly relates to Gothicism because it repels the idea of modern science and seeks for the world of beauty and fantasy after men conquer nature. At that moment, contents expressed in Gothic literature were regarded as one of the particular fields of literature.

Poe’s “The Oval Portrait” and Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were created in such a literary stream. Both works beautifully describe the fantasy and terror reflected in the art though they were in the social context of the nineteenth century. Using the idea of modern science, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also indicates the inexplicable incident, the way the mentality and vices of the protagonists transmits to the picture.

As he often remembered afterwards and always with no small wonder, he found himself at first gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest. That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? – that what it dreamed, they made true? Or was there some other, more terrible reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror. (95)

Introducing the scientific terms and showing the objectivity in some degree, the text shows a strange event occurring in the story. The elements presenting some scientific idea are typical for gothic literature and the pseudo-science and magical motif of a portrait which mirrors the life of the protagonist co-exist in the story. The work draws

the darkness of the human mind contrasting the gaudy life of the protagonist with the story of man as if he sells his soul to Mephistopheles.

In his biographical study, *Oscar Wilde*, Richard Ellman points out that “For Wilde aestheticism was not a creed but a problem. Exploring its ramifications provided him with his subject, and he responded to it with a mixture of serious espousal and mockery” (Ellmann 1987, 292). Poe has a similar idea towards art. He says in “The Philosophy of Composition” that “When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect” (Poe 1984, 16). The aesthetic, for both Wilde and Poe, is not a value to believe but the problem whose effects should be considered. Both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and “The Oval Portrait” describe the object of beauty and creating the aesthetic atmosphere, but cause the sense of illusion and fear to the character and the reader as well. The two stories represent an essence of Gothic literature in a portrait, a fusion of the reality and illusion.

Notes

- 1 *Demosthenes*, Roman Copy, Original BC. c. 280, Campagna, Italy, Marble, 192cm, Copenhagen, Museum of Ni-Carlesburg.)
- 2 Fourth Style, AD, c. 60-79, *The house of Telentius*, Pompeii, Italy, Wall painting, 58×52cm, National Museum of Archaeology, Naples.
- 3 Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin with Chancellor Rolin*. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
- 4 The division of genre of painting is mainly established by André Félibien, an art historian and critic in the seventeenth century, except genre painting which is recognised in nineteenth century.
- 5 When Dorian asks Basil Hallward that “Am I really like that?” He responds, “Yes; you are just like that.” (29)
- 6 Religious paintings are also related to human since they describe some appearance of man. The objects of the religious paintings, however, are the universal figure such as Christ or Virgin Mary, that they are the object of worship.

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Textual Anthropology and the 'Imagined Community'

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Abstract: *This paper enquires into 'textual anthropology' as a new way of reading Irish texts. It has been prompted by two papers given in Sydney last October by Antony Tatlow, Professor of Comparative Literature at TCD, and a passage from the Introduction to Declan Kiberd's Irish Classics (London: Granta Books, 2000), p. xiii, where Professor Kiberd says: 'Because there were two powerful cultures in constant contention in Ireland after 1600, neither was able to achieve absolute hegemony. One consequence was that no single tradition could ever become official: the only persistent tradition in Irish culture was the largely unsuccessful attempt to subvert all claims to make any tradition official. In conditions of ongoing cultural confrontation, most of the great works of literature produced on either side took on something of the character of anthropology.' In addition to testing this contention, this paper will enquire into issues such as: To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts? What presuppositions underpin textual anthropology? and What benefits accrue from and what limitations attend such an approach?*

It was two papers given in Sydney last October by Professor Antony Tatlow, Professor of Comparative Literature at Trinity College, where he offered 'anthropological' readings of Shakespeare, that first set me thinking about textual anthropology and the 'imagined community'. They also prompted me to recall that passage from Declan Kiberd's splendid *Irish Classics* where he writes:

Because there were two powerful cultures in constant contention in Ireland after 1600, neither was able to achieve absolute hegemony. One consequence was that no single tradition could ever become official: the only persistent tradition in Irish culture was the largely unsuccessful attempt to subvert all claims to make any tradition official. In conditions of ongoing cultural confrontation, most

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of the great works of literature produced on either side took on something of the character of anthropology. (Kiberd 2000, xiii)

As well, there were three further stimuli. The first had to do with a literary history of Irish poetry 1900-1940 that I have been working on for some time and my concerns about the theoretical/methodological approach I had adopted for this project. The second had to do with a very recent and most welcome invitation from the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Enterprise, at my university, The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, to convene an Irish Studies Program. And the third had to do with that passage from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, a work first published in 1983 and then revised in 1991 and subsequently reprinted numerous times; a highly influential book, not only in terms of post-colonial and cultural theory and the extent to which it has underpinned the Field-Day projects, but also, again returning to Declan Kiberd's work, as an approach to Irish Studies extensively explored in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*.

Anderson in that memorable sentence, only part of which however is generally quoted, announces his willingness to risk a definition of the term "nation" – thereby taking firm hold of a concept that had hitherto been left lie or had slipped the grip of Marxist and Modern historians. 'In an anthropological spirit, then', he says, 'I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. (Anderson 1991, 5-6) The term 'imagined community' – the qualifier 'political' seems to have silently dropped out of sight – as well as the extent to which Anderson investigated, illustrated and valorized the word 'imagined', has become as much a mantra for post-colonial critics as an incantation for cultural theorists.¹

But what about the word "community" let alone the words "political community"? How much attention has been paid to that part of the definition? Just as Anderson contended that the term 'nation' had been elided by Marxist and Modernist historians, I would like to submit that the term 'community' has been elided in what has been researched and written in Irish Studies for at least the last ten to fifteen years. Arguably, it is now time to look more closely at the term "community" before we continue to parade out post-structuralism, strut our semiotics, hypothecate our historicism, deploy our deconstruction, or posit ourselves as just plain readers. After all, of the three terms in Anderson's definition of the nation: 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign', his definition of the term 'community' is the most cursory. To quote:

Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it

possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.² (7)

The gendered metaphors embedded in this definition – ‘comradeship’, ‘fraternity’ – are enough to make a sensitive critic, whether feminist or not, shudder. But more about Anderson, ‘community’, and the impact on Irish Studies *anon*.

The intersection of these five stimuli, provocations or whatever one might like to characterize them – Antony Tatlow, Declan Kiberd, my own literary history, convening the UNSW Irish Studies Program and Benedict Anderson – and the recurrence of the word anthropological, stirred me into thought. Though most of what I am going to offer remains teasingly preliminary, and though I am not going rigorously to distinguish between the two uses of the term anthropological in what I have referred to so far – that is anthropological as content *pace* Kiberd and anthropological as method or approach *pace* Tatlow – I want to explore various aspects of the way we have done, are doing, and perhaps should ‘do’, Irish Studies.

What follows then is an attempt to address issues such as: ‘To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts? What presuppositions could be said to underpin textual anthropology? And what benefits might accrue from and what limitations might attend such an approach? I hope that my attempts to address these questions will go some way towards providing the basis for a rationale for our new Irish Studies Program at the University of New South Wales as well as a guide to our own teaching and research.

Setting ourselves at ease with some of the terms intrinsic to thinking about Irish Studies in this way provides one entry point. Here Declan Kiberd’s caution is instructive: ‘that ‘most of the great works of literature produced [...] took on something of the character of anthropology’. It is the ‘character of anthropology’ that is noteworthy here. As a discipline, as a systematic way of thinking about the world, anthropology only began to emerge towards the end of the eighteenth century as it disentangled itself from archaeology, in the sense of archaeology as the ‘professional’³ study of antiquities. Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language in which words are Deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers*, first published in 1755, defines anthropology as the ‘study of man’ – with ‘man’ being used in the generic sense and ‘study’ confined to the scientific observation of physical characteristics. Anthropology as the study of persons as social, spiritual, economic and political beings, as being formed by and forming societies, was still some way, though not a long way, off.⁴ Not surprisingly, and here I am restricting myself to the English Enlightenment,⁵ it is the travel literature of the eighteenth century, and the competition for status between the physical sciences and the human sciences, between the emerging yet powerful disciplines of mathematics, physics and astronomy and the more gentlemanly and often better funded enquiries made under the rubric of the Antiquities that urged on the development of anthropology. Both the competition and

the pressures disclose themselves in the debates that enlivened the Royal Society in England throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Come the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the nation-state, and the competition and the pressures rapidly intensify, with the result that Sociology,⁶ fostered by Utilitarianism, begins to emerge as the dominant human science, positioning itself as relevant and necessary by providing a methodology and seemingly objective rationales for social engineering and by focusing on contemporary society, on the present, thereby obliging anthropology to continue the process of disentangling itself from the antiquities, from a preoccupation with the past, the primitive and the exotic.

Arguably a similar development has taken place and a similar tension exists within Irish Studies – the tension between post-colonial and ‘cultural studies’ approaches (with their parallels with sociology) and what might be termed the traditional historical approaches (with their parallels with anthropology in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century sense of the word). The practitioners of post-colonial theory and cultural studies claim relevance and feel they are more methodologically attuned; they are, as it were, the ones who produce the street directories and the lists of who’s who and who isn’t. For their part, the practitioners of historical studies image themselves as cartographers of source countries and hinterlands; they are, as it were, the ones who produce the topographic, physical and political maps. Not that these two approaches are entirely separate, or, for that matter, discrete. Nor do they simply exist as binary opposites. There are numerous cross-contaminations and leakages; much more, of which this conference is itself eloquent, of the inclusive ‘both/and’ rather than the divisive and exclusive ‘either/or’.

And that is how it should be. We need both types of maps – the street directory and the topographical; the lists of who’s who and who isn’t and the spatial representations that show who has claimed what, when, and how. And this is one of the great strengths of IASIL, and here I pay tribute not only to the pluralist, tolerant and inclusive vision of Professor Derry Jeffares, but also to successive Presidents, who have discouraged proselytizing in the name of the *idée fixe* and encouraged pluralism. Such pluralism, I believe, needs to be practiced by individuals. To take two examples at random. As Elizabeth Butler Cullingford disarmingly admits in her most recent book: *Ireland’s Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture*, Field Day Monograph 10, after feeling herself ‘beached’ at the beginning of the ‘eighties was surprised to find as the decade wore on ‘to [sense] the tide of the latest American paradigm shift lifting [her] off the shoals, and to be told that some people thought [she] was a New Historicist.’ ‘I hastened to find out what that was’, she confesses, ‘and was disappointed to discover that I was probably just an Old Historian in drag [...] though [this] in any case, proved perfectly compatible with my new feminism’. (Cullingford 2001, 3) Similarly, John Wilson Foster in *Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* narrates his own theoretical journey in the opening sentence to his *Introduction* when he says: ‘These pieces written over a period of sixteen years, begin collectively as

articles in literary criticism and end as essays in cultural criticism'. (1) Ideological purity, for its own sake, can prove the most barren of all attainments.

What I encourage my students to do in the courses that will become part of the Irish Studies Program at the University of New South Wales is to think of literary theory in terms of Derrida's provocative reading of Plato's *pharmakon* – the way that in western metaphysics poison and antidote co-exist in binary opposition/relation. My argument is that theory is poisonous; that each approach is merely a variety of a toxin that if taken in sufficient quantities and over a sufficient period of time inevitably produces linguistic determinism in the unwitting victim. Injected with large doses of post-colonial theory, or with feminism, marxism, historicism, new historicism, post-structuralism or whatever, the student and the academic enter on that Faustian compact where empowerment to speak is accompanied by a hidden but nevertheless powerful and remorseless curtailment of speech. Theoretical discourses both facilitate speech/writing and limit it. I am sure we have all had personal experience of this when we have received essays from students which seem to have been written, not by the delightful free-thinking individuals we have met in lectures and tutorials or spoken with in our offices, but by impersonal jargon generators. So I require the students who take my courses to vaccinate themselves with theory against theory; in other words, if they find they are particularly attracted to new historicism to deliberately take a good strong dose of cultural theory or feminism. Poison and antidote. And to keep it practical I set exercises where I ask them to offer opposed readings of the one piece of literature – for example Yeats's "Easter 1916", first employing say a specific school of post-colonial theory and then say deconstructing the poem, setting both readings alongside one another and asking themselves what each theory has prevented them from saying even as it has enabled them to speak. Or Brian Friel's *Translations* – read with the aid of systemic functional linguistics and then counter-read through Terry Eagleton's brand of Marxism. Most of my students seem to find this rather challenging, but also very exciting and highly rewarding. Finally, to apply my own method to itself. The potentially toxic effect of what might be summarized as this dialogic double-ness is simplification; the antidotes I suspect are wide reading, deep thought, persistence and honesty. And I like to point this out to my students too.

But to return to the term 'community'. As I have indicated, it is time, I believe, to look closely at what is meant by this seminal term as we fix the compass and set off critically to chart, explore or simply traverse the 'imagined community' of Ireland/Irishness. The OED gives as its origin the Latin *cumunitat-em* f. *commun-is* and its coming into English via the Old French *com(m)uneté*, *com(m)unité*. The original Latin word was merely a noun of quality meaning 'fellowship, as in community of relations or feelings'; but in Medieval Latin the word was used concretely in the sense of 'a body of fellows or fellow-townsmen' – hence the sexism of Benedict Anderson's definition. The OED then goes on to list 9 current meanings for 'community', the meanings divided into two categories depending on whether or not the word is being used to describe 'a quality or state' or 'a body of individuals'.

Under the first category, ‘a quality or state’, the meanings listed are:

1. the quality of appertaining to or being held by all in common; joint or common ownership; **2.** common character; quality in common, commonness, agreement, identity; **3.** social intercourse, fellowship, communion; **4.** Life in association with others, society, the social state; and **5.** commonness, ordinary occurrence.

Under the second category, as pertaining to a ‘body of individuals’, community can mean:

6. the body of those having common or equal rights or rank, as distinguished from the privileged classes; the body or commons, the commonality; **7.** a body of people organized into a political municipal, or social unity as either **a:** a state or commonwealth or **b:** a body of men living in the same locality or **c:** as applied to those members of a civil community who have certain circumstances of nativity, religion, or pursuit, common to them but not shared by those among whom they live as the British or Chinese community in a foreign city, the mercantile community everywhere, the Roman Catholic community in a Protestant city etc; and **d:** the people of a county (or district) as a whole; the general body to which all alike belong, the public. **8.** a body of persons living together and practicing more or less community of goods such as either **a:** a religious society, a monastic body or **b:** a socialistic or communistic society and finally **9.** *Trans* and *fig* of gregarious animals or of things, a cluster, or combination.

For the most part Benedict Anderson concentrates on meanings **1, 3, 4, & 6**, arguing that nations became imagined into being through the rise of a print capitalism⁷ which valorized even as it popularized vernacular speech, and valorized it in the sense that the vernacular became what he terms the ‘language-of-state’. Such print vernaculars inexorably forged identity, established boundaries, created a sense of belonging, offered a means of transacting power (thereby transforming hierarchical structures into horizontal structures), and engendered new concepts of time (principally simultaneity and chronology – or what he terms calendrical time). Pivotal to this process, he argues, were the ‘pilgrim creole functionaries and the provincial creole printmen’ (65); or, to put it in other terms, the local bureaucrat and the local newspaper; though in a subsequent chapter he analyses passages from several novels to show how specific generic characteristics facilitated the processes of imagining that created the sense of community intrinsic to the formation and maintenance of national identity.

To reach this point Anderson relies on a number of theoretical works and theoretical approaches: firstly the work of the French annalists,⁸ specifically Lucien Febvre’s and Henri-Jean Martin’s *The Coming of the Book. The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800* (London:

New Left Books, 1976 [Translation of *L'appartition du Livre*. Paris: Albin Michel. 1958]); secondly, a quasi Althusian/Marxist approach to develop the notions of print capitalism and the emergence of bourgeois reading publics that are quintessential to his definition of community; and thirdly on a mix of New Criticism, Chicago Aristotelianism (as a source for genre theory) and Reader Reception theory for analyzing a range of 'vernacular' novels to show how, at particular points in time, they created, through their deployment of various literary techniques, the illusion of community.⁹

The first two of these, I believe, are particularly helpful in thinking about ways of coming to terms with 'community'. Arguably writers inhabit a variety of these, which co-exist in relation to one another, for the want of a better visual metaphor, like a series of Chinese boxes. To work as it were from the outside in with perhaps the most basic of structures. There is the national/international community which comprises the way or ways writers negotiate, whether consciously or unconsciously, their ethnicity/cosmopolitanism, their nativism/globalism. Then there is the professional community – which includes in one sense relations to fellow writers, to literary agents, to publishers, and to reviewers; as well as membership of literary and non-literary organizations, including perhaps affiliations with newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television programs, projects, manifestos, institutions and 'movements'; and in another sense, genre, tradition, intertextuality, cultural discourses all the 'stuff' that makes good cultural/literary history. So both writers and texts can belong to and be shaped by communities. More about textual communities *anon*. Finally, there is the personal community – to some extent able to be reconstructed through memoirs, autobiography, correspondence, manuscripts, as well as 'information' about the intellectual, social, spiritual, political and cultural milieu, all the 'stuff' that goes to make a good critical editions of letters and good critical biography.

Such communities, though they may impinge on one another and interact with one another, do have 'boundaries' in the sense that Anderson posits boundaries for vernacular speech/ vernacular print/language-of-state communities.¹⁰ Thus, Edna Longley, whose perspicacious and polemical *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland*, is mandatory reading for my students, critiques Heaney's account of the literary scene in Belfast during his formative years as follows:

Heaney should be seen as generalizing from his own experience and, ironically, from too Anglo-centric a viewpoint, when he says: 'all of us in this group [he includes Mahon] were harking to writers from the English cultural background of the late 'fifties and 'sixties. That *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), *Night Crossing* (1968) and *No Continuing City* (1969) are such different first collections proves the range of influences at work. These early aesthetic differences have often been obscured or distorted by the political and theoretical batteries pounding away since 1970. If politics, as well as criticism, begins in aesthetics, close reading becomes all the more crucial.

Although distant constellations counted too – Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Frost, Stevens, Crane, Lowell, Wilbur, Penguin Modern European Poets – I suggest three immediate literary environments shaped Northern Irish poetry in the 1960s. (Longley 1994, 20)

Edna Longley is equally illuminating in the way texts can be thought of in terms of community /communities. In ‘writing these essays’, she observes of *The Living Stream*,

I found that I was often tracing a textual web, and that the term “intertextuality” applied to Northern Irish poetry in a special, living sense: not as a theoretical dead letter, but as a creative dynamic working upon mechanisms of tradition and cultural definitions alike.

Intertextual dialogues may be explicit variations on a theme: Heaney rewriting Hewitt from “The Other Side”, Muldoon taking oblique issue with Heaney’s “Punishment”; or they may unobtrusively tweak the threads of a word or image [...] But poems can ignore one another yet be in touch. Because of the themes that go with the territory, and the territory that goes with the themes, they participate in a shifting system of aesthetic and cultural relations. Here lyric poetry, often damned as upholding the egotistical sublime, clearly subscribes to a dispersed collectivity, and observes disciplines akin to the historians ‘intertextual antagonism’. This is why we should take care not to collapse generational dialectics, as when Morrison and Motion [...] press Heaney into the post-modernist mould or mouldlessness. (51)

There are a number of instructive ways of thinking about community embedded in this passage – textual communities made up of poems, plays, novels and short stories in dialogue with one another, a dialogue than can be characterized either as “intertextuality” or “textual antagonism”. Generational communities – as, in the case of Northern Ireland, the stately seniors: Heaney, Longley and Mahon and then the young turks: Muldoon, Ciaran Carson and Mebh McGuckian. Here it is worth remarking that the self-assessment of performance, the competitiveness that can come from being contemporaries, or the conflict of the generations, can be just as much a factor in the power politics of a literary movement as any agreements or disagreements about aims and manifestos and just as much a factor in the ways a writer writes. George William Russell (*AE*) once suggested that a literary movement could be defined as ‘five or six people who live in the same town and hate each other cordially’ (Moore 1914, 165) – “inter-urban” instead of “intertextual antagonism” as it were. In adapting this to our present discussion, I would like to suggest that any literary movement could be defined as any number of writers who, regardless of where they live, monitor one another instinctively. Informing this is Eliot’s observation that: ‘Between the true artists of any one time there is, I believe, an unconscious community’. (Eliot 1972, 24) So generational communities, communities

of exemplary practice can be fostered within and beyond cities or regions, periods or epochs. But as Edna Longley shrewdly cautions, if we are talking about generational communities: 'care should be taken not to collapse generational dialectics'. Communities do have boundaries; and it is in locating those boundaries that the second half of Anderson's definition comes into its own. If 'imagined' is the motor; then 'community' is the brake. If 'imagined' is the spur; then 'community' is the bridle. If 'imagined' stimulates us to think about what is produced within and for the cultural artifact that is the nation; then 'community' challenges us to determine the spatial reach of that imagining, the area of its effect, the dimensions of the resultant cultural artifact.

So to offer, in conclusion, some tentative answers to the questions I posed at the beginning of this paper. To take the first two questions together: 'To what extent and in what ways does textual anthropology relate to previous approaches to reading Irish texts?' And 'what presuppositions could be said to underpin textual anthropology?' It can offer one way of resolving the tension that Edna Longley, in the final paragraph of her essay on 'Revising "Irish Literature,"' felt was crippling Irish Studies:

Perhaps Irish Studies, as we now call them, have inherited two broad modes of enquiry. One derived from the Enlightenment, is the empirical quest for data [...]. But this approach can never be wholly detached from another tradition: the discursive tradition of 'talking about Ireland' which grew up with nineteenth-century Nationalism and is, indeed, politics by other means. At the moment Irish literary studies [...] are uneasily caught between the two. (68)

Community can be the concept that grounds 'talking about Ireland' in empirical data. It can be the means for administering the antidote of fact to the poison of fancy.

Finally: what benefits might accrue from and what limitations might attend such an approach? To take the limitations first. These have been perhaps best summed up by Yeats in his condemnation of the mind that is too self-aware, too cautious, too conscious of its own processes, when he images the loss of *sprezzatura* in *Ego Dominus Tuus* as the loss of that 'old nonchalance of the hand'. (VP, 368)

On the other hand, the greatest benefit that can accrue from thinking rigorously about community, I would argue, is that it can significantly improve our scholarship. A rather old fashioned term but perhaps one that needs to be revived. Community can be our safety device as we embark on that perilous journey from particular to general or general to particular. It can and should alert us to anachronism and fallacious analogy, to those legerdemain slippages that glittering metaphors half reveal and half conceal even as they enchant the writer equally with the reader. 'Just a moment', it should say to us, 'just what are the spatial and/or temporal dimensions of what you are about to relate?' Did X really know, read, correspond with Y? Was concept A available to, understood by writer B and audience C? Does text F really lie within the generic or theoretical paradigm G? Does J share sufficient characteristics of generalization K to qualify as an example? And so on. I suspect Irish Studies is still to some extent caught in the dilemma that Edna Longley identified; but if recent publications are anything to go by then perhaps

approaches associated with cultural studies are being obliged to take more account of empirical evidence, or ‘stuff’; while historical approaches are becoming more conceptually daring. And if this is not happening, let’s ensure that it does.

Notes

- 1 Not accepted however by Jim MacLaughlin, who writes in his *Reimagining the Nation State: The Contested Terrains of Nation-Building* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 6: ‘Nations, whatever their scale, were ‘historical happenings’ and geographical constructs. They were rarely abstract ‘imagined communities’ as Anderson implies. They were never the ‘natural’ homelands of ‘people’ as nationalists insist. They entailed a tremendous amount of social and environmental engineering [...]. They authenticated themselves, or more accurately had structures of authenticity imposed on them [...] nationalisms in Ireland were always expressions of practical politics. As such, nationalism, whether in unionist or nationalist separatist garb, was always rooted in concrete socio-historical formations and in well-defined geographical milieux’.
- 2 Freud, of course, came up with quite a different explanation for why thousands of young men were prepared to die for patriarchal nation-states.
- 3 I am using the word here in the sense of those people who were sufficiently wealthy and sufficiently devoted/obsessed to share their findings through Societies like the Royal Society.
- 4 OED defines anthropology as I: The science of man, or of mankind, in the widest sense. This seems to have been the original application of the word in English but for two-and-a-half centuries, to c.1860, the term was commonly confined to the sense b. Since that date, it has sometimes been limited by reaction, to c. **b**. The science of the nature of man, embracing Human Physiology and Psychology and their mutual bearing. **c**. The ‘study of man as an animal’ (Latham). The branch of science which investigates the position of man zoologically, his ‘evolution’ and history as a race of animated beings.
- 5 I am using the term for this article in the sense that it is defined by John Gascoigne in *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 33-4) where the English Enlightenment is distinguished from the French by characterizing it as ‘a set of barely conscious social attitudes which coloured the actions and values of society’.
- 6 OED defines sociology as The science or study of the origin, history, and constitution of human society; social science. First recorded use **1843** *Blackwoods Magazine* LIII, 397: These are to constitute a new science, to be called Social Ethics or Sociology.
- 7 ‘If we consider the character of the newer nationalisms which, between 1820 and 1920, mark them off from their ancestors. First, in almost all of them “national print-languages” were of central ideological and political importance [...]. Second, all were able to work from visible models provided by their distant, and after the convulsions of the French revolution, not so distant, predecessors’. (67) ‘Print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language *per se*’. (134)
- 8 The designation derives from the journal edited by Lucien Febvre and others from 1946, which appeared quarterly between 1946-1960 and then bimonthly from 1961. The title is sometimes cited as: *Annales, économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 1946-1993; then as: *Annales, histoire, sciences sociales*.
- 9 Eric Aurebach’s *Mimesis* is quoted with approval on pages 16, 23-4 and 68-9; while much of the analysis of fiction in the section of chapter 3 entitled “Apprehensions of Time” (22-36) derives

from works like Wayne C Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Booth is not cited in the bibliography of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. The theoretical work that Anderson does cite with approval that has a bearing on his anthropological approach to defining community but does not seem to have influenced his literary analysis is: Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.

- 10 'We have also seen that for essentially administrative purposes these dynasties had, at different speeds, settled on certain print-vernaculars as languages-of-state – with the choice of language essentially a matter of unselfconscious inheritance or convenience'. (84)

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Cage and Joyce

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Abstract: *James Joyce's work was very important to the development of John Cage's music and poetry. We can see it when we listen to his compositions or read his poems. Cage admired Joyce's last novel, Finnegans Wake, praising mainly its language and circular structure. Cage decided to rewrite this novel, using a very personal method, that he called "chance operations". Why did Cage decide to do it? I do not intend to explain his innermost motivations, but it is obvious that Cage created a very interesting poem, "Writing through Finnegans Wake", that could be considered a very condensed version of Joyce's masterpiece. After finishing his poem, Cage decided to transform it into a musical piece. He collected a great variety of sounds, using Joyce's novel as a guide. So all the sounds that Cage collected are mentioned in Finnegans Wake – noises, voices, traditional songs, etc. All these sounds were played together, creating a sonorous chaos that suggests a dream, the dream of all mankind. Its title is taken from Finnegans Wake: "Roaratorio". This musical composition is in its own right a masterpiece. Cage's voice, reading his own poem, was added to this musical chaos. This composition was recorded and today is available on CD. I would like to play a small fragment of it. But before doing so, I would like to call attention to Cage's poem, because it reveals Cage's poetics very well. Cage loved Joyce's words, but criticized his syntax, because it looked like the normal syntax of the English language. For this reason Cage decided to use words without normal syntax, creating a new kind of poetic language not found in Joyce's novel.*

In the introduction to "In the Wake of the Wake", a book which records the impact that James Joyce's novel had on other artists, editor David Hayman comments:

"Few writers in either nation read "Finnegans Wake". In America, we are just now getting beyond "Ulysses", but at least we have been there. Only a chosen few – [...] – are branching out from the "Wake". [...] "Finnegans Wake" is not yet the model and integrated source it could and may become."

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In the same text Hayman cites Californian musician and poet John Cage as one of the few artists who was really affected or influenced by his reading of “Finnegans Wake,” even before it was published as a book.

John Cage was born in Los Angeles in 1912 and died in New York in 1992. An experimental composer, he became known for his piece “4’33,” “where the composition is based on the sounds a silent audience is likely to be able to hear during that specified period of silence,” according to Otto Karolyi. Cage also “developed the prepared piano, for which he became one of the most inventive writers.” “[...] As the piano is prepared, the various timbres give an illusion of a percussive ensemble, though there is only one player.” In the opinion of 20th-century critics, Cage “is one of the great experimentalists of our century.”

In addition to being a composer, Cage was also a poet, and published several books. He was an avid reader and admired modern literature. In the 1970s he admitted that “[...] when I was young, the writers who were of interest to all of us were Pound and Stein and Eliot and Cummings and Joyce, and I am still devoted to Pound and Stein and Joyce. And of those three, I’m at present interested in Joyce.”

In fact, along with composer Erik Satie and painter and sculptor Marcel Duchamp, the author of “Finnegans Wake” was probably the artist who most marked Cage’s artistic path, influencing both his poetry and music. Cage recognized this at the end of his life:

“And I think that the artists of the twentieth century who resist our understanding are the ones to whom we will continue to be grateful. Besides Joyce there is Duchamp. And Satie whose work, though seemingly simple, is no less difficult to understand than that of Webern.”

Cage discovered Joyce’s work when he was still very young, as we already know. In 1939 he acquired a copy of the first edition of “Finnegans Wake,” but at that time he was already familiar with several fragments of the book, which had been published in magazines during previous years: “[...] I had read parts of it in “transiton” (sic) before that. [...] I was always fascinated with the language and I think of it as the most important book of the century.”

Even though Cage considered the novel to be a masterpiece, he never read it from beginning to end. He admired some passages, which he stumbled on by chance. Cage admitted: “But like so many other people I never read it.” Yet Cage used the book as a source of inspiration, for he “was always fascinated with the language:” “Very early in the forties I wrote a song called “The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs.” I found the text for that – I’ve forgotten the page, something like 556 – I simply looked for a lyrical passage.”

Cage composed this song in 1942. At the time, he also enjoyed reading some fragments of the book to friends. The book was always close at hand, on his table or on his bookshelf, but was only occasionally opened by Cage.

This situation continued during many years. In the 1970s Cage finally opened the book to read it from the first to last pages, as he had never attempted before. He did not, however, read it as a typical reader, but as a poet seeking inspiration in the novel for his own poems, or better yet, for some “mesostics” on the name of the Irish writer.

“A mesostic is like an acrostic,” a poem written in verse that highlights, through the succession of certain letters placed in the middle of sentences, the name of some person or thing to whom or which one wishes to pay homage. In other words, “the principle of a mesostic is simple: a name, word, or phrase serves as a “key” for the text to be written.”

According to James Pritchett, Cage “began using mesostics as a way of rearranging an existing text [...]. The first such use was in his “Writing Through ‘Finnegans Wake’ (1977).”

That is, for John Cage a mesostic was a type of poetic composition that took as a reference another literary piece or pre-existing text: the poet randomly selected words and sentences from this source, and then rearranged them in a new and briefer order. By adopting this method, Cage was able to write in verses a fairly reduced version of “Finnegans Wake” (“it is 626 pages long”), in which Joyce’s name is cited in the middle of the sentences.

However, Cage’s editor considered this summarized version of the novel too long. For this reason, Cage soon thereafter decided to write “Writing for the Second Time Through ‘Finnegans Wake’,” as he explained:

“The text itself was written because J. R. de la Torre Bueno, my editor at Wesleyan University Press, found my first “Writing Through ‘Finnegans Wake’” unreadable. He said it was too long and boring. It has around 120 pages and is a series of 862 mesostics on the name of James Joyce starting at the beginning of “Finnegans Wake” and going to the end. [...] Instead of 120, “Writing for the Second Time Through ‘Finnegans Wake’” has only 41 pages.”

We could conclude from what was stated above that when Cage read “Finnegans Wake,” he was “bringing it to life in another form.” That is, instead of trying to discover the meaning of the book, Cage was more interested in manipulating and reinventing it. He thus declared: “So that rather than trying to find out what the book’s about, this opens up the possibility of doing many things with the book.”

Cage stated that he had “a non-scholarly and naive attitude toward the book” and that for him, “each instant in ‘Finnegans Wake’ is more interesting than trying to find out what the whole book is about.” He concluded, “everything about it is endless and attractive.”

Joyce’s novel, however, was not the only literary work that Cage rewrote or recomposed using mesostics. As Pritchett stated:

“After the first “Writing Through ‘Finnegans Wake’,” Cage wrote three more, using slightly different rules of finding mesostics. Later, Cage applied the same procedure to the “Cantos” of Ezra Pound (1982), Kafka’s “Die Verwandlung” (1983), and Thoreau’s “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience” (1985).

In 1978, a German radio station (West German radio, Westdeutscher Rundfunk) invited Cage to read his “Writings Through ‘Finnegans Wake’.” Cage accepted the invitation and decided to read only “Writing for the Second Time Through ‘Finnegans Wake’.”

According to Kostelanetz:

“Asked to add “musical background” to this declamation, Cage decided to gather sounds recorded in every geographic place mentioned in Joyce’s text [...] but since most of Joyce’s places were in Ireland, he decided to spend a whole month there himself [...], recording not only place but native music.”

In addition, the German radio station “agreed to arrange for letters to be sent to radio stations around the world to ask for sounds from the places mentioned in the ‘Wake’.”

During his one-month voyage through Ireland, Cage recounts that he talked to laymen about Joyce’s novel, and they told him “[...] that they didn’t understand it. And then I asked them if they understand theirs dreams and they confessed that they didn’t. And if you can’t understand your dreams, it’s perfectly reasonable not to be able to understand “Finnegans Wake,” which is also a dream.”

Cage preserved this dream – and on occasion nightmare – atmosphere that is intrinsic to Joyce’s book, in the noise-riddled music composed for “Writing for the Second Time Through ‘Finnegans Wake’.” As a composer, Cage followed an aesthetic principle: he always tried, as he admitted several times, “to find a way of writing music that freed the sounds from my likes and dislikes and from my memory and from my taste.” For this reason Cage began working with what he termed “chance operations,” which involve impersonal and abstract decisions or choices. Cage did not wish to express his own feelings, but to do art to change himself. One could say that Joyce also shared this aesthetic conviction, to a certain extent. As Cage himself stated: “I forget where it was that I read that Joyce preferred comedy to tragedy, because in comedy – as he put it, I believe – there is greater freedom from likes and dislikes.”

In sum, the “musical background” that Cage composed for “Finnegans Wake” is an experimental composition, “free of melody and free of harmony and free of counterpoint.” The audio material originates from two basic sources:

- “a tape collage, based on sounds and noises mentioned by Joyce in his book (such as bells, dogs barking, water running etc.)”
- “a circus of Irish folk music.”

The two “tapes were then assembled and mixed.” The noise-riddled music that emerged from this was then “superimposed upon the reading of Cage’s text.”

In the opinion of James Pritchett: “The effect of this is a thick, joyous collage of sounds, music, and reading.” This performance, “which is both literary and musical,” was termed “Roaratorio,” a word composed of another two: “roar plus oratorio,” which Cage took from “Finnegans Wake.”

When evaluating his own work, Cage stated: “I don’t think it’s as complex as “Finnegans Wake” itself.” His intention was perhaps to suggest the work’s complexity, without reproducing it.

Cage explained the following about the term “oratorio:”

“An oratorio is like a church-opera, in which the people don’t act, they simply stand there and sing. And so a “Roaratorio” is – well, you don’t roar in a church but you roar in life, or roars take place in life and among animals and nature and that’s what this is. It’s out in the world. It’s not in the church.

Or you can say the world has become a church – in which you don’t sing, you roar.”

And now I would like to present a fragment of this John Cage performance, which was recorded on CD. In fact, it is an excellent recording that preserves the qualities of Cage’s music and Joyce’s novel: chaotic, oneiric, nocturnal, non-melodic and non-harmonic art.

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*Brazilian Readings of British
Decadentism: Abgar Renault
and Pedro Nava Recreate W. B. Yeats
and A. V. Beardsley*

*Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira**

Abstract: *The paper focuses on a double affinity, which concerns Literature and the Visual Arts, involving Brazilian and Anglo/Irish works. The text likewise traces the affinities between Pedro Nava's illustrations of Renault's poems and Beardsley's drawings for Salome.*

*Centring on Abgar Renault's translations of poems by Yeats and Wilde, the essay tries to trace the process of appropriation and re-invention which enables the Brazilian poet to transtextualize the Irish writers' poetry, interweaving source and translated texts. The Brazilian poet's choice of poems, which concentrates on different stages of Yeats' production, further reflects Renault's own stylistic choices: like Yeats, he starts as a symbolist, but moves on to a post-symbolist poetics, more attuned to modern taste. The paper relies on Augusto de Campos' notion of translation as a persona, in which the translator gets into the foreign text's skin, so as to "re-pretend everything again". A parallel is also drawn with Machado de Assis' translation tactics in *Ocidentais*: the appropriation of European poetry illustrates Machado's own project for the construction of Brazilian literary identity.*

The ways of intertextuality are unpredictable. There is no knowing where they will take us. Having no traceable beginning or end they may lead to paths as wayward as those of the electronic web, involving countless kinds of semiotic processes and all kinds of texts, literary or otherwise. In this connection, the relations between Brazilian and Anglo-Irish art provide exciting material, shedding new light on textual analysis.

To embark on one of these journeys, I would like to comment on the meeting of two Anglo-Irish poets, Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats, with one of their Brazilian

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translators, Abgar Renault – a poet whose centenary was celebrated in 2001 by the two literary academies to which he belonged (the Brazilian Academy and the Academy of Letters of Minas Gerais). On the other hand, I would like to explore the mediation of the three poets' work in drawings by Aubrey Beardsley and by Pedro Nava, the Brazilian memorialist whose many talents included that of painter and illustrator. In his long and busy life (he was not only a writer, but also a physician with a large practice) Nava was able to write a five-volume memoir spanning several decades of Brazilian social life. Not much time was left to develop his considerable talent for the visual arts. But he managed to leave enough paintings and drawings to display his different styles and to give a measure of his powers in the field.

In his illustrations of Renault's symbolist poems Nava seems to engage in a dialogue with Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations of Wilde's *Salome* and of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. A circuitous connection thus brings together the poetry of Wilde and Yeats, that of Renault, their Brazilian translator, as well as Nava and Beardsley's graphic art, in their illustrations of Wilde and Renault, respectively. The crisscross of associations among these texts also provides a glimpse of certain aspects of *fin de siècle* decadence as well as of its relative, Brazilian Symbolism.

We may begin with three illustrations by Nava for his lifelong friend Abgar Renault's unpublished *Poemas do Silencioso Romance*, dated 1925. Copied in the author's own hand, the poems were not selected by Renault for inclusion in his *Poetic Works (Obra Poética)*, the register of his aesthetic itinerary, which covers seven decades and decisive moments of twentieth-century Brazilian poetry, from late Romanticism, Parnassianism and Symbolism to Modernism and Concretism. Not included in this collection, the loosely symbolist *Poems of the Silent Romance* remain in a handwritten booklet presented by the poet to his fiancée, Ignez Brant. The first three pages of the booklet were illustrated with pen and ink drawings by Nava.

The drawings recall certain features of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Wilde's 1893 English edition of *Salome* and also of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. In a way they close the circle around Abgar Renault, who translated Wilde, as well as Yeats, into Portuguese. Like Yeats's, Renault's poetics wore many "coats": it underwent a number of metamorphoses – a long fling with Symbolism preceding a bare, unadorned verse, which marked both his maturity and that of the Irish poet.

Thus, although Renault did not translate many of Yeats's or Wilde's texts, his Portuguese versions of their poems invite analysis. Regardless of their intrinsic merit, they play a significant role as indicators of the Brazilian poet's aesthetic development. The peculiar kind of intertextuality which involves the poems, their translations and the mediation of Audrey Beardsley and Pedro Nava's illustrations, foregrounds certain affinities among the literary and visual arts in Europe and in Brazil. Renault's choice of texts to be translated also illustrates a process of appropriation and re-invention which enables poets to transtextualize other artists' creations in such a way that by interweaving source and target texts they make the foreign work serve their own purposes.

The mesh of texts I have in mind is a case in point. Before I pursue their analysis, however, I must qualify their similarities by mentioning a contrast between Beardsley's and Nava's achievements: Nava, a prolific memorialist, had little time to develop his talent in the direction of the visual arts. As for Beardsley, even though he also tried his hand at writing (he is the author of *Under the Hill*, his version of the legend of Tannhäuser) he is first of all a painter and draughtsman. Perhaps the greatest illustrator of the industrial age, also a master caricaturist and natural parodist, he was considered as much a master of pen and ink as Goya was of aquatint, or Handel of the combination of voice and trumpet. His drawings, a contemporary critic once declared, are the most complete expression of what is typical of the decadent movement – a “disdain of classical traditions in art, and of clean traditions in ethics; the *fin de siècle* outlook on the husk of life, and brilliant dexterity in portraying it”. Beardsley's black-and-white illustrations seemed to capture the spirit of his age so perfectly that Max Beerbohm once dubbed the 1890's “The Beardsley Period”. And yet the fashion for his work lasted for only about a year – from April 1894, when the first number of the magazine *The Yellow Book* brought him notoriety – to the spring of 1895, when Oscar Wilde's trial for indecency created a public backlash which also led to the dismissal from the magazine of the illustrator of *Salome*.

An expert in the art of intertextuality, Beardsley was capable of working at once in several different styles, and of blending them with a startlingly fresh touch. His artistic relations are as diverse as the early Pre-Raphaelites, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Whistler, Japanese prints, Greek vases, French Rococo, art nouveau and Toulouse Lautrec. For the drawings for Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, his first commission, Beardsley couldn't resist sending up the mannered intensity of Burne-Jones and Rossetti. He filled his pages with androgynous knights and droopy nymphs, but brilliantly adapted their slightly old-fashioned Pre-Raphaelitism to the more refined taste of the 1890s. In fact he considered the art of Morris and Burne-Jones as “old stuff”. In his drawings for *Salome* Beardsley ironically appropriates the decadent theme of the evil, emasculating woman. The drawings create a vaguely Byzantine setting, but the artist also works in the fashionable japonisme of the period, drawing on the asymmetry, economy of line, and decorative flatness of the Japanese woodblock print. The silhouetted outlines of the figures on Greek red-figured vases served him for Aristophanes's satire *Lysistrata*; while for the illustrations to *Volpone* he used a heavy cross-hatch to create a richly baroque effect. His later infatuation with the French rococo informs the suitably frothy illustrations to *The Rape of the Lock*.

Beardsley's drawings are marked throughout by a voluptuous elegance, an ornamental rhythm akin to the abstract decorations of Islamic palaces, an exquisite calibration between the flowing lines and the flat areas of black and white. The figures appear to be arbitrarily cropped. Without totally effacing an illusion of reality, his aim, like the Eastern artist's, seems to be a beautiful design or pattern within a given space.¹

Some of these features may be seen in Nava's illustrations of Renault's *Poems of the Silent Romance* and thus take us back to the intertextual relationship we started with.

We may first remember how gifted Nava was as a painter and illustrator. We have it from himself that his first artistic manifestations lay in that direction, and he kept a lifelong inclination for finding likenesses between real life characters and figures in painting and sculpture. On this aspect of his talent he once said: "I had an extraordinary vocation for painting, which I played with, but let pass."² However, he sometimes gave vent to this inclination, as in eight gouache illustrations he drew on the pages of a copy of Mário de Andrade's novel *Macunaíma* in 1928. In the course of the correspondence with the novelist, Nava also sent Andrade five drawings. Andrade considered them excellent, especially one, *Claudionor*, which he thought "splendid" and which reveals Nava's knowledge of anatomy.³ His friend Carlos Drummond de Andrade mentions other drawings, some of which (as a head of Oscar Wilde) Drummond kept for himself. Drummond reports, too, that Nava used to draw caricatures on the marble top of bar tables – ephemeral creations soon to be wiped off by waiters [...].

To capture the similarity between Nava and Beardsley, we may look at three vignettes, the first from Beardsley's drawings for Wilde's *Salome*, the two others Nava's illustrations for the initial pages of Renault's manuscript *Poems of the Silent Romance*. The four drawings show a family resemblance, revealed in the similarity of their upward thrust and in their economy and flatness of line, balanced by similarly flowing curved shapes. Nava's next drawing may be compared to "The peacock skirt" from Audrey's *Salome*. Tempered by violet, orange and pink touches, Nava's figure reminds us of the voluptuous slender black and white elegance in many of Beardsley's sketches, and, like some of them, is vaguely reminiscent of art nouveau. The Brazilian drawing also evokes the dreamy, vaguely pre-Raphaelite style of Beardsley's illustrations for *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1470), Malory's first poetic prose account in English of the rise and fall of King Arthur and the fellowship of the Round Table. A delicate eroticism, toned down by a reticence which does not deceive the attentive eye, can be traced in the faceless, gracefully curved naked figure. What cannot be found here, and couldn't anyway be expected in a booklet dedicated to a chaste young woman in the conventional Brazilian society of the 1920's, is the blunt eroticism which gave Beardsley's art such a role in the creation of the myth of the English "Naughty Nineties".

This eroticism often becomes pornography, and may be related to the fashionable japonisme of the times. Many artists had studied the prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige. But Beardsley alone looked attentively at the Shunga genre of print-making, so pornographic that such prints were sold under the counter in Victorian bookshops specialising in erotica or "curiosa". In the same vein Beardsley produced obscene drawings for private collectors. In his published work, he managed slyly to insert schoolboy smut even in seemingly blameless illustrations. The fact could not escape his contemporaries. They considered him a dangerously subversive talent, who posed a danger to the very fabric of society: in 1894 and 1895 *Punch* castigated him as "Mr Aubrey Beer de Beers", with his "comedy of leers".

The kinship between Beardsley and Nava is not limited to the affinities between the few drawings mentioned so far. The more heavily erotic or pornographic aspects of

Beardsley's art also find an echo in Pedro Nava's later drawings, kept under lock and key in Rio de Janeiro's *Biblioteca Nacional*. These illustrations, which recall Nava's long practice as a doctor, reveal the anatomist's skill in their coarse, almost brutal sensuality. So, in accordance with his family's wishes, they have not been published and can only be seen under special conditions.

This oscillation between dreamy stylized sketches and a bare, realistic touch brings us back to Renault's translations of Wilde and Yeats' s poems and to the Brazilian poet's own original work. The first thing to notice is the criterion implicit in his choice of texts to be translated – not the representativity of the poem within the author's work or of the author within a national tradition. Side by side with towering figures like Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Coleridge, or Wallace Stevens, Renault's translations include writers virtually unknown in Brazil in the early twentieth century. The fact is, Renault translates poems showing striking stylistic affinities with those he himself authored at the time. The act of translation was an exercise in literary empathy, confirming the notion (chiefly developed by the Campos brothers in Brazil) that translation may prove a way for writers to choose their precursors and to antropophagically appropriate them for their own uses. Appropriation, re-invention and transtextualization then allow for the weaving together of source and target texts. In this train of associations, Renault's selection of Yeats' and Wilde's poems is a creative option. Echoing Haroldo de Campos' words, who in turn echoes Fernando Pessoa, translation thus becomes something like a heteronym. The poet translates only what he loves, he only pretends what he wants to. The foreign text becomes a kind of skin: the translator gets into it, so as to "re-pretend everything again":

translation for me is a persona. Nearly a heteronym. It is to get into the pretender's skin, to re-pretend everything again, each pain, each sound, each colour. This is why I never set out to translate everything. Only what I feel. Only what I lie. Or what I lie that I feel, as, once again, Pessoa would say in his own persona.⁴

Consistently with this notion of translation, among Yeats' ample poetic range Renault chooses poems that, great lover and teacher of Literature in English that he was, could, at a certain stage, have been written by himself. The same can be said about his translations of Wilde. Two of the translated poems, "When you are old" and "She wishes for the clothes of heaven" were taken from Yeats' s early books *The Rose* (1893) and *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899) Here we find the symbolist voice which, fighting the "prevailing decadence" of the nineties, Yeats will later disown for its "sentimental sadness", its "womanish introspection", as he calls them. In a letter dated 1904, the poet declares he no longer wants the kind of poetry that "speaks [...] with the sweet insinuating voice of the dwellers in that country of shadows and hollow images".⁵ But in 1893, before this denunciation, when Yeats is 28, it is still the soft redolent musical voice of Symbolism that we hear in "When you are old". We can read the first stanza side by side with Renault's translation:

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

*When you are old, and gray and full of sleep
And nodding by the fire, take down this book
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.*

QUANDO FORES VELHA

*Quando estiveres, já velhinha, a cochilar
junto à lareira, tira este livro da estante
devagarinho lê [...] sonha com o suave olhar
dos teus olhos de outrora e suas sombras
fundas.*

Owing to the character of Portuguese morphology, the translation cannot duplicate the predominantly monosyllabic line. Largely responsible for the slow dreamy rhythm of Yeats's stanza, the heavy monosyllables seem equivalent to the curved florid pen strokes in Beardsley's and Nava's illustrations. Forcing the gaze to linger in different directions, the flowing curves retard the perception of the whole, and make for a slower rhythm in the reading of the illustration. In his blank verse transcreation of Yeats's poem Renault does his best to achieve a similar slow pace: he introduces a number of pauses, made explicit by the punctuation, which reduce the speed of the reading. Yeats's other early poem, written six years later, is marked by resplendent, precious imagery, favoured by symbolists, as well as by the hesitancy between sound and meaning so valued by Valery. Let us again compare the English and the Portuguese:

SHE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

*Had I heaven's embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;*

*I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

ELA DESEJA OS TECIDOS DO CÉU

*Se eu tivesse dos céus os tecidos bordados,
de luz dourada e viva prata entretecidos
os azuis, os escuros e os claros tecidos
da noite, do romper do dia e do crepúsculo,
estender-te-ia esses tecidos sob os pés [...]
Mas, pobre como sou, só possuo os meus
sonhos;*

*eu espalhei os meus sonhos sob os teus pés:
pisa de leve, pois pisas os meus sonhos [...]*

Here again Renault's exercise in literary empathy evinces the stylistic similarity between Yeats's and his own poetry. The slow dreamy rhythm of "When you are old", as well as its general theme and atmosphere can be found, for instance, in Renault's original poem, "Diante do Mar". Like Yeats's, this is a young man's piece, taken from *A Princesa e o Pegureiro*, the first book of *Obra Poética*, marked by a premoninantly symbolist aesthetics. Had the young Yeats written in Portuguese, he could have written this poem, so akin in tone to "When you are old":

DIANTE DO MAR

*Uma tarde, quando eu não for mais eu, virás a mim sem ti.
Ver-te-ei cegamente num mortiço espelho.*

*O que apertarei e beijarei presente será distante aqui,
sombra de lua e nada, e estarei meu eu mais velho.*

*Saberei que me serás apenas álgido futuro
um dia de asas em indelével fuga, e não terei
alípede cavalo, anjo ou bruxedo. Gelado furo
no ar de inverno arrastará meu íntimo rei. (Etc., 49)*

As an equivalent for “She wishes for the cloths of heaven”, I would choose Renault’s “Em Busca da Estrela”, another youthful composition. In tone, as well as in the rich texture of its cosmic imagery, these verses again recall Yeats:

*Que firmamento ou que anfracto,
perdido de ti, e pálido,
possui o vestido cálido
que afagou as nebulosas, o vinho, as ondas e as rosas
do teu subvertido corpo?*

The same might be said of these lines, from *Sub specie aeternitatis*:

*Vi-te e vi a expressão essencial
da forma, da graça e da luz.
Vi-te e vi a trêmula fragilidade do efêmero
vestida das roupagens do eterno. (A Princesa e o Pegureiro, 17)*

In the two poems by Renault one finds the cosmic imagery that, as in Yeats’s “She wishes for the cloths of heaven”, evokes the transcendental aspect of Symbolism presenting the beloved as an incarnation of the Platonic Idea.

Renault’s translation of Oscar Wilde’s “Requiescat” also illustrates his youthful bent towards Symbolism. Readers can see this for themselves, noticing the translator’s use of rare, literary epithets like *fulvo*, *fúlgido*, well suited to Wilde’s “golden”, but also recalling the use of a similar register in Renault’s original poems.

*REQUIESCAT
Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.*

*All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.*

*REQUIESCAT
Ela está aqui (pisai de leve [...])
por sob a neve.
Falai baixinho; pode ela ouvir
crescer as flores.*

*Seu fulvo e fúlgido cabelo
está mofado.
e ela, que foi formosa e jovem,
Desfeita em pó.*

*Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.*

*Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.*

*Lirial e branca como a neve,
mal conheceu
que era mulher, e suavemente
assim cresceu*

*Dura pedra e tábua de um caixão
seu peito cobrem;
sòzinho, dói-me o coração;
ela descansa.*

Note, too, that the young woman celebrated by the poem, with her “bright golden hair/ Tarnished with rust” and her “lily white “complexion likewise recalls the beloved of Abgar’s poems, who has auburn hair “cabelo enastro” (“Alegoria”) and “the white face of transiency” (“o alvo rosto do efêmero”) in “Nas mãos de Deus/II”). Similar descriptions, which pop up in other poems, also evoke the “Rossetti face”, created by the Pre-Raphaelite painter for the *femme fatales* and tragic heroines of his paintings.

As they overcome this symbolist stage, both Yeats and Renault later adopt other voices – (as does Wilde, in *De Profundis*). Here is Renault’s translation of “A Drinking Song” (*The Green Helmet*, 1904), with its lighter, quicker pace:

À DRINKING SONG

*Wine comes in at the mouth
And love comes in at the eye;
That’s all we shall know for truth eis
Before we grow old and die.
I lift the glass to my mouth
I look at you, and I sigh.*

CANÇÃO

*Entra o vinho pela boca
pelos olhos entra o amor,
tudo quanto sabemos
antes de velhice e morte
Levanto meu copo à boca
E contemplo-te, e suspiro.*

This is not a far cry from Yeats’s later unadorned style, punctuated by realistic details. The lyricism is still here, but the song has lost its piercing intensity, which has been replaced by a quieter, lucid, almost dry tone. Yeats’s “Old men admiring themselves in the water”, on the age-long theme of the transiency of all things, rings with this new voice. It can here be heard side by side with Renault’s rendering::

*OLD MEN ADMIRING THEMSELVES
IN THE WATER*

*I heard the old, old men say,
“Everything laters,
And one by one we drop away.
They had hands like claws, and their knees
Were twisted like the old thorn-trees
By the waters.*

OS VELHOS CONTEMPLAM-SE NA ÁGUA

*Eu ouvi os velhos dizendo:
“Tudo muda
E um a um vamos desaparecendo...”
Tinham mãos como garras, e seus joelhos
eram tortos tais espinheiros velhos
ao pé das águas.*

*I heard the old, old men say:
“All that is beautiful drifts away
Like the waters.”*

*Eu ouvi os velhinhos dizendo:
“Tudo que é belo passa correndo
como as águas...”*

The poem, from *In the Seven Woods* (1909) seems to announce the Yeats's voice that

we hear in *Last Poems*. Abgar, too, will find a new, mature voice, most notably in his great philosophical poem, *Sofotulafai*. These confluent paths enhance the significance of the two poets' meetings, either through the visual mediation of Nava's and Beardsley's illustrations, or through their stylistic resemblances. Renault's and Nava's plunge into the vast aesthetic web we call Decadentism – a manifestation of their own individual tastes – supports the notion of intertextuality and translation as a vehicle for artists' individual projects. We are here reminded of *Ocidentais*, Machado de Assis's collection of translated poetry. In his recreations of European texts, Machado's disregard for the ancient ideal of “faithful” translation, reveals, instead, a project of his own, which included the construction of Brazilian literary identity.⁶ In their use of foreign texts on their way to the finding of their own voice, Renault⁷ and Nava also brush by Machado de Assis, perhaps the greatest of all artists writing in Portuguese.

Notes

- 1 The remarks on Beardsley's art have been largely taken from art critic's Richard Dorment's text on the catalogue for the Aubrey Beardsley Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, on the centenary of the artist's death, from 8 October 1998 to 10 January 1999. I have also drawn freely from Michael Gibson, *Symbolism*. “
- 2 “Eu tinha uma extraordinária paixão pela pintura que deixei passar brincando”. Apud Bueno, Antônio Sérgio. *Vísceras da Memória*. Uma leitura da obra de Pedro Nava. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 1997, 101.
- 3 Andrade, Carlos Drummond. Ambrosina e os incendiários arrependidos. Apud Bueno, 105.
- 4 Campos, Augusto de. *Verso, Reverso, Controverso*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1978, 7. Trans. and quoted by Vieira, Else Ribeiro Pires. Nudity versus Royal Robe. *Brazil and the Discovery of America. Narrative, History, Fiction, 1492-1992*. Mc Guirk, Bernard and Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro (Eds.). London: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996, 1-15.
- 5 From Yeats's letter to A.E. in April 1904. *The Collected Letters*. Wade, Allan (Ed.). London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954, 434 (apud Mutran, Munira Hamud. *Album de Retratos*. George Moore, Oscar Wilde e William Butler Yeats no fim do ‘seculo XIX: um momento cultural. São Paulo. Tese [Livre-Docência, Departamento de Letras Modernas], Faculdade de Filosofia Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo, 2000, 207.
- 6 Here I briefly sum up Sérgio Bellei's convincing thesis in Bellei, Sérgio Luiz Prado. O Corvo Tropical de Edgar Allan Poe. *Nacionalidade e Literatura*. Os Caminhos da Alteridade. Florianópolis: Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 1992, 77-90.
- 7 For a study of the evolution of Renault's poetics, see Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de. Centenário de Abgar Renault: Poeta sem Rótulos. *Revista da Academia Mineira de Letras*, v. XXII. Belo Horizonte, 2001, 17-31, Pastiche Pós-Moderno: uma releitura de Abgar Renault. *Suplemento*

Literário. Secretaria de Estado de Cultura de Minas Gerais, n. 83, May 2002, 4-7. Cf. also Oliveira, Solange Ribeiro de, and Renault, Affonso Henrique Tamm. *Abgar Renault*. Belo Horizonte: Centro de Estudos de Literários da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG, 1996.

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- _____; Renault, Affonso Henrique Tamm. *Abgar Renault*. Belo Horizonte, Centro de Estudos de Literários da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG, 1996.
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The Wild West Show: Ireland in the 1930s

David Pierce*

Abstract: *The West of Ireland has played a dignified if supporting role in modern Irish culture. Writers and painters such as Synge, Jack B. Yeats, Sean Keating, Paul Henry, and the Blasket Islanders helped define the (French-inspired) perception of the West as if not sacred then special. In the 1930s, the West was given another make-over under the impetus partly of documentary realism and partly of an interest in a disappearing lifestyle. There was still an appetite for doing something with that western alternative lifestyle, of recuperating its folds for posterity (as with the foundation of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935), of memorialising its passing (as with the accounts by the last generation of Blasket Islanders), or of using it to make a comment about modernity (as with the Canadian director Robert Flaherty's documentary film *Man of Aran*). *Man of Aran* (1934) is at the centre of several overlapping discourses – visual anthropology, ethnology, documentary film making, Grierson and the 1930s, the ethics of documentarists, and Flaherty's career as a film maker. Surprisingly, analysis of the film's place in modern Irish culture has been attended to less frequently, and the critical probing has tended to come from elsewhere. In the Irish context, *Man of Aran* belongs not so much with Wordsworthian Synge but to a body of work that includes most notably Darrell Figgis's novel *Children of Earth* (1918) where there is a combination of the forceful naturalism of Zola with Hardy's sense of place. Synge's work lives in its language, a language which has a life of its own, conscious of its beauty as well as its fascination for others. In *Man of Aran* there is almost no dialogue and only occasionally do we hear snatches of conversation. In many ways the most telling Irish critique of *Man of Aran* remains Denis Johnston's little-known, satiric play *Storm Song* (1935). Equally, in terms of visual culture, the contemporary cartoons which appeared in *Dublin Opinion* should not be overlooked. These provide not only a running satire on the popularisation of the West but also another filter for viewing this body of work, a filter which, given the demise of the West, now seems in many respects closer to the emerging truth.*

* York St John College, Lord Mayor's Walk. This article appears by courtesy of Polity Press, publishers of *A Cultural History of Twentieth-Century Irish Literature*, from which this extract is taken.]

