

2015

# Renegotiating National Identity: Partial Cosmopolitanism in Twentieth-Century Irish Fiction

Jason Chad Cash  
*Lehigh University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://preserve.lehigh.edu/etd>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Cash, Jason Chad, "Renegotiating National Identity: Partial Cosmopolitanism in Twentieth-Century Irish Fiction" (2015). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2541.

<http://preserve.lehigh.edu/etd/2541>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Lehigh Preserve. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Lehigh Preserve. For more information, please contact [preserve@lehigh.edu](mailto:preserve@lehigh.edu).

Renegotiating National Identity:  
Partial Cosmopolitanism in Twentieth-Century Irish Fiction

by

Jason C. Cash

A Dissertation

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Lehigh University

May 2015

© 2015 Copyright  
Jason C. Cash

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Jason Cash  
Renegotiating National Identity:  
Partial Cosmopolitanism in Twentieth-Century Irish Fiction

---

Elizabeth Fifer, Dissertation Director

---

Approved Date

Committee Members:

---

Amardeep Singh

---

Seth Moglen

---

Catherine Elick

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is hard, nearly impossible in fact, to know where to begin. I would like first to thank my committee, each of whom has been instrumental in my success and growth as a scholar, a teacher, and a human being. Elizabeth Fifer, my dissertation chair, was the first person with whom I had a conversation of any length at Lehigh. Her encouragement, geniality, and guidance – to say nothing of her willingness to read hundreds of pages of my writing before the dissertation process even began – has been invaluable. Amardeep Singh has been no less encouraging and genial, but I would like to thank him in particular for pushing me to continually clarify and refine my ideas as well as to expand the contexts in which I have considered Irish literature. I would like to thank Seth Moglen for his highly specific, thorough, and constructively critical feedback; I still have a long way to go as a writer, but I know that many hours of Seth's life have been spent making me a better one. Last but not least, I would like to thank Kathy Elick of Bridgewater College both for agreeing to be an outside reader despite absurd distance and her own ongoing work and for raising my interest in Irish literature in the first place.

I would also like to thank Lehigh's English department as a whole for encouraging me to think and feel more deeply about literature and about humanity. There are so many horror stories about cutthroat competition in academic settings, but I have found only support and solidarity among both faculty and students here. In fact, my experience in higher education has been unusually supportive, so I must also thank Ellen Malenas-Ledoux, Geoffrey Sill, and Tyler Hoffman among others of Rutgers-Camden and Scott Suter, Alice Trupe, and Ed Huffstetler of Bridgewater College. Perhaps most

emphatically, I express my gratitude to Phil O'Mara, whose overwhelming faith in me led me down a very different path than I had anticipated.

Finally, I have to thank my family. I thank my parents, Sherry and Chad Cash, for ensuring my existence and for encouraging me to make good on my own potential. My cousin Joshua Mathews-Ailsworth I thank for being my closest friend for a very long time and for helping me recognize that silliness and an optimistic sense of fun are, in fact, compatible with an intellectual disposition. My mother-in-law, Cindy Harnish, and brother-in-law, Chris Harnish, I thank for welcoming me as one of your own. It would be disingenuous for me to conclude this project without acknowledging the contribution of our cat, Mushu, who has spent what seems like thousands of hours nestled between my lap and the keyboard as I type. Most importantly, I thank my wife, my partner, and my best friend, Callie Cash. Callie, you have been incredibly patient with me. I have been a student of some kind for the majority of our time together, and I know that has presented its challenges, but you have made it possible for me not only to get by but to succeed and to thrive. I love you, and I cannot wait to see what life has in store for us next.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Introduction: Nationality <i>and</i> Cosmopolitanism?	3
Chapter One: “Do I Contradict Myself? Very well then I Contradict Myself”: Bram Stoker and the Cosmopolitan Counternarrative	44
Chapter Two: “our greater Ireland beyond the sea”: Reimagining Social Identification in James Joyce’s <i>Ulysses</i>	113
Chapter Three: “Ye’re not men at all”: Gender and Nationalism in Kate O’Brien’s <i>The Land of Spices</i>	171
Chapter Four: “Rubbed-out men in the rabbled empire of the Queen”: Transnational Utopianism in Sebastian Barry’s <i>The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty</i>	232
Conclusion	294
Works Cited	305
Appendix A: Debate in <i>The Dublin Daily Express</i>	312
Appendix B: Patrick Pearse and Militant Nationalism	318
Vita	323

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation takes as its starting point the postcolonial approach that has guided the critical discourse on Irish literature for the last two decades. Rather than simply reiterating the familiar emphasis on nationalist or imperialist sympathies in their texts, I take the position that a number of Irish writers were actively engaged in a thoughtful reconsideration of Irish subjectivity in relation to both national and international or transnational communities. This is not to say that the novels do not contain gestures that resonate with nationalism and imperialism. Instead, I argue that the visions of cosmopolitan possibility in these novels should be taken seriously despite the pattern of deflation or seeming impossibility that characterizes them all.

Within the individual chapters, I examine novels by Bram Stoker, James Joyce, Kate O'Brien, and Sebastian Barry, highlighting the ways in which the writers both celebrate the love of nation and the good that Irish nationalism has done and could do, as well as the points at which they become critical of it and look to more inclusive and expansive ways of being. Stoker, moving from *The Snake's Pass* to *Dracula*, develops a cosmopolitan generosity to competing ways of understanding the world, initially rooted in Ireland, into an elaborate transnational fantasy that sees social edification in the possibility of cooperation across difference. James Joyce, in *Ulysses's* "Cyclops" episode, uses surrogate characters to vocalize both the grievances of Ireland under colonial occupation and the risks associated with political nationalist responses to oppression, offering a – qualified – endorsement of cosmopolitanism as an alternative. Kate O'Brien's *The Land of Spices* sees more rigidly-defined nationalist and cosmopolitan characters cooperating to alleviate the gender oppression endemic to some



forms of Irish nationalism, though she maintains a critical distance from nationalism writ large. Finally, Sebastian Barry uses his historical perspective at the end of the twentieth century to give this study its most fully-realized expression of transnational utopian possibility, as *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* focuses on a character whose love for his nation is as undeniable as his refusal to abandon his love for the world as a whole.

These novels never settle on a primary sense of the Irish subject as either national or cosmopolitan, so the vision in these texts can best be characterized as versions of what Kwame Anthony Appiah calls “partial cosmopolitanism”; they explore the possibility that one might identify strongly both with their national communities as well as with people around the world and, in the process, call into question the internalization of xenophobic and culturally narrow conceptions of Irishness implied in George Russell’s influential and prescient formulation, “Nationality or Cosmopolitanism.”

## INTRODUCTION

### Nationality *and* Cosmopolitanism?

#### I. Context: Essentialism and Hybridity in Ireland

In 1996's *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd locates the question of Irish identity in relation to other nationalities at the center of late nineteenth-century Irish writing: "Were the Irish a hybrid people, as the artists generally claimed, exponents of multiple selfhood and modern authenticity? Or were they a pure, unitary race, dedicated to defending a romantic notion of integrity?" His answer to that question, of course, varies by the authors he examines, but for Kiberd the question was reemerging as the new millennium approached. He writes, "[t]he century which is about to end is once again dominated by the debate with which it began: how to distinguish what is good in nationalism from what is bad, and how to use the positive potentials to assist peoples to modernize in a humane fashion" (7). As it turns out, in the years since *Inventing Ireland's* publication, that preoccupation has become even more central to Irish politics, identity and cultural expression. The Republic of Ireland's status as a multicultural and increasingly pluralistic nation since the late twentieth century is indisputable. Although the more rural and remote counties, the small villages and the *Gaeltachts* may still resonate with a vision of a "pure" and unified culture, the reality for the majority of Ireland's population is one of permeability and dynamic exchange. And yet, alongside the intensifying global influence in the Irish nation, vestiges of the past persist and even thrive.

On the whole, one might argue that Ireland's willingness to engage other nations and cultures has been in the best interest of its people. Since joining the European Union in 1973, Ireland has enjoyed a number of economic benefits and protections, and it has been able to leverage that membership into a transformation of its once subordinate status in relation to the United Kingdom into one of peers and political, if not always economic, equality (Thiel 17). The question of how the average Irish citizen identifies in relation to both the Republic and the European Union, however, is much more complex; most identify as primarily Irish, some primarily European, and some as *exclusively* Irish. Still others identify as global citizens (Thiel 80). It is tempting, and at least partially justified, to situate this into a teleological narrative of progress; with each successive generation, Ireland becomes more secure in its sovereignty and likewise more willing to entertain cross-cultural contact. One need not necessarily sacrifice one's local loyalties in order to develop a sense of shared humanity and collective interests, after all. Markus Thiel's recent investigation into contemporary European transnationalism, however, suggests that there are several important qualifications for the Irish case which cannot be dismissed. Despite Declan Kiberd's claim that the Irish have "an extraordinary capacity to assimilate new elements and 'take pleasure' in the fact that identity is seldom straightforward and given" (1), the Irish have been in many ways resistant both to full integration with an international community and to the influx of immigrant culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In *The Limits of Transnationalism: Collective Identities and EU Integration* (2011), Thiel sets out to chart the various self-identified national or international subject-positions of members of EU nations. By examining primary sources, conducting

interviews, and engaging in statistical analysis, Thiel concludes that Ireland is deeply ambivalent about its status in the European Union. Thiel identifies several key distinctions between Ireland and the other case samples. In addition to the Republic of Ireland's Roman Catholic identification, Thiel notes its "unique balance of strong national identity as well as attachment to the EU, ... [its] special relationship with the UK," and a "well-developed democracy marked by popular referenda, which have become a hindrance in the ratification process of EU treaties and served as volatile catalysts for (trans)national discussions" (17). In other words, Ireland has largely been willing to entertain an instrumentalist relationship with the EU while its democratic consensus reveals a repeated resistance to more extensive assimilation, especially when that assimilation tends toward secularization and distances the population from its Catholic cultural identity. Historically, Ireland's profoundly stubborn adherence to a national identity might be best explained in relationship to its emergence from English subjugation; it needed to establish its own cultural boundaries and simultaneously elevate and exonerate that Irishness. The legacy of that identity, however, is interwoven with severe limitations on the Irish people and an unflinching policy of international neutrality that is perhaps most (in)famously captured in moments like Eamon de Valera's refusal to grant visas to Jews exiled from Germany during World War II, a rumor finally confirmed just a few years ago in 2012. In practice, Ireland's transnational interactions have, since the nation's inception, been fraught.

The literature Irish writers have produced in recent years reflects an increasing awareness that, for whatever cultural distinctiveness the nation may have, the lives and experience of its population are bound up with and forever changed by the outside world.

Marisol Morales Ladrón and Juan F. Elices Agudo, in *Glocal Ireland* (2011), see this as a benefit to Irish culture and the development of identity, coining the term “glocal” to describe the “site of negotiation between two forces, one centripetal and one centrifugal” (2). The collection of essays reflects a belief that as Ireland has become increasingly multicultural, “the cultural and artistic productivity of this nation has also definitely moved away from the topical insularity that had exhibited in the past [sic] and has adopted more transnational and universal subjects, at the same time that it has struggled to retain its genuine values and its own signs of identity” (1). The broad landscape of Irish literature in the early twenty-first century reflects the sentiments Thiel’s interviewees expressed; the European or even global identity is impending, but local attachment and attention persists, is “more significant than ever” (Ladrón and Agudo 2). Rather than focusing on a tension or conflict of interests between the national and international modes of identification, it is possible to see the two as mutually constitutive, of course. As Ladrón and Agudo argue, “the construction of the global does not necessarily involve a rejection of the local” and they suggest additionally that “Ireland’s aesthetic production has retained both the interests and the particulars of a local identity and the concerns for a growing multicultural society” (2). The ambivalence Thiel notes in his interviews and studies corresponds to the tension Ladrón and Agudo describe. The reality is an “undiluted” or “uncontaminated” conception of the Irish self is no longer plausible, if in fact it ever was; the myths of absolute difference upon which such a conception is founded seem to have been disappearing in a profoundly concentrated form for the last few decades of Irish life, and the choice between identifying primarily in

terms of national or transnational subjectivity appears more and more clearly as the false dilemma it may have always been.

The Irish conception of a national type, like most conceptions of nationally-oriented subjectivity and like the concept of Ireland as a nation rather than a loose band of tribes, is only a few centuries old at the most. It is, in many ways, a direct result of British conquest, as their rule required the justification of a clear racial and cultural barrier. At major historical moments – the Act of Union, various rebellions, and so on – the discourse of difference has been most visible, but it goes back at least to the sixteenth century, which saw the beginning of representations of the Irish which provided the foundation for centuries of rhetoric using difference to justify domination. The Irish were too close to the English, and not just geographically; as Kiberd notes, English “hostility to the Irish may have had much to do with similarities ... The Irish, despite their glibs and mantles, actually looked like the English to the point of undetectability” (9). The English devaluation of the Irish, in short, is essential to any rationalization of their rule over their western neighbors, and racialization here required an even greater emphasis on ostensible character deficiencies. There is virtually no optic difference whatsoever, and at a more profound level, their cultures developed in strikingly similar ways and probably from rather similar experiences. As much as anything else, the English had to create discourses of Irish inferiority in order to repress their own insecurity as an emerging power. Crafting a response to this history of negative representation, then, was perhaps foremost in the Irish attempt to cast off English rule. Although some would challenge the idea of a unitary national character outright, the dominant mode of Irish discursive

resistance has been either to challenge the validity of stereotypes or to turn them on their heads and into values and noble traits.

Returning to the broader conversation, the “negotiation” between a global and a local identity in Ireland, in both the lives of the Irish people and in its national literature, is not new. Kiberd’s observations might, in fact, be understood as the culmination of more than a century of explicit and implicit discourse weighing the potential benefits and consequences of identifying in primarily national or cosmopolitan terms, with the former seeming to win out. Although occasionally a contentious choice, the predominant tendency in developing a sense of national identity in Ireland has been through dialogue with the Irish Celtic or Gaelic past – the legends and myths, the sports and games, the land and the language – which has been increasingly erased or Anglicized. This past can often seem broken off punctually from the present, of course, due to the impositions of the British. A number of scholars, both historians and literary critics, draw attention to the way that gaps in continuity can undermine any attempts to represent a unified culture. Seamus Deane, for example, suggests that “Without such a tradition, or the idea of it, history appears gapped, discontinuous, unmanageably complex. The period between 1880 and 1940 made a fetish of continuity in part because the generation before had witnessed the final rupturing of the Gaelic civilization” (*Celtic* 36). Deane’s language effectively echoes that of Benedict Anderson in his landmark study *Imagined Communities* (1983; 2006), in which Anderson emphasizes the importance of a sense of a shared past in creating a collective future and describes a nation as “a solid community moving steadily up (or down) history” (26) as well as Eric Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), who emphasize the relationship between the present moment in

which tradition, whether real or imagined, is being invoked, and the moment from which it ostensibly comes.

A society's understanding of the past, in other words, is often shaped by the desires for that society's future. Although, like Anderson, they are not concerned with Ireland in particular, their study speaks volumes about the turn to the past in Irish culture and literature. In Hobsbawm's introduction, he defines the concept of an "[i]nvented tradition" as "a set of practices ... of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior *by repetition*, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past" (1, emphasis mine). The Gaelic League, in attempting to resurrect and promote the usage of the Irish language, accomplished a great deal in developing and preserving a sense of continuity despite the distancing of many Irish persons from that language, and despite the ultimate pervasiveness of the English language in Ireland's everyday life. Likewise, and in addition to providing a means by which to challenge the British emasculation of the Irish male, the Gaelic Athletic Association represented an attempt to establish continuity with the ancient Irish past in terms of its sports and games. Even smaller instances of cultural resistance – such as hedge schools and makeshift stone altars during the prohibition of Roman Catholicism – can be and have been read as successful attempts by the Irish to maintain identity and culture.

## II. Nationalisms

A meaningful discussion of Irish nationalism necessitates a brief delineation of its several forms. Although some writers effectively collapse one into the other, Irish



nationalism is conventionally understood as having two distinctive strands - cultural nationalism and political or militant nationalism. As the names imply, the former is situated primarily in the cultural spheres - the aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, musical, literary, and so on – while the latter describes attempts to affect direct change in the lived experience of a nation, or would-be nation, through political or even military action. As John P. Harrington writes, “Political nationalism is a pragmatic program in which a native population or spokespeople for a native population organize formidable resistance to outside, colonial government” (xii). Harrington echoes Ernest Gellner’s more general claims about nationalism, which he defines in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) as “a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political lines, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state ... should not separate the power-holders from the rest” (1). The common thread in these two definitions is the consensus among the members of a nation that direct action, often in the form of force, must be taken when the nation’s ruling body is not reflective of its population. To some extent, then, political nationalism – especially its militant varieties – aspires to a clear distinction between a national “us” and a foreign “them.” Although not inherently prescriptive, it easily becomes so. In the chapters that follow, I will explore some forms of Irish nationalist prescriptivism. It is perhaps more urgent, however, to examine the ways in which cultural nationalism, which is less directly confrontational and political, may still feed into attitudes that perpetuate violence.

Most of the time, cultural nationalism is more pervasively described in terms of rescuing or elevating national self-image. “Cultural nationalism,” writes Harrington, is “generally a corollary movement [and] an aesthetic program to organize for a native

population a sustaining image of itself, its uniqueness, and its dignity, all contrary to the subordinate and submissive identity nurtured by external, foreign administration” (xii-xiii). Cultural nationalism, then, while less direct, still aims for social transformation. In identifying an “authorized emblem of nation,” it can or obscure the real diversity of a people, and, at least in the case of the Irish national theatre, it “presume[d] to identify the people’s proper aspirations and to require their enrollment, by attendance, in an improving program” (Harrington x). In the nineteenth century, especially in the years following the Famine and Irish diaspora, both of these threads in Irish nationalism became increasingly influential. The Irish citizens closest to its folk traditions, its customs and language, were those most affected by the loss of resources, and so the depletion of rural population by emigration and death hastened their seeming erasure. It was the Anglo-Irish Protestants, however, who led Revivalist efforts beginning with the Young Ireland movement, and including such disparate threads as the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association and eventually the Irish National Theatre, to restore (or invent) a culturally cohesive Ireland.

Young Ireland believed that an immersion in ancient culture supplemented by a modern political apparatus was the only plausible way to move Ireland forward. Although the Young Irelanders, at the peak of the famine in 1848, led a (failed) rebellion that saw their leader, William Smith O’Brien, shipped off to Van Diemen’s Land, they initially imagined a democratic future for the Irish people. Prior to the rebellion, their methodology was not unlike that of those who would come at the end of the century in the Irish Literary Revival. Despite the eventual rebellion, David Dwan, in *The Great Community: Culture and Nationalism in Ireland*, notes that they defined a nation in terms

of a “spiritual essence” rather than in political terms, understanding that “all nationalism ... aims to render politics and culture coextensive” (5). With an imperial power on one hand and contemporary models of rebellion in Europe on the other, the turn to violence is unsurprising, but in its inception, much like George Russell later, Young Ireland understood its cultural and national future rested on an extensive – and primarily cultural – engagement with the past. The believed that “genuine culture,” as Dwan writes, would have to be rooted in “tradition or historical community” (1). Also like Russell, however, a number of the major figures in Young Ireland – Thomas Davis and William Smith O’Brien among them, were Protestants and effectively disconnected from the very culture for whose emancipation they advocated. In effect, the move to locate a shared historical essence or past community, disregarding the relatively short historical period in which their families had lived in Ireland, suggested a means by which to transcend the contemporary schism and work together toward something mutually agreeable. Similarly, Young Ireland believed that democracy was the only desirable future for Ireland, but feared that democracy would promote individualism and deepen divisions. The resurrection – or fabrication – of a shared past, then, offered, along with public education, a means by which to address open wounds and prevent further ones (Dwan 9).

Given the role of Protestant Anglo-Irish in leading successive cultural (and occasionally) political movements, the impression is often one of condescension and paternalism. The Catholic Irish, the reasoning goes, needed the elite and educated Protestants to impose upon them their own culture, to reconnect them with it, and to turn it into something socially and politically viable. In effect, of course, this allows for a check of power on the masses, whose very contemporary lives could be construed as the

“real” Ireland of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, although often with the best intentions, the fixation on the past is, as much as anything, a denial of the authenticity of later versions of Irish culture which do not appear contiguous. At its most transparent, with the case of W. B. Yeats, the allure of the past was precisely that it maintained an inequitable distribution of power by locating the Irish spirit as strongest simultaneously in the peasantry and in the ascendancy; in other words, hierarchy is endemic to and necessary for an essential and traditional Irish culture. Although embedded within a viciously critical chapter, Seamus Deane points out effectively the fallacies of Yeats’s attempt to establish the Irish character as essentially anti-modern, particularly the Protestant writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (*Celtic* 39). Democracy, or political change in general, would be dangerous because “independence would lead [the Irish peasant class] to a loss of their uniqueness (Deane, *Celtic* 37). For Yeats, Deane ultimately argues, traditionalism in modernity is actually revolutionary. So if Young Ireland was hesitant about democracy, Yeats grew caustically antagonistic towards it, as well as towards the emergent capitalist bourgeois middle class. Although initially drawn to democracy in his early years, he would later write that “intellectual freedom and social equality are incompatible” (qtd. in Dwan 6). Yeats recognized that the freedom of the Protestant Ascendancy required the subjugation of the Catholic peasants, and reconciled this by suggesting that the hierarchical relationship was in their nature and ultimately to the greater benefit of the nation – an essentially circular application of traditionalist logic.

For its centrality to the goal of elevating the subordinate peoples of Ireland, then, and for its many potential applications, a sustained dialogue with the past is one of the major currents contributing to the vision of a unified Irish culture. Although some critics,

such as David Dwan (16), take issue with the formulation, Seamus Deane suggests that the Celtic Revivals should be read as “part of the history of European Romanticism,” and that, “[i]n Ireland, these Revivals eventually took the form of a concentration on certain issues which had particular political resonance,” such as “language,” “the land, or the landscape,” and “the fact of violence” (*Celtic* 14). Thematic preoccupations in the literature, in other words, were informed by and in turn informed sociopolitical concerns. The social and material need for edifying narratives and political movements, regardless of the form they take, is clear. Regardless of how like or unlike Irish essentialism is or was to continental European Romanticism, and regardless of how many potential “other Irelands” it might be required to repress, both the cultural and political architects of the Irish state understood the importance of promoting a singular vision – even if they could not reach agreement about which elements were most important.

One of the most important tools for instilling a sense of national identity, and one especially contentious in the case of the Irish, is language. The issues of language in Ireland – of how the Irish language was effectively exterminated and its use made economically counterintuitive, and whether a national literature could ever be produced in the English language – are familiar enough topics. Indeed, the formative debates in the *Dublin Daily Express*, to which I will turn shortly, are related directly to the question of how to conduct a national literature in English. The importance of these issues, however, is not diminished because of that familiarity. Benedict Anderson, highlighting the disparity between the “[t]he objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye” and “their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists” (5), suggests the process by which a national consciousness is realized involves three major components: a unified language, a

sense of unified culture, and centralized media to communicate both of the others (44-5). If it were desirable that Ireland self-realize as a nation-state, then it would have been necessary to found that nation on something more profoundly woven into the fabric of people's lives than abstract geographical borders. The decision, more gradual than punctual, to write *primarily* in English meant that some version of the culture could be communicated to a much wider Irish audience, even if it came at the expense of a native form.

Although the Irish language, thanks to the Famine and emigration, was not very common in the mid-nineteenth century, the Revivalists managed to make it seem as intrinsic to Irish identity as it had ever been, much as it did the Gaelic games. The repetition of which Hobsbawm speaks, in other words, might be a key to understanding the meticulous, and stubborn, application of fading forms to address modern devaluation. By repeatedly placing traditional Irish forms at the center of Irish experience, they reach a level of normalization and familiarity. The same applies to the interest in translating folk tales and songs, and to the emphasis on highly charged emblems of Irishness – the shamrock, the harp, and so on. It is also worth noting that, as a number of these symbols predate both Catholic and Protestant Christianity in Ireland, they offer a space in which to carve out an Irish identity that, at least ideally, is not divisive with regard to contemporary religious practice. Hobsbawm's articulation of the relationship between the United States and Great Britain might well apply here: "The crucial element seems to have been the invention of emotionally and symbolically charged signs of club membership rather than the statutes and objects of the club. Their significance lay precisely in their undefined universality" (11). While so many of the cultural artefacts

resurrected and pushed to the fore in Irish culture, like the flags and anthems Hobsbawm discusses, are effectively hollow, they are also powerful because they allow a variety of individual projections of what it might mean to subscribe to a certain national identity. In other words, they might be somewhat thoughtlessly repeated practices, but that does not make them powerless – or disempowering.

Although language is incalculably important to understanding Ireland's development of national subjectivity, it is only one part of a complex and sometimes indeterminate process. Consider Declan Kiberd's question at the beginning of *Invented Ireland*, "who invented Ireland?," for which he offers three possible and equally convincing answers: the Irish people themselves who "imagined the Irish people as an historic community," the English, for whom "Ireland was pressed into service as a foil to set off English virtues,..." and Irish emigrants (1-2). So far, my discussion has emphasized the first of these, the attempt to define an Ireland rooted in a shared history. To some extent, however, that very tendency can be understood as a response to the second of Kiberd's formulations. Even at its most prescriptive and potentially oppressive, the Irish national character developed through cultural and political apparatuses represented a challenge to English productions of a devalued and debased Irishness. The English imagination of an Irish people goes back at least as far as Edmund Spenser's time in Ireland, and reflects an attempt to "impose a unitary Irish character," increasingly so with the interpenetration and hybridization of the English in Ireland. Ireland had to become, in Kiberd's words, "a not-England, a place whose peoples were, in many important ways, the very antithesis of their ... rulers overseas"; because "the English have presented themselves as controlled refined and rooted, ... it suited them to find the

Irish hot-headed, rude and nomadic, the perfect foil to set off their own virtues” (9). The Irish affinity for alcohol, the effeminacy of Irish men, the intense sentimentalism, and the resistance to capitalist modernity – to modernizing in general –all stem in one way or another from the values attached to Ireland by the English.

Paradoxically, the homogeneity, however negative, assumed of the Irish and promoted by the English may have actually not only necessitated Irish nationalism, but enabled it. As Seamus Deane puts it, “...in the nineteenth century, the prevailing English attitude towards Ireland gave assistance to the notion of continuity and coherence by emphasizing English internal harmony and respectability against the contrasting dissonances and disorderliness of Irish experience and of Irish people” (*Celtic* 19). If the Irish understood themselves to be a unified race, or at least cultivated a unified worldview, then the project of countering stereotypes – or “rescuing” them, as Deane would put it – could be the project of elevating everyone and every *one*. Certain stereotypes would prove much easier to work with than others, of course. For example, Deane suggests in *Celtic Twilights* that some of them are effectively *true*, including sentimentalism, or a fixation on “[l]anguage and landscape” that reflected “a specifically Irish form of nostalgia” (14) – true with, of course, some qualification. With the native Irish population utterly devastated by the Famine and emigration, and with their near-complete estrangement from the land, sentiment became a way of actively remembering and remaining connected to the past and to Ireland itself. Deane, rather persuasively, suggests that Irish “nostalgia was consistently directed towards a past so deeply buried that it was not recoverable except as sentiment” (14). Although it is fairly commonplace to read the immersion in folk stories and songs, in the ancient games, and other cultural



forms as having a political dimension, even the melancholic disposition associated with the Irish has a potentially pro-nationalist dimension and could imply the capacity for reconnection through active engagement, something Shaw does not even entertain in his vicious dismissal of the dreamy Celt in *John Bull's Other Island* (1903).

As I hope to demonstrate throughout these chapters, there is slippage between cultural and militant political nationalisms. Yeats recognized this, famously, in the reception of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), the public response to which led him to reflect on whether or not his play had inspired “Certain men the English shot” during the 1916 Easter Rising (“Man and the Echo” 12). One of these men, Patrick Pearse, argues precisely that the intersection of cultural and militant nationalisms is the entire point<sup>1</sup>. The Gaelic League, as the dominant institution of cultural nationalism, is in Pearse transformed into a centralizing and mobilizing force for political nationalism. The object has not been simply to celebrate and rescue the Irish language and culture, but instead to prepare for full-scale resistance and the realization of a free Irish state. “I say now,” writes Pearse, “that our Gaelic League education ought to have been a preparation for our complete living as Irish Nationalists ... (by which I term I mean people who accept the ideal of, and work for, the realization of an Irish Nation, by whatever means)” (186-7). A near-constant in the discourse of cultural nationalism is the elision of violence, or rather the avoidance of discussing violence toward others; the implications of “by whatever means,” however, goes beyond the self-sacrifice and martyrdom more generally accepted and acknowledges, at least implicitly, the possibility of having to not only die for Ireland, but of having to kill for it. Directly or indirectly, Irish nationalism in both its cultural and

---

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of Pearse’s views, see Appendix B.

political forms has been responsible for a deeply-felt division between the Irish subject and the world outside.

### III. Naming the Dilemma

A generation of traditionalist endeavor reached its apotheosis decades before the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent War for Independence and Civil War, as a more indirect “battle” was waged regarding the conflict between Ireland’s relationship with its inherited native culture and that of the world beyond the island. A debate centered around the tension between national and cosmopolitan conceptions of audience and methodology, published in the Saturday editions of unionist paper the *Dublin Daily Express* in the late 1890s, presents a singularly representative example of Irish intellectuals including W. B. Yeats, John Eglinton, and George Russell, all invested equally in the future of the Irish people, each of whom arrive nevertheless at dramatically different understandings of how national, and how transnational or cosmopolitan, Ireland should be<sup>2</sup>. As Declan Kiberd summarizes, “the controversy established Yeats as the upholder of nationalism, Eglinton as the defender of cosmopolitanism, and Russell as the seeker of some vaguely-defined middle ground” (157). John Eglinton feared that Irish nationalism would equate to a sort of provincialism that would disadvantage the Irish economically and socially in relation to continental Europe, while William Butler Yeats held the position that Ireland could avoid the death of the soul he saw in bourgeois, individualist modernity only by the cultivation and perpetuation of the Ascendancy and peasant classes, in both of whom he located the purest expressions of the Irish spirit.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appedix A for a fuller account of the debate.

This debate, collected in the volume *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (1899), was primarily between Eglinton and Yeats, but also included William Larminie and, of course, A. E., George Russell. Russell's final contribution to the debate, "Nationality and Cosmopolitanism in Literature," was also its effective endpoint. In 1915, however, Russell republished the essay under the shortened title "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism" in the collection *Imaginations and Reveries*, reviving the debate and, at least implicitly, forcing it as a question for the Irish public to consider, and on the eve of the Easter Rising no less. The revised version offers a more developed argument, and Russell's alterations – some of which suggest with even greater emphasis the position of the writer as a conduit for the national spirit – suggests itself as a focal point for my purposes over the earlier published version. Russell weighs carefully and respectfully the relative values of national and cosmopolitan attitudes, all the while advocating for, and explaining the methodology by which to achieve, an essentially Irish cultural and national identity. Kiberd reads Russell's gesture in the essay as "a characteristically ecumenical attempt to reconcile the national and the individual idea" wherein "the nation as a formation existed to enhance the expressive potential of the person, rather than the person existing as a mere illustration of some prior national essence" (157). Russell's particular brand of nationalism, in effect, looks in many ways similar to the nationalist movements to which he, like Yeats and Eglinton, was heir, especially in the appeal to traditional forms and revival of ancient culture in response to the widespread sense of cultural and historical discontinuity. National identity, after all, requires a sense of shared history and a shared future. However, Russell's nationalist vision is neither isolationist nor exceptionalist, as evidenced by Russell's repeated appeals to ancient traditions such as the Greek and

Egyptian. In other words, Russell does not share Eglinton's fears that Irish nationalism would prove too insular and provincial, but instead suggests that all cultures, at some point, have access to a certain intensity and clarity of feeling that is locally-focused and yet reflects universal preoccupations and concerns.

If Russell's intentions were largely ameliorative and ecumenical, and if, like the debate as a whole, he is not concerned with any sort of revolutionary politics proper, his language nevertheless often betrays a number of familiar implicit dangers and latent consequences related to the nationalist project. This is not to say that Irish nationalism and the move to independence did not accomplish immeasurable good for the Irish people, from improvements to the material and economic realities of day to day life to curbing the soul-crushing emotional and psychological discourses of Irish inferiority underwriting British rule in Ireland. Irish political nationalists, in many ways expressing a will implicit in and prepared by cultural nationalists, accomplished great deal of good. Any emancipatory movement, however, with the necessary establishment of its own proprieties and practices, can become hegemonic and normalizing. If, as Russell suggests, Irish literature is the vehicle by which the Irish could create "a new soul among its people," there is the risk that conceptions of that soul might become prescriptive – but more on that later.

Although Kiberd suggests that George Russell saw the Irish essence as primarily enabling the unique expression of the individual, Russell nevertheless articulates that empowerment in terms that render the Irish writer-subject a passive conduit and suggests a measure of conditionality to that individualism. All nations eventually succumb to "psychic maladies," Russell writes, but Ireland is "not yet sick with this sickness," so its

“psychology ... concerns only the curious.” What he sees in Ireland is the “national spirit ... making a last effort to *assert itself* in literature and to overcome cosmopolitan influences *and* the art of writers who express a purely personal feeling” (emphasis mine). In dismissing the “purely personal,” Russell establishes a criterion for the evaluation of Irish literature. Impersonal literature, or rather literature which expresses this national spirit (or allows the national spirit to come through), is accorded higher estimation and becomes the standard. What Russell seems to be gesturing toward, then, is a choice between homogeneities; Russell sees cosmopolitanism “hastily obliterating all distinctions,” and yet turns national essence into a virtue. Essence is, however, also a homogenizing concept.

Russell’s appeals to antique cultures keep his position from being overtly exceptionalist; while national character may be important, the goal is ultimately to elevate what has been diminished or reduced in the Irish, to reclaim it, rather than to set it in competitive opposition to other cultures:

...a literature loosely held together by some emotional characteristics common to the writers, however great it may be, does not fulfill the purpose of a literature or art created by a number of men who have a common aim in building up an overwhelming idea—who create, in a sense, a soul for their country, and who have a common pride in the achievement of all. The world has not seen this since the great antique civilizations of Egypt and Greece passed away.

Russell’s anti-individualism is of the best and most noble kind. It is not overtly prescriptive in this form as it is communitarian. Each person, in contributing something

shaped by – and shaping – the national spirit, edifies and elevates the others. Likewise, what is unique to Ireland is not its status as a nation with a spirit to express, or rather not the comparative quality of that spirit; what is unique is the immediate historical moment at which Ireland is to express the national spirit. The Greeks and Egyptians are no worse (or better) than the Irish; it is just that their time has passed. Ireland is not excluded from Russell’s earlier statement that “psychic maladies . . . attack all races when their civilization grows old.” In this regard, Russell’s vision of an Irish nationalism differs significantly from the versions of nationalism we have come to view with such skepticism and hesitancy since the early twentieth century. While not interested in any explicit cross-cultural or transnational dialogue, this conceptualization of nationality still implies connections among cultures at an almost mystical level.

Perhaps the most important element in Russell’s vision in building an Irish nation, however, and almost certainly the one that makes the Irish struggle for cultural and eventually political independence most like other decolonizing projects, is the role of tradition. The key to realizing the Irish spirit is the “adherence to traditional form.” Looking to, borrowing from, or perhaps even *inventing* the practices, beliefs, and cultural formations particular to the Irish, Russell suggests, is essential: the “national ideal” can be created by “let[ting] that spirit incarnate fully which began among the ancient peoples,” “Nationality or Cosmopolitanism” is filled with continuity rhetoric, which, despite intense historical irony, situates Russell firmly in the company of fellow Protestant nationalists. Consider, for example, the claims that “[t]he faculty of abstracting from the land their eyes beheld another Ireland through which they wandered in dream, has always been a characteristic of the Celtic poets” and “The last Irish poet who has

appeared shows the spiritual qualities of the first...". Irish writers, Russell suggests, have always idealized the island and have recognized its capacity to express both their individual and collective selves. This is perhaps less racial than mystical or environmental, of course, as so many of Russell's peers would have had as little common heritage with the Irish Catholic peasant as he. By situating the "last Irish poet" in continuity with the first, the Protestant Yeats and the early Irish bards are historically, and perhaps culturally, distinctive, but share an edifying creative relationship with the island. Russell goes as far as to suggest that "much in the creation of Ireland in the mind is already done, and *only* needs retelling by the new writers" (emphasis mine). In effect, the modern Irish writer is little more than a conduit for the national spirit, and their writings function to contemporize antiquity. If national essence is understood as the means by which the individual reaches his or her fullest expression, he or she is paradoxically allowed very little agency.

George Russell's appeals to the Irish past, like those made by so many of his contemporaries and antecedents, involves the extensive invocation of the traditional stories of the Gaelic people. He calls specifically for "an offset to the cosmopolitan ideal" in

the creation of heroic figures, types, whether legendary or taken from history, and enlarged to epic proportions by our writers, who would use them in common, as Cuculain, Fionn, Ossian, and Oscar were used by the generations of poets who have left us the bardic history of Ireland, wherein one would write of the battle fury of a hero, and another of a moment when his fire would turn to gentleness, ... and so on from

iteration to iteration persistent dwelling on a few heroes, their imaginative images found echoes in life, and other heroes arose, continuing their tradition of chivalry.

In the debate in the *Dublin Daily Express*, Russell's sympathies are clearly closer to those of Yeats than those of Eglinton. He expands on Yeats, however, by setting up historical figures alongside the mythic and folk characters, which is flexible enough as a category to allow for centuries-old and nearly-mythic figures like Aoife MacMurrough and more ones like Theobald Wolfe Tone or Charles Stewart Parnell. The implication is that like recorded history, as much as the old legends, which themselves may have begun as some sort of chronicle of actual events anyway, are as just as suitable for repurposing in the interests of the present. The exploits of Cuchulain are part of the same tradition that would, in other words, give to literature and history the mythologized versions of Padraig Pearse or James Connolly which Yeats rightly anticipates in "Easter 1916." Additionally, while Russell's interest in an active resurrection of the mythic and historical past is never explicitly revolutionary or tied to violent resistance, it is hard to dismiss. Cuchulain, Fionn, the Red Branch Knights – warriors all. Likewise, Mother Ireland, the Shan van Vocht, demands sacrifice and grows youthful when the land is saturated with blood.

It is telling that, even as Russell attempts to represent a multitude of possible aspects by which to consider the mythic past, he begins with "the battle fury of a hero," implying bellicosity as the default position. While such models often prove pivotal in establishing an oppositional identity, even at the metaphorical cultural level, it is unsurprising that the warrior tradition becomes not only a cultural touchstone but also a justification for and agent in the normalizing and even sacralization of violence. We



cannot overlook the fact, in other words, that the “types” which “are of the most ennobling influence on a country,” when internalized, provide discursive justification for hatred and murder. In other words, as Russell’s formulation that these “imaginative images,” themselves reflections of history, “found echoes in life” that led “other heroes” to “ar[i]se.” However, the “chivalry” Russell represents is as much a coded defense for militarism and violence. History, literature, and legend interact not only in the sense that the former provides material for the latter two, but possibly also in the sense that the latter shapes the movement of the former.

#### IV. Success and Consequence

In contrast to the overt militarism of writers like Patrick Pearse, the cultural nationalist project of resurrecting the past and reconnecting to it by virtue of revisiting ancient myths and narratives, an indispensable part of the Revivalist methodology, appears tame because its appeals to violence are often indirect or secondary. W. B. Yeats, for example, wrote extensively in this mode in such early works as *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) and his plays with Lady Gregory, and Padraig Pearse’s translations of works from the Gaelic past are more notable than his original compositions. Like many myths, those of the Irish had a significant undercurrent of both latent and overt violence. The attention to violent heroes is, in part, a gesture inclined toward social and political empowerment, an attempt to supplant the frail, sentimental and incompetent model propagated by the British, to say nothing of their value as demonstrations of Irish creativity on par with the more culturally esteemed antique cultures. These narratives also, however, normalize and even sacralize violence. Whatever figurative power they

might be intentionally repurposed for, their content nevertheless equates rewards with violence at best and heroic and noble deaths at worst. In *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War* (1998), Barbara Ehrenreich theorizes on the origins of the sacred feelings humans attach to war, and sees cultural expressions of violence as indicative of a repeated retelling of the moment of transition in human pre-history from prey to predator (84). In these terms, the retelling of valiant and violent deeds plays an important and reassuring role in a culture that has been systemically made prey, but it also helps point out the ease with which roles can switch, even the desirability and a fundamental psychic level. This also means that they function, significantly if not primarily, as narratives which both address national and cultural insecurity even as they promote visions of the nation or the people at risk; in some measure, they create or at least perpetuate the very anxieties they are ostensibly needed to counter.

The normalization of violence is one among many consequences which followed the emergence of Irish nationalism. In addition to a set of conflicting responses to a perceived crisis in masculinity, discussed earlier, anti-imperialist Irish nationalism produced a plurality of prescriptive narratives of ideal femininity. Paradoxically, these narratives seem to be at once mutually exclusive and yet mutually reinforcing; at one level, Ireland was itself represented, in its most idealized form, a woman worthy of, and demanding of, blood sacrifice to maintain and retain her youth, while on another, the embodied woman in her everyday life was increasingly deprived of sexual and economic agency, largely as part of the project to elevate the Irish nation by countering the aforementioned discourses of diminished Irish masculinity. The most familiar and influential example of the former is that of Cathleen ni Houlihan, a folk personification of

Ireland famously represented in Lady Gregory's and W. B. Yeats's collaborative play of the same name. Cathleen ni Houlihan is one expression of the *shan van vocht* ("poor old woman") trope in Irish culture, one Mother Ireland among many, and represents the nation as a woman who at once demands and necessitates sacrifice – and protection. The codifying of the nation as a woman, however, initially served a practical purpose. In the early centuries of English rule, Cathleen ni Houlihan could be discussed as a literal substitute in conversation about Ireland. It was a way in which to articulate subversive pro-Irish sentiment without facing reprisal by the English (Kiberd 16). What was convenient and necessary, however, transformed over time into a vision that exercised considerable influence in the day-to-day lives of the Irish. As Heather Ingman writes in *Twentieth Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender* (2007), "Nationalist symbols had material consequences" (7) in Ireland.

Such rendition of the nation has profound and complex implications for a culture that is increasingly concerned with asserting its own masculinity; if the nation is conceptualized as a woman, then the national subjects are either likewise feminized or have to demarcate relatively unambiguous spheres or acceptable behaviors for both sexes. Although women played an important role in political and cultural nationalist movements, by the middle of the twentieth century, women's subordination and secondary status was all but a legal requirement. Following the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty, Ireland saw a "gradual erosion of [women's] political rights" (Ingman 3). Technically, women could and did pursue employment outside of the home, but the social stigma was significant for doing so. As Ingman argues:

[O]ne gender, usually male, becomes empowered at the expense of the other with the result that, whatever rhetoric of equality may be employed, the nation becomes the property of men ... through repetition of accepted gender behaviour, men and women help to construct the identity of their nation; at the same time, this repetition reinforces gendered constructs. Men become the nation's protectors, women its biological and ideological reproducers guaranteeing the nation's purity. Hence: nationalism becomes the language through which sexual control and repression ... is justified and masculine prowess is expressed and exercised. (3)

The clearest expression of this idealization and its consequences is seen in the series of laws leading up to the 1937 Constitution. Although women in Ireland achieved, in 1918, suffrage for those over thirty years of age who owned property, suffrage extended to women over 21 in 1922, a series of rulings beginning with the 1925 Civil Service Amendment, which limited the roles of women in the civil service, and including the 1934 criminalization of birth control, the 1932 marriage bar for teachers, and the 1935 Employment Bill, made it almost impossible for a woman to be fully self-realized and independent on a level remotely approaching that of a man (Ingman 10).

The 1937 Constitution, more than any other document, became the foundational ideological artifact for Irish nationalist sexism and public policy. The Constitution "recognize[d] the family as the natural primary and fundamental group unit of a society" (qtd. in Ingman 11), and therefore built its social codes around a specific vision of family. The Constitution, in part, praises the role of women, suggesting that "In particular the State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support

without which the common good cannot be achieved,” and it attempts to represent domesticity as a noble duty rather than a limitation: “The State shall therefore endeavor to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of her duties in the home” (qtd. in Ingman 12). Although there are two ways to read this, the “more restrictive interpretation” was that which Ingman argues “held sway among Irish legislators for the next thirty years” rather than influencing policy to ensure practical economic support (12).

Nationalism, in its institutional form, also effectively curtailed the potential for challenging sexist oppression through the transformation of male gender norms. Much in the way that the Irish were represented as irrational and emotional to England’s rational and intellectual, they were also represented as characteristically effeminate in contrast to a virile English masculinity. As regards the absolute division of gender roles in Gaelic Ireland, Charles Kingsley and like-minded Englishmen may have been onto something. Two strategies emerged, accordingly. One attempted to celebrate the fluidity of gender in Ireland, while the other – and with lasting repercussions – attempts to invalidate the English claim by suggesting its falsehood and imposing/recognizing gender hierarchy in Irish culture. Both David Lloyd and Declan Kiberd point to this past and its repression. In *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (2011), Lloyd discusses the importance of orality in Irish culture and the marking of Irish Otherness by the English, arguing that “the reconstruction of Irish masculinity and the regulation of proper gendered spaces that was undertaken by Irish nationalism generated a set of prohibitions and exhortations that focus on the unruly mouth” (*Irish Culture* 3), and suggesting that “the discourse on the Irish in the mid-nineteenth century shows a

remarkable absence of any developed conception of gender differentiation” (*Irish Culture* 10). Lloyd and Kiberd share a sensibility that Irish gender and orality are closely linked.

Much like Lloyd’s suggestion that gender division was reinforced through the disciplining of the Irish mouth to meet British standards regarding both speech and drinking (*Irish Culture* 3), Kiberd associates the freedom of Hiberno-English in Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) with the freedom of gender roles in the play. Synge, in other words, celebrates what is elsewhere repressed and controlled. Kiberd sees in the play a “positive revolutionary potential [in] a masculinization of women and a corresponding feminization of men” (175-6). In Synge’s studies of Irish language poetry from the 1600s and 1700s, he encountered “writers [who] had denounced the new Anglicization of sexuality in rural Ireland” and whose poetry and customs represented a system of courtship and sexuality that forewent overt markings of sexual difference as well as allowed for sexual frankness and agency among women (Kiberd 177). As Kiberd points out, “ancient Irish laws were remarkably liberal in their attitude to women,” who could “divorce a sterile, impotent or homosexual husband, could marry a priest, and could give honourable birth to a child outside of wedlock,” and Synge would have found in the far west of Ireland pockets of culture who had not “los[t] these liberal traditions” (179). The Irish, in a sense, may not have always operated on the assumption of normative gender relations, and their men may not have always dominated their women. Instead, both Kiberd and Lloyd are convinced that they began doing so when it became politically advantageous or for national liberation.

Perhaps the most singular influence in fixing the notion of the Irish male as falling short, categorically, of normative masculinity, was Charles Kingsley. While Synge was

able to gesture towards a celebration of the fluid Gaelic gender system, he did so from a Protestant position of relative privilege – and distance. For many Catholic writers, however, the British discourse on Irish sex and gender had a more immediately oppressive dimension, and versions of nationalist masculinity recovery offered a challenge to that discourse. Tracey Teets Schwarze links the concepts of masculinity in Irish literature to Kingsley’s “Christian manliness [which defines] itself against feminine and other racial Others” (113). Her discussion, while primarily about Leopold Bloom, provides useful contextual information for the discussion of gender norms and expectations at the time of the Revival. She notes that while much attention has been given to feminine gender as a façade, the definition of manhood, in the England of the 1800s, also “fluctuated and evolved in response to various social challenges to patriarchal authority, such as Chartism, feminism, and threats to empire, issues that were themselves often framed in terms of gender” (Schwarze 115). With the recognition that manhood was subject to (re)definition, and therefore constructed, vulnerability became an increasingly important British concern. Kingsley urged men to “reconstruct ‘manhood’ as a less ambiguous and physically harder phenomenon” and promoted a “new ideal of a virile and distinctly heterosexual manliness ... that required ‘boldness,’ ‘honesty,’ and ‘plainness’; a defiance of authority; stoic patience; and violent energy” (116-7). Ireland, then, as the most immediate not-England, became the locus for British abjection. Perhaps rightly, the English represented an Irish population whose conceptions of gender were less fixed. Descriptive and observational accuracy, however, were made to serve ideological ends, as they provided the necessary marker of inferiority to British superiority.

Eventually, as Schwarze says, the Kingsleyan mentality was assumed and internalized by many of the Irish men themselves. In addition to (re)establishing a sense of continuity with the ancient past, Gaelic sports provided a means by which to assert a form of masculinity compatible with British norms. Although this required a repression of the indeterminacy and fluidity celebrated by writers like Synge, its rhetorical value in challenging British justifications for colonial occupation is clear. Schwarze sees in the formation of the Gaelic Athletic Association an attempt to “equate a sturdy, rugged maleness with nationhood” as “the ‘recovery of manhood’ ... became synonymous with the discovery of the Irish national soul” (121). Gender divisions continued to be somewhat complex; after all, some of the most prominent nationalist voices included Maude Gonne, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and Countess Markiewicz, the latter of whom actually participated in the 1916 Easter Rising. And, as much as the new gender norms involved the active leadership and domination by men, Ireland in its idealized form continued to be represented as a woman.

In addition to repressing a potentially more egalitarian past in terms of Irish gender arrangements, Irish nationalism came increasingly to represent a distancing from its communitarian Catholicism. Granted, the religion proper continued to be central to the nation’s identity and functioned largely as a conservative force, but its emphasis on community and mutual support, which had been a major factor in Ireland’s resistance to advanced capitalism, became increasingly compromised by Ireland’s need to challenge discourses of Irish inferiority by the British based on charges of “laziness” or inability to modernize. In “Black Irish, Irish Whiteness and Atlantic State Formation,” a chapter from *The Black and Green Atlantic* (2009), David Lloyd draws attention to Ireland’s



historical resistance to imperialist capitalism. Lloyd's account of impoverished Ireland explicitly approaches the Utopian: "the Irish poor were ... found to be surprisingly content with their modes of life and resistant to the improving efforts of colonial administrators and reformers," showing "seeming indifference to the Protestant work ethic," an indifference the British feared would spread like a contagion ("Black Irish" 5). This has been fixed over time as racial characteristic of Irish 'backwardness,' which Lloyd argues could be "understood as a resistance to capitalist and colonial development" because "the Irish were both highly organized politically in novel ways that answered to the forms of mass democracy just emerging in the early nineteenth century, and capable of articulating systematic alternatives to an industrial capital whose triumph was not yet secured" ("Black Irish" 6). Lloyd sees these alternatives primarily in Daniel O'Connell's Land Plan, which "represented both a practical utopian alternative to industrial wage labor and a means to diminish the industrial labor supply in order to raise the general level of wages for the working class that was obliged to remain in cities and factories" (6-7). As such, racial understanding of the Irish by the British began to shift from their being essentially lazy and dehumanized to a race in need of time to modernize, an understanding which may have mitigated derision, but was nevertheless prescriptive and demanding. Like the complex relationship with gender, Ireland's relationship with traditional cultural forms and capitalism has been fraught. Even as Ireland grew more bourgeois and capitalist, Eamon de Valera's vision for the nation continued to be one of humility and anti-materialism. The generations of Irish in the twentieth century, in other words, were heir to antithetical conceptions of how best to relate to capitalism and, in turn, act in the best interests of the Irish nation.

A further consequence of Irish nationalism, though perhaps less direct in influencing the lives of the Irish people, is the Manichean method of reading Irish literature in relation to nationalism and British imperialism. Following the postcolonial turn of the late twentieth century, there has been a tendency to read Irish writers as being wholly engaged in or wholly opposed to official form of nationalism and British imperialism. There may be cases of this, but I would argue that the majority of writers hold more nuanced positions and that the conflictedness we have occasionally tried to repress or explain away might instead be thought of us a productive avenue by which to find a more inclusive alternative to both. In the process of doing so, I hope to address the ways in which this complication also sheds light on the various consequences outlined above. While this project is, as a whole, concerned primarily with highlighting responses to the national-cosmopolitan binary, it will also necessarily wrestle with the other binaries which have structured Irish history for the past century and more.

## V. Transcending the Binary

In practice, when faced with the dilemma identified by Russell as a choice between nationality and cosmopolitanism, Ireland chose the former. There were strategic reasons for this choice, and regarding the process of decolonizing and separating from England, it was effective. Historically, however, national and cultural independence has proven costly. The consequences of a nationalist state – prescriptive gender and sexual identities, dissonant discourses on proper ways of being, the normalization and sacralization of violence among them – have been, for many, crushing despite the great deal of good it has done. There is an undercurrent in Irish writing, especially in the fiction

of the twentieth century, however, which suggests that an investment in the Irish people and nation was and is not as distinct from concepts of transnational identification or cosmopolitan selfhood as the embracing of nationality might otherwise suggest. While Kiberd has noted an assimilability in Irish culture that belies the limitations of nationalism, I am concerned here with writers who expressly and explicitly complicate nationality – without losing sight of it or necessarily devaluing it.

What remains, then, is to arrive at a term which best captures this critical but generous attitude towards Irish nationalism. I am inclined to return to the binary opposition, the Manichean dichotomy that framed the earlier sections of this introduction. George Russell and his cultural nationalist peers asked Ireland to choose between “nationality” and “cosmopolitanism” and, despite their religious differences and stronger ties to the English, encouraged the Irish toward the former. Political nationalists like Pearse, it goes without saying, may have acknowledged the innate value of other sovereign nations, but remained largely myopic in imagining Ireland post-independence, and the way the imagined Ireland proved highly limiting and prescriptive. And yet, in both Russell and in Pearse, there is a kernel of something more dynamic and inclusive. Because of the urgency of realizing an Irish state, and in the case of Pearse because of his early death, the framers of the Irish government did not foresee the consequences of isolationism that would become associated with an Irish nationalist government. They did not foresee the possibility – in the long term, and after Irish freedom had been secured – of a third option.

The term I have chosen to describe this quasi-utopian impulse in Irish fiction is “partial cosmopolitanism,” the central concept in philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah’s

2006 book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (xvii). Appiah argues that for too long we have assumed that loyalty to one's nation and an ethical awareness of oneself as a global citizen are in some way mutually exclusive. "Fortunately," he implores the reader, "we need take sides neither with the nationalist who abandons all foreigners nor with the hard-core cosmopolitan who regards her friends with icy impartiality" (xvii). He chooses the term "partial" because it captures both an honesty – we are more than likely going to prefer those with whom we have more frequent interaction with and with whom we are more clearly interdependent – and a sort of goal or aspiration – we might recognize that preference without shuttering ourselves off to the wellbeing of others. That kind of dynamic interchange with cultures beyond our own carries the potential to transform nations both internally and in their interactions with one another.

Unlike the type of cosmopolitanism approached with hesitation by George Russell and contemporaries, Appiah makes it clear that we *should not* "expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life" (xv). Whereas Russell expressed some concern that cosmopolitanism would negate difference and sculpt a monochromatic and dull culture and people, Appiah recognizes that it is capable of respecting diversity and sustaining difference without compromising cooperation. Some values, Appiah suggests, "are, and must be, local" while "some are, and should be, universal" (xxi). Appiah's system offers a significant challenge to exceptionalist forms of nationalism. "Thoroughgoing ignorance about the ways of others," he writes, "is largely a privilege of the powerful" (xiii). For Ireland, this has implications both for the interaction of persons and cultures within the nation and internationally, where Ireland has clung to a

position of noninvolvement and noninterference even decades after its admission to the E. U. Furthermore, Appiah's take on cosmopolitanism has the potential to alleviate some of George Russell's fears of homogeneity. These are familiar enough ones in our current historical moment, especially given the prevalence of critical discourse surrounding the concept of cultural imperialism. Appiah's account of various homogeneities can function both as a response to Russell and as an encapsulation of the position of figures within the Irish tradition who are apprehensive about forces imposing sameness from within the nation rather than from without. It would not be much of a stretch to imagine Stephen Dedalus or Joyce himself voicing Appiah's words:

If we want to preserve a wide range of human conditions because it allows free people the best chance to make their own lives, there is no place for the enforcement of diversity by trapping people within a kind of difference they long to escape. There simply is no decent way to sustain those communities of difference that will not survive without the free allegiance of their members. (105)

The concern is largely, for Appiah, that of economic reality, and harkens back to John Eglinton's ideas about the inexportability of Irish tropes. If there is not within the subject a sense of fulfillment in or desire to find expression through the cultural or national type, then the preservation of culture becomes less about expressing the experience of the people than imposing values upon them. Appiah's call is for a less condescending view of the subject and the culture alike, and he suggests, much as we see in the continued Irish resistance to continental European secularism which Thiel describes, that even in what seem to be the most coercive of economic arrangements the "local product" still

tends to be preferred and that “cultural consumers ... can resist.” In response to discourses of purity, in other words, cosmopolitans might be drawn to embrace a conception of “contamination” (111) a position which both reflects the reality for people in most places of the globe and rescues a term long associated with racist discourse, turning it into an ideal.

Following the longstanding tradition of critics like Seamus Deane, I recognize that we are still struggling to find a mode of criticism that acknowledges the value of Irish nationalism in the nation’s literature without damning those texts which do not readily lend themselves to pro-nationalist readings. This framework, I believe, might offer one way of doing just that. Each of the texts I have chosen speaks to a belief that there might be a way to replace the nationalist and cosmopolitan binary, which may as well be a nationalist and anti-nationalist binary, with something more radically inclusive. Stoker, Joyce, O’Brien, and Barry each explore some negotiated space between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Their novels move, sometimes wildly, between poles of endorsement and hesitancy where both nationalism and cosmopolitanism are concerned, but, at their most fully realized, these novels also acknowledge and advocate for that space between.

The authors I will be examining seem to all recognize that, as much as nationalism may have been necessary, it lost some of its value or became itself tyrannical and oppressive. Though the degree to which each embraces the transnational or cosmopolitan as solution varies, and though all suggest a healthy measure of skepticism and hesitation, these texts represent a sustained conviction that it might be possible to meet Kiberd’s challenge and hold on to the good that nationalism has achieved while

moving past the limitations of nationalist identification. The first chapter, "Do I Contradict Myself? Very Well then I Contradict Myself?: Bram Stoker and the Cosmopolitan Counternarrative," looks at two of Stoker's major novels, *The Snake's Pass* and *Dracula*, and examines the continued development of Stoker's particular resistance to both British imperialist and Irish nationalist values. This preoccupation, which dates back to some muddled but illuminating ideas from Stoker's days as a university student, finds its most developed and nuanced expression in these texts. The former novel, his only long work set in Ireland, foregrounds the relationship between colloquial ways of knowing in the form of Irish folklore and authorized ones in the form of British science. The later novel carries this impulse to its most heightened expression in Stoker's canon, as the fantastical qualities allow Stoker a space where the epistemological modes achieve parity. Although both novels contain considerable deference to imperialist norms and, in *Dracula*, a displacement of the discourse to the fantasy plane, they represent a continuation of the cosmopolitan conviction that characterizes Stoker's non-fiction output and foreground an alternative to the dominant discourses of the late nineteenth century.

Chapter two, "'Our Greater Ireland Beyond the Sea': Reimagining Social Identification in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," looks primarily at "Cyclops" to challenge the tendency in Joyce criticism to overemphasize the implied dismissal of Bloom's views, the Citizen's, or both. The Citizen is an obvious satire, but he still vocalizes some of the views that Joyce continued to hold about Irish nationalism and British imperialism, while Leopold Bloom's saccharine cosmopolitanism and call for love, while laughable, might constitute a viable alternative for rethinking the ways in which individuals relate to the social whole. Although, in "Circe," Bloom's views go, literally, on trial, Joyce seems to

be working through an alternative mode of Irish subjectivity which rejects nationalist violence without denying its strategic importance. Rather than refuting Bloom's utopian vision entirely, the dream state of the later chapter and the infusion of doubt into the chapter remind the reader that his ideas are powerfully subversive and might constitute a productive challenge to the reader rather than a simple, cruel joke.

In the third chapter, “‘Ye’re Not Men at All’: Gender and Nationalism in Kate O’Brien’s *The Land of Spices*,” I argue that critics have too readily focused on the anti-nationalist sentiment in the novel and ignored the way in which the cosmopolitan element, embodied in the Reverend Mother, actually works in conjunction with the nationalist Bishop's agenda to enable the self-actualization of younger protagonist Anna Murphy. It is tempting to read O’Brien as complicit with the marginalization of Irish nationalists as provincial or extremists, but the anxiety within the text that an Irish nationalist ideology may be replacing a imperialist-apologist one is historically grounded. The cosmopolitan influence, then, helps to break down the gender bias inherent in Irish nationalist values, especially those internalized by Irish women, while the Bishop's belief in the value of *every* Irish subject helps to legitimate the empowerment of deserving women. Though fraught and highly qualified, O’Brien imagines a way in which inward- and outward-oriented versions of Irishness might find mutual ground.

I argue in the final chapter, “‘Rubbed-out men in the rabbled empire of the Queen’: Transnational Utopianism in Sebastian Barry's *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*,” that Barry's late twentieth-century novel represents one the most fully-realized and unqualified expressions of Irish partial cosmopolitanism ever printed. Though highly critical of institutional nationalism and the normalization of violence in decolonization –



not just Ireland's – Barry creates, in the title character, a subject whose love for his country and his people transcends any and all other concerns, including that of his own well-being. Maintaining and learning from this love, Eneas and Nigerian exile Harcourt build a short-lived Utopian community which forgoes the inequitable distribution of power and resources and abandons conventional notions of nationhood, resurrecting an ostensibly Irish value that nationalism, on Lloyd's reasoning, had all but erased. Although it is, in being burnt to the ground, as contained in the end as the glimpses we see in the previous three chapters, Barry challenges the coming century in Ireland with a resounding "What if?"

This challenge, I believe, is at the heart of each of these texts in some form or other. Each expression of Irish partial cosmopolitanism examined in the following chapters is qualified in some way; it is displaced from the real in the case of Stoker, mocked even as it is celebrated in Joyce, seems to lead invariably to the normalization of dominance in O'Brien, and it is literally burned to the ground in Barry. These reservations, however, do not disqualify the Utopian impulse. As Frederic Jameson has argued, a work of expressive culture often has a "twin capacity to perform an urgent ideological function at the same time that it provides the vehicle for the investment of a desperate Utopian fantasy" (145). There, I believe, are powerful implications for recognizing and celebrating a partial cosmopolitan current in Irish literature. As a sort of case study of necessary nationalism that had unforeseen and regrettable consequences, including the hegemonic erasure of subcultures within a nation, we can explore a set of texts which "take seriously not just the value of human life, but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance"

(xv). For a nation that, in its inception, was already divisive and grows increasingly diverse, the notion that beliefs and values need not be understood in competition, but recognized for their own intrinsic values to the persons practicing them, has great restorative potential. I would also argue that this kind of empathetic practice has socially beneficial implications far beyond reimagining Ireland, but for changing the world.

## CHAPTER ONE

“Do I Contradict Myself? Very Well then I Contradict Myself”:

Bram Stoker and the Cosmopolitan Counternarrative

### I. Introduction

The name Bram Stoker does not, for most readers, call to mind questions of Irish nationalism. Despite his Clontarf, Dublin birth, he is usually counted as a lesser British writer of sensational fiction in the late Victorian period, with one well-known novel to his name and a career in theatre which overshadowed his writing. For all of his indirection in expressing it, however, Stoker remained engaged with the question of Ireland’s future, and he was an advocate of Home Rule despite his repeated condemnation of Fenian violence. There have been, generally speaking, two major contours in the criticism concerned with Stoker’s relationship to British imperialism and Irish nationalism, if the latter is recognized at all. The first of these, and probably the most representative, suggests that Bram Stoker should be read primarily as a British writer whose values are unquestionably Victorian. Whatever tensions or apprehensions his texts may introduce about the effects of British imperialism on human lives both in the metropole and the periphery, these readings emphasize the eventual triumph and reinscription of imperial normativity, and they likewise assume the centrality and validation of the masculine, the rationalist, the techno-scientific and the modern.

The Irish element need not appear in these readings, generally, because the inferiority of the Irish for Stoker is assumed to be the same as the inferiority of a more general conception of the Other. When the Irish does appear, either textually as it does in *The Snake’s Pass* (1890) or subtextually as has been argued repeatedly in the last few

decades of *Dracula* (1897), it is understood as an element to suppress and control, or more generously to assimilate and transform. The 1990s, for example, saw an explosion of criticism within Irish studies which sought to reclaim *Dracula* as an Irish text, or at least one with particular implications for an Irish writer, and in doing so represented the novel as an indication of Stoker's repudiation and affirmation of his Irish and English heritages, respectively. Cannon Schmitt, William Hughes, and Seamus Deane, among others, to varying degrees and with differing emphases, articulate cases along these lines regarding *Dracula*, or emphasize the British paternalism implicit in *The Snake's Pass*. Wherever ambiguity occurs in Stoker's texts, it is something to be feared and contained. Conversely, writers in the subsequent decades, such as Joseph Valente and Lisabeth Buchelt, have given increasing attention to the possibility of reading Stoker subversively, as a writer engaged in challenging imperialist ideology from within. Although Nicholas Daly and a few others began this work as early as 1995, it might be said that the 1990s were the period in which Stoker was recovered as an Irish writer, but the 2000s and early '10s are the ones in which Stoker is being recovered as an *Irish* writer.

The readings of Stoker as a specifically pro-Irish writer fall on a continuum which might be the most nuanced on the end of Valente's *Dracula's Crypt* (2002) and most straightforwardly sympathetic to the Irish in Buchelt's "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*" (2012). Valente reads Stoker's conclusion in *Dracula* as implicitly cosmopolitan, as a championing of "the Utopian possibilities of ethnic hybridization" (130) as well as a challenge to "racial imperialism and essentialist ideology" (41). Buchelt, on the other hand, argues that Arthur, the English narrator of *The Snake's Pass*,

is ultimately excluded from the Irish community into which he nominally marries, that he “remains removed from genuine integration” despite what she sees as Stoker’s rejection of a system in which quality of character is “not determined solely by race, but rather by class and personal character” (133). She imagines *The Snake’s Pass* as accomplishing, much earlier, what Valente identifies in *Dracula*: “... it is not in *Dracula* that Stoker first interrogates the notion of an identity and produces a generically ambivalent text representing an identity that is, in Valente’s words, ‘something like a *coherent indeterminacy*’; Stoker had already done so in *The Snake’s Pass*” (133). Valente himself does not see much particular value in reading *Dracula* in light of the earlier and more explicitly Irish novel (12-13), and Buchelt accordingly makes only a few gestures at developing connections between the two. I am inclined to both agree and disagree with Buchelt’s formulations. *The Snake’s Pass* represents Stoker’s only sustained interrogation into national character with an overtly Irish setting, and it suggests the possibility that national character is not singular but varied. No single character, however, ever achieves the types of pluralism implicit within a Van Helsing or Mina Murray Harker. *The Snake’s Pass* is a rejection of essentialism, perhaps, but it stops short of celebrating hybridity. In the later novel, however, hybridity becomes not only possible, but even necessary. The move might be understood as one from *intersubjective* pluralism to *intrasubjective* pluralism. It accomplishes a notion of identity which resonates with the sentiment in the famous lines written by Stoker’s hero Walt Whitman in “Song of Myself”: “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.) (77). Reading *The Snake’s Pass* alongside *Dracula* allows us to see, in other words, that Stoker was continuing to work at redefining identity and affiliation in terms

beyond simple nationality, and furthermore suggests that the later novel is the realization of what he could only glimpse in the earlier. Rather than a repression of the Irish element in *Dracula*, then, it is also possible to see the subtextual or implicit Irishness as a means by which to expand the inquiry of identity into, if not a global, than at least a pan-European one. It is not that Stoker is not interested in the question of Irish identity *per se* in *Dracula*, but rather that he extrapolates his earlier hypotheses and advances them into a near-universal rejection of the concept of national character, an endeavor in which the Irish continues to play a role.

## II. Stoker's Cosmopolitanism in "The Necessity for Political Honesty"

A broader investigation of the contours of Stoker's career suggests that the binarizing endemic to the British conception of the national self was a preoccupation of his from the beginning, and furthermore reveals its genesis – regardless of where it took him in his eleven novels and dozens of stories *not* set in Ireland – to be rooted in the question of *Irish* national character. Both Chris Morash and Joseph Valente situate the beginning of Stoker's intellectual engagement with national character during his time as a university student, particularly his 1872 address to the Trinity College Historical Society, "The Necessity for Political Honesty." The address is, at the broadest level, concerned with the function of the CHS in the Trinity system, which Stoker believes is essential for training future public servants in ways that the curriculum simply cannot and, in his view, should not. It is a "necessity" which "supplements the teaching of the university" by allowing "general politics" to be discussed "without acrimony" in "that style of speaking which suits the requirements of the age" (34). Whereas Stoker, who concedes its potential

relativity, represents historical study as a straightforward account of facts and dates, he also suggests that the Historical Society should be understood as fundamentally democratic and open to multiple perspectives. “In the great world of politics,” Stoker argues, “the value of discussion is to find from the reason and acuteness of many trained minds, the result of certain combinations, which should agree with the issue of trial . . . we encourage [young men] to study each of those questions [which interest them] in all its bearings” (35). Stoker’s fiction will proceed along similar lines, emphasizing the greater degree of truth that human beings can reach if they are open to learning from dissimilar authorities. Contrary to a persistent reading of Stoker as a reactionary writer, a reading to which his texts lend themselves, the Stoker we see here and subtextually in his novels is much more open-minded, articulating the desire for others to be equally curious and accepting and applying this value specifically to the case of Ireland:

...when in our debates men find that bigotry and prejudice and cynicism are looked on as worse faults than ignorance, they soon learn to be liberal in their views, and tolerant of the opinion of others. Even in the last few years, when the whole country was agitated with the renewal of old strife and old disaffection, and when great reforms, religious and territorial, were carried out, their effects were debated without a shadow of ill-will, here, amongst a body of men whose future they vitally influenced. (35)

Stoker, then, suggests that the College Historical Society and, by extension, other bodies of people that facilitate democratic debate might play an important function in mitigating both sectarian and political conflict. With that kind of power, and that kind of potential, Stoker encourages his peers to be completely self-conscious in realizing it.

For most of the address, Stoker details his conviction that public decisions and politics should be practiced with the same sort of honesty and ethical conviction one might apply to his or her personal life: "I hold that the same rules of right and wrong, which are our springs of personal action, should be through life our guides in state matters, and that the only policy whose effects will for ever influence the world for good, is that which is but the enlargement and perfection of our personal truth and justice" (32). Stoker emphasizes flexibility and ethical commitment over dogmatism or absolute adherence to laws or doctrines, arguing instead that "Our principle should be ... to do always what we believe is right, even if the honest change of our conduct in particular affairs should give our enemies an opportunity to call us fickle. We are not cowards that we should fear being called renegades for changing our views, when we feel that in doing so we are right" (41). This conviction that fluidity and dialogue are essential to progress underwrites his call to cosmopolitanism, or to use Stoker's term here, "internationalism." The address, then, on the one hand highlights a young Stoker's relationship to British Empire as mostly positive. He sees the Empire as a tool for progress and seems convinced by the more idealistic and heroic rhetoric that so often obscures the exploitation and oppression that marks the experience of the colonized. On the other hand, however, "The Necessity for Political Honesty" also suggests that his views of nation, of national character and destiny, are not really oriented toward an affirmation of British superiority or domination, and Stoker actually describes a multilayered vision of affiliation that is figured increasingly in terms of Ireland as he moves toward the conclusion.



Admittedly, Stoker's address is optimistic and verges on naïve, but it offers insightful material through which to consider his later creative output. Neither *The Snake's Pass* nor *Dracula* approaches such explicit engagement with politics, but both demonstrate, to varying degrees and in divergent forms, Stoker's continued conviction that nationalist identification, while not intrinsically or categorically a bad thing, is limited and must eventually be supplemented or replaced by a broader system of identification, something that must have held great appeal for an Anglo-Irishman with a demonstrable appreciation for both traditions to which he was heir. "Of late years," Stoker tells his audience, "internationalism has become a great idea in the minds of men, and one which will sway the destinies of the future," leading to "the casting off of the petty chains of local prejudice, and of that quasi-nationality which is the very apotheosis of parochialism." It is not that Stoker dismisses national pride; he clearly has a stake in both his Irish and English heritages. It might be more accurate to characterize his idea of patriotism or nationalism as non-hierarchical, as he asks, "When will men learn that patriotism is not merely to sneer at and be jealous of surrounding nations, nor to gather all the love and affection with which God has dowered the heart of man into on little spot till it becomes a garden, whilst all of the world remains, for them, a waste? (43). The sense in the passage that those outside one's nation might be affected detrimentally by a nation who acts in its own self-interest only, and that other nations might be equally deserving of respect and appreciation.

It is possible to read in the address a measure of exceptionalism, wherein Great Britain essentially acts as a model or guide for the rest of the world, but this is distinct from overt domination, at least in theory. Paradoxically, in fact, Stoker suggests that

those who take into account the people beyond their borders are really those who act in the best interest of their nations: “The true patriot is he who wishes his own country to lead the van of thought and action by a good example, and not he who would make all the earth subservient in everything to his own land.” Stoker’s vision of British imperialism, in this reading, is rose-tinted. A misunderstanding of the facts, however, does not detract from Stoker’s personal ethical beliefs, and it allows him furthermore to posit a model of international cooperation with dimensions tailored explicitly to questions of social justice: “Men are finding out that what is best for the world is best for the nation, and that the consolidation of all countries into one common league for good is the true means of peace,” as the “dawn of internationalism and arbitration has come with a wider spirit of charity, and a nobler sense of the duties of humanity” (43). What Stoker aims for, ultimately, is a vision of affiliation that accommodates international identification without compromising local attachment and national pride; much as Kwame Anthony Appiah argues in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006) as the central tenet of “partial cosmopolitanism” (xvii), Stoker urges the listener to recognize that “the more we really care for our own country the dearer to us will be the whole world” (44). The moral imperative to care for one another as human beings is rooted in the recognition of shared humanity with those who make up our everyday networks of interaction – local communities, families, and so on. In recognizing that we have moral obligations to them because they are human, we ought eventually to realize that we have moral obligations to our brothers and sisters in other nations around the world. Those obligations may take very different shapes, but Stoker, like Appiah after him, seems convinced that they are not necessarily competing impulses.

For the most part, Stoker's position is curiously non-political, or at least non-specific, for a piece on "political honesty," and he speaks at such a broad and abstract level that it is almost impossible to disagree with him. Immediately after articulating his vision of simultaneous affiliation to a national and international community, however, he moves swiftly to the specific case of Ireland, applying his principle and, along the way, advocating an implicit understanding of a nation's race as a matter of social construction and cultural inheritance rather than one of essence or biology. Trinity College, Stoker believes, has an obligation built on "our love for our country and belief in the future of our race," and lest we take that to mean Britain and the Anglo race, he specifically locates Trinity as "the intellectual centre of Ireland" (44). As the "Celtic race . . . wak[es] up from its long lethargy" still possessed of "a vital energy which is unequalled," "an intellect which only requires to be directed by experience," and "an instinct of right and wrong almost poetical in its intensity," it has the advantage of "hav[ing] remained the same whilst other peoples have slowly changed for the worst" (45). Much like Matthew Arnold, to whom I will turn momentarily, Stoker associates Ireland's lack of development along lines parallel to modernized and industrialized nations to qualities that might mitigate the perceived weaknesses incurred because of that same modernization and industrialization. Stoker, however, does not situate the Irish race as essentially inferior and limited in its potential the way that Arnold does. Indeed, he argues for the possible centrality of the Celt to global (or at least Western) development and encourages his peers to be accordingly accountable: "this race which we young men may each of us directly and indirectly influence for good or ill, may become in time the *leading element of Western civilization.*" "It may be for us," he continues, "to be the foremost men of the

advancing race” (45;46, emphasis mine). The formulations are problematic to Stoker’s self-professed internationalism inasmuch as they imagine the world that matters in conventional West-privileging terms, but Stoker’s belief that the Irish, consistently devalued and Othered in 19<sup>th</sup> century British rhetoric, might have a leadership role to play, and more uniquely his collapsing of the native Irish and Anglo-Irish into the category of Celtic race, set the address’s sensibilities apart from Arnold and the typical imperial apologist. Even the near-Fenian element Stoker recognizes in the Irish character, and which he will suffuse subtly into the idealized Irish tenant farmer Phelim Joyce in *The Snake’s Pass* and which underscores his perennial villain Dracula, has value: the “individuality and self-assertion and passionate feeling which prompt to rebellion” (46) can actually, in this vision, serve a greater national and international good.

The Stoker of “The Necessity for Political Honesty” appears, on the surface, diametrically opposed to the Stoker whose *Dracula* has been read as the abject accumulation of all xenophobia, British imperialist fears of contagion and atavism, and of all racialist pseudoscience, to the Stoker whose *The Snake’s Pass* tacitly cedes the greater capacity of the English to make good on the promise of Ireland than the Irish themselves. The text of “The Necessity” itself would bear that reading out, given Stoker’s own assertions about the importance of accepting changes in one’s own mind; *The Snake’s Pass* does, after all, follow this address by nearly 20 years, and *Dracula* by 25. Both of these novels, however, also contain vestiges of “Internationalism” as the “nationalism of humanity” and “wide prospect of hope” (43), and I am inclined to read them instead as the work of an older author who has seen the challenges history has laid out to his younger idealism, but who continues to work through them in his art rather than reverse

his position outright. On Morash's account, Stoker's attempts to represent the negotiation between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon are part of Stoker's greater "struggle to write into discourse that which threatens to elude representation," a means by which "epistemological ambivalence" could be "entered into language and controlled" (Morash 106). Stoker's address, then, represents an attempt to reconcile Stoker's uneasy feelings about the persistence or reemergence of the ancient and atavistic element alongside the modern, typified in the Celt and the Anglo-Saxon respectively (108-9). Despite their occasionally considerable reactionary content, however, both *The Snake's Pass* and *Dracula*, perhaps even more radically, signal Stoker's continued belief in the value of transcending simplistic and reductionist ideas of national identity, as both challenge ideas of national character by validating a plurality of epistemological discourses identified closely with different and distinctive cultures.

Although the continuation of this preoccupation throughout Stoker's corpus signals to Morash a continued "fear that atavism is not something which decrease proportionately as modernity increases, but that the two nourish each other" (109), he concedes that one of the tenets of the 1872 address is the possibility that the totality of Britain might be enhanced or revitalized by the Celtic element. The idea of an essential Celtic character restoring a languid British one is not exclusive to Stoker and owes greatly to his familiarity with Matthew Arnold, something noted by both Morash (102) and Valente, the latter of whom suggests that "'The Necessity for Political Honesty'" "unmistakably recalls the hybrid ethnological vision of Great Britain that Matthew Arnold had set forth just five years earlier in *The Study of Celtic Literature*" (25). Arnold's familiar typology, for all of its negative consequences, was actually fairly well-

intentioned. In the introduction to the aforementioned 1867 text *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, Arnold argues, condescendingly, for the English to adopt a generous attitude with respect to the Celtic peoples: “Might not these divine English gifts, and the English language in which they are preached, have a better chance of making their way among the poor Celtic heathen, if the English apostle delivered his message a little more agreeably?” (xv). His conclusion reinforces this call to a new relationship, indeed deems it a call to transform the English character, asking for “a new type, more intelligent, more gracious, and more humane” (xix). But good intentions do not always yield good results, and Arnold’s typology probably did more to damage the Irish and sustain distance between the cultures than anything. The most essential component of Arnold’s characterization of the Celt is sentimentality (76), which makes the Irish and the Welsh alike “*always ready to react against the despotism of fact*” (77). The Celt has a tremendous capacity for feeling, which Arnold sees in the music and art of the Scots and the Irish, but argues that, being “so eager for emotion,” “has not patience for science” (78), and, coupled with the predilection for imaginative superstition, emerges as an ideal foil for British rationalism, something of which Stoker is aware and complicates.

Initially, Arnold is concerned primarily with music, poetry, and the arts, but concludes that “his want of sanity and steadfastness has kept the Celt back from the highest success,” before extending this impotence resulting from “rebellion against fact” to a “lame[ness] ... in the world of business and politics” (79), going as far as to argue that the Celt has “fail[ed] to reach any material civilisation sound and satisfying, and not out at elbows, slovenly, and half-barbarous,” despite sharing qualities with the equally energetic Roman and Greek peoples (80). From the very outset, Arnold articulates a need

for greater assimilation of the Celts, both Welsh and Irish, into the folds of greater British society in order to energize the English national character. Because Arnold sees the British character, wherever it is devoid of outside influence, as somewhat emotionless and coolly intellectual, the Celtic sentimentality and primal energy are imagined here as a supplementary element – not essential, but beneficial. It is as though the Irish, and also the Welsh, are to be both valued *and* devalued for difference, and that, were that difference to disappear, they would lose their vitality and cease to be a valuable part of Great Britain and humanity. The very conditions which justify their subservience and exploitation, in other words, are to be maintained because they are needed for the larger collective good.

Countering a pattern of *Dracula* criticism and responding to Morash by name, however, Valente suggests that Stoker's project is more complex and more generous than the surface borrowings from Arnold might otherwise imply. Valente points out that Stoker's address pinpoints in the Irish a "prospective antidote to the effete decline of Western civilization and an instance of evolutionary arrest" (23). However, Valente also draws attention to the particularities of Stoker's formulation. Portions of the phrasing are lifted directly from Arnold, but they are tempered with crucial distinctions that challenge the racist logic of *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. Here, the "Irish people," appear as an "'old world people—seemingly half-barbarous amid a world of luxury' (qtd. in Valente 23). The choice to characterize the Irish as "half-barbarous" is a direct quotation of Matthew Arnold, but as Valente notes, this is applied *not* to the Celtic race, but to the Irish people as a whole (24). Stoker's reading of Irishness is a hybrid construction in which racial types do continue to exist in some fashion, one that finds the Anglo-Irish and

Celtic-Irish mutually constitutive and reinforcing and distinct from the Anglo-Saxon. As a whole, the address might be read, as Valente tells us, as Stoker's vision of a national character "wherein each of the main ethnic lines of Ireland, Anglo and Celtic, remains visible even as each is assimilated to the other under the sign of Irishness. Instead of proposing a simple elimination or homogenization of ethnic status, Stoker looks for the Irish to transform their double-born position from bane to boon" (25). Whereas Arnold's vision of assimilation is largely one in which hierarchy is maintained and used to elevate the Anglo-Saxon, Stoker's vision may be more dialogic. Although not all of his writing realizes this vision – the conclusion of *The Snake's Pass*, as I hope to demonstrate, in some ways reproduces some of the Arnoldian assimilationism, hierarchy intact – it begins to lay out the possibility for conceptualizing Stoker's aforementioned vision of a "nationalism of humanity." This is the genesis of what Valente terms Stoker's "domestic cosmopolitanism" (40), a concept suggesting cosmopolitan value in a politically domestic or intranational space. We can see, then, the emergence of an Irish cosmopolitan counternarrative historically contemporary to that of the nationalist narrative, equally invested in challenging the devaluation of the Irish by the English but attuned to the possibility that said challenge need not be purely oppositional or antagonistic. A quarter century before George Russell gave name to the dilemma "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism," Bram Stoker had already begun to suggest that Ireland might have it both ways.

### III. Introducing and Contextualizing *The Snake's Pass*



Because *The Snake's Pass* is less familiar to most readers than *Dracula*, and because my argument is concerned mostly with how it acts as an essential step in Stoker's realization of the potential in "The Necessity for Political Honesty" through the 1897 novel, I will briefly contextualize and summarize the novel before examining its relationship with its successor and its place in Stoker's intellectual and philosophical development. Like much of Stoker's fiction, *The Snake's Pass* is informed deeply by generic convention. It is, most clearly, of a piece with late-Victorian imperialist adventure narratives, but it is also informed just as much by the colonial marriage plot that dominates Irish fiction in the nineteenth century from Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) on, wherein an unruly – but vital and energetic – Irish woman is married to an Englishman, thereby figuratively enveloping and enfolding the Irish identity within the English, taming and assimilating the Celt in the process. Nicholas Daly has argued that, although the genre overlap may sometimes cause fissures in the text, they are *productive* fissures, "allow[ing] us to see how in the age of Empire and its aftermath, any 'whole' reading must be false" as the "migratory colonial, or postcolonial, text never stays in one place long enough to allow such a reading," and "the last word can never be said" (67). Nevertheless, while I agree with Daly's assessment in principle, I read the novel's indeterminacy somewhat differently, largely because its engagement with Anglo-Saxon and Irish character both reflects the generous ambivalence of Stoker's earlier observations and anticipates the explosion of national character in *Dracula* seven years later. In other words, *The Snake's Pass* as an imaginary realization of an Anglo-Irish union that falls somewhere between the outright assimilationism of Matthew Arnold and

the pluralistic simultaneity bubbling under the surface in “The Necessity for Political Honesty.”

*The Snake’s Pass* tells the story of newly-wealthy English orphan Arthur Severn, who, at the novel’s beginning, is intent on visiting acquaintances in County Clare. His plans change, however, as he has to take shelter from a rainstorm in the fictitious agrarian community of Carnaclif. There, in the company of his new friend and driver Andy, Arthur hears the story of the local landscape, both the Shleenanaher, or the titular snake’s pass, and a hill, known both as Knockcalletcore or Knockcalltore. The hill has two stories; one story is of the ancient Irish legendary past, and focuses on the expulsion of the snakes from Ireland by St. Patrick, while the other looks to the more immediate past, the 1798 rebellion, and in particular the French support for the Irish cause. In both cases, the hill is identified with a lost artifact or treasure. “Knockcalltecrore” is the legendary name, referencing the lost crown of the King of the Snakes and translating to The Hill of the Lost Golden Crown. On the other hand, “Knockcalltore” is the more historically-grounded name, translating to The Hill of the Lost Gold, a reference to gold sent to Irish rebels by the French in 1798, a treasure which was swallowed up, along with the soldiers delivering it, by the local “Shifting bog.” While locals Bat Moynahan and Jerry Scanlan relate the two narratives, Arthur meets the local farmer Phelim Joyce and his nemesis, the usurious “gombeen man” (26) Black Murdock. Murdock has effectively swindled Joyce out of his land, which he believes includes the portion of the bog where he will find the lost 1798 gold. Arthur and Andy drive Phelim home, where Arthur hears Norah’s voice – but does not see her face. He returns several times, eventually falling in love with Norah without knowing that it is her, and encounters his school friend Dick Sutherland, a

scientist now in the employ of Black Murdock. Sutherland uses the most modern technology to scour the bog for Murdock, but is eventually fired and sides with Arthur, who buys up all of the land – including Murdock’s and Joyce’s – and upon learning her identity, proposes to Norah (and thereby coming into eventual possession of the Cliff Fields). By the novel’s end, the shifting bog is ejected from the land by a wild storm, and with it Black Murdock, ousted from Ireland by his own greed. Arthur, Norah, Dick and Phelim find the lost gold of 1798 *and* an ancient pre-Christian crown, validating the local stories, and Arthur sends Norah away to be continentalized and educated before their wedding, which concludes the novel.

*The Snake’s Pass* also benefits from a consideration of the its biographical and historical context. By the time Stoker began writing novels in earnest, he was already successful in his career as manager of London’s Lyceum Theatre. Although the question of Irish identity continued to haunt Stoker as an Irishman living in England, he refused to relinquish it fully, and he may have even attempted to render it an asset or quality for admiration. Valente points out that Stoker’s dual inheritance, the Anglo-Saxon “ambition, adventurousness, and martial valor” derived from his father on the one hand and the “tales of his mother,” which “commemorated the domestic suffering and passive endurance of her Irish peasant compeers” on the other (19), remained a part of his public persona despite the chidings of mentors like Henry Irving. Stoker performed his Irishness, in other words, taking “care to preserve his native accent, and his thickish brogue served both as a bait to his more condescending English colleagues and a self-assertive check on his Anglophilia” (39). In the years between “The Necessity” and *The Snake’s Pass*, Ireland may have disappeared from Stoker’s writing but never from his life

and consciousness. The 1880s, however, gave Stoker a number of urgent reasons to start developing further – and publicizing – his vision of an Ireland reconciled with the English.

One of these reasons was Fenian violence, which was by no means new in the 1880s. It was, however, escalating. The Irish Republican Brotherhood had been active since the late 1850s, and had of course been preceded by sporadic reactionary and revolutionary violence (including the Irish Rebellion of 1798, which figures into the plot of *The Snake's Pass* and led directly to the 1800 Act of Union). The most widely-identified single incident of violence in the 1870s and 1880s was the 1882 double-murder of Thomas Henry Burke and Lord Henry Cavendish by the Irish nationalist Invincibles in Dublin's Phoenix Park. Cannon Schmitt, Stephen D. Arata, and Joseph Valente are among the many critics to identify the potential influence of the Phoenix Park Murders on Stoker's *Dracula*, and the murders have been likewise discussed in relation to Irish writers and writers of Irish descent from James Joyce to Arthur Conan Doyle. Had it been on Stoker's mind during the writing of the later novel, it would have been even more pertinent for its topically Irish predecessor. More pressing, however, and more clearly analogous to the novel's events, was the Land War and subsequent Plan of Campaign, a series of events which defined the Irish social and political landscape for the better part of the late nineteenth century.

The Land War, Daly reminds us, “shattered the power of the Anglo-Irish as a class,” by “pitt[ing] vulnerable, predominantly Catholic tenants against their largely Protestant landlords” (55). The most explicit reference in *The Snake's Pass* to the Land War is the presence of the moonlighters, a group of “unofficial ... agrarian ‘terrorists,’”

who in Stoker's novel are reduced to "simply local thugs and robbers – less colorful Irish banditti," which according to Daly suggests that "Severn, like the novel itself, is determined to give political questions romantic answers" (60). Speaking broadly, the Land War was a series of events in which Irish nationalists of varying persuasions and affiliations advocated and took both political and violent action in order to realize a fairer relationship between the Irish tenant farmers and the Irish land, if not the outright expulsion of the English from Ireland. For some, this meant fairer rent rates and better lives for tenant farmers, while in its most extreme it meant the relinquishing of Irish lands by the Anglo-Irish, even at the cost of violence. The conflict over the land and the (un)fairness of Anglo-Irish landlords to Irish tenants predates the Land War by nearly a century at the least – see Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) – but it intensified in the decades following the Famine. By 1870, Prime Minister William Gladstone, a hero of Stoker's and an admirer of *The Snake's Pass* (Murray 139), attempted the increased enfranchisement of Irish tenants (Kane 52), but the decade saw little progress. More significant improvement came through the establishment of the Land League by Michael Davitt, also a fan of *The Snake's Pass* (Murray 160), whose efforts alongside Charles Stewart Parnell made *some* positive changes in the lives of Irish tenant farmers. As Anne Kane writes, "the Land League, and the unity which it offered to restore to the struggle against the British, [became] a symbol to the Irish of regeneration and redemption from both shame and English domination" (97). In the end, however, the Irish were increasingly unable and unwilling to pay the rents and began striking, and many rent strikers were evicted from their land (Kane 28). The evictees often responded with

violence, and in turn the British government affected the Coercion Acts, sanctioning the support of the local police by the British Army (Kane 161).

Parnell and Davitt, for several years, ceded the rent refusal strategy, but with the Plan of Campaign beginning in 1886 the rent strikes and related violence reemerged in an intensified form (Kane 218). Although Morash rightly cautions against reading Stoker's 1890 novel as a reversal of his longstanding advocacy for Home Rule, he does point out that the novel "might [be] read ... as a response to the 'Plan of Campaign', under which thousands of tenant farmers throughout the country were refusing to pay their rents" (111). Stoker could not have ignored the "marked increase in agrarian violence," and so, Morash posits, "That Stoker intended *The Snake's Pass* as an intervention in the Irish land debate of the late 1880s is clear" (112). Although Stoker's accomplishment in *The Snake's Pass* is both biased and somewhat convoluted, it represents a hopeful vision that recognizes the political upheaval and violence of Ireland in the late nineteenth century without retreating completely into an exclusively Anglo-positive identification. It is deeply paternalistic and condescending, but Stoker still manages to articulate a vision of pluralistic Ireland and retain thereby a valorized version of his Irishness.

#### IV. *The Snake's Pass*

Unlike Stoker's more famous novel, which sees the narrative voice proliferate beyond recognizable authority, the upwardly-mobile Arthur Severn is our sole narrator in *The Snake's Pass*, recounting the story and documenting all that he sees in the land, and in the people, with an authority that grows as he makes the gradual transition from tourist to landowner and benefactor of an idealized Irish West. It is in part, then, a novel of

mastery and knowledge, of the very intersection between the two, and as Arthur becomes conversant in and aware of the Irish modes of life, his ability to interact with it and solve its problems grows. Although Buchelt invites us to consider the possibility that Arthur is by Stoker's design an unreliable narrator, it is worth thinking of him as a character that, while he does have preconceived notions of Irishness, comes to recognize a complexity to Irish life that simultaneously affirms those preconceptions and introduces new layers of possibility. The "cues that Arthur is not an objective observer" (Buchelt 113) do not disqualify his perspective outright, especially given his willingness to be transformed. His point of view is, rather typically of Stoker, empiricist and subject to revision if more persuasive evidence introduces itself. It happens, however, that most of the Ireland Arthur finds is the Ireland that a late Victorian Englishman would likely expect. He *is* an unmistakably colonizing or imperialist presence in Ireland, but he is Stoker's apologist fantasy colonizer, textualizing the author's fraught conviction that Ireland could be simultaneously preserved and respected while serving the needs of British Empire.

Arthur's introduction to the reader is simultaneous to his own introduction to Ireland, and Stoker employs a strategy of disorientation and subsequent familiarization which anticipates the opening of *Dracula*. The earliest scenes reveal an almost sublime contrast between natural topography and the visible reminders of human life that interact with that topography. Situated in a green valley "[b]etween two great mountains of grey and green," Arthur observes a wild landscape barely civilized: "In the wide terrace-like steps of the shelving mountain there were occasional glimpses of civilization emerging from the primal desolation which immediately surrounded us – clumps of trees, cottages, and the irregular outlines of stone-walled fields, with black stacks of turf for the winter

piled here and there” (9). His interpretation of the landscape is conflicted; while he admires the natural beauty of the scene, his description repeatedly emphasizes disorder – and the possibility *for* order. The “glimpses” of civilization represent the partial achievement of the locals to challenge nature, just as the irregularity of the fences suggests both a desire in the Irish people for order and the inability to actualize it to English standards. What Arthur, at his most Arnoldian, reads in the “primal desolation” before him are the signs of a people eager to achieve but in need of guidance.

After his initial disorientation, the land before him starts to take on a significance Arthur can only guess at. He is in a transitional and receptive stage in life, an orphan who has spent most of his life with relatively modest means only to come into a large inheritance after his aunt’s death, and he has hanging over him the ostracization his father faced for marrying beneath his station in life. He is newly worldly, barely a man, fresh from a six-month tour of Europe. “I had stepped but lately from boyhood, with all boyhood’s surroundings, into manhood, and as yet I was hardly at ease in my new position,” he explains, but only after relating that his glimpse of Ireland’s pastoral west has led him “into a new and more real life” (11). The experience he is undergoing and which will continue through the novel is one of self-definition, or redefinition. Though it indulges in the reductionist and instrumentalist pattern of affluent imperialist cosmopolitanism, Arthur’s special relationship with Ireland affords it a transformative efficacy, an ennobling function at first not unlike Arnold’s articulations or Stoker’s own in “The Necessity for Political Honesty.”

The British narrator’s move towards self-realization is shaped not only with his apprehension of the Irish landscape, but also by his initial encounters the people whose



potential he will cultivate, paternalistically, throughout the course of the novel. His delineation of an Irish national type is multifaceted, and yet Stoker often seems to buy into Arnoldian conceptions of an Irish national type distinct from, but supportive of, the collective British identity. However, he also challenges demeaning estimations of the traditional or Celtic Irish which have been used historically to justify British intervention in Irish affairs; what Arthur sees fits with what he thinks he should see, but that does not discredit the Irish for Arthur as it might for others. While the novel ultimately reconfigures British rule in Ireland, emphasizing consent and reciprocity in an apologist fantasy, Stoker refuses to endorse fully the justifications for occupation that were commonplace by 1890. Recall, as David Lloyd reminds us, that one of the primary obstacles the British saw in the Celtic-Catholic Irish people was an unwillingness to modernize or, more accurately, to fall in line with British imperialist capitalism's conceptions of industriousness and productivity (5-6). The Irish peasants were perceived, and rightly so in many cases, as being predominantly communitarian and indifferent to material accumulation. It is all but impossible to recognize the influence of Roman Catholicism at work here, especially its emphasis on self-sacrifice and loving of one's neighbor. Situated along these contours is the stereotype of the Irish peasant as generous and hospitable, always ready with fresh milk (and perhaps poteen) for the weary traveler. It is this Ireland in which Arthur finds himself at the conclusion of the first chapter. Even in poverty-stricken post-famine Ireland, Stoker depicts a people who have the care for stranger and community member alike at the core of their social vision. When Andy takes Arthur to the Widow Kelligan's shebeen, or public house, Arthur identifies it as a "hospitable shelter" wherein has gathered "quite an assemblage" (15). What he

experiences there is as transformative, if not moreso, than the landscape. Although modest, and although filled with a mixture of animals and people, and despite the poverty, the shebeen as Arthur describes it is nearly utopian:

There were no plates, no knives, forks or spoons – no ceremony – no precedence – nor was there any heartburning, jealousy or greed. A happier meal I never took a part in – nor did I ever enjoy food more. *Such as it was*, it was perfect. The potatoes were fine and cooked to perfection; we took them in our fingers, peeled them how we could, dipped them in the salt – and ate till we were satisfied. (16-17, emphasis mine)

Stoker, by way of Arthur, is in a tricky position. On the one hand, this romanticizing of the Irish peasantry and the location of generosity in poverty plays dangerously close to Yeats's assertions about social inequality being a necessary foundation for the flourishing of national character. It seems to be precisely the lack of means that makes Carnaclif so inclusive. These people do not know "jealously or greed"; there does not seem to be much to lose, so why not share? Arthur's qualifier – "such as it was" – also suggests that the perfection is only relative to the particular circumstances of the Irish peasant class. Keeping this representation in dialogue with the patterns of representing Irish poverty as justified by laziness or immorality, as indications of national flaws, however, it seems that what Stoker is trying to do is much more affirmative, even if he falls into familiar traps associated with representation. With the novel's fantasy, this is the moment at which Arthur is initiated into the community and which sets in motion the events which will render him its benefactor. The stereotype of Irish hospitality is transformed into the moral impetus for its external salvation.

Although Stoker will abandon this strategy regarding national character by the end of *Dracula*, the Irish in *The Snake's Pass* fit, by and large, into familiar types. These types are both literal and figurative, and include, among others, the stage Irish, Ireland as embodied as a woman, and a tenant farmer class divided in Gladstonian terms, half idealized and half villainous. For Arthur this is not necessarily cause for their devaluation, and the dissemination of qualities might also be read in fact as Stoker's first attempts to complicate a unitary identity while still adhering to certain stock and stereotypical representational practices. The most obvious place to look for stock Irishness in the late nineteenth century, indeed the most influential "type" to this day, is the stage Irishman – sentimental, drunken, quick-tempered, full of blarney and half-indecipherable speech. Stoker's hiberno-English is enough, on its own, to call to mind the stage Irish, peppered with oaths, laced with common words and phrases rendered phonetically beyond purely textual recognition, standardized syntax and grammar likewise abandoned. Jerry Scanlan's description of the old mountain in his tale of St. Patrick and the King of the Snakes is representative of Stoker's method: "In thim times there was up at the top iv the hill a wee bit iv a lake wid threes and sedges and the like growin' round it; and 'twas there that the King iv the Shnakes made his nist – or whatever it is that shnakes calls their home. Glory be to God! but none of us knows anythin' of them at all, at all, since Saint Patrick tuk them in hand" (18). While this passage affirms a thread of superstitious disposition of the Irish, or at least a segment of the population, it is worth noting that Stoker's heavy-handed representational methodology is precisely the same as the one he will use later with characters in *Dracula*, characters ranging from the old sailor at Whitby to the esteemed Abraham Van Helsing, a character decidedly *not* the object of the

author's derision or contempt. His use of local color is, notably and continuously, a gesture intended for documentarian accuracy. In Stoker's fiction, deviations from standard English do mark cultural difference, but mastery of that English does not always indicate superiority.

The speech of the stage Irish, in the most superficial way, conforms to English preconceptions of Irishness, but is also first among many stereotypes Stoker both affirms and occasionally celebrates. The most prominent stage Irish character to whom we are introduced, Arthur's driver Andy, fits several of the major Irish stereotypes, especially in his loquacity and knowledge of folklore. His initial introduction by Arthur emphasizes each of these. Arthur is surprised that Andy has ceased to speak after a glimpse of a storm at sea, explaining that the later "was for the nonce awed into comparative silence" and had "Hitherto, for nearly forty miles of a drive, . . . been giving me his experiences – propounding his views – airing his opinions; in fact he had been making me acquainted with his store of knowledge touching the whole district and his people." It is clear that Arthur does not understand Andy's talkativeness and his folk knowledgeability as unique to the driver. Instead, his momentary observation of Andy's qualities becomes grounds for a generalization of the Irish:

No barber – taking this tradesman to illustrate the popular idea of loquacity *in excelsis* – is more consistently talkative than an Irish car-driver to whom has been granted the gift of speech. There is absolutely no limit to his capability, for every change of surrounding affords a new theme and brings on the tapis a host of matters requiring to be set forth.

(10)

As the novel bears out, however, this becomes one of the greatest strengths of the Irish for Arthur and Stoker. Irish storytelling is of singular importance in the novel, as it encodes both punctual and accumulative history as well as reinforcing community values.

In addition to the stage Irish, Arthur also encounters another conventional Irish literary trope brought to life in *Norah Joyce*. *Norah*, the novel's female protagonist, is idealized and at times abstracted almost to the point of non-personhood. She becomes the catalyst for Arthur's lasting interest in Carnaclif as well as the means by which he insinuates himself into its community. Two distinct, but related, tropes inform her characterization. The first of these is the trope of Ireland as a maiden, and the second is that of the "Wild Irish Girl," which again became commonplace in Irish fiction following Lady Sydney Owenson's novel of the same name. Regarding the first, William Hughes tells us,

In nineteenth century Irish nationalist journals ... Erin is frequently portrayed as a noble and sorrowful maiden, beset by an invariably male power" and according to L. P. Curtis, whom Hughes quotes, "Erin was a stately as well as sad and wise woman ... her hair was long and dark, falling well down her back; her eyes were round and melancholy set in face of flawless symmetry," "components ... all present in *Norah Joyce*.  
(18)

Put upon by Black Murdock both directly and indirectly, *Norah Joyce* is beset by the very Irish peasant who is her father's foil in the novel. With her father's land compromised, and without Arthur's intervention, she is undoubtedly "beset by a male power." Her role

as Ireland in the novel's allegorical ending, furthermore, suggests that Ireland can only be saved from itself by committing itself to integration into England's social fabric.

That Arthur sees her in these terms is clear from their first encounter. Much like her near-namesake Nora Reilly in Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), her English suitor finds her alluring because of her voice. For much of the novel, in fact, she is nothing to him *but* a voice, one which becomes the object of his love, even his obsession. He first hears her speak when he and Andy take Phelim home. Andy recognizes her, even in the dark, but Arthur only "looked eagerly in the direction in which [Andy] evidently pointed, [and] ... could see nothing" (44). The darkness, however, is necessary for the profundity Arthur notices when he first hears her voice. Arthur reflects on the whole experience, which "was all bewildering to [him]" for he "could hear it all – and a sweeter voice [he] never heard" (45). The conversation marks the beginning of a transformation for Arthur and continues the redefinition of his relationship to Ireland. When he has the convenience of perspective, he is able to rationalize that fixation with recourse to conventional narratives of love:

When I look back and try to analyse myself and my feelings with the aid of the knowledge and experience of life received since then, I think that I must have been in love. I do not know if philosophers have ever undertaken to say whether it is possible for a human being to be in love with the abstract – whether the something which the heart has a tendency to send forth needs a concrete objective point! (47)

Tellingly, nowhere in his reflection, communicated presumably from a point in time beyond the novel's resolution and his marriage to Norah, does he name her. There is a

real apprehension her at the idea that the materiality of Norah might deprive him of that joy. Arthur is more in love with the concept – the abstraction – of Irish women, it seems, than with any particular Irish woman. In the first of several mountaintop encounters in which neither party offers nor requests the others' name – Norah simply assumes that Arthur knows – Arthur hears a voice singing, and thinks to himself, “By Jove ... the women of this country have sweet voices!” Implausibly, he makes no connection to the voice he cannot seem to escape, instead turning the similarity into grounds for generalization. His conclusion of what characterizes the rural Irish woman is, in fact, as reductionist as it can possibly be: “My experience of the girls of the west is that of *vox et praeteria nihil*” (73). They are, to translate, *voice and nothing more*. Norah's voice, however little it may represent an actual personage for Arthur, is essential in his growth into a paternalistic beneficent landlord. Returning to Stoker's formulations in “The Necessity for Political Honesty,” the Irish need the English for the purposes of survival and modernization, but the English need the “wild” and idealized Celtic race to stave off a future of effeteness and inefficacy.

It is also worth noting that Norah's characterization continues the complication of racial Irishness that Stoker began in “The Necessity for Political Honesty,” in that her status as Irish is unquestioned despite her ethnic indeterminacy. Stoker, in the 1872 address, effectively collapses the categories of nation and race, not by emphasizing a biological basis for national membership, but by implying that the makeup of the national population itself creates the criteria by which to determine race. Recall that he, like most of his audience at Trinity, is of Protestant and Anglo descent and yet refers to all in attendance to do their best to represent the Celtic race (in service, of course, to England).

If, at least implicitly, biological inheritance is not the foundation of concepts of race for Stoker, then one of Ireland's key "racial" qualities is that it cannot be reduced to a biological absolute. If biological race or phenotype is often at the foundation of the narratives which imperial powers use to justify the subjugation of those deemed inferior, as is profoundly the case for Ireland's oppressor England after the fifteenth century or so, then gesturing in some way at the construction of race undermines the discourse of imperialism, regardless of what Stoker's intentions may have been. Norah Joyce is in many ways the most indeterminate character in the novel; as discussed, she is at once represented as utterly unique but also uniquely representative of Irish women, at least to Arthur. Although she is not Catholic like the majority of the Irish peasant class, she is still associated with Romantic concepts of Ireland, including its pastoralism and the fairy stories with which Andy constantly associates her when teasing Arthur. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Stoker explicitly questions how "native" the representative Irish woman is in the first place. "How lovely she was!" Arthur observes, "I had heard that along the west coast of Ireland there are traces of Spanish blood and Spanish beauty; and here was a living evidence of the hearsay. Not even at the sunset in the parades of Madrid or Seville, could one see more perfect beauty of the Spanish type – beauty perhaps all the more perfect for being tempered with northern calm" (75). Arthur's move is typical of Stoker inasmuch as it seems that he wants to have it both ways. Her beauty is attributed to its evocation of phenotypically Spanish features, and yet those very alien features make her all the more Irish. Furthermore, when the implicitly "essential" Spanish features are "tempered with northern calm," they become more beautiful in Arthur's eyes. "Northern calm" could refer to Ireland's relative position to Spain, but it also recalls



Ireland's history of successive invasions by Scandinavian Vikings. Stoker, vis-à-vis Arthur, represents an idealized racial type with no clear racial origins. Although it is clear to him by her dress and mannerisms that she is "a peasant girl, manifestly and unmistakably" (75), her physical features, while beautiful and alluring, suggest much more than they reveal.

Arthur, then, encounters Irish characters who almost uniformly fit within received and preconceived parameters of Irishness, although those parameters are somewhat more inclusive than might be the norm. Unlike Jonathan Harker, he does not have many experiences which cause him self-doubt or epistemological anxiety. That is not to say, however, that there is no complexity. Stoker was a vocal admirer of Prime Minister Gladstone, and Christopher Morash suggests that Stoker inherited Gladstone's "bifurcated vision of the Irish tenant farmer as both the embodiment of his nation's progress and as a violent, atavistic demon was frequently written in the late nineteenth century as two opposed character types: the 'peasant' and the 'gombeen man.'" (113). These two types appear in the shape of Phelim Joyce and Black Murdock respectively. It is a characteristically Stokerian doubling, establishing a pattern that develops in Dracula's proliferating parallels and pairings of characters, and it allows the author both to concede an insidious element in Ireland while reaffirming the array of possibility within that type, including the possibility that the less desirable twin might, ultimately, be ousted. Furthermore, this doubling is compounded by the reallocation of the land between Murdock and Phelim, with the Shifting bog representing the general ambivalence and indeterminacy about what the truer Irish character really is. As Hughes notes, Stoker's attribution of the land dispute to the Irish gombeen man effectively obscures the role of

the British in creating and perpetuating the conditions for land antagonism (18-19), suggesting in fact the necessity of British intervention. “The novel functions essentially as a fable or reconstruction,” he writes, “a synecdoche in which supposedly representative Irish ‘problems’ are identified, and an arena where these are overcome through the intervention and energy of an outsider...” (17). Daly concurs, suggesting that “the text transforms the historical struggle between Catholic tenants and their largely Protestant landlords into the persecution of the Protestant (but poor) Joyces at the hands of the presumably Catholic Murdock” (56), going a step beyond Hughes in reading the land struggle in *The Snake’s Pass* as an outright reversal of the real dynamics of exploitation in Ireland. The net effect of Arthur’s encountering these types, in other words, is that he recognizes his potential to save them.

Phelim Joyce’s defining quality is his willingness to sacrifice his own desires and put others, especially his family; before the novel even begins, he has gone into tremendous debt in an attempt to give his son an education. At one point, “feel[ing] quite proud” of his father-in-law-to-be, Arthur observes of Phelim, “There was a natural grace and dignity about him which suited him so well, that I had no wish to see him other than a peasant. He became the station, and there was no pretence” (165). We could read it as an ironic gloss on the Englishman’s assuredness in his own superiority; he would simply be reading in Phelim precisely that which is most amenable to his ambitions of marrying Norah and incorporating Ireland. Norah’s relationship with his daughter, however, suggests that he shares some of Arthur’s sensibility about what is best for Ireland and what his proper station is. In Norah’s role as a personified Ireland, her father’s deference figures as a gesture of fatherly love even as it more profoundly suggests Stoker’s

conflicted vision of an Ireland consciously moving towards integration with British Empire and continental Europe. Much as his daughter Norah expresses, of her own volition, the desire to acclimate and elevate herself to be a fit wife for Arthur, Phelim reinforces this sense of inferiority, telling his future son-in-law, "...we're not of your class, an' if ye wish for her it is only right an' fair that she should be brought up to the level of the people that she's goin' into" (159). Stoker, in Phelim Joyce, accomplishes a rather complex characterization which, paradoxically, still conforms to a vision of Irish national character; he is at once proud of his Irishness and desirous of independence, but he also recognizes the relative underdevelopment of the Irish and the necessity for a reciprocal arrangement. It is imperialist wish fulfillment, but it also continues the novel's project to complicate more reductionist and racialized versions of national character.

Conversely, Black Murdock's primary role in the novel's treatment of Irish character is to provide a foil to the idealized Phelim Joyce, a treatment which implicitly attributes the Land War and the oppression of the Irish to personal failings and flaws. As Murray writes, "Murdock is a ruthlessly accumulative Irish peasant, representative of a new breed of unattractive, ambitious native entrepreneurs as seen by unimpressed Protestant observers" (156). His goal is singular, as he desires money and power. Dick, after leaving Murdock's employ, goes as far as to call Murdock a "human shaped wolf" guilty of "robbery, and nothing short of it" (87). While both Phelim and Murdock are Irish, and while Murdock's religion is unidentified, speculation favoring Catholic, Phelim is explicitly Protestant, and the narrative sympathy favors the former unambiguously. If Murdock's opportunistic land-grabbing is read as an analogue to the Land Acts and eventual purchase of lands from the Anglo-Irish and English by the Catholic Irish tenant

farmers, then Dick's comments suggest enough consternation and reservation on Stoker's part about the new landholders to make W. B. Yeats proud. Black Murdock manipulates, coerces, deceives and exploits his neighbors. He never quite *breaks* the law, with the notable exception of the attempted murder of Bat Moynahan, but instead looks for ways to use it unethically to his advantage. As Arthur remarks, "He was evidently a bit of a lawyer – a gombeen man must be – and he knew the practical matters of the law affecting things in which he was himself interested" (119). This is clearest in his initial exploitation of Phelim Joyce's need, but it extends to his attempt to wrest the Cliff Fields land from Norah by, rather comically, proposing to her. For Murdock, Norah is nothing but a means by which to consolidate his wealth. When rejected as, in Phelim's words, "the likest thing to a divil in these parts," Murdock coldly reminds the Joyces to "remimber ye're in me power; an' ye've got to plase me in wan way or another" (169). The majority of the Irish characters in the novel, as we have seen, can be characterized by their willingness to help others, the hospitality and communitarianism that is evident from the first night in the shebeen. Phelim Joyce, Norah, and Andy, the three central Irish characters, all demonstrate some kind of selflessness. Although Murdock reflects for Stoker an overambitious and greedy type within the Irish population, it is one that is neither representative nor, necessarily, an enduring fixture. With the shifting bog leaves the island in the novel's climactic storm, the uncertainty it has represented regarding the "true identity" of the Irish tenant farmer goes with it.

*The Snake's Pass* has at its core a mystery which cannot be understood fully through any one explanatory lens. Although Black Murdock is the unquestionable villain of the piece, he is two-dimensional and not very interesting on his own. He is the yin to

Joyce's yang, and much of the novel plays out as a competition between two halves of the Irish peasant self. Their conflict revolves around the area in Carnaclif known as the shifting bog, an anomalous variation of the familiar Irish bog which "has moved an' moved an' moved longer than anywan can remimber" (43). The shifting bog is spread across three pieces of land. The good farm land initially belongs to Phelim Joyce, while the land rendered useless by the bog belongs initially to Black Murdock. The pastoral Cliff Fields belong to Norah, and they remain in her possession until the conclusion of the novel. Their reasons for wanting the better portion of the land differ; for Joyce, it is his modest livelihood, while Murdock believes it hides the lost gold of 1798. His greed, of course, gets the better of him, and when the bog is drained it is revealed that he had possessed the land he desired from the very beginning.

As a dynamic and fluid topographical phenomenon, the shifting bog serves as an ideal metaphor for the novel's ostensible intra-Irish struggle between greed and honor. At the literal level of the plot, however, the shifting bog is equally indeterminate. The residents of Carnaclif do not have a singular understanding of it, and the layers of tales they tell about it suggest a valid but incomplete attempt to understand it. Buchelt, emphasizing Stoker's Irish cultural inheritance with regard to Irish orality, identifies in *The Snake's Pass* an indebtedness to "the Irish narrative genre of stories about placenames, the *dinnseanchas* tradition" (113). Bat Moynahan and Jerry Scanlan have important roles in the community to play as the *seanachai*, the preservers of the *dinnseanchas*. Their stories both record actual events and encode the community's values, and they represent two types of storytelling in *The Snake's Pass* which Buchelt calls, echoing the novel's Hiberno-English dialect, "laygends" and "shtories" (119).

Scanlan's tale, the legend, of the confrontation between Patrick and the King of the Snakes implies that the Bog is itself the reincarnation of Patrick's adversary, who defies the saint's alien authority when ordered to leave Ireland: "I didn't obey ... because I thraverse the jurisdiction. ... Because this is my own houldin' ... I'm the whole government here, and I put a nexeat on meself not to lave widout me own permission" (22). The King of the Snakes articulates a desire for self-governance, and furthermore explicitly validates his authority in terms of land possession. Stoker effectively villainizes the Irish who would hold on to their land here, but by making the Snake the community's archetypal villain, he also distances them from the attitude and represents a rural Irish peasantry who do not represent a threat to proper" rulership. At the end of the story, the Snake King hides his crown, telling Patrick, "An' till ye it me crown I'm king here still, though ye banish me. An' mayhap, I'll come in some forum what ye don't suspect, for I must watch me crown." The people of Carnaclif ask Jerry "what forum he tuk when he kem bak," to which Jerry responds, "Sure, they do say that the shiftin' bog wor the forum he tuk," explaining that "The mountain wid the lake on top used to be the fertilist shpot in the whole country; but iver since the bog began to shift this was niver the same" (23). If the bog itself represents, in the novel's "bifurcated" view of the Irish tenant farmer, the greedy and arrogant element, then Stoker's formulations, articulated through Jerry, associate the inability of the land to produce with the persistence of Irish resistance. Jerry's story, which proves to have a material basis in fact when the ancient crown is discovered, also captures a moral truism to which the novel subscribes. Although there is no indication that the confrontation between Patrick and the King of Snakes ever occurred, Jerry's story remains, in a very real way, true.

Bat Moynahan's story, that of the 1798 Rebellion and the loss of the French gold, likewise captures a truth about the character of Carnaclif's people, but it also reflects literal, factual truth in a way that Jerry's cannot. The literal truth is pretty straightforward. Bat and his father saw two French soldiers, sent with gold to aid the Irish against the English, consumed by the bog. Initially, Bat does not remember, but instead prefaces the story as one handed down from his father: "Oh, sorra one of me knows anythin' except what I've heerd from me father. But I oft heerd him say that he was tould, that it was said," he begins (24). Although Murdock will later jog his memory in a series of cruel, drunken expeditions, Bat Moynahan's uncertainty situates the story, truthful as it is, in a space of half-remembrance, an account already on its way to the more allegorical function in Jerry's story. The values implied in this story, however, seem to contradict those in the tale of Patrick. Whereas the King of the Snakes, as an object of derision, implies a distancing of the community from pride or resistance to authority, the story of the 1798 Rebellion has a clearly Fenian undercurrent, with Bat declaring "bad cess to thim" that would not join in the Irish cause, even for a substantial bribe. Furthermore, when the gold is finally recovered at the novel's end, Arthur encourages Phelim to take the treasure, and Phelim's rationale is transparently pro-nationalist: "Take it I will, an' gladly; but not for meself. The money was sent for Ireland's good – to help them that wanted help, an' plase God! I'll see it doesn't go astray now!" (240). The seeming inconsistencies in these two accounts, the legend and the story, might actually be read as Stoker's attempt to celebrate the spirit of resistance, something he had already done before in "The Necessity." He cannot endorse it fully, of course, and the novel's

conclusion undermines full Irish independence unapologetically, but his non-fiction writings do corroborate his sense of vitality in Fenianism.

One Irish account imagines the origins of the shifting bog, then, and the other documents its contemporary relevance. Regardless of their tales' implicit disagreement about Irish resistance, both Moynahan and Scanlan reveal something about the character of the people through the stories they tell about the shifting bog. By contrast, Arthur Severn and Dick Sutherland do not seek to understand or interpret the bog figuratively at all. Rather, it is something to be controlled simply for the sake of knowledge and, more importantly, for the economic sustainability and prosperity of Carnaclif and the Englishman who, by novel's end, owns literally all of it. We first encounter Dick in Chapter IV, "The Secrets of the Bog." While the stories of the bog are public knowledge, the way that it works and what it *actually* houses are secrets, and it takes an Englishman with a particular set of skills to exact those secrets. Dick Sutherland, in other words, represents the third and most effective discursive possibility for discussing the shifting bog and bogs in general. His explanation of a bog's constitution, and its danger, is direct and, as Arthur reflects, horrifying. After Arthur asks Dick if a bog is more like a "quagmire" or "quicksand," Dick responds:

Like either, or both. Nay! it is more treacherous than either! ... What you see is simply a film or skin of vegetation of a very low kind, mixed with the mould of decayed vegetable fibre and grit and rubbish of all kinds which have somehow got mixed into it, floating on a sea of ooze and slime – of something half liquid half solid, and of an unknown depth ... A body immersed would, when the lungs had escaped and the *rigor mortis* had set



in, probably sink a considerable difference; then it would rise after nine days, when decomposition began to generate gases, and make an effort to reach the top. (59)

Although there is a clear warning to Dick's account, there is no moral or lesson here other than "be careful around bogs." He is concerned with its scientific makeup, with the biology and physics that make it do the things that it does. It is, in other words, more material than either of the Irish accounts. Dick's account of the shifting properties is equally demystified. Water accumulates underground in various places inside the mountain, he suggests, and as "the mountain is covered in a number of places with a growth or formation of bog, .. this water ... would not only saturate it, but would raise it – being of less specific gravity than itself – till it actually floated" (66-7). In the novel's climactic bogslide, Dick's speculation proves accurate, demonstrating the plainness and indisputability of his scientific discourse in contrast to that of the Carnaclif *seanachai*.

Each of the epistemologies in *The Snake's Pass* is associated closely with nationality. Andy, Scanlan and Moynahan recall longstanding Irish representations, sometimes even negative stereotypes, but their characterization also reveals a deeper immersion in and understanding of Irish culture than Stoker is often given credit for. Each of these characters represents an aspect of Irish oral culture and has mastery over a distinctive form of storytelling which encodes the history and values of the region. As discussed earlier, one deals primarily with the pre-Christian mythic past, while another is the more conventionally factual and historical. As much as the Irish discourse is distinctive, so too is the English. While Buchelt suggests accurately that Dick "has a more nuanced understanding [than Arthur does] of the relationship between legend, story,

and truth; one that ... reflects that of the locals' understanding of their *dinnseanchas*" (123), the division she makes between the two English characters downplays what they actually share. Arthur Severn and Dick Sutherland are much like their Irish counterparts in that they represent less a unified English national character than two equally privileged forms of Englishness, with Arthur being the nouveau-riche capitalist and Dick the middle class man of science, not wealthy but capable of meeting his needs through employment and his erudite knowledge. They are united, however, in their recourse to progressive and rationalist scientific discourse as the primary explanatory paradigm. Dick, who at one point tells Arthur straightforwardly that "Legends always have a base in fact" (65), is more flexible than Arthur in his receptiveness to Irish folklore as a source of legitimate knowledge, but he is markedly removed from the oral storytelling culture of the novel's Irish characters. The gap between Anglo and Irish characterization in the novel is most evident in the way in which they relate to the Irish topography, in how they describe it, think about it, and understand it.

While Dick does concede the potential for Irish storytelling to encode elements of Ireland's and Carnaclif's history, both he and Arthur have a relationship to the land that is at once more imperialist, more scientific, and instrumentalist. As Stoker makes clear as late as 1907's "The Great White Fair in Dublin," he was of the conviction that the greatest obstacle to Irish modernization was its lack of industry, a parochialism which was not the result of any shortcoming of character but rather of the dispersal of the population and the island's isolation: "The geographical position of the island, ... its isolation, ... and, from the nature of its natural products, a logical lack of transport facilities – all have tended to create for its inhabitants a personal ignorance both of itself

and the outside world ... Inasmuch as Ireland is naturally an agricultural country, the lives of its people are, as a rule spent in narrow areas” (146). Stoker here suggests that, as much as Ireland’s perceived backwardness is the result of geographical isolation, both intranationally and internationally, the Irish need some sort of external guidance to improve the lives of the island and its people. This is, in short, what outside investors like Arthur and engineers like Dick have to offer Ireland. Although it may not be their intent, Stoker creates characters who might, as he would write nearly two decades after *The Snake’s Pass*, “introduce Patrick to his new self” (“Great White Fair” 146). They have the economic and intellectual means by which to make the most of Ireland’s resources and the knowledge to realize that goal. Although Dick may be more sympathetic to the knowledge implicit in the *dinnseanchas*, he is closer to Arthur than to the Irish in his approach to – and reasons for – answering the questions raised by the indeterminate and unyielding Irish land.

Understandably, most of the critical attention regarding scientific discourse in the novel has focused on the question of the shifting bog. Although a natural phenomenon, it eludes easy understanding because so much of what it does and how it works occurs out of sight. Dick and Arthur, in their desire both for knowledge and mastery of it, embody a pragmatism denied to the Irish characters. Daly suggests that the “novel ... thematicizes visual control in the language of surveying and engineering,” although “the sense of visual mastery falters” at times; therefore, “the bog appears to represent the limits of the text’s ability to contain colonial space” (48). Similarly, in “Ceide Fields; Natural Histories of a Buried Landscape,” Stuart McLean suggests that “Stoker’s portrayal of the shifting bog is notable for its explicit linking of the bog as a colonial topography – a

space of wildness and excess needing to be reformed and domesticated – with its significance as a receptacle of submerged pasts, including both historical events and the nebulous time-before of pagan myth...” (56). Although the text cannot contain the colonial space, the conclusion bears out Dick’s hypotheses regarding the bog’s potential behavior; the crown and the gold, which appear after the bog is emptied, verify some truth in both the mythic and historical account of the bog. There are remnants of a pre-Christian past, for one, and the 1798 gold finally fulfills its purpose. But neither of these forms of discourse has the productive potential of Dick’s science; in addition to explaining the bog’s behavior and helping him predict – and therefore, to some extent, control – nature, it also helps him identify the natural resource, limestone, which will carry Carnaclif into the post-agrarian future. All three levels of discourse prove to be, in some measure, true. Only the English scientist, however, is able to *do* something with that knowledge, and so the novel ends up being not only a displaced and revisionist account of Land War anxiety, but also an apologia for imperialist interventionism. The colonizer’s attempt to “contain colonial space” and “domesticate” it are, in the novel’s admittedly biased milieu, to the colony’s benefit.

While Stoker goes to great lengths, then, to celebrate indigenous Irish ways of knowing, the novel is more convinced of the long-termed viability of science. Given the strong emphasis on progress, which runs as an undercurrent through Stoker’s entire career, this is unsurprising. It is not that the Irish do not have a means by which to use their discourse productively; Andy’s “fairy girl” teasing stands as a prime example of a metaphorical story designed to encourage Arthur to recognize the value of what is in front of him in Norah, and it also allows him to do so without disclosing Arthur’s feelings

to others. It is a mode of simultaneous revelation and concealment. But that very concealment appears to be a limitation as well, as Arthur's inability to grasp it demonstrates repeatedly. Despite their unique value, the stories are removed almost infinitely from the straightforward and thorough discourse which enables the reclamation of bogs and the economic modernization of Ireland. What both Dick and Arthur require, and which the economic success of Carnaclif at the end of the novel affirms, is a means by which, in Dick's words, to "cure [a] bog by both a surgical and medical process," thereby stopping "its mechanical action as a sponge" and "kill[ing] the vital principle of its growth." This is how, he tells Arthur, a "scientific and executive man asserts his *dominance*" (56, emphasis mine). As Kwame Anthony Appiah observes of his own postcolonial experience, that "Those of us who were given scientific educations have a significant advantage. It's not that we are individually more reasonable; it's that we have been given better materials with which to think about the world" (42). Stoker's English protagonists have better materials, clearly, to the extent that their actions have an efficacy that allows them to achieve their own ambitions and improve the community as well. At the same time, however, Stoker does not dismiss the folk beliefs and stories. Even the slow-to-believe Arthur, after the novel's climax and the discovery of the ancient crown, declares the legend to be "true" even if it is not factually exact: "And so, ladies and gentlemen, the legend is true, that the Lost Crown would be discovered when the water of the lake was found again" (242). Science may be *truer*, in a sense, and may offer more in terms of potential progress, but it also supports folklore rather than disproving or supplanting it. *The Snake's Pass* suggests a greater estimation of the scientific, but it also

implies that they are not mutually incompatible. They are different ways of getting at the same idea, even if one has more potential for modernizing.

The great mystery of the shifting bog, then, is explained equally well by story and legend. Stoker supplies them each with material evidence to that end, but spends less time talking about the crown or the gold than about what can be done with the scientific mastery over the land. All three modes are true, one might say, but not all truths are created equal. In *The Snake's Pass*, the folk or Celtic element is purely imaginative or creative, while the English is scientific, rationalist, and more productive or truthful, even if there is some truth in the Irish creation. There is a plainness that makes the Anglo-affiliated discourse ultimately superior in the novel. Nevertheless, it still marks a generous attempt on Stoker's part to recognize the possibility a pluralistic culture which, while reaffirming English paternalism, valorizes aspects of the Celt. By extension, Arthur's marriage to Norah, England's marriage to Ireland, becomes about the elevation of Ireland. The novel's conclusion is, as has been argued, ultimately assimilationist, conforming to the pattern of Anglo-Irish colonial marriage plots going back at least as far as Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl*. In *The Snake's Pass*, in other words, Stoker generic choice allows him to have it both ways.

#### V. *Dracula*

In both *The Snake's Pass* and *Dracula*, at least initially, Bram Stoker limits the reader's perspective to the confines of an upwardly mobile Englishman. Arthur Severn has only recently come into wealth and is travelling for pleasure, while Jonathan Harker has just been made a solicitor and is traveling to Eastern Europe on behalf of his

employer, Peter Hawkins. Both protagonists are clearly familiar with pseudo-imperialist discourse; each knows, or thinks he knows, a great deal about what he is seeing despite being affected to a significant degree by the land and people with whom he interacts. As a comparison of their respective experiences suggests, however, Stoker's faith in English epistemological systems grew less certain – and more complex – in the years between the two novels. Whereas Arthur's assumptions, especially those of Irish difference, are by and large met, Jonathan Harker's recourse to Anglo systems of knowledge to reaffirm his difference and superiority ultimately fail, confirming suspicions while reducing his distance to those from whom imperialism requires submission. The result is a destabilization of the narratives which underwrite imperialist domination and a near-complete rupture in textual authority. Furthermore, by limiting the reader's perspective to Jonathan's, Stoker encourages the reader's self-examination of his or her own conception of self in relation to others.

Superficially, *Dracula's* Jonathan Harker is a clear successor to Arthur Severn. Once again, he is an Englishman travelling in an unfamiliar land and among unfamiliar people, and he falls back on imperialist discourses of difference and superiority, as well as a body of ostensibly reliable knowledge, in order to make sense of his experiences. Like Arthur, he finds many of his assumptions confirmed, but his reliance on rationalism and modern perspectives on the world fails him, compromising his sense of difference and pushing him toward more ancient and traditional forms of understanding. In other words, Jonathan has to make room for new ways of thinking about the world, and so Stoker first has to highlight the shortcomings and logical inconsistencies inherent to a discourse of absolute fixity. Accordingly, he begins challenging the binarizing tendencies

of imperialism in the opening chapters, which recount Jonathan's experiences travelling to Castle Dracula. These journal entries effectively situate the reader in a position sympathetic to and informed by British imperialist discourse and values, both of which reflect Orientalist concepts of the East. By inviting the reader to identify with Harker and then quickly undermining the authority of the Englishman's knowledge, Stoker forces the reader to recognize the constructedness of his or her own views on national character. Initially, then, the division between concepts of East and West has to appear clear, and Harker's bias seems duly justified by his observation and experiences, but the text works quickly to subvert the legitimacy of his subjectivity at every turn.

Before detailing Jonathan's travels in Eastern Europe and how they both align with and depart from those of Arthur in Ireland, however, it is worth looking at the particular affinity Stoker's Transylvania has with Ireland and how Jonathan's experience of it registers as imperial anxiety. In imperialism, knowledge is tantamount to power, and attempts to assert authoritative knowledge also function as gestures of mastery. When Jonathan Harker's assumptions, even the accurate ones, fail to empower him, he goes into a lengthy tailspin that is mitigated only by the internalization of new forms of knowledge. That Transylvania and Eastern Europe function as analogues for Ireland is becoming something of a given in Irish readings of *Dracula*. Joseph Valente's exhaustive reading of Transylvania as Ireland in the first chapter of *Dracula's Crypt* is representative. "Ireland and the Irish Question may be said," he suggests, "to constitute the 'other scene of *Dracula*, a never fully present correlative to the official narrative concerning the Balkans and the Eastern Question, at once a supplementary shadow term and the novel's ultimate object of reference," and therefore "intersect[ing] with the manifest content ... in an



overdetermined manner” (50). Valente notes the similarity to Transylvania’s literal translation of “beyond the woods” to the phrase associated with Irish resistance to British rule, “beyond the pale,” as well as the combination of Irish folk stories and Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” infusing *Dracula*’s stories of the theft and consumption of children, the description of the topography, the ethnic variety and succession of conquering invaders, and Jonathan’s account of Transylvania’s “social landscape,” which “succeeds in indexing the opacity, the hybridity, and the self-alterity of [Ireland as] a referent, its intractability to univocal or even coherent representation” (50-52).

Furthermore, the function of Transylvania as a near-substitute for Ireland in the novel is also implicit in *Dracula*’s persistent orientalist formulations. In *Orientalism* (1978), as the third of three “interdependent” meanings of the term, following the “academic” and “a more general” meaning predicated on “ontological and epistemological difference” (2), Edward Said notes the power implicit in discourses of Occident and Orient:

...Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (3)

This practice also resonates with the discourses of British superiority over their Irish neighbors. Furthermore, as Joseph Lennon writes in *Irish Orientalism* (2004), the Orient functioned during Ireland’s cultural revival as a means of representing Ireland by proxy: “Images of the Orient allowed later Irish writers an avenue for indirectly representing Irish-English relations, colonialism, cultural resistance and decolonization” (xxiii). If

Ireland is an implicit layer in Stoker's Transylvania, then the disorientation Jonathan experiences suggests that in the years between the two novels, Stoker has begun to question distinction between Anglo and Irish, or Anglo and Other, which, however benignly, informs *The Snake's Pass*.

Beginning the discussion of *Dracula* proper, the land in which and people with whom Jonathan Harker finds himself conform to his concepts of cultural Otherness, and his journal can itself be read as a form of modern technology meant to efficiently subordinate and order his impressions of an irrational land in rational terms. The first observation Harker makes involves the lack of punctuality in Eastern Europe in contrast to the West, a theme to which he returns habitually in the pages to follow; he "should have arrived at 6.46," he writes, but his "train was an hour late" (9). Harker then gazes from the window of his train, deducing from the very small bit of Budapest he can see that it is "a wonderful place," although he could only manage a "glimpse" and a "little ... walk through the streets." He is left to conclude: "The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East," where he finds himself "among the traditions of Turkish rule" (9). There is not enough evidence, as his journal readily tells us, to make much by way of generalizations, so the only way to read Harker's impressions which follow, then, is as the repeated confirmation of an *a priori* hypothesis. Jonathan Harker believes that he knows where he is going, and the evidence has to affirm that belief so that he can maintain both his self-identification as a Westerner and his psychic integrity – no small feat in a novel full of characters fixated on certifying their sanity. Already, then, the Englishman abroad has arrived at a conclusion about the meaning of what he shall see in the events to follow, and he goes as far as to imagine a spatially designated continuum

from civilized to uncivilized. Harker's location of the absolute divide between the two on the Danube, however, suggests that a continuum is perhaps too generous a way to describe his conception of the relationship between geography and character. Even as human technology makes the flow and interchange among and between peoples possible, even as it blurs distinctions, Harker assigns absolute signifying power to that most literally fluid of topographical features, the river. He is defensive and on shaky ground.

As Bram Stoker exposes the fallacies underlying Jonathan's worldview, the initial rigidity gives way to fluidity and confusion, and through the early journal entries (and the novel as a whole) this movement from the absolute to the relative only proliferates. For example, Harker's first journal entry suggests his association of superstitious beliefs with the people of Eastern Europe and especially their diversity. Pointing out the "four distinct nationalities" of Transylvania, "the Saxons, and mixed with them the Wallachs... Magyars in the west, and Szekelys in the east and north," Jonathan connects this broadly Eastern grouping with the rationalist disvalue of superstition: "I read that every superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool; if so my stay may be very interesting" (10). But Harker's attempts to assert his authoritative understanding of these people as somehow homogenous are logically inconsistent, and his formulations are self-contradictory; if the nationalities are "distinct," why are the first two examples he offers notable for being "mixed"? This interpenetration and possible melding of cultures is implicitly the antecedent for the superstitious temperament Harker will find. The narrative will confirm his suspicions here, of course, because this is a superstitious region, but it has less to do with national character than it has to do with the reality they

live in within the novel. They have good, empirical, reasons to believe as they do. He is self-assured and condescending, but gradually and with increasing intensity his stubborn adherence to the banks of English knowledge proves futile and even self-destructive.

Jonathan Harker's assumptions about the people runs deep, and extends as well to their customs, revealing in depth the way dominant discourse shapes his interpretation of what he sees. At times, this appears innocuous, as he adopts the language and methodology of the tourist who can partake of, and even coopt for replication, the local food, but as Schmitt observes, this is important to recognize as a "familiar orientalizing trope: the touristic appreciation for and appropriation of local color" (28). At other times, more apprehensively than was the case with Arthur, it reveals the reduction of the people he encounters to cultural types. As with the earlier intimations of a continuum, Harker does not always seem convinced, despite himself, that there is much of a substantive difference between the people of England or France and those of Eastern Europe. There are elements of familiarity, especially with a broadly identifiable peasant class, which seems to exist everywhere, but they are juxtaposed with what appear to be more unfamiliar groups. "Some of them," Jonathan writes, "were just like the peasants at home or those I saw coming through France and Germany ... but others were very picturesque" (11). There are at least two things of note in Harker's phrasing; first, the laboring classes are universal and mitigate the sense of culture shock. Second, the less familiar types are rendered in the Romantic language of the picturesque, implying a Burkean negotiation between the sublime and the beautiful arranged and controlled by the observer (as opposed to the more contemporary sense of "picturesque," which equates, roughly, to "pretty"). Part of the crowd, in other words, he understands readily, the other he has a

technology or method for understanding. It is not so much that Harker does not recognize the other portion of the crowd as it is that he cannot name them. The reader is reminded constantly that the Otherness in operation may be simply the codification of what he or she encounters every day, especially since the sublime aspect of the picturesque implies a familiarity that Harker's formulations otherwise deny.

Given the indeterminacy of Transylvania, it follows that the imperialist Jonathan would use the tools of knowledge to regain his bearings. These tools, however, fail him quickly. It is fitting, given the novel's Irish authorship and resonance, that language emerges as one of the main ways in which Jonathan is challenged. Although initially aided by his "smattering of German" (9), Harker finds himself in increasingly unfamiliar linguistic territory. As Benedict Anderson has argued, the emergence of nation-states in the eighteenth and nineteenth century is made possible largely by the creation of a national language and the marginalization – or elimination – of others (44-5). Linguistic indeterminacy is cultural indeterminacy, then, and when faced with this it, Harker responds by referring to a modern tool of homogenization: the dictionary. Just before he takes his fateful coach to Castle Dracula, Harker observes of the crowd of people who come to look at him "pityingly," "I could hear a lot of words often repeated, queer words, for there were many nationalities in the crowd; so I quietly got my polyglot dictionary from my bag and looked them out" (13). Although it does not register with him completely yet, Harker senses the tension of the crowd and connects it to their "queer words" and multinational, multicultural quality. Having already been familiarized with some of the region's superstitions and beliefs, Harker attempts to navigate and make sense of the overload by referring to the collected knowledge of a single, bound, printed

volume. Harker's polyglot dictionary, in addition to communicating to the reader the Englishman's valuation of fixed knowledge and rationality, signals also the related unwillingness or inability to confront that with which it presents him. The repeated phrases include "'Ordog'—Satan, 'pokol'—hell, 'stregoica'—witch, 'vrolok' and 'vlkoslak'—both of which mean the same thing, one being Slovak and the other Servian for something that is either werewolf or vampire," and they prompt Harker to declare, with grim irony, that he "must ask the Count about these superstitions" (13-14). Though he notes that the translations are "not cheering" (14) to him, he gives it no further thought. Unlike Arthur Severn, he cannot even acknowledge their figurative authority. Harker does not recognize that the abundance of words for the same thing might actually imply a need for credulity; all of these people, superstitious as they may appear to his Western sensibilities, are correct to fear the Count, and to a more receptive and flexible audience, the number of synonyms and similar concepts here might suggest a multicultural consensus to consider. Folk wisdom is valuable in the novel, even more than it is in *The Snake's Pass*, and without it there is no means by which to explain, much less confront, supernatural evil.

By the time Jonathan has been in Dracula's castle for a few days, he has all but abandoned the forms of knowledge on which he had so heavily relied and begun to take seriously not only the superstitions of Eastern Europe, but also its Catholic beliefs, here Greek Orthodox. The most important identification of power in folk wisdom in *Dracula* centers on the precepts and artifacts of both the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic faiths, the latter of which had been conspicuously absent in *The Snake's Pass*; however Stoker may be accused of mishandling them, the text repeatedly signals their explanatory

capacity, even their efficacy, despite Jonathan Harker's initial repudiation of them, and despite the near-uniform Protestantism of its protagonists. The most distinctive affirmation of the effects of Catholicism in *Dracula* is, of course, the crucifix. It initially perplexes and almost offends Harker, but it becomes more and more a source of comfort and even power. While Jonathan Harker is Dracula's "guest," before he realizes the extent to which he is a prisoner, Stoker plants the seeds for a generous and credulous relationship between Protestants and the Catholic faith. Harker starts to understand that his English rationalism and the "superstition" of Catholicism might work together, noting both that he "need[s], and shall need, all [his] brains to get through" (32) and that the crucifix, "a thing which [he] ha[s] been taught to regard with disfavor and as idolatrous" becomes "in a time of loneliness and trouble to be of help, ... a tangible help" (33). The division between Harker's Protestantism with its emphasis on faith in the immaterial, and the more immediate, visible and "tangible" Catholicism begins to crumble, paving the way for the many instances in the novel in which a Catholic artifact has an explicit and literal power over the forces of evil; we go on to see the power of the cross over the vampiric Lucy, the Host's ability to repel Dracula's brides, and the literal marking of Mina's forehead by the application of the communion wafer. If Stoker's ambition is to champion the British national character, as Seamus Deane has argued in *Strange Country* (93), the inefficacy of British rationalism and the legitimacy of the mystic or spiritual conspire to undermine that ambition. It is as though Stoker is challenging the reader to recognize that hybridity is fundamentally part of the human experience in modernity.

As becomes increasingly clear in Jonathan Harker's journal, his sense of Western superiority is challenged when the tools of his knowledge fail to contain and order his

experiences in Transylvania. When he meets Dracula, this disorientation proliferates because *Dracula's* "shifting bog," its unknowable object, is Dracula himself. His defining feature, in fact, might be his very indeterminacy and his control over it; unlike the bog or Black Murdock, the vampire has full mastery over how others perceive him. Jonathan's first encounter with the Count sets the stage, as his coach driver eventually turns out to have been Dracula all along. He is terrifying, in part, because he defies categorization and render impotent the modern and imperial mind. Although Stephen Arata may be right that Dracula's enterprise is ultimately a sort of racial conquest (464), the racial characteristics he spreads are indeterminate; they constitute, in fact, indeterminacy itself, and it is Dracula's ability to shift and recontextualize himself that makes him most dangerous. We see him variously as an old man, a younger man, crawling down a wall like a lizard, his own driver in disguise, a wolf-beast, a bat, and perhaps most tellingly, mist. He is able to be everywhere, it seems, and as mist, simultaneously nowhere. He eludes categorization and defies all (modern) modes of discourse. Even the character's interpretation by critics who are interested in his relationship to the Anglo-Irish identity question come to very different conclusions; Deane reads him as a surrogate for the absentee landlord, but Cannon Schmitt notes instead the "savage bestiality of his vampiric attacks," which when "combined with the aristocratic hauteur of his manner[,] suggests the peculiarly Irish double threat of Fenianism and Catholic feudalism" (35). Dracula mystifies not only his antagonists, but his scholars.

Furthermore, Dracula is cunning and resourceful in his manipulation. Although centuries old and presumably having led an unlife situated primarily in Eastern Europe, he demonstrates an intrinsic ability to acculturate, or at least to feign acculturation even



from a distance. Language has already failed Jonathan by the time he meets Dracula, and yet his host has considerable skill in speaking English, a language foreign to him; when Dracula tells Jonathan that he “only knows [English] through books,” Jonathan responds, “you know and speak English thoroughly!” (26). Unlike Jonathan, Dracula can use books and indirect experience to adapt. Furthermore, whereas Jonathan finds the history of Dracula’s homeland confusing and mystifying, Dracula himself is self-assured and confident in his knowledge of London as he has experienced it in books. Dracula’s library, in fact, comes across as a laundry list of everything one might need to know to adapt to any number of situations in England. Jonathan finds “books of the most varied kind – history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law – all relating to England and English life and customs and manners” (25). Jonathan cannot know the implications of Dracula’s plan, but he is here essentially to affirm the Count’s designs in preparing himself for the infiltration of London. Dracula is proud of his own nobility, he tells Jonathan, but desires when in London to appear indigenous rather than “a stranger in a strange land”: “I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he see me,” though he concedes, “I have been so long master that I would be master still” (26). Dracula’s layers of performance and misdirection are endless. He uses Jonathan here to enhance his ability to blend into London life, but he is also hiding his plans, articulated quite precisely, in plain sight. Both Jonathan and the reader are accordingly horrified when, then, the Count steals Jonathan’s clothes and begins kidnapping children. Dracula readily appropriates markers of Jonathan’s difference, of *English* difference, and so when he finally appears in London, the reader and the hero alike have a glimpse of the potential for destruction in Dracula’s own “shifting.” As a mystical being self-educated in English

life, one whose supernatural power is supplemented by a modern knowledge, he is prepared from the beginning to adapt and transform beyond the limited imaginations of the novel's male English protagonists.

In *Dracula*, the opposition and interpenetration of traditional and modern discourse continues, but in an altered arrangement and without the same structures of hierarchy intrinsic to *The Snake's Pass*. The plot of the earlier novel is implausible, but in the end there is no real incompatibility between the *dinnseanchas* and Dick's science; one is a figurative attempt to capture the truth of the other, and they become different layers of the story of Carnaclif in which the expectations of belief vary. Because of the transparently fantastical nature of *Dracula*, however, the novel allows diverse folk traditions, religious beliefs and scientific discourse to be equally true *in the same, literal way*; if *The Snake's Pass* is Stoker's recognition that the conflicting traditions to which he is heir might be reconciled, then *Dracula* uses the conventions of the horror gothic to create a fantasy wherein those traditions might be rendered coequal, briefly dissolving the hierarchy and realizing a desire which underwrites most of his ideas about nation and culture in a way his earlier work anticipates but does not achieve. Although it is not an entirely representative text, and although it does not engage explicitly in the question of Ireland's relationship to England, or even mention Ireland directly at all, *Dracula* is an extension of the questions of race and nation in Stoker's other work as well as his most explosively subversive representation of them. *Dracula*, as much as it concedes the potential of both modernity and technology, cannot be read simply as their triumph over the archaic and arcane; Catholicism and folk ritual are indispensable to the novel's resolution, though they require modern methods for application. It is clear that the danger

Dracula represents is related to his indeterminacy and ability to blend in or disappear, to say nothing of his voluminous textual experience with England, so his enemies need to be as flexible as he is in order to respond to his constant code-switching and shifting tactics. In other words, the hybrid threat the Count represents necessitates a multifaceted response. *Dracula* goes one step beyond *The Snake's Pass*, suggesting that for knowledge to have power it must be fluid and inclusive, must be inherently simultaneous, which, following Kwame Anthony Appiah is intrinsically cosmopolitan.

In both novels, Bram Stoker's protagonists employ a cosmopolitan strategy in response to the seemingly unknowable obstacle. Any singular form of knowledge is inadequate to arrive at a full understanding of the bog or of Dracula, and so with increasing intensity Stoker's novels explore the possibility of synthesizing layers of narratives and, by extension, the communities from which they emerge. This approach is cosmopolitan because it undermines, to some extent, the privilege and hierarchy endemic to competing methods of explanation. These epistemologies can be, in fact, mutually reinforcing and might provide a multifaceted insight otherwise unavailable. Stoker's exploration begins as early as "The Necessity of Political Honesty," in which Stoker suggests that "We are indulging in no day-dreams when we try to the best of our ability to puzzle out the truth amongst us from many conflicting opinions" (36). It is part of what, again, Valente terms Stoker's "domestic cosmopolitanism," and it offers an intranational, but equally intercultural, variation on Appiah's call to "take seriously the value of ... particular human lives," including "the practices and beliefs that lend them significance" (xv). Consider Appiah's personal account in an early chapter of *Cosmopolitanism*, wherein he describes the persistence of vestiges of local religious

tradition alongside world religions in his native Ghana. Appiah's Asante people do not see the belief in witchcraft and spiritualism as incompatible with Christian practice. Appiah's father, as such, "took his appeals to spirits to be consistent with his Methodism." While certain practices may seem irrational or illogical to outsiders, beyond substantiation, they may nevertheless be as rational or logical within the appropriate context as the outsiders' own. Appiah references the Duhem thesis, which suggests that "[h]owever much data you have ... there will be many theories that explain it equally well," and suggests that "*there will always be more than one possible reasonable account for the facts*"(40, emphasis in original). Appiah's point is that, while our epistemological frameworks may vary based on the social and material circumstances of the cultures in which we are raised, they might still have internally consistent rules and criteria and, furthermore, may work in dialogue with other epistemologies to arrive at rounder and fuller perspectives. Bram Stoker's representation of the slippage between the scientific and the superstitious, to say nothing of varying religions, anticipates the generous position in Appiah's formulations. It speaks to a gesture on Stoker's part, perhaps, to encourage the consideration of these epistemological models, and in turn the ethno-national types with which they are associated, as mutually reinforcing and, by *Dracula*, approaching parity.

The cosmopolitan implications for *Dracula* have been gaining steam as a fixture of recent criticism on the novel, not only in the context of Irish Studies, as seen in Valente's *Dracula's Crypt*, but also more generally. For example, John Langan, in "'Through the Gates of Darkness': The Cosmopolitan Gothic of J. Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker," describes the general mistrust of the cosmopolitan in gothic fiction but

suggests that both Stoker and fellow Anglo-Irishman Le Fanu entertain the possibility that a cosmopolitan attitude might have something positive to contribute to the world.

Langan argues that “the mode’s original aversion to the cosmopolitan is literally pitted against a new appreciation of its potentials. In the case of *Dracula*, this split embodies itself quite neatly in the figures of Count Dracula and Doctor Van Helsing” (60).

Langan’s reading is spot-on, but I would suggest that the positive vision of cosmopolitanism embodied in Van Helsing also extends to the rest of the Crew of Light, especially Mina. Furthermore, although Langan does not raise the question of Irish political subtext, in light of Stoker’s earlier gestures at cosmopolitanism in “The Necessity for Political Honesty” and *The Snake’s Pass*, *Dracula* can be read both as an extension and transcendence of his engagement with the questions of a conflicted cultural self-identity.

Although this flexibility is achieved primarily in the group dynamic from which particular roles are assigned, it informs individual characterizations, especially those of Abraham Van Helsing and Mina Harker/Murray, each of whom is on the social peripheries (as Dutch and female, respectively) and central to the novel’s resolution.

From his introduction to the novel, Abraham Van Helsing embodies both an immersion in the scientific – but also a self-aware skepticism of it. Science is useful, but it is limited in its inability to conceive of those things it can neither prove nor disprove. He tells his former student Jack Seward, “Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain it all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new: and which are yet but the old, which pretend to be young” (171). The import is clear – science can be a

powerful tool, but it is too quick to overlook the persistence of other forms of knowledge and the contributions they offer to our understanding of the world. Van Helsing is, in a sense, the successor to both Dick Sutherland and Arthur's driver Andy, albeit with a more literal understanding of the supernatural than the Irishman. He is able to draw on both discourses simultaneously. If we are reading the novel as accomplishing a negotiation between the two forms of knowledge, as positing a more comprehensive worldview that transcends rigid binaries, then the succession of failures in confronting Dracula, from the letters in shorthand through the blood transfusions, register as a necessary stumbling blocks. Only when, in the novel's climactic scenes, the Crew of Light achieve a harmonious union of these tactics and worldviews are they successful; the threats of reverse colonization, atavism, miscegenation and racial degeneracy which Dracula ostensibly represents, can only be responded to effectively when the protagonists demonstrate the capacity to hold contraries in tension. For the Anglo-Irish writer, the appeal starts to come into focus; the English and Irish elements, while they may retain some of their differentiation, need not be understood in a relationship of dominance and subordination, but might instead be mutually reinforcing.

Van Helsing's methods represent the most singularly distilled example of a mystical-scientific fusion in the novel. He produces the ritual for killing a vampire, the now-familiar decapitation and stake through the heart, as readily as he does the equipment for blood transfusions. Seward's description of Van Helsing in a letter to Arthur Holmwood prepares the reader for this unorthodox fusion as the younger doctor emphasizes the qualities that make the elder fit for the case and reveal him as representative of the novel's ultimate negotiation between polarities:

Professor Van Helsing ... knows as much about obscure diseases as any one in the world ... So, no matter on what ground he comes, we must accept his wishes. He is a seemingly arbitrary man, but this is because he knows what he is talking about better than anyone else. He is a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day; and he has, I believe, an absolutely open mind. (105-6)

Seward begins his description of the professor by appealing to Van Helsing's specialized factual knowledge, and he predicates upon this knowledge a need for complete submission to the Dutchman's directions. Unlike Jonathan Harker's (and, by extension, the common Englishman's) attempts to adhere to a strictly rationalist perspective, Van Helsing combines his knowledge of science with a receptive, but discerning, spirit. Although Van Helsing is a scientist, and an advanced one at that, Seward's sequencing prioritizes his mentor's foundation in abstract thought and emphasizes his "absolute" – and unconventional – willingness to consider all possibilities, a position that all of Seward's allies will have to embrace by the novel's conclusion.

In order for Van Helsing's unorthodox scientific and religious attitudes to take root, after all, Stoker needs characters to trust him. For some, like Jack, this trust is long-earned and conditional. Stoker provides in Mina Murray/Harker, however, a sympathetic soul, reinforcing both the need for individual commitment and receptivity as well as the importance of collective action. She is the figure in whom this negotiation is expressed in its most concentrated form, and in fact reflects Stoker's even broader project of reconciling and synthesizing other binaries, like that of gender. If Van Helsing embodies a willingness to actively consider both scientific and mystical worldviews, then Mina

might be understood as a figure complicating the division between the spheres of the masculine and feminine, the active and the passive, and the modern and traditional. It is not as though Stoker idealizes Mina or represents her as somehow transcending the potential for degeneration we see activated in Lucy Westenra, and yet it is in Mina that we see the greatest optimism about the transformation of social norms and propriety in relation to women. To borrow from Appiah's formulation, her "contamination" is something of a devilish godsend. His goal here is to recover the idea of contamination from discourses of "cultural purity," which he suggests "is an oxymoron" anyway, as most people "already live a cosmopolitan life" (112). Contamination, in other words, is a fact of life as well a potential asset. The qualities which emerge in Mina are not created by vampire's bite, nor when activated are they exclusively dangerous.

People are individually complex in *Dracula* in a way that they are not in *The Snake's Pass*. In the earlier novel, people do not really change much, with the exception of Norah in her continental education, though they may become more *aware*. In *Dracula*, however, people not only change but can adapt and deploy conflicting discourses on the fly. Van Helsing and Mina fulfill this cosmopolitan ideal most fully, but all of the Crew of Light (to say nothing of Dracula) demonstrate a capacity to do so. By the novel's conclusion, the heroes collectively demonstrate a similar blend of resolve and flexibility, using trains and steamboats, as well as the efficiency of communication afforded by Mina's transcription efforts, to track the vampire to his castle. They make use of both the modern (the aforementioned trains and steamboats) and the primitive (horses) to overtake the vampire. They are guided by the documents compiled and transcribed from various records, including phonographs, by means of a typewriter, and maps consulted "under



God's providence" (304). Their task is funded both by the accumulation of both modern capitalist wealth and that of the antiquarian landed gentry. They even employ the up-to-date discourses of criminology and the pseudoscience of hypnosis in the pursuit of the ancient, supernatural criminal. At the center of all of this, again, is Mina, who, in her hypnotism "is once more our teacher [as] [h]er eyes have seen where we were blinded" (306). Mina's connection with the Count after her vampire baptism – her "contamination" – is, in the end, the most important component of their victory. Although Dracula nearly eludes his pursuers, it is ultimately the member of their party who resembles him most closely who enables their success. Stoker's vision in *Dracula* is not outright assimilationist as it is in *The Snake's Pass*, but the very fact that he renders Mina's imposed hybridity a resource suggests, yet again, that an absolute division is neither possible nor desirable. Furthermore, if the vampire is a proxy for the Anglo-Irish, and recalling Stoker's conflation of racial types in "The Necessity of Political Honesty," then the Irish element has an important function to play in the overall stabilizing of society.

## VI. Containing Multitudes: Concluding Thoughts

These two aspects of *Dracula*, the overlapping questioning of national or racial essentialism and the cultivation of an intermingled, multi-discursive epistemology, build on Stoker's earlier efforts in *The Snake's Pass*, which imagined a national type that was multifaceted even if complicit with stereotype, and which affirmed the figurative truth of folk knowledge even if that knowledge proved subordinate to modern, scientific knowledge. The self-conscious and self-enacted contamination of Van Helsing, Mina,

and eventually Harker and the rest of the Crew of Light, in other words, is essential for understanding the implications of the *Dracula*'s conclusion, which sets it apart yet again from *The Snake's Pass* without abandoning the earlier novel's more progressive gestures. After all, *The Snake's Pass* is ultimately ideological in its conclusion. The ending reads like a revisionist parable of the Land War, in which the intra-Irish conflict of Phelim Joyce and Black Murdock, somewhat analogous to the violent conflict between the Irish peasant class and Ascendant landlords, is put to rest by the intervention of a wealthy Englishman who buys up the land and replaces the agrarianism of Carnaclif with a capitalist enterprise in the export of limestone. In terms of the Land War, this would suggest that Stoker imagines a benevolent Anglo presence as the cure for what is an essentially Irish problem. The community restored at the end of the novel, then, is at once modernized and situated within a primarily Anglo-identified socioeconomic arrangement. It is also, however, a community in which a number of belief systems and discursive models coexist peacefully. Consider how, after the expulsion of the Shifting Bog, Arthur's band find, in Dick's words, "the mountain giving up ... its secrets. ... this is a day of discoveries!" (240). These discoveries include, unsurprisingly the French gold, which was part of the community's immediate memory anyway, but they also include the limestone necessary for Dick's and Arthur's vision of a modernized economy for Carnaclif and "an ancient crown of strange form" (241), affirming in some form the most ancient of legends. Once Ireland is purged of greed, the novel imagines, its diverse inhabitants might create a productive utopia in which all of their beliefs and values find accommodation.

If it is a fantasy, it is a well-intentioned one. Taken in isolation, it would seem to realize the “domestic cosmopolitanism” Valente reads implicitly in “The Necessity for Political Honesty.” It is not as though the novel foregoes hierarchy, however; from very early on, Arthur naturalizes Irish deference to the English, such as his belief that “Mrs. Keating’s kindly face beam[ed] by the vehemence with which [he] demanded food” (86), romanticizing servility into hospitality. More troublingly, Carnaclif’s priest, Father Peter, offers the novel’s most emphatic endorsement for the English control of Irish lands, telling Phelim Joyce,

...take to heart the lesson of God’s goodness! Ye thought when yer land and yer house was taken that a great wrong was done ye, and that God had deserted ye; and yet so inscrutable are His ways that these very things were the salvation of ye and all belonging to ye. For in his stead you and yours would have been swept into that awful avalanche into the sea! (244)

Nowhere in the text is Father Peter’s denominational affiliation made clear; the title “Father” is not exclusive to the Roman Catholic faith, and so he could very well be Phelim’s Anglican priest. At the same time, the novel is set in the predominantly Catholic rural west, and so he may be speaking to Phelim solely as a community authority. This ambiguity, transferred to the audience, has the rhetorical benefit of alienating neither Catholic nor Protestant reader. In turn, then, the disenfranchised peasant, whether Catholic or Protestant, is discouraged through recourse to divine machinations from any active resistance to the loss of land, even to the point of potential punishment by death at God’s hands. The transformation of Carnaclif into a “fairyland” (246) in which no one wants for anything and where everyone is rewarded for his or her work – or emigrates -

and in which diverse peoples might coexist, is contingent upon tacit affirmation of subordination by the peasant Irish.

The ending of *The Snake's Pass* is unambiguous in its representation of a pluralistic society, but that society is achieved in ideologically problematic ways. Here, Stoker imagines that a community might be established that fosters diversity, but that diversity can only prosper if people ultimately accept their proper stations. The conclusion of *Dracula*, by contrast, is both more ambiguous and more egalitarian. The hierarchies of *The Snake's Pass* disappear, and there is no voice to naturalize or valorize relationships of domination and subordination. The Crew of Light is easily as diverse as Carnaclif, if not more so. It has both men and women. It is multinational, with American, Dutch and English members. It is multiclass, with capitalists, aristocrats, doctors, teachers and solicitors employing their respective resources for a greater good. It is as religiously diverse as Carnaclif, too, perhaps even moreso, given the Catholicism of Van Helsing, for which there is no explicit corollary in *The Snake's Pass*. It is versed in the discourses both of English rationalism and science as well as tradition and superstition. *Dracula* even takes this cosmopolitan pluralism one step further, as its characters internalize the variety of possibility, deferring to the authority of science where necessary and relying on faith the next. I have characterized the difference between the pluralism of *The Snake's Pass* and that of *Dracula* as one between intersubjective pluralism and intrasubjective pluralism, but it might be more accurate to say that *Dracula* has both. The Crew of Light is the manifestation of the former, and, while they may occasionally indicate the possibility of the latter, it is Quincey Harker in whom Stoker ultimately

personifies and incarnates the cosmopolitan ideal. In little Quincey, the possibilities implicit in Stoker's earlier novel's conclusion are realized to their fullest.

The culmination of *Dracula's* camaraderie is the creation of this new, not easily defined, identity, though the critical position regarding Quincey Harker is conflicted. In the closing pages, Jonathan relates the birth of the Harkers' son: "It is an added joy ... that our boy's birthday is the same day as that on which Quincey Morris died. His mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's spirit has passed into him. His bundle of names links all our little band of men together; but we call him Quincey" (326). In effect, Quincey Harker has five fathers. Despite his being, biologically, the result of heterosexual coupling, even his mother notes a sense of the boy's shared spiritual fatherhood. Quincey Harker, named after an American and an English man respectively, fathered biologically by one, spiritually by another, and socially by five, cannot be defined easily in terms of nationality. There is plausibly Irish as well, as Mina's maiden name, Murray, is derived from the Celtic Irish (Valente 66). Furthermore, we have to take into consideration the glaring omission from Harker's account of Quincey's lineage – Dracula himself. As Valente puts it, "even Dracula himself finds a place in the xenophilic community that young Harker embodies" (141). Conversely, Cannon Schmitt suggests that because little Quincey "traces his lineage back, not only to all the Westerners in the novel, but to a vampire as well," Stoker is expressing anxiety about a lasting "pollution" (38). This pollution proves necessary for Schmitt, in familiar Arnoldian terms, representing a "terrible intervention, a last ditch effort to save an anemic civilization" and represents a "failure," but a "productive one" that leaves, in

Mina's son "not a contaminated being so much as a being strengthened and revived" (39).

It may be, however, that this is not a "terrible" but necessary concession on Stoker's part, but rather a conclusion built into the very fabric of the novel's social formations. "Pollution" is not far, after all, from Appiah's "contamination," which has proven to be an asset for Mina and the Crew of Light. Valente's contrasting view is that "Quincy [sic] Harker ... is the culmination of Mina's role as universal mother, on which basis she has served as the principal exponent of the *ethos* of radical social connectivity celebrated in the novel" (142), reading Jonathan's omission of Dracula in the child's parentage represents "a comparative unconcern or lack of anxiety about the index of 'blood'" (141). In the end, the contradictions, paradoxes and inconsistencies may not need reconciliation at all – they may just be distinct but interrelated components of a social whole. Though *Dracula* contains a threat to empire in the killing of the vampire, the future it represents is more than simply British. In a way, Stoker is able to subsume the disparate national elements – including the British and the Irish – into a new, transnational, more-than-hybrid and more-than-hyphenated identity. The journey from a vision of domestic cosmopolitanism for Ireland, laid out implicitly in "The Necessity for Political Honesty" and glimpsed, if in a compromised form, in *The Snake's Pass* is realized – and universalized – by the end of *Dracula*. In effect, Quincey Harker emerges as Stoker's incarnation of the cosmopolitan, the child of a diverse and pluralistic band of compatriots who might be said, to return at last to Whitman's words, to "contain multitudes." While Stoker's vision has little practical value for the emerging and

escalating Irish resistance movement, it represents an important counternarrative that tries to emphasize shared humanity in the face of increasing internecine violence.

## CHAPTER TWO

“our greater Ireland beyond the sea”:

### Reimagining Social Identification in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*

#### I. Introduction

Although the novel famously charts the events of Dublin on June 16, 1904, the drafting of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* did not begin until 1914, a decade after the author left Ireland with Nora Barnacle. Published serially from 1916-1918 and then finally collected in 1922, the novel was set, drafted in, and released in whole to the public during highly significant periods in Irish cultural and political history. The turn of the century was the height of the Irish Literary Revival, one of the most lasting and influential branches of what Seamus Deane identifies in *Celtic Revivals* (1985) as the second Celtic Revival (13). The Irish stage was filled with plays which alternately idealized the Irish subject and resurrected the old myths and legends of Ireland’s past for a contemporary audience, and even the most politically ambivalent writers often crafted stories with undercurrents of revolution and subversion. William Butler Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory’s *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), the play which prompted Yeats decades later to reflect famously in “Man and the Echo,” “Did that play of mine send out / Certain men the English shot?” (11-12), had premiered to a fanatical response just two years before *Ulysses* takes place. The play’s status as a rallying point for Irish nationalist sentiment is understandable; it fuses the story of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 with the increasingly pervasive trope of Ireland as a mother figure, demanding sacrifice and promising revivification in equal measure. The Dublin of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, then, was one in which the mythic and legendary pasts were both comically and tragically



ever-present. By the time Joyce had begun drafting *Ulysses*, however, the cultural revolution had begun to transform into a political and even militant one.

The decade in Irish history from 1912 to 1922, currently being celebrated by Raidió Teilifís Éireann as “Century Ireland,” or the Irish decade of commemorations, saw an Irish upheaval fuelled by unrest regarding not only Ireland’s long-troubled relationship with England, but also by its increasingly self-aware and motivated proletariat and a female population determined to achieve suffrage and, perhaps, equality. Although these threads often conflicted, and indeed still do, there was a shared conviction that Home Rule, or better, if possible, an Irish Free State, would be necessary to improve the lives of the Irish people. The Home Rule debate was already decades old, but new, punctual milestones came quickly and often fiercely, beginning with the Dublin lock-out, which saw labor activists like James Connolly and James Larkin motivate thousands of workers to fight for union rights in the face of imported British labor. A few short years later, World War I brought the promise of Home Rule and the enlistment of many Irish men in the British Army, but Britain never had the chance to make good on that promise, had it intended to; the 1916 Easter Rising, perhaps the most well-known event in modern Irish history, ensured that. Led, yet again, by James Connolly along with Thomas MacDonagh, Sean MacDermott and, of course, Patrick Pearse, the rebels commandeered the Dublin General Post Office and other key locations during Easter Week, beginning a violent exchange that lasted from Monday until the leaders’ surrender on Saturday. The execution of Pearse, Connolly and company has since become a singular monument to the significance of sacrifice as a central tenet of Irish nationalism; these are the deaths

which made the violence to follow sacred and, more importantly, nearly impossible to criticize.

The synergy between the Literary Revival and the Easter Rising in normalizing martyrdom cannot be overlooked, nor can the literary legacy (see Yeats's "Easter 1916") which cemented the executions as the inaugural moment in the eventual birth of the Irish nation. As discussed in the introduction, sacrifice became increasingly fixed as the dominant trope and value in the years leading up to the Rising. The Rising, in other words, effectively realized what Deane recognizes in the work of the Revivalists, "which draws heavily on the idea that the revival of heroism is a necessary and practicable ambition in Irish circumstances" (*Celtic* 63). Emblematic of this synergy is Patrick Pearse, who strides the cultural and militant threads of nationalism, in particular, because his "version of heroism is . . . closely supported by his notion of a pure, prophetic minority tradition which will, by a sacrificial act, convert the majority from a state of nationhood into the condition of a state" (*Celtic* 7). The Rising was only the beginning, however, as it was followed by the 1918 election of 73 Sinn Fein representatives to parliament – roughly three quarters of Ireland's representation – and the 1919 withdrawal of those representatives to form the Dáil Éireann and declare independence. The remaining years brought the Irish War of Independence, the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty by Michael Collins (and its rejection by Eamon De Valera), and finally the Irish Civil War, which culminated in December 1922 with the realization of the Irish Free State, only ten months after the publication of *Ulysses* in full.

Because he was living in continental Europe, Joyce was not present for the decade's events; however, the violence which threatens to erupt in *Ulysses* is

unmistakable and unmistakably inflected by the twin discourses, that is to say cultural and political, of Irish nationalism. The writing of the novel, after all, began properly in 1914, and its – significantly – serial publication began in 1918. In other words, Joyce had begun writing the novel at the time during the time of the Rising and was still working on it in some respect at the beginning of the War of Independence. I am inclined to believe, as Willard Potts suggests in *James Joyce and the Two Irelands* (2000), “Joyce’s attack on Irish nationalists in *Ulysses* ... may have ... been motivated by the Easter Rising of 1916, which was an obvious culmination of nationalist fervor aroused by the Revival and which occurred at an early stage in the book’s composition” (145). The rhetoric of Irish nationalism, both its deep-rooted and legitimate indictment of British imperialism and its potential to reproduce systems of violence and domination, makes its way into Joyce’s novel. Joyce self-identified as a pacifist, and his interrogation of violence in Irish nationalist culture is unsurprising. If his self-described goal in *Dubliners* (1904) was to hold a “looking-glass” up to the Irish people (qtd. in Ellmann 222), then his position of writing in exile starts to suggest a necessary distance from which to examine the social and political transformation of Ireland. *Ulysses* has often been read as both an exercise in pure aesthetics or as an experiment in documenting the processes of language and thought. It is both of these things, but it also contains Joyce’s most focused delineation and criticism of the violence intrinsic to nationalism. Furthermore, and although tentative in its formulation, Joyce’s own cosmopolitan and transnational experience works its way into the novel as a potential response to that violence contributes a significant – and highly canonical – voice to the counternarrative.

While there is a lack of consensus among critics regarding Joyce's political positioning, there is also no reasonable way to discuss the majority of Joyce's without talking about Irish nationalism and its effects on the author's aesthetic choices. As laid out in the introductory chapter, nationalism tends to be understood in two broad categories: cultural and political. Cultural nationalism emphasizes, revives, or even invents traditions in the interest of solidifying ethnic or national identity. This is often a valuable and necessary tactic for decolonizing nations or for systematically-disempowered populations, and it can influence music, the visual arts, theatre, literature, sports, and pretty much any social practice that fosters pride but ostensibly stops short of direct political agitation. By contrast, and as the name suggests, political nationalism is a category that encompasses any movement that seeks to change the policies and governmental structures which created inequitable, oppressive circumstances and an asymmetrical distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities. This is a broad category, however, and it is important, especially in the case of Ireland, to further delineate sub-forms of political nationalism. As in the case with the Home Rule movement and even early Sinn Fein policies, political nationalism is frequently a matter of advocating for changes in laws, governmental structure and operation, or economic policy. Political nationalism, however, is also used to describe militant or physical force nationalism, the use of individual or coordinated acts of violence, militarism, fear and intimidation to affect political change or a complete abdication of governance by the empowered.

Although there are two labels frequently used in nationalist discourse, then, there are really at least three distinct strategies with equally varied objectives. Each of the

authors in this dissertation touches on these categories to some extent, and each places it in dialogue with cosmopolitan values, often suggesting that, despite George Russell's inaugural binarizing in "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism," the outward- and inward-looking modes of social identification might be mutually beneficial rather than exclusive. For Bram Stoker, cultural nationalism amounts to romanticized stereotypes occasionally exonerated and celebrated as legitimate epistemological modes and value systems, but political nationalism comes up only in passing. The cosmopolitanism is largely implicit, save for Arthur's argument that Nora should continentalize and the internalized cosmopolitanism of *Dracula's* conclusion. As the next chapter will show, Kate O'Brien is highly specific regarding cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism, but avoids any direct representation of political nationalism almost entirely, especially physical force, despite suggestive moments that remind readers of nationalist violence in and beyond Ireland. Sebastian Barry, as I discuss in the final chapter, is explicit in his cosmopolitanism and in his criticism of physical force nationalism, but the milder forms of political nationalism are barely present, and cultural nationalism disappears almost entirely. Joyce, as it were, provides explicit insight into each of these modes, and it allows him to trace out the connections more comprehensively than most other Irish writers, even if he ends at something of an impasse.

In the following pages, I will examine the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses* as well as some portions of "Circe," paying particular attention to the characterization of the Citizen and his function as a foil to Leopold Bloom. The Citizen embodies cultural nationalism, quite literally at times, and his placement among the patrons of Barney Kiernan's pub allows Joyce to develop his alignment with cultural nationalism even further. He also

advocates political nationalism, however, both in its constitutional form and in its militant or physical force forms. Part of what Joyce is doing in this episode is encouraging the reader to recognize the relationship between cultural celebration as a sociopolitical strategy and the naturalizing of militarism not only as a tactic for change, but as an unquestioned and dangerous part of one's individual and social identity. The Citizen has legitimate grievances, however, and ones which Joyce notably shares, complicating the caricature. Leopold Bloom, by contrast, both as an Irishman and a Jew, shares experiences similar to those of the Citizen, but moves toward an inclusive vision of society and porous notions of identity despite pressure to fall back on violence. Each of the characters has laughable moments, but neither is entirely laughable. The chapter becomes a sort of classic thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic, and it is tempting to rest on Bloom's ultimate synthesis as Joyce's final word on the matter. As "Circe" reveals, however, the attainability of this vision seems to be beyond Joyce's imagining, and partial cosmopolitanism is reduced to an unattainable and unreachable ideal in the novel as a whole. In brief, the implementation of Bloom's idealistic notions requires a narrower focus for practicality's sake. This is not incompatible with cosmopolitan ethics, however, as we have seen with Stoker, but Joyce takes it a step further, seeming to conclude that an egalitarian social arrangement might be in reality a farce or well-intentioned authoritarianism at best.

## II. Critical Dissensus

For all of the insight his works offer regarding the personal experience of harsh social and political realities, James Joyce did not believe himself adequately prepared for

a thorough immersion in politics. Joyce was, in other words, aware of his own limitations; as Ellmann writes regarding the Irishman's attempts at understanding socialism, a political framework with which he was ethically sympathetic, Joyce "admitted to little understanding of political science" (55). Of course, this did not keep Joyce from engaging political matters in his non-creative writing. During his time in Italy, especially in the years leading up to the Easter Rising, Joyce was keenly aware of the escalation of violence at home, and wrote articles in Italian journals which were exclusively "about Ireland and the Irish people" (qtd. in Ellmann 332). Likewise, the experience of the Irish lives in the modern political context informs every page of Joyce's texts. Often, this is affective mapping or the demonstration of how those realities circumscribe potential and experience in Irish lives, but it also suggests a greater understanding of political realities than Joyce admits.

Although it is by now a stock reading of *Ulysses*, it is worth pointing out the way that Joyce, a noted pacifist, deflates the national epic in the novel even as he celebrates the national subject. The national epic, conventionally, creates a racial or national identity for a group of people through an account of heroic deeds; *Ulysses*'s model, *The Odyssey*, is one example of this, but the reappropriation of Celtic myth by the Irish made the method especially resonant in Joyce's time. Satirizing the epic was nothing new by the early twentieth century, of course, but Joyce changes up the formula in *Ulysses* by creating mock-heroic and unsentimental characters that are nevertheless multidimensional and deserve readers' empathy. As Ellmann puts it, "Joyce's version of the epic story is a pacifist version," one which works toward the "ennoblement of the mock-heroic" (360). Joyce's pacifist sensibilities inform both his intellectual

development and his career trajectory as a whole, and they derived from his admiration for figures as diverse as Henrik Ibsen and Charles Stewart Parnell. As he did with Ibsen, Joyce admired Parnell's "reticence and refusal to join battle with his enemies" (Ellmann 73), and following the Norwegian playwright's example, Joyce "detested the grosser forms of nationalism" (Ellmann 66). This is not to say, however, that Joyce did not identify with nationalist goals or even some nationalist methods.

Joyce maintained enough sympathy with the Irish and antipathy toward the English to convince anyone who wanted to believe that he was a nationalist; for example, Joseph Casey, an elder exile with whom Joyce became friends while in Paris, and the model for *Ulysses*'s Kevin Egan, believed Joyce himself to be a likeminded Fenian (Ellmann 125). Joyce even maintained the friendship of several more prominent and vocal political nationalists who went on to become high-profile martyrs for Ireland. George Clancy, a friend of Joyce's, "subscribed ardently to every aspect of the nationalist movement," and would go on to die at the hands of the Black and Tans. Clancy was also an Irish sports enthusiast and a founder of the University College branch of the Gaelic League, cementing the type of association between cultural and political nationalisms which Pearse identifies specifically in "The Coming Revolution." Another friend was Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, the husband of suffragist and nationalist Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, and he also died famously during the Easter Rising. Although a pacifist and non-participant, Sheehy-Skeffington was detained for being a sympathizer with the Irish and died among other prisoners. Unique among this group was Thomas Kettle, yet another friend of Joyce's who died at the hands of the English in 1916. Kettle, however, was notable for his belief that reconciling inward- and outward-looking perspectives



would be necessary for the improvement of Ireland. Despite his commitment to Ireland, Kettle believed, like Joyce, that his nation had to cosmopolitanize eventually: “If Ireland is to become a new Ireland she must first become European” (qtd. in Ellmann 63). Joyce, then, was familiar not only with constitutional nationalists like his father Simon, but also on intimate terms with politically committed Irish citizens in various degrees of engagement with nationalism. His friendship with Kettle in particular, however, also suggests also that Joyce was aware of the potential persuasiveness of cosmopolitan transformation even to the most ardent nationalists.

Nevertheless, Joyce was treated as an apolitical writer for the better part of a century. Seamus Deane offers a brief account of this phenomenon, reminding us that the “received wisdom about Joyce and his relationship to the major political issues of his time” can be summed up as follows: “Repudiating British and Roman imperialisms and rejecting Irish nationalism and Irish literature which seemed to be in service to that cause, he turned away from his early commitment to socialism and devoted himself instead to a highly apolitical and wonderfully arcane practice of writing” (*Celtic* 92). Deane situates Joyce against the essentialists like Patrick Pearse for whom “Nationalism . . . was a crusade for decontamination,” and locates Joyce’s nationalist contribution not in his critique of imperialism, but rather in his art itself, as “art is in itself in service to [creating] the soul of Ireland” (*Celtic* 97). I would suggest that this is part of Joyce’s nationalism, one on which he and George Russell might hesitantly agree. I would also, on these terms, suggest that Joyce’s intellectual deconstruction of nationalist perspectives is *itself* of benefit to the Irish cause. It is caustic, but constructive, criticism.

Another voice in the increased politicization of Joyce studies is Declan Kiberd, whose *Inventing Ireland* (1996) includes the chapter “James Joyce and Mythic Realism.” For Kiberd, Joyce’s cosmopolitanism is that of a “nomad,” and he suggests that Joyce’s decision to leave both the colony and the imperial center – making him “[v]irtually alone among the great post-colonial writers” – reflects an early recognition that “the culture to which he had been assimilated ... lacked a centre” (327). Rather than a fixed subject-position, Joyce set out looking for a model to capture dynamism and change, for a means “to express the sheer fluidity and instability of Irish experience in a form that would be nonetheless comprehensible to arbiters of international order” (328). Kiberd’s central claim in the chapter is that Joyce’s blend of mythic and realist has the effect of undermining all authority in the text (339). As most critics treating Joyce’s politics tend to do, Kiberd pays special attention to Joyce’s essays and lectures, particularly “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages,” a 1907 lecture delivered in Trieste. In sum, he reads from the lecture Joyce’s understanding that political nationalism has several potential consequences that the Irish cannot afford to overlook. In Kiberd’s reading of Joyce, which recognizes and distinguishes between the divergent forms of political nationalism, “the constitutional nationalists were in danger of being co-opted by empire, [and] the militants were at grave risk of embracing the imperial psychology in a reworked form” (335). Unlike a number of Joyce critics, Kiberd sees legitimate social and political insight behind the broad satire of episodes like “Cyclops.” It is true that the Citizen, for example, is ineffectual and hypocritical, a drunken cadger. That does not mean, however, that we should disregard the patterns of racialism and racism he reflects, nor should we overlook what the implications this has for nationalists may be. It borders on a tragic variety of

farce and reflects a deeply rooted insular Irishness that continues in varied forms – with real consequences – even today.

Others, however, are less persuaded by the parallels to “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages,” and they go as far as to suggest that in his fiction we see Joyce’s self-revision and distancing from his earlier analysis. Potts, for example, suggests that although “many details of [Joyce’s earlier] account reappear in “Cyclops,” that the Citizen voices them raises serious doubts about their accuracy” (149). The Citizen may not be as one-dimensional as a conventional reading suggests, however. His racism and latent imperialism are clearly presented critically, but even terrible people, or people whose consciousness has been shaped by terrible discourse, might still have valuable and accurate insight about the world, because, simply put, recognizing our own complicity with systems of oppression does not mean that we have to disregard any wisdom that has been transmitted along with those systems. My own reading, perhaps, is closer to Edward Cronin’s, who suggests that “the citizen is a *persona* of Joyce” who “does double-duty” by “tell[ing] not only what is wrong with England,” but also “unconsciously ... reveal[ing] what is wrong with Ireland – and himself” (32). Cronin, however, also suggests that we read the Citizen as “pure tragi-comedy: tragic, because the emotions are founded in reality; comic, because it is futile” (36). Futility may be too strong. Given the background of the Easter Rising and the Irish War for Independence, Joyce had a clear and contemporary series of events on which to reflect, one which illustrated plainly the extent to which inflated rhetoric might have material and political consequences.

Readings of Joyce have become increasingly engaged with his political views. Again, any to attempt accordingly to identify a critical consensus regarding the politics of

*Ulysses* is difficult, but there is some agreement on a few major elements. For one, Joyce's transnational life of exile is clearly influential to his thought. As James H. Maddox, Jr., argues in *Joyce's Ulysses and the Assault upon Character* (1978), Europe "raised [Joyce's] own Irishness to a new exponential power" because Joyce "could be most Irish, most heroic and embattled, only once he had transformed Ireland herself into his prosecutor" (6). Additionally, most critics also concede at least one version of Irish nationalism to which Joyce was sympathetic. Although the movement eventually became associated with intense violence, Joyce was a supporter of Sinn Fein under Arthur Griffiths. As Andras Ungar has observed in *Joyce's Ulysses as National Epic: Epic Mimesis and the Political History of the Nation State* (2002), "Sinn Fein ... pointed Ireland toward Europe." This iteration of Sinn Fein appealed to Joyce because, for him, "Irish nationalism had to look outward" and "craft an understanding that took note of the diverse sources of common identity and allowed for a historical vision that pointed beyond self-glorification, resentment, and repetition" (49). Nationalism is at least partially about how a nation understands itself in a community of nations. More importantly, perhaps, Griffiths's plan emphasized "economic self-reliance, and ... non-violent methods" (Manganiello 170). In other words, although Sinn Fein translates to "ourselves alone," its initial emphasis was neither antagonistic nor isolationist, but rather directed toward self-sufficiency and independence. Its ecumenical potential was both international and intranational, as Griffiths also imagined with Sinn Fein "promot[ing] the old nationalist ideal of cooperation between Protestant and Catholic" (Potts 28). The versions of Irish nationalism to which Joyce gave most vocal support, in other words,

were those most predisposed to dialogism and cooperation. His later disavowal of Sinn Fein occurred only because of Griffith's increasing racist-essentialist ideology.

For the most part, however, readings seem to vary wildly, and the agreement about whether or not political readings even work is up for debate. Christy L. Burns captures this flux in Joyce criticism's take on Joyce's politics by emphasizing the inability of critics to reach agreement: "Initially labeled as a pacifist for his retreats to Switzerland during the wars and a cosmopolitan for his mockery of nationalism and the Irish Literary Revival, Joyce has more recently been reclaimed as Irish for his persistent use of Irish locale, history, and his texts' implicit critique of British colonialism" (1). Marilyn Reizbaum offers a similar overview, suggesting that Joyce "was situated first as internationalist, modernist, then Irish postcolonial, now cosmopolitan" (243). Several compelling readings have been conducted in either direction<sup>3</sup>. Some critics<sup>4</sup>, most notably Joseph Valente in "James Joyce and the Cosmopolitan Sublime" (1996), have challenged the leftist readings of Joyce and suggests that they are as misguided and biased as the earlier, ostensibly apolitical New Critical perspectives. Joyce is, in other words, "something of an ideological Rorschach test for his readers" (64). Valente suggests instead that, rather than focusing on particularities within the political writings, we should take them "in aggregate" and thereby "appreciate the irreducible ambivalence that Joyce then self-reflexively encodes in his fiction" (69). I would like to build on Valente's analysis, applying it specifically to "Cyclops" in order to highlight the productive nature of this internal conflict. I hope to demonstrate, in fact, that Joyce's "ambivalence" might

---

<sup>3</sup> For progressive takes on Joyce, see Vincent Cheng's *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (1995) and Dominic Manganiello's *Joyce's Politics* (1980).

<sup>4</sup> In addition to Valente, see Neil R. Davison's "'Cyclops,' Sinn Fein, and 'The Jew'" (1995)

instead be read as a constructive and self-conscious interrogation, a measuring of possibilities. My emphasis is on the process of understanding rather than the point of arrival. *Ulysses* is ultimately cosmopolitan and multicultural and, in its way, nationalist, and it can help us further understand ways in which these might be mutually constitutive ethical points of view.

Joyce does not depict Irish nationalism as uniformly malevolent; rather, he is working through an articulation of its strengths, of the things it is getting right in the name of the Irish people and of human rights more generally. At the same time, however, he is mapping out its costs and consequences, taking stock and challenging, where possible, its tendency toward violence, exclusionism, and social injustice. Does Joyce use humor to deflate and criticize, even mock, the Irish revival and physical force nationalism? Yes, of course. That said, that Joyce goes to such lengths to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each explores the possibility that, at the very least, sympathy with their overall goals. In response to both political and cultural nationalism, Joyce suggests that the internalization of cosmopolitan values, however difficult or unlikely, might both realize the same goals and better position Ireland – and the Irish subject – in the global community to which, in seeking legitimized nationhood, it aspires. Although Joyce stops well shy of advocating any particular policy or even a broad worldview, *Ulysses* might be read as another attempt by an Irish author to claim an identity that is local and particular, global and universal, all at the same time. It is, in other words, a more developed vision of what Kwame Anthony Appiah calls “partial cosmopolitanism” (xvii), a term I used in the previous chapter to characterize the shift in perspective in Bram Stoker’s fiction. Joyce’s distance from Leopold Bloom, like his self-effacing

depiction of Stephen Dedalus, is not a repudiation of his limitations in conceptualizing a better world but rather a validation of those aspirations as aspirations.

### III. Theoretical Positioning

Cultural nationalism is not exclusive in *Ulysses* to “Cyclops”; indeed, it appears in almost every chapter and plays a large part in “Aeolus” and especially “Scylla and Charybdis,” where Stephen Dedalus attempts to navigate the expectations of the Dublin intelligentsia, in this case Irish revivalists by their real names, for young artists to conform to the nationalist representational and topical agendas. Cultural nationalism is a primary tool in anti-colonial efforts, as theorists of nationalism have argued for decades. Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities,” for example, while not tied specifically to resistance movements, speaks to the role that a shared language and culture can play in fostering solidarity among disparate and disconnected peoples in an age where the historical modes of connectivity - religion, royal lineages – have been lost (26). Although he does not connect this to anti-colonial nationalism, Anderson’s formulations suggest the possibility for those desirous of such change to create it by taking control of language and the production of culture. Anderson’s contemporaries, such as Eric Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), speak precisely to the manipulation and distortion of the past in service of the present and future by drawing attention to the resurrection – or, more to the point, the *invention* – of traditions where they have been lost or have never existed, an enterprise which has had clearly devastating iterations such as that of Nazi Germany as well as those to which we have been historically more receptive, such as Ireland’s multi-pronged efforts in the

Celtic Revivals. Ernest Gellner, whose *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) was published in the same year as Anderson, Hobsbawm and Ranger, takes neither the wholly positive nor cautiously critical perspectives of his peers, opting instead to *describe* the means by which a socially disadvantaged portion of the population – for example, the Celtic Irish – might use cultural nationalism to transform the social hierarchy in which they have been oppressed into one in which they are empowered.

Gellner argues that there are two primary means, two poles on a spectrum, by which groups are formed and maintained. The first of these is a combination of “will, voluntary adherence and identification, loyalty, [and] solidarity,” while the other is “fear, coercion, [and] compulsion” (52). Taking the example of the nationalist Irish under British subjugation, we might say that they occupied both extremes simultaneously. By actively promoting a sense of Irish nationality, they used language, sport, literature and cultural generally to foster community in opposition to British rule. At the same time, they were politically and legally British, and had to repudiate or qualify their Irishness or face economic and material consequences, to say nothing of the psychological damage. With enough effort, Gellner argues, “Nationalism [often] conquers in the name of a putative folk culture” using “symbolism ... drawn from the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of the peasants” and the low culture of the oppressed becomes the dominant, and legitimate, high culture (56). For Gellner, high culture, primarily understood in terms of the dominant language, is necessary for a modern state to function (34-5). A consequence of this, or more neutrally, a result, is that cultures become increasingly homogenous. Not everyone shares this belief; Appiah argues in favor of proactive ethical commitments despite the fact that we can neither “expect nor desire that every person or every society



should converge on a single mode of life” (xv). Because modern nations effectively undermine caste systems and increase social mobility, this is in Gellner’s eyes a good thing, all in all: “The kind of cultural homogeneity demanded by nationalism” is a consequence of modernizing, and “we had better make our peace with it,” he writes (38). Within this reasoning, assimilation is an eventuality, either for the subordinates within a nation or for the former dominants after a new nation is formed from the resistant disempowered. If not now, eventually, in other words. Someone will have to give. As he writes towards the end of *Nations and Nationalism*, “it remains difficult to imagine two large, politically viable, independence-worthy cultures cohabiting under a single political roof, and trusting a single political centre to maintain and service both cultures with perfect or even adequate impartiality” (114). Again, Gellner’s mode is primarily descriptive and therefore eschews any obvious moral positioning. He downplays, to some extent, the normalizing effects of nationalism by emphasizing the greater efficiency of monocultural industrial nations in contrast to those with more pronounced pluralism, suggesting as a matter of course that some people, regardless of who has control, or going to have to adapt or conform. He has little interest in the preservation of culture for its own sake, and he likewise has little to say about the psychological and social trauma of those who find themselves outside of the newly-emerged system of privilege. In other words, the Anglo-Irish in an increasingly Celtic Ireland may begin to experience a version of the “fear” and “coercion” to which the Celtic Irish had previously been subject. At the risk of overstating, this is an overturning of one hierarchy in order to introduce a new one rather than an effort to address the root problem. Other writers – theorists and creative writers alike – have been more emphatically critical, including Joyce himself by implication.

Despite Ernest Gellner's warning that studying nationalism in the terms of its "own prophets" is misguided (120), it seems impossible to discuss Irish history and Ireland's literature without doing so. Irish cultural nationalism has a profoundly militant quality; although there seems to be a clear distinction between penning a poem or playing in a hurling match and firing a rifle at a British soldier, so many of Ireland's cultural leaders were not only advocates for violent resistance but participants as well. Keying in on Ireland's highly religious cultural identity, specifically Catholic but generally Christian, writer-revolutionaries like Patrick Pearse mobilized the Irish both by appeals to religious authority and by injecting their nationalist discourse with the rhetoric of sacred duty. The crux of this rhetoric tended to fall on one particular ritual: sacrifice. As David Stevens argues, the Easter Rising, as the "founding act of violence of the Irish republic ... was deliberately designed by Patrick Pearse as a sacrificial act" (253). Pearse's poetry and essays both make this intention clear, and as I demonstrated in the introduction, Pearse was hardly alone in deploying this tactic. It is Pearse, however, whose fusion of cultural and physical force nationalisms has left the longest-lasting impression on Irish national identity.

Barbara Ehrenreich's account of the sacralization of violence in nationalism is persuasive – and helpful – in understanding and explaining the role that cultural nationalism plays in bolstering and normalizing violence, especially since the writings of Irish nationalist poets and leaders demonstrates a clear understanding that the rhetoric of religion could be, especially when combined with the affective possibilities of expressive culture, a powerful tool for building communities and mobilizing resistance. On Ehrenreich's account, nationalism is a psychological corollary to religion; the threat of a

god or a predator beast is replaced by the threat of other nations, and the possibility of strength through affiliation with those gods and beasts is replaced with the strength of identifying with one's own nation (82). In the short-term, this is both a good and necessary thing, but Ehrenreich – like Laura Doyle<sup>5</sup>, in fact – recognizes that people need to constantly remind themselves that they have made the transformation from prey to predator (22;57). The stories we tell often celebrate that transformation even as they extol virtues which can, despite their origins in the resistance of oppression, become oppressive in their own rights (83). Like religion sometimes does, however, nationalism can become a force beyond questioning. One of *Ulysses*'s most profound accomplishments is that it charts, in varying ways, the intersection of cultural nationalism and physical force nationalism and demonstrates how the unconsidered reproduction of cultural nationalist values and narratives might conflict with nationalism's legitimate social justice aims and contribute to violence even when violence is not the only – or even the most effective – option.

As the controversy surrounding Irish studies' postcolonial turn reminds us, however, Ireland's postcolonial status has always been complicated. There is little if any discernible ethnic difference between the Irish and the English, subject as they were to many of the same successive invasions and prone as they have been to intermarrying. The Irish, while subjected to exhaustive racializing discourse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are white. The gap in modernization and industrial advancement between Ireland and England is also significantly smaller than the ones between England and its other colonies. Though there is a litany of legitimate grievances and a history of

---

<sup>5</sup> See *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940*, p. 23

exploitation – if not near-genocide – with which to contend, Ireland is still western European and benefitted clearly from British imperialism. By Joyce’s time, by the time cultural and physical force movements had begun to mobilize, the Irish had a clear sense of what it meant to be what Ehrenreich terms “predators” in the international scene, and yet they had much of the experience of “prey” as well. Ireland was uniquely positioned with an awareness of how important anti-imperial resistance was and of the material and economic benefits with which predator status comes. Ehrenreich’s emphasis on the repeatedly reconfigured asymmetrical distribution of power, in other words, makes Ireland an especially relevant case study.

#### IV. The Intersection of Cultural and Political Nationalism in “Cyclops”

Although violence recurs throughout the entirety of *Ulysses*, it is in “Cyclops” that James Joyce both subverts Irish nationalism’s ongoing shift to a violent paradigm most clearly and hints, however tentatively, at a cosmopolitan alternative. This is a multifaceted effort. As thinkers like Doyle and Ehrenreich have pointed out, the anxieties inherent to being newly empowered or desiring freedom sometimes lead to the reconfiguration of domination. We see this most clearly, in *Ulysses*, through the Citizen. The Citizen’s legitimate concerns for the well-being of the Irish should not be dismissed and, as mentioned, reflect Joyce’s own published thoughts on British imperialism. *Ulysses* obscures neither Ireland’s need to decolonize nor its need for self-sustaining economic and political systems. The danger, however, is that social and psychological transformation often does not stop until the subject or subjects become predators themselves – if even then. As Ehrenreich argues, this is a way to both repress past

victimhood by inscribing a new cultural narrative as well as the means by which to repeatedly validate that new narrative. “Cyclops” accomplishes this by drawing on the familiar tropes and beats from Irish cultural nationalism – the heroics of the mythic past, the hypermasculinity of Gaelic sports culture, and the xenophobia of the language movement – and personifying them in the Citizen. In turn, the Citizen comes to embody a new variant on imperialism, extolling, however humorously, the possibility of an Irish navy in contrast with the British and gombeenishly seizing lands from more rightful owners just as the English had done. I also hope to show that, in perhaps a more muted way, Joyce addresses the role of the sacrificial victim or outcast in the person of Leopold Bloom. On Ehrenreich’s account, the sacrifice must be part of the community and, in his or her death, reaffirms and strengthens the ties of that community<sup>6</sup>. Bloom, being both part of the community and – as the episode makes clear – *not*, fits and does not quite fit the sacrificial role. He is too familiar to be the foreign threat, the new prey, but too foreign to be offered up by the community. More importantly, as Spiegel points out, the Citizen’s attempts to scapegoat Bloom fail, and the community he is trying to build, in the episode his community of cyclopean barflies, is largely indifferent to the Citizen’s efforts (90). Bloom, embodying the cosmopolitan trope of the wandering Jew, and offering (admittedly meek) formulations of the intersection between national pride and cosmopolitanism, not only aids in Joyce’s subversion of both physical force and cultural nationalisms but also offers a potential alternative model of community identification in the process.

---

<sup>6</sup> See *Blood Rites*, chapter 4.

“Cyclops” recounts Leopold Bloom’s brief stop in Barney Kiernan’s pub. He is there, charitably, to raise money for the late Paddy Dignam’s family, but he is quickly sucked into a dispute with the ultra-nationalist Citizen on the nature of nations, nationalism, and militarism. Their conversation culminates with Bloom leaving the pub and being harassed for his Jewishness while the Citizen hurls a biscuit-tin at his head before, in the exaggerated and hyperbolic style of the episode, “ascend[ing] to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe’s in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel” (345). It is also important to note that “Cyclops” is unusual for its point-of-view in the section of the book where it falls; although part of the stylistic explosion that begins with “Sirens” or even “Wandering Rocks,” it does not follow Bloom’s perspective at all, instead, and for the only time in *Ulysses*, being related by an unidentified narrator. Like Stephen Dedalus with his aesthetic philosophy, Bloom with his pulpy and popular reading, and Gerty with romance novels, the narrator’s consciousness is clearly informed by an immersion in Celtic myth and storytelling, with its long lists and emphasis on heroic deeds, litanies of heroes and lineages designed to establish continuity between past and present. In conjunction with the single-mindedness of the Citizen, the episode effectively fuses the materials on which cultural nationalism relies with the ambitions and value-systems of militant political nationalism.

More clearly than some other episodes in *Ulysses*, “Cyclops” uses the scaffolding of *The Odyssey* to imbue its characters with critical attributes which its protagonist must navigate. Homer focuses primarily on a single Cyclops – Polyphemus – but Odysseus and his crew are actually among a host of Cyclopes. For the sake of Joyce, this means it is worth remembering that the narrator in the episode is potentially as myopic as the

Citizen. The same seems to be true, if to a lesser extent, of the Citizen's interlocutors and admirers. For practical purposes, though, there are two main Cyclopes to keep in mind. The first of these, most obviously, is the Citizen, whose sustained and occasionally ethically inconsistent brand of Irish nationalism is a figurative limitation in perspective. The second, however, is the unnamed narrator. Although Ellmann has noted that Joyce modeled the narrator on Thersites from *The Iliad* (Gifford 314), the narrator's hyperbolic and excessive stylistic indulgences – what Joyce designated as “gigantism” – textually replicate Odysseus's experience of being dwarfed by his enemies, and the prolonged treatment of a number of objects without interruption also registers as a kind of fluctuating myopism, especially as compared with Bloom's ceaseless chains of association or Stephen's inquisitive, playful and insightful musings. The interplay between these two Cyclopes, the cross-section of description and response on the one hand and belligerent oration on the other, creates a space in which Joyce can chart the slippage between cultural and military nationalism even as he allows the Citizen the occasional insight into colonialism, imperialism, and oppression. The episode, then, is not a simple repudiation of the premises on which militant political nationalism is founded, but rather an attempt to register and curtail the imperial mentality's ability to renew and relocate as cultures make the transition from subjugation to independence.

Because readers first experience the cyclopean effect of the episode through its formal properties, it makes sense to examine exactly those properties are and how they reflect the shaping of the narrator's subjectivity, and implicitly of Irish nationalism, by Irish texts. In many ways, the episode reads as a forbear to Flann O'Brien's *At Swim- Two-Birds* (1939), especially the long lists and accumulative descriptions rattled off by

O'Brien's Finn MacCool. Simply by describing the events as he does, the narrator becomes part of the Irish imaginative tradition in which the greatest warriors were also among the greatest storytellers, including not only Finn but also Oisín, a warrior-poet and favorite of Yeats's. Although, through the course of "Cyclops," Joyce also parodies the grandiosity of scripture, legal discourse, and journalism, the first and most frequently-returned-to style is that of the Irish myth and the Revival itself. The tone is mock-heroic, beginning with the narrator's description of Barney Kiernan's pub itself and the district in which it is located:

In Inisfail the fair there lies a land, the land of holy Michan. There rises a watchtower beheld of men afar. There sleep the mighty dead as in life they slept, warriors and princes of high renown. A pleasant land it is in sooth of murmuring waters, fishfull streams where sport the gunnard, the plaice, the roach, the halibut, the gibbed haddock ... and other denizens of the aqueous kingdom too numerous to enumerate. (293-4)

Michan parish was the location of Barney Kiernan's pub, so Joyce suffuses the real geographical location of the episode's setting with embellishments from familiar Irish legends. While there was a real watchtower in the parish, Joyce is implicitly evoking the round towers found scattered across Ireland. The round towers are among the most familiar icons associated with romanticized Ireland, figuring prominently in such satires of Irishness as George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), and they continue to be a draw for tourists into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The narrator's evocation of "mighty ... warriors and princes" refers to the internment of bodies in the church's vaults, which house "several leaders of the Rebellion of 1798" (Gifford 317), but the



round towers have their own legacy of Irish resistance to foreign invasion. In order to protect the Irish from invading Vikings, the towers were built with doors so high that they could not be reached without a ladder that could be brought in during times of emergency. Encoded in the description of setting, then, are both a celebration of Ireland's heroic dead – the sacrificed martyrs – and the legacy of vulnerability and fear.

Stylistically, this reflects the inflation of myth that characterizes the episode, but it also thematicizes Irish nationalism before the conversations proper begin; what is subterranean – corpses – becomes the subtext, a glorification of heroism which tends always toward death. The abundant list of fish varieties, which at once enumerates and refuses to enumerate, is also characteristic of the Irish mythic style, and the heightened language – “aqueous kingdoms” and so on – reflects tendencies in Revival translation like those of Standish O'Grady. Both of these formal qualities recur frequently in the following pages, with the informal and excited dialogue of the pub's patrons occasionally punctuating the proceedings as if to remind the reader that the prose does not reflect the way people actually speak and interact. It is hard to imagine, in other words, the inhabitants of “a shining palace whose crystal glittering roof is seen by mariners who traverse the extensive sea” addressing anyone by shouting and describing him or her as a “notorious bloody hill and dale robber!” (294). Joyce creates and sustains a sharp juxtaposition between the image the Revivalists are trying to cultivate through their treatment of Irish legends and the gritty reality in which most of Ireland's population finds itself.

It is amid this whirl of contradictions that we encounter the Citizen, and from his introduction, we understand as readers that he is cautious and hesitant to receive

outsiders. When the narrator enters the pub with Joe Hynes, Joe points out the Citizen, who is seated in “his gloryhole, with his cruiskeen lawn and his load of papers, working for the cause” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 295). Gifford identifies the “gloryhole” as a “place where odds and ends are put away without order,” while “cruiskeen lawn” is Irish for “little full jug or flask” (319). Hynes’s description makes this scene seem like part of the Citizen’s regular experience. While disorganized and drinking, the Citizen is surrounded by documents and engaged in some sort of nationalist endeavor. The combination of disorder, alcohol, and what seems to be an effort to remain informed about the state of affairs, gives the Citizen and, by extension, Irish nationalism qualities of self-limiting and self-defeating determination. The truth is there but likely to be obscured by enthusiasm as much as by booze. The narrator then encounters the Citizen, who addresses the former curtly with the “highwayman’s command to his victim,” as Gifford describes it (319), “Stand and deliver” (Joyce *U* 295). He is vigilant, probably well-informed, and likely drunk, but the imperative, delivered as to a complete stranger, to defer and submit, anticipates the character’s own latent imperialism.

Soon after the Citizen is introduced, the episode shifts back into the mock-heroic mode and enumerates his physical features. His description echoes that of Ireland’s heroes in the popular translations of Irish folklore, emphasizing his physical prowess to the point of absurdity:

The figure seated on a large boulder at the foot of a round tower was that of a broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed frankeyed redheaired freely freckled shaggybearded widemouthed largenosed longheaded deepvoiced barekneed brawnyhanded sineweyarmed hero. From shoulder

to shoulder he measured several ells and his rocklike mountainous knees were covered, as was likewise the rest of his body wherever visible, with a strong growth of tawny prickly hair in hue and toughness similar to the mountain gorse” (296).

The remainder of the paragraph describes his enormous nose and eyes, as well as his breath. The Citizen is situated here, much like the pub itself, in relation to one of Ireland’s round towers, implying that he is part of an ancient historical tradition of defense. The repetition of compound adjectives that emphasize his size serves two purposes; first, it replicates the style of Irish legend. Second, it highlights the physicality of a man who will later in the episode be associated closely with Gaelic Athletics. Finally, on a related note, it begins to connect him with Ireland’s legendary heroes, a connection to which the Gaelic Athletic Association itself was meant to draw attention. The Citizen’s attire likewise implies the desire to authorize continuity. He wears a “long unsleeved garment” that becomes “a loose kilt” at the knees, and he wears a “girdle” on which are hung “seastones . . . graven with rude yet striking art of the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity” (296) The usual subjects – Cuchulin, Red Hugh O’Donnell, Wolfe Tone – are all accounted for, but so are Christopher Columbus, Napoleon Bonaparte, Beethoven and Adam and Eve among many others. The effect is numbing; the Citizen’s attire reveals a need to display his Irish authenticity and stretch it as far back as he possibly can, but it also includes so many names not remotely associated with Ireland as to render the category completely useless or, more generously, suggests the strategic appropriation of foreign culture by the Irish. His appeals to tradition are called into question even as they are introduced, and he provides a textbook example of

the use of culture to authorize power as described by Gellner and Hobsbawm among others.

For all of this humorous deflation, the Citizen is not entirely laughable, and his contributions should not be dismissed outright. There is a measure of truth in his stories, but uncovering it requires sifting through mountains of rhetoric and ideology. Despite the irony created by the narrative technique, and despite the distance which so obviously separates the author's position as an intellectual from the deliberate reductionism of his character, the Citizen affords Joyce a voice through which to consider the very real problems of empire and exploitation as well as the escalating retaliatory violence that followed. He has a lot to say, to the point that the narrator – himself inclined to prolix – occasionally tires of the Citizen's long-windedness. Consider how, after a conversation about executions, during which he grows frustrated with Bloom's fixation on the bodily experience of hangings, particularly post-mortem erections, the Citizen seizes the opportunity to go over his familiar topics:

So of course the citizen was only waiting for the wink of the word and he starts gassing out of him about the invincibles and the old guard and the men of sixtyseven and who fears to speak of ninetyeight and Joe with him about all the fellows that were hanged, drawn and transported for the cause by drumhead courtmartial and a new Ireland and this, that and the other. (305).

One of the effects of following a narrator's point-of-view so closely like this is that, as readers, we are being pushed to identify with his impatience. "Of course the citizen" was waiting to chime in on examples germane to his nationalist goals; that is what he does. To

the narrator, who may have some nationalist sympathies, the particularities of the diatribe dissolve into the indistinct “this, that and the other,” but each of these references is to violent resistance by Irish nationalists. There is mention of the 1798 Rebellion, as always, but there are also allusions to the Fenians who developed out of the Young Ireland movement, a reference to an abandoned 1867 rebellion, and most empathically the Invincibles, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Fenians who assassinated British forces in Ireland, most famously in the Phoenix Park murders. It is only when the Citizen begins to discuss the military trials and executions of the Irish nationalists, the violence *against* the Irish, that the narrator loses interest. The Citizen may have more of interest to the reader, and may in fact be somewhat justified in his position, but the method of mediation obscures additional insight.

His stories, like those of the Revival, are important. One of the most valuable points Ehrenreich makes in *Blood Rites* is that the stories we tell, the games we play and the culture we create may have been psychologically geared to maintain distance between ourselves and our more vulnerable predecessors. Myths and stories, and the cultural forms that capture those same values, build and sustain our belief in the stability of security (45). Irish cultural nationalism works much the same way, from the stories and myths to the Gaelic games. In other words, there is a frequent slippage between the values of the ostensibly more innocuous cultural forms of nationalism and their militant, physical force counterparts. Joyce recognizes this, and uses this connection to intensify his critique of Ireland’s emergent identity as predator. During a lengthy description of one of the hangings, widely believed to be a parody of a newspaper story on the execution of Robert Emmet (Gifford 333), represents two significant gestures in the

episode's conversation of nationalism. First, it reinforces the inability of the Citizen to engage other perspectives, or even hear other voices in any meaningful way. When the Citizen, "glaring at Bloom" with whom he has been arguing, proposes a toast to the "memory of the dead," he ignores Bloom's assertion that the former doesn't "grasp [his] point," and interrupts him mid-sentence by ejaculating "*Sinn Fein! ... Sinn fein amhain!* The friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate before us" (Joyce, *U* 306). The Citizen's toast is multifunctional and multivalent; it precedes, of course, the journalistic account of a fallen Irish nationalist, and is therefore appropriate political rhetoric for such a trigger. The portion in Irish is the Gaelic League's motto, translating to "Ourselves! ... Ourselves alone!," while the English is a paraphrase of Thomas Moore, the hugely influential Irish nationalist poet (Gifford 333). In the context of the conversation as a whole, the outburst can be read as an outpouring of Irish national pride; it also, however, represents an act of dominance on the Citizen's part as he silences Bloom with a phrase which demarcates the barrier between self and Other. The "foe we hate," then, is not simply the British in this case, but the ostensible enemy within, the foreign element, Bloom the Jewish scapegoat.

In addition to establishing the exclusionary nature of the Citizen's social vision, the account of the nationalist's hanging draws attention to the ease with which cultural nationalism tends towards the violent, codified here in terms of two of the major cultural nationalist touchstones, that of the allegorical Irish female, and that of Irish sports. Elsewhere, the notes the Citizen sounds regarding the relationship between cultural and political nationalism are familiar, as when he "begins talking about the Irish language and the corporation meeting and all that to the shoneens that can't speak their own language"

(310). The politicizing of the study of Irish language is clear, especially in light of Pearse's observations in "The Coming Revolution." The Citizen himself describes the Gaelic language as "on the march" as he curses "the bloody brutal Sassenachs and their *patois*" (324). The role of Irish sports, however, is less direct.

As the unnamed "hero martyr" (308) is about to be executed, his "blushing bride" rushes the scaffold and "fl[i]ngs herself upon the muscular bosom of him who was about to be launched into eternity for her sake." His final words to her, "*Sheila, my own,*" references one of Ireland's many female names, and she in turn kisses him and "sw[ears] to him as they mingled the salt streams of their tears that she would cherish his memory, that she would never forget her hero boy who went to his death with a song on his lips as if he were but going to a hurling match" (309). Like the men of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* who are martyred for Ireland's sake, the man to be executed makes himself a willing sacrifice for a woman coded as Ireland. This complicates her status as bride, of course, as she also becomes something of a mother to this "hero boy." The subsequent betrayal of the hero, furthermore, by the woman, taps into the pattern of Irish betrayal from within, not to mention Joyce's/*Ulysses*'s mistrust of women, and suggests that Ireland may not even be worth saving. More subtly, however, the passage all but conflates Irish games with the violence and sacrifice required in nationalist resistance. Michael Cusack, a primary model for the Citizen, founded the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the Gaelic games were construed largely as a means to cultivate a stronger and more virile Irish man – one more capable of resisting the British, although that may not have been as explicit a goal as the preservation of culture was. Even the games themselves traditionally served as

military drills, since the legends speak of Cuchulain and company playing hurling to keep their skills sharp.

That the unnamed martyr could be going to a “hurling match” in this moment as much as preparing for execution is not all that shocking, then, but rather a fairly straightforward encapsulation of the GAA’s values, a corollary of sorts to Pearse’s implications in “The Coming Revolution” that the Gaelic League had, from its inceptions, political application in mind. When Joe asks the Citizen how he feels about “the commissioner of police forbidding Irish games in the park,” the reader does not need Joe’s description of the Citizen as “the man ... that made the Gaelic sports revival” (315; 316) to understand that the question is overwhelmingly rhetorical. Indeed, in another of the lengthy passages, this time more journalistic in tone, the narrator situates the Gaelic games on the same level as its Greco-Roman counterparts. Unlike Anglo-imitative “shoneen games,” according to the indirect discourse of Hynes and the Citizen as recounted by the narrator, “Gaelic sports,” reflect “the importance of physical culture, as understood in ancient Greece and ancient Rome and ancient Ireland, for the development of the race,” and are ideal for having been “practiced morning and evening by Finn MacCool.” They might even “revive the best traditions of manly strength and power handed down to [the Irish] from ancient ages (316-7). The revival of the games and the reassertion of historical continuity are not simply about recovering a sense of the pride from which the Irish have been cut off, but of preparing for feats of physical strength. The invocation of yet another famous Irish warrior, the giant Fionn MacCumhail, is simply another reminder that, in the case of Ireland, the cultural anticipates or precipitates the political and militant.



Some of the Citizen's rhetoric reads as an affirmation of an Irish potential, long since cut short, or even like overt advocacy for rebuilding an economy and topography devastated by English rule. He would, for example, "[s]ave the trees of Ireland for the future men of Ireland," and he writes of the importance of reestablishing Irish trade, in response to Lenehan's assertion that Europe is watching Ireland: "...our eyes are on Europe. ... We had our trade with Spain and the French and with the Flemings before those mongrels [the English] were pupped, Spanish ale in Galway, the winebark on the winedark waterway ... And with the help of the holy mother of God ... [o]ur harbours that are empty will be full again" (326; 327-8). Somewhat parallel to the efforts at establishing a heroic continuity, or in the case of Russell and Yeats a poetic continuity, the Citizen implies the possibility and importance of building on Ireland's ancient accomplishments in trade to ensure a successful Irish future.

Derogation of the English notwithstanding, these passages are affirmative in tone, more about a nation's and a people's success than about the potential to dominate. Joyce himself had, recall, made similar points himself years earlier in a series of lectures. He argues in "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages, for example, that Ireland's poverty is a direct result of British imperialism:

Ireland is poor because English laws ruined the country's industries, especially the wool industry, because the neglect of the English government in the years of the potato famine allowed the best of the population to die from hunger, and because under the present administration, while Ireland is losing its population and crimes are almost non-existent, the judges receive the salary of a king, and governing

officials and those in public service receive high sums for doing almost nothing. (167)

Like the Citizen, Joyce is angry at the British for appropriating Irish goods and undercutting Irish trade, and he minces no words in implicating the foreign government in maintaining Ireland's economic distress. Taken in conjunction with Joyce's comments in the same lecture that "it cannot logically be considered wrong for" a tyrannized country "to rebel" against its oppressor (163), Joyce's conflictedness about Irish nationalism becomes clear. He believes strongly in the need for justice, but discredits narratives of ethnic and cultural purity on the grounds of Ireland's repeated pattern of invasion and assimilation: "to deny the name of patriot to those who are not of Irish stock would be to deny it to almost all the heroes of the modern movement," including Parnell, "in whose veins there was not even a drop of Celtic blood" (162). Moreover, Joyce is quick to remind his listener, as is the pattern in his fiction, that opportunism among the Irish has been an obstacle equal to British force. In "Saints and Sages," Joyce is simultaneously Citizen and Bloom; he recognizes the systematic nature of British oppression and laments the loss of Ireland's self-sustained economic viability, but he refuses to reify a singular Irish race, instead focusing on the Irish as a present body politic comprised of various ethnic origins – but with shared interests and the potential for a shared future.

It has to be said that these moments in "Cyclops" where Joyce and the Citizen's views converge, however, are exceptions. One of the first things we see the Citizen doing, after all, is "dr[i]nk[ing] to the undoing of his foes, a race of mighty valorous heroes, rulers of the waves" (325), and his desires take a more subtly dark turn by the

end. Just as cultural nationalism begins with the primary objective of restoring a people's dignity, or with the aim of solidarity, but can lead potentially not only to militarizing but also to the glorification of violence, the Citizen's economic and trade ambitions give way to fantasies of an Irish empire, a military force to be feared. The fullness of the harbors, it seems, will only be possible "when the first Irish battleship is seen breasting the waves with our own flag to the fore" (328). There is something practical in his formulation; at the height of British imperial trade, and of course of piracy, artillery might be something of a requirement. But the designation of the ship as a "battleship" combined with the emphasis on "our own flag" suggests the desire of which Ehrenreich warns us. Once freedom has been won, then comes the desire to conquer. The narrator does not think much of it, suggesting that he is "[a]ll wind and piss like a tanyard cat" and that his rhetoric is all "tall talk" which, if he were to address more actively violent nationalists would get him killed, as the "Molly Maguires [have been] looking for him to let daylight through him for grabbing the holding of an evicted tenant" (328). The narrator's dismissal, however, glosses over the severity of the image. Could Ireland build a navy to rival that of the English? In a word, no. That said, the Citizen's land-grabbing is a brand of opportunism which nevertheless fulfills a specifically Irish desire. It might be interpreted as greed or inconsistency, or an affirmation of gombeen stereotypes, but it also aligns with specific nationalist imperatives. At worst, the Citizen embodies a mentality that sees superiority as the only alternative to devaluation; at best, he represents the potential perversion and intranational consequences of largely defensible and understandable nationalist values.

It seems as though the Citizen wants it both ways with regards to empire and military; the vision of an Irish battleship combined with the reemergence of Irish trade has clearly imperial implications, but within a few breaths he is deriding British Empire again and criticizing the poor treatment of sailors in the British Navy who are blinded by the internalization of imperialist values. Fellow patron Ned, quoting the song “The Lads in Navy Blue” (Gifford 357), asks the Citizen his opinion of “the fighting navy ... that keeps our foes at bay” (Joyce, *Ulysses* 328). The Citizen calls the Navy “Hell upon earth,” and “telling [his audience] about corporal punishment and the crew of tars and officers and rearadmirals drawn up in crooked hats and the parson with his protestant bible to witness punishment and a young lad brought out, howling for his ma, and they tie him down on the buttend of a gun” (329). The Citizen is citing news stories from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, like those published by John Gordon Swift MacNeill, Donegal’s parliamentary representative and a vocal nationalist. Although these stories were written by someone with a clear bias against the British, they do reflect the reality for British seamen; while flogging had been banned in 1880, Gifford points out that other corporal punishment, “just short of flogging,” went on until 1906 or later (357). Likewise, it is helpful to consider the paradoxical spirit of liberty and freedom in British patriotic songs like “Rule Britannia” which are as much about reasserting Britain’s own journey out of subjugation (Doyle 3). “Rule Britannia” appears in part several times in the episode, and the Citizen draws attention to this connection, when he says that the “glorious British navy ... that bosses the earth,” the “fellows that never will be slaves” is built on the work of “drudges and whipped serfs,” whose “tragedy” is that “they believe it” (Joyce, *U* 329). In effect, the Citizen has described the experience of the British navy as one of

psychological oppression, which Sandra Lee Bartky defines as the “internalization of intimations of inferiority” (24). When people internalize their own oppression, they play a role in maintaining the systems of dominance that structure their own lives and those of others. The Citizen implies that the British are themselves victims to the imperial system, but does not have the foresight to see this as a possible outcome for Irish exceptionalism.

The Citizen’s response, then, not only takes the British Navy to task, but also returns to the themes of both exile and the possibility of Irish imperialism. Bloom questions the Citizen on this possibility explicitly: “isn’t discipline the same everywhere? I mean wouldn’t be the same here if you put force against force?” (329). The very qualities which the Citizen has identified as deplorable in the British imperial military might, on Bloom’s account, be reproduced if the Citizen’s vision were realized (or even realizable). But, as the Citizen’s relationship with Ireland is not only one of pride, but of exceptionalism, he believes that things would be different if the Irish in charge, because the Irish have the moral high ground:

We’ll put force against force ... We have our greater Ireland beyond the sea. ... the *Times* rubbed its hands and told the whitelivered Saxons there would soon be as few Irish in Ireland as redskins in America ... Twenty thousand of them died in the coffinships. But those that came to the land of the free remember the land of bondage. And they will come again with a vengeance, no cravens, the sons of Granuaile, the champions of Kathleen ni Houlihan. (330)

The desire for violent reprisal is clear in this passage from the first mention of “force” to the final “vengeance,” but there is also an implicitly imperialist bent to the Citizen’s

remarks. While he does reference America by name subsequently, the United States is represented first here as “the greater Ireland beyond the sea.” In effect, the Citizen implies that the U.S. is an Irish colony despite its English origins. While there is a transnational understanding of diaspora to consider here, the Citizen reduces that alliance to a decentralized – but essentially unified – military for the Irish cause. His companions in Kiernan’s pub, by contrast, see at least some possibility of transnational cooperation. Ned and John Wyse point out the admittedly complex historical cooperation between the Irish and the French, but the Citizen dismisses the French, who “were never worth a roasted fart to Ireland,” completely (330). It seems that the Citizen has already forgotten his estimation of the greater European value of the French in contrast to the English, when he recalls meeting Kevin Egan in Paris and contrasts the continental European culture as comparatively valuable and authentic in contrast to that the British, whom he paints as thieves of Irish culture and “Tonguetied sons of bastards’ ghosts” (325).

#### V. Leopold Bloom’s Inclusive Alternative

Early in *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson observes the ways in which national identification is limited: “No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet” (7). In each of their own ways, however, the Citizen and Bloom imagine exactly that, a nation that extends to the ends of the earth. The Citizen’s view is imperialist and could even be connected to fascism, but Leopold Bloom offers a fresh perspective that extends citizenship infinitely without the

prescriptive parameters in Anderson's Christianity or the Citizen's Irish exceptionalism. Implicit in the Citizen's treatment of Irish diaspora is the possibility of reconfiguring the entire concept of a nation away from traditional geopolitical designations, as the American Irish are just as much Irish as those at home. Although there is the historical proliferation of Fenianism in exile, especially in the U. S., diasporic Irish national pride in exile has taken a number of forms. As the episode reaches its climax, Bloom tells the Citizen and his companions, "Persecution, ... all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations," to which John Wyse responds, "But do you know what a nation means?" The nationalist Cyclopes in Kiernan's pub have been operating on the assumption that a nation might, or must, be defined in terms of its cultural and racial uniformity. The definition Bloom offers is much simpler. "A nation is the same people living in the same place ... Or also living in different places" (331). Bloom persists through their laughter, quietly and unassumingly, as is his tendency. His definition of a nation, which is neither prescriptive nor exclusionary, sets him apart from his interlocutors as much as his mannerisms and his demeanor. If a "nation" can be reduced simply to a group of people sharing a space or sharing ideas, the episode does not command the same coercive power of conventional nationalism. It is, in fact, radically *inclusive*.

Bloom's position, then, in the final pages of the episode, emphasizes the Jewish parallels to the Irish that the Citizen had been unwittingly pointing out the entire time. It is not that his Judaism does not carry the potential for militarism, but rather that Bloom proactively distances himself from it. When the Citizen asks Bloom his nation, Bloom's response is simple and affirmative: "Ireland ... I was born here. Ireland" (331).

Nationality, for Bloom, is largely a matter of accident. It may still be a real and powerful force, and it may still be the basis for oppression and disenfranchisement by other nations, but it is not in and of itself something mystical or essential. Bloom's idea of a nation is porous as well, flowing beyond geopolitical borders as much the Citizen's, but offering a more affirmative collectivism rather than antagonism. Crucially, Bloom also separates race from the nation equation. "I belong to a race *too* ... that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant," he tells the Citizen and company. Specifically, they have been "Robbed ... Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment ... sold by auction off in Morocco like slaves or cattles" (332, emphasis mine). While slavery might be a slight historical exaggeration (Gifford 364), Bloom is as aware of the crimes against the Jews as the Citizen is of those against the Irish, but he does not use that as the justification for violence or, in the more indirect term Joyce favors here, "force." We may laugh at Bloom's sentimentalism, and Joyce all but encourages us to do so, yet we also have to see through that laughter and recognize the legitimacy of Bloom's perception as much as, if not more than, the Citizen's. Bloom *could* adopt the kind of militant differentiation of the Irish nationalists, but he chooses not to.

One of the freedoms or, perhaps, one of the challenges, of this broader notion of belonging is the availability of conflict resolution models that forego the perpetuation of violence. It is not as though the oppression of the Jews has not bred a violent contingency; the Citizen even suspects that Bloom is such a Zionist at one point, asking Leopold if he is "talking about the new Jerusalem." Bloom's response is terse and emphatic, but not particularly defensive: "I'm talking about injustice" (332). At this point



in the conversation, there is no disagreement between Wyse, the Citizen, and Bloom. Each shares, in some fashion, a belief in justice and recognizes in the case of Ireland at least some violations thereof. Whereas John Wyse, like the Citizen, however, would “Stand up to it ... with force like men,” Bloom offers an analysis of historical forces that emphasizes violence as a self-replicating cycle: “But it’s no use ... Force, hatred, history, all that. That’s not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it’s the opposite of that that is really life.” Life then, “real life,” is “Love” (333). The effect is sentimental – and Joyce plays this up – but powerful.

Bloom then leaves the pub to resume his efforts on behalf of the Dignams, leaving the Cyclopes with their reflections on his words. The exchange between Wyse and Bloom is richly textured; by emphasizing the role that physical prowess and the willingness to fight play in creating an acceptable masculine identity, Joyce affords Bloom a chance to respond not only to militant nationalism, but militarism’s requisite normalization of gender roles in cultural nationalism. Whereas Wyse does not even imply the possibility of women in coordinated resistance, Bloom’s claim that “force” is not a life for “men and women” is gender-inclusive and reflects both the reality of violence in the lives of women as well as elevating them to a similar status as men in their potential to represent an entire people. “Life” is not about proving manliness or being the best or strongest but rather about the intimate and affirmative connections we make with others. The concept of nation, per the Cyclopes, allows only for limited love, for limited *life*, while Leopold Bloom’s cosmopolitanism encourages the proliferation of each. It also puts the Catholic Cyclopes in a bit of a bind. The Citizen may mockingly compare Bloom to Christ, calling the former “[a] new apostle to the gentiles” with a message of “[u]niversal love.” Wyse

can only offer the almost-rhetorical response, “Well . . . isn’t that what we’re told? Love your neighbors” (333). Wyse’s recognition here gets at one of the core claims implicit in the episode; for all of the difference between the Irishman and the Jew, they share a structure of feeling that might enable them to transcend subject-formation based on difference.

The role of cultural scripts in conditioning a predisposition to violence, as I have been suggesting, is only one major thread in the chapter. The experience of difference and exclusion, while related, is another. As we see repeatedly in the novel’s interior monologues, Bloom is swimming in anti-Semitism, and the characters in “Cyclops” are particularly guilty. The journey to Bloom’s identification with Christ – and with Wyse’s recognition of his Christ-like formulations – is a circuitous one, beginning, in fact, when Joe Hynes introduces Bloom into the chapter as “old Shylock” (313). Joyce goes to great lengths in “Cyclops,” as in *Ulysses* as a whole, to develop a sense of kinship or of shared experience between the Irish and the Jews. According to Ellmann, “the similarity of the Jews and the Irish” was a topic of discussion “on which Joyce insisted,” as Joyce believed both peoples were “impulsive, given to fancy, addicted to associative thinking, wanting in rational discipline” (395). The parallels which the Citizen articulates – but does not recognize – are relentless in “Cyclops”. For instance, the Irish are described as being constituted of twelve tribes. Traditional interpretation of the Old Testament identifies the Hebrew people as having been descended from the sons of Jacob, whom God had renamed Israel; from one of these sons, Judah, came the Jewish people, held to be one of only two surviving Israeli tribes. Joyce does not develop the parallel exactly, but the implication is clear in his coinage, “the twelve tribes of Iar,” each headed by

“one man” (*Ulysses* 323). These twelve patriarchs include St. Patrick, Red Hugh O’Donnell, St. Kevin, the warrior-poet Ossian, and others, effectively running the gamut of Irish social, religious and cultural history.

This parallel is deepened by the shared sense of loss and diaspora, as we see in a moment that both reflects the Citizen’s anti-Semitism and demonstrates his awareness of Ireland’s intense feelings of loss. Bloom, somewhat tritely but appropriately, tells the Citizen, “Some people ... can see the mote in others’ eyes but they can’t see the beam in their own.” This indirect accusation, which echoes Odysseus’s blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus, captures the Citizen’s overall myopism and anticipates directly the limitation of his response to Bloom. “*Raimis* ...,” he begins, “There’s no-one as blind as the fellow that won’t see, if you know what that means. Where are our missing twenty millions of Irish should be here today instead of four, our lost tribes?” (327). The Citizen dismisses Bloom’s call for self-awareness by calling it “*Rameis*,” which Gifford translates as “romance” or “nonsense” (349). Given the overall tenor of the Citizen’s characterization, Bloom is right. The Citizen, however, is right, too. Self-awareness might be important, but so is the ability to recognize the historical trauma of a people living in subjugation and cut off from the resources of their very land when those resources are most needed. The effect of the Great Famine, in conjunction with British and Anglo-Irish land and trade policies, was to reduce the Irish population by millions and millions over the course of a few short decades. Their suffering has brought them – rapidly – to a state analogous to that of the Jews. The Citizen’s evocation of the “lost tribes,” however, implies a connection with the lost tribes of Israel, and could offer an opportunity for transcultural identification and solidarity. If there are some who “will not

see,” then, the Citizen and the brand of nationalism he remains blinded by the “beam” in his eye.

At the episode’s conclusion, the Jewish-Irish parallel reaches its apotheosis, as Martin, responding to the Citizen’s ironic exclamation that Bloom is “the new Messiah for Ireland,” observing that the Jews are “still waiting for the redeemer,” and “[f]or that matter so are we” (337). The Citizen may not be persuaded, and yet Joyce allows subtle moments like this shine through and suggest the possibility of an Ireland more open to transcultural dialogue. Bloom is already there, of course, telling to the Citizen, “Your God was a Jew. Christ was a Jew like me” (342). Whereas most of the episode, with its anti-Semitism and with Bloom’s persecution by the Citizen, has set Bloom up as a passive sacrificial figure, he here embraces it. In doing so, having already established his own sense of Irishness, Bloom begins to dissolve the distinction between would-be predator/sacrificial agent and prey/sacrifice the Citizen desires. This is an example, in other words, of what Stevens calls a “crisis of differentiation” (248), a case in which a scapegoat has to be sacrificed or expelled in order to reaffirm the qualities community members wish to believe are intrinsically unique to that community. By reminding the Citizen that Christianity has no narrative except that which follows Judaism, he brings the Citizen that much closer to him. The integrity of the Citizen’s personhood is challenged, but the novel suggests that such a challenge might be thought of as an opportunity for community. The narrator may deride Bloom for his sentimental leanings, but, as readers, we do not have to.

## VI. Solution or Challenge?

So far, I have argued for an alternative middle ground regarding Joyce's politics, primarily as implied in the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*. To review in brief, critical consensus has been split both in terms of Joyce's relationships to Irish nationalism and to cosmopolitanism. While he clearly rejects British imperialism, the degree to which Joyce identifies with Irish nationalism is subject to debate; one of the most common views is that he rejects it entirely, dismissing cultural nationalism and physical force nationalism alike. To the extent that each version of Irish nationalism encodes the rhetoric of identity based on violence and sacrifice, I find this reading persuasive. The Citizen's function in the novel as a mouthpiece for Joyce's legitimate arguments in favor of some version of Irish nationalism, however, complicates any attempts to read this distancing in black and white terms. The opposition between the Citizen's xenophobic nationalism and Leopold Bloom's sentimentalist cosmopolitanism is equally contentious. For all of the critics who read in it Joyce's celebration of cosmopolitan anti-essentialism, there are as many who read it as part of Joyce's larger project in the episode of rejecting absolute ideologies altogether. To the extent that his formulations undermine the normalization of violence from which the text clearly distances itself, however, it is clear that we, as readers, are to do more than simply scorn his ideas.

This threatens to put the reader and the critic alike at an impasse. Readings of "Cyclops," and of *Ulysses* as a whole, which address this tension without falling into one of the broad readings detailed above, tend to note only Joyce's unresolved ambivalence. I would suggest, however, that the text is not simply a testament to Joyce's inability to decide between competing impulses and loyalties, but rather a sustained and self-critical

effort at evaluating those impulses. Nationalism, in isolation, is clearly insufficient for Joyce. This is no secret, informing as it does nearly everything in his corpus. But it is something he still works through carefully. Cosmopolitan ethics are no different. While Joyce's biography reflects the artistic advantages of exile, a reading of key passages in *Ulysses* suggests the understanding that it is significantly more difficult to realize cosmopolitanism as an egalitarian social movement or vision; if the text reads as ambivalent, and if Joyce does not resolve the tension, it is not for lack of trying. In the closing pages of the chapter, then, I will discuss several moments in "Circe" which reflect back on the events in Kiernan's pub and suggest that, despite his noncommittal stance and *Ulysses*'s indeterminacy, Joyce and his text present the reader with a model for thinking and feeling through difficult solutions and rejecting reductive answers.

Whereas nationalism, all complexity considered, is largely rejected by the end of "Cyclops," Joyce returns several times over to models of alternative forms of interaction between the individual and the collective. This is concentrated most profoundly in Bloom's hallucination of the "New Bloomusalem" in "Circe," which has a clear antecedent in the events of "Cyclops," particularly Bloom's transformation into a martyr or messiah, a transformation instigated by the Citizen but accepted and even embraced by Bloom. If we can say that Bloom adopts the cosmopolitan universalism of a nation comprised of all people living in the same place or in different places too quickly to have been an intellectually coherent position, its reemergence in the episode of excessive returns of the repressed suggests that part of him takes it seriously and cannot let it go.

Charting the events of "Circe" in whole would be a herculean task, but there are a few moments which, in isolation, recall the themes of "Cyclops" and develop them – or

complicate them – clearly. These developments take off with Bloom’s hallucinatory trial. Bloom, having been caught by the watch feeding a stray dog, defends himself on humanitarian terms: “I am doing good to others” (453). One implicit interrogation in the trial sequence, then, is of the gap between intention and action; for all of his ostensible good will, does Bloom live up to his own idealistic rhetoric? Accused of a number of crimes and character deficiencies, Bloom declares that he is being “made a scapegoat of” and, backing away from the critique of empire in the earlier episode, appeals to British authority to legitimate and confirm his merits. He is son-in-law to “a most distinguished commander, a gallant upstanding gentleman, ... Majorgeneral Brian Tweedy, one of Britain’s fighting men.” This does not sit well with the more nationalist contingent in Bloom’s hallucination, who decree Bloom a “Turncoat” and vocalize support for analogous decolonization efforts: “Up the Boers!” (457). Bloom’s trial reveals a conflicted and unstable subject-position. Whereas, confronted with the physical and literal external threat of the Citizen, he had been willing to embrace a pluralistic Irishness and challenge nationalist homogenization, Bloom, in the unconscious plane of “Circe,” slips easily into a defensive identification with Anglo power. The slipperiness of his identity, however, actually ratifies his status as scapegoat; he can be persecuted by the English in the name of demarcating the boundaries of Anglo ethno-racial identity as easily as he has been persecuted by the English. His self-identification as the victim might come across as self-aggrandizement, except that he is completely right. With Bloom having set himself up in the early portions of the episode as alien to both dominant and subordinate cultures in Anglo-Ireland, his trial starts to shift from a defense of his character to an interrogation of his egalitarian ambitions and their plausibility.

To some extent, Joyce's treatment of Bloom's self-identification as a martyr or messiah figure is ironic. When John Howard Parnell appears, declaring Bloom the "Successor to [his] illustrious brother," Charles Stewart Parnell, it is safe to say that we as readers are not to see Bloom as the immediate answer to the problem of Irish governance any more than we were to believe him, or a figure like him, as the source of Arthur Griffiths' *Sinn Fein* economic positions. Bloom's response to Parnell, in which the former describes "Erin" as the "promised land of our common ancestors" (483) presumably the Jews and the Irish, is tonally similar. And yet, despite complicating Bloom's authenticity and mocking his sense of self, Joyce elaborates on what a Bloomian Utopia might look like by describing, in detail, the New Bloomusalem. The city's name refers back, of course, to the "Cyclops" episode's discussion of the New Jerusalem and Judeo-Christian messianic traditions. Bloom's proclamation and naming of the city, however, effectively collapses the socially-efficacious implications of the city with Bloom's personal desire to matter. Bloom, echoing the phrasing of both the bible and of imperialism, addresses his would-be Irish subjects, mere pages after defending his own Britishness, as follows: "My beloved subjects, a new era is about to dawn. I, Bloom, tell you verily it is even now at hand. Yea, on the word of a Bloom, ye shall ere long enter into the golden city which is to be, the New Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (*U* 484). While Bloom himself is more culturally Jewish than the other characters in the novel, the New Jerusalem carries a double valence. It refers, potentially, to the reestablishment of Jerusalem as a Jewish city, as in Ezekiel, but, given Bloom's Christ parallels, it also points toward the Book of Revelation, which describes the creation of a New Jerusalem along with a "new Heaven" and a "new Earth" at the end of days (*New*



*King James Version*, 21:1). Given the parallels in language, Nova Hibernia – New Ireland – becomes in Bloom’s vision the surrogate for the world as a whole. The program he would carry out in a New Ireland, by extension, might be read as Joyce’s hypothesis – however tentative – on what a self-consciously cosmopolitan and egalitarian arrangement might look like.

When Bloom finally details – after numerous, humorous detours – the essential features of the New Bloomusalem, it is with a mix of earnest humanism, technological and perhaps social wishful thinking, and of course Joyce’s skeptical eye. A great deal of it sounds desirable indeed, but even Bloom seems to recognize that it would have to come at a cost:

I stand for the reform of municipal morals and the plain ten commandments. New worlds for old. Union of all, jew, moslem, and gentile. Three acres and a cow for all children of nature. Saloon motor hearses. Compulsory manual labour for all. All parks open to the public day and night. Electric dishscrubbers. Tuberculosis, lunacy, war and mendicancy must now cease. General amnesty, weekly carnival, with marked licence, bonuses for all, esperanto the universal brotherhood. No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical impostors. Free money, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state (*U* 489-90).

Bloom’s platform oscillates between vagueness and extreme, absurd specificity. His imagined jurisdiction is the city – he aims to “reform ... municipal” morality specifically – but, of itself, morality is a slippery concept. The “plain ten commandments” has a conservative ring, but in light of the Abrahamic triad which follows, it ends up coming

across more like an appeal to overlapping cultural contexts. Bloom's formulation is not universal, but it does transcend several significant binaries; his morality is not determined by contrasts between Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew, Judeo-Christian and Muslim, but rather by common threads. They are to form a "union," but not necessarily to homogenize; we see this in the retention of their individual group designations alongside the broader appeal to togetherness. There are gaps, of course, of both religious and more broadly cultural natures, but since Bloom is himself something of an atheist, the appeal loses some of its potentially coercive and normalizing edge. The language becomes increasingly secularized and universal as he begins to enumerate the features – both benefits and responsibilities – of the New Bloomusalem. Bloom starts off with a reference to Irish land reform efforts (Gifford 479), but with significant qualifiers. Land and sustenance – "Three acres and a cow" are not simply for the Irish, or for the Jews, or even God's children, but those "of nature."

Bloom also imagines a more peaceful city. "All parks open to the public day and night," for example, suggests the safety of public spaces in contrast to their turn-of-the-century associations with violence and covert subversion, such as the Phoenix Park murders. In order for parks to be open day and night, in other words, people would need to be assured of their safety; writing, as Joyce is, of course, after the Easter Rising, the militarization of public space would have taken on even more resonance (it also, incidentally, harkens back to the "Cyclops" conversation about Irish sports being banned in the parks). What is interesting, through all of this, is that Bloom never promises to deliver *any* of these things. This is what he "stands for," what he believes to be desirable. When he declares that physical and mental illness, poverty and war "must now cease,"

there is no clear directive for how to get there. Who is to stop complex social phenomena and abstractions? The more Bloom articulates his vision of an ideal human community, the more difficult it becomes to imagine its implementation. At the same time, real possibilities persist. If nothing else, “carnivals” with “marked licence” gestures at a validation of pleasure and a rejection of normalizing morality. “General amnesty,” furthermore, and “esperanto,” a potential universal language which gained some traction at the turn of the century, whose name translates to “hopeful” (Gifford 479), are plausibly within reach of human agency. Esperanto, notably, is separated from “the universal brotherhood” neither by a comma nor a conjunction. A universal brotherhood remains a possibility, and although it it would have to contend with the problem of differentiation, simultaneously an obstacle to that brotherhood as well as a legitimate source of pride and self-worth, Bloom’s fraught formulations refuse to let it go. At the very least, he can specify the personalities with which the universal brotherhood would have to contend and stress the importance of everyday, common contributors, as we see in the repetition of “lay” in the passages closing lines.

I have, so far, skipped over one or two of Bloom’s finer points, some of which seem silly by contrast. “Electric dishscrubbers,” for one, is not as infused with the high idealism of the aforementioned moments. It is almost analogous to someone giving a speech on the benefits of social democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century United States and referencing the laboring robots on *The Jetsons* for the sake of illustration. And yet, reading Joyce’s Irish near-contemporaries is illuminating. Oscar Wilde, like Joyce, flirted with socialism, but put an incredibly individualistic spin on it. For Wilde, the artist needs absolute freedom of self-expression; in order for people to experience absolute freedom,

they must be free of debt, charity, and the hierarchical relationships without which capitalism cannot exist. Socialism and collectivism are, for Wilde, prerequisite to a model of individualism free from domination and inequality. Wilde, whom Joyce had read extensively, elaborates his vision of socialism – which is really more social anarchism than anything else – in “The Soul of Man under Socialism” (1891). Wilde’s is the more hopeful vision, perhaps. He suggests that “All association must be quite voluntary,” as “only in voluntary associations ... man is fine” (1082). In a voluntary socialist arrangement, people’s charity would be replaced with sincere “sympathy,” expressed “freely and spontaneously” (1101). In order for this to be realized, and this is Wilde at his most optimistic, the dirty jobs would more or less go to robots: “civilization requires slaves. ... Unless there are slaves to do the ugly, horrible, uninteresting work, culture and contemplation become almost impossible. Human slavery is wrong, insecure, and demoralising. On mechanical slavery, on the slavery of the machine, the future depends” (1089). Bloom’s, Joyce’s, brief nod to technological advancement is more prophetic regarding the limitations and possibilities of technology. He does not venture onto the speculative limb of Wilde, but he recognizes it; the New Bloomusalem cannot function, for Joyce, on “voluntary associations,” but instead requires “compulsory manual labor for all.” On the whole, the passage reflects Joyce’s self-admitted reluctance to embrace fully socialist politics, but also a recognition of the need for a more inclusive and conscientious social organization.

At this point, Joyce has moved away from an explicit discussion of the transnational, but the entire conversation of the New Bloomusalem, we have to remember, grows out of Bloom’s desire to rethink the nature of communities as a

response to nationalism. The real problem in achieving any kind of utopian community, the episode ultimately suggests, is the inability of the people to see beyond individual desires, biases, and legitimate needs. We see it, for example, in O' Madden Burke, who remarks, "Free fox in a free henroost," while Davy Byrne, owner of the sandwich shop from "Lestrygonians" and the *Dubliners* story "Counterparts," simply yawns. When Bloom suggests intermarriage – "Mixed races and mixed marriage" – a particularly transparent appeal to the anti-essentialism of race to which Joyce himself subscribed, he is met with Lenehan's salacious request for "mixed bathing" (491). Little moments like this are the ones that point most emphatically to Joyce's sympathies toward Bloom. Recalling Joyce's own claims about Irish race in various critical writings, claims which bleed through into "Cyclops," Bloom's most modest appeal may also be the most realizable. Lenehan, ever the shortsighted libidinalist, turns this potentially sincere moment into a bawdy one. Like so many moments in Joyce, there are shades of Charles Stewart Parnell in the sequence – not long after Lenehan drags Bloom's ideas into the gutter, Father Farley, a priest, declares Bloom "an anythingarian seeking to overthrow our holy faith," and Stephen Dedalus's aunt Mrs. Riordan pipes in with the obligatory disavowing echo, telling Bloom she is "disappointed" and that he is a "bad man" (491). Mrs. Riordan's role here rehearses her role in *A Portrait* in miniature; she is presented with a potentially liberating vision of the world, but defers to the Church's *ad hominem* condemnation without any sustained consideration of that vision's merits. If Joyce wants us to see Bloom's platform as unrealistic or implausible, we are as encouraged to recognize the multiplicity of Ireland's, and by extension the world's, self-defeating personalities. Regardless of Bloom's idealism, there are serious obstacles to social

transformation, including but not limited to indifference, distraction, and the unquestioning surrender to socially conservative authorities.

In “Cyclops,” Bloom’s formulations have a distinctively cosmopolitan quality. He transforms the concept of a nation as a fixed geopolitical space into a network of affiliation and mutual responsibility, and this is carried into later chapters through the reappearance of the New Jerusalem as the New *Bloomusalem*. Something is lost along the way, however. What begins as a grand multinational or supranational enterprise becomes implicitly implausible and unmasked as mere wishful thinking. Bloom’s cosmopolitanism, in its interrogated form, is more a utopian fantasy than a fully-realized or realizable transnational entity. Joyce’s reservations about endorsing Bloom’s fantasy anticipate Gellner’s own sympathetic dismissal 60 years later. Gellner argues that loose affiliations without a centralized and geographically limited state are ultimately incapable of making life work for people in the industrial age: “Some of this co-operation might under favourable conditions be spontaneous and need no central sanctions. The idea that all of it could perpetually work in this way, that it could exist without any enforcement and control, puts an intolerable strain on one’s credulity” (5). Any attempt to perpetuate voluntary cooperation without a centralized state, which, in Gellner’s estimation, necessarily produces homogenized national culture, cannot be sustained. Fortunately, as readers and as citizens, we do not have to accept this binarized perspective. As Appiah argues in the final chapter of *Cosmopolitanism*, we might as members of nations use the national government to influence international policy to ensure the extension of basic human entitlements to all people. Ethically, we might maintain a sense of global interconnectedness – even where international conflict has been historically fraught –

without having to substitute a global government for a national or local one, which would be undesirable and untenable for any number of reasons, especially the familiar arguments about too much power in the hands of too few people and the greater capacity of local governments to respond to local needs (163).

In the end, Joyce does not arrive at such a neat conclusion with regards either to nationalism or cosmopolitanism in *Ulysses*; considerable implications in his texts for reforming his home nation notwithstanding, Joyce does not defend it in any conventional sense. At best, nationalism is a tactical position for countering dominant discourse, a means to an end. The more familiar forms of nationalism threaten to reinscribe the very values they challenge in new, potentially more insidious forms. Some of this may be necessary; if an Irish writer with the power to persuade and affect chooses instead to pursue overtly individualistic self-gratification, is he or she complicit with imperialism? Is Joyce no better than the Home Rule advocates who want the monetary benefits and comforts of British Empire without the interference of British law? Other reformations of mastery are clearer in their negative ramifications. The transformation from prey to predator, from subject to potential subjugator is of course one, but, as the following chapter will bear out with regards to gender, the affirmation of dominance internal to the nation is another, more likely consequence. Joyce, however, does not endorse transnationalism or cosmopolitanism fully, either. He raises questions, especially in “Circe” but even in “Cyclops,” about not only the sincerity of those who desire a sweeping social arrangement based on humanism and sentiment, but also the practical difficulties facing anyone motivated enough to attempt its realization.

Returning once more to Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism*, it appears to me that *Ulysses* anticipates two of Appiah's most pragmatic compromises to cosmopolitanism. Appiah, recall, advocates partial cosmopolitanism, a position that recognizes our interconnectedness with the global community but emphasizes the importance of cultivating sympathy and equity first among those with whom we have the most immediate contact. We have to keep in mind, Appiah argues, that "the primary mechanism for ensuring these entitlements [having basic needs met, exercising human capabilities, and being protected from certain harms] remains the nation-state" (162). A centralized world government would not be able to respond to the many, many individual needs in the same way that a national or local government would, he suggests, and it keeps us accountable to one another in a more immediate way. Additionally, Appiah argues that no matter how much we may rightly wish to help others, we will be unable to do anything if the "basic obligations" we determine for ourselves are not "consistent with our being" (165), especially with our relationships to those closest to us, without whom our abilities to empathize and sympathize would be sorely underdeveloped. Although not as murky and indeterminate as Stoker before him, the most notable quality in Joyce's cosmopolitanism is its conflictedness. There is a clear sense of value, but no real program. To indulge in speculation, we might infer that Joyce, like Appiah, is suggesting, in so many words, that "cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but of the challenge" (xv). This is distinct, I think, from the ambivalence with which Joyce's cosmopolitan leanings have been described by previous middle ground criticism. Although he can be caustically critical of it, *Ulysses* suggests that, at the very least, we



take the time to think about how we relate, how we define and are defined by, not only our national communities, but the world as a whole.

## CHAPTER THREE

“Ye’re not men at all”:

### Gender and Nationalism in Kate O’Brien’s *The Land of Spices*

#### I. Introduction

Kate O’Brien marks a departure from the anticipatory work of Stoker and Joyce. Her writing, produced primarily in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, is valuable because it offers an oppositional perspective which reflects the lived experience of people in an actualized Irish Free State. Like Joyce, her characters are Irish; unlike Joyce, however, they are not *bound* to Dublin or to Ireland. They may take the experience of being Irish with them, but her characters and texts are even more explicitly transnational and cosmopolitan than Joyce’s. All the same, however, the international dimension of her novels is never divorced fully from the national consciousness that haunts them and drives her characters abroad. Furthermore Kate O’Brien’s historical perspective allows her to make two significant advancements on earlier analyses. Ireland is, for all intents and purposes, an independent nation-state by the time her career begins. She is able, then, to represent Irish nationalism as of a piece with the continental corollaries she criticizes in her nonfiction writing. It is a notable subtext in her writing, but beyond the scope of the chapter which follows. I would argue that her most significant contribution to the development of this dialogue between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, and the one which provides the foundation of this chapter, is in her treatment of gender and sexuality. Irish nationalism – whatever divergent criticisms writers like Stoker or Joyce might have offered – was a movement with egalitarian promise. While it may have contained an element of racialism, or even racism, and although it had a prominent hypermasculine dimension

both in its militarism and in its association with the Gaelic Athletic Association, it had a kernel of gender equity. Kate O'Brien's novels, especially *The Land of Spices* (1941), register the failure of the Irish Free State to make good on the promise nationalism held for women in the previous decades, linking the circumscription of desire and of potential explicitly to authorized conceptions of national character. O'Brien, like Stoker and Joyce before her, challenges institutionalized Irish nationalism by contrasting it with transnational and cosmopolitan values.

The basic narrative of Kate O'Brien's relationship to the Irish canon and to literary studies goes something like this: she was, during the 1940s and 1950s, an immensely popular novelist despite the censorship of several of her texts, but her novels drifted out of publication and received little critical attention until the 1980s. Although many Irish women wrote through the twentieth century, the giants of Joyce, Yeats, Shaw and Beckett have taken up so many pages of literary criticism that few other men have received exhaustive critical treatments; historically marginalized to begin with, Irish women have fared even worse. As O'Brien's novels began to be republished, however, a new generation of politically engaged critics began the work both of recovering them as aesthetic accomplishments and as examples of a curious and ambivalent pseudo- or proto-feminist discourse. The political positioning of Kate O'Brien's novels, however, is always complex. She has a habit of interrogating systems of power and hierarchy only to reaffirm the largely indifferent individualism by which such systems are made possible. Prompted by her notoriously taciturn disposition regarding discussion of her personal life, critics have continuously attempted to reconstruct a sense of O'Brien's personality by looking at the moments in which her known biography and non-fiction writing intersects

with the themes and motifs of her novels. The foremost of these is O'Brien's somewhat unique position as a representative and documenter of upper-middle class life in Ireland at the turn of the century, but increasing attention has been given to the latent – and sometimes explicit – treatment of queer desire in her novels and, of course, her complex interrogations of sex and gender. By contrast, for most of the time she has been afforded any critical attention, Kate O'Brien's complex exploration of the intersection between national and international interests has been overlooked by critics or treated as a footnote in discussions of gender. Gender and national identity, however, are more connected than they may otherwise appear.

Nationalist politics have not been a consistent preoccupation in O'Brien criticism, but the critics who treat nationalism do so with some consistency. The most recurring points of discussion involve O'Brien's class privilege and her overt criticism of fascism, especially Francoist Spain. Many of O'Brien's characters reflect the author's own upper middle-class background and have access to culture and resources denied to their peers. This is especially true of *The Land of Spices*'s convent school, which verges on extravagance and commands a steep tuition affordable to very few Irish Catholics. The privilege into which she was born was short-lived as a social phenomenon, and this sense of a lost culture complicates her sociopolitical positioning. If she has been championed as a valuable writer in the Irish feminist tradition, then, her contributions to the discourse of class are more complicated. Eavan Boland has argued that "Kate O'Brien's world was perishing almost as soon as she discovered it," and Boland identifies O'Brien as "a romantic elitist [who] held to the nineteenth-century view that the extraordinary define themselves against and not with the many [and] had a clear perception of the small,

doomed group... in which the elegy for order produces a conflict of identity” (17; 18). Karin Zettel offers a similar perspective, arguing that the “secure status of [O’Brien’s] middle class family of merchants with their close links to England and the continent had little in common with the frugality of De Valera’s inward-looking nation. Unlike the cultural nationalists of her time, she never experienced the English and continental cultures as antagonistic to her Irishness” (42). Furthermore, Zettel argues that O’Brien essentially ignores the role of nationalism for the Irish who saw it as “the ideology that had liberated the Irish from British rule,” emphasizing instead “nationalism in relation to the nationalist and fascist movements rising on the continent” (43-44). There is some agreement among critics, then, that Kate O’Brien’s potential sympathy with her fellow Irish Catholics was compromised by her status. Although she might identify with them in religious terms, she did not share their need for nationalist agitation and change. Her outsider’s perspective within the nation and the culture allowed her to see the dangers of nationalism quite clearly and legitimately, but it may have also caused her to undervalue the good it had done for less-privileged in Ireland.

Long passages in *The Land of Spices* are devoted to exploring the provincialism of Irish nationalism as well as its affirmation of patriarchal norms, even within all-female communities. O’Brien depicts the potential for women to cooperate and thereby undermine systemic oppression, but these depictions occur only within socially rarified air. Moreover, she envisions the possibility of self-fashioned intercultural identities to supplant prescribed national ones. In theory, this sounds fantastic. It is particularly promising for women; if identity is not inherently tied to national consciousness, then nationalism loses its hegemonic influence over women’s lives. As Mary Breen writes,

*The Land of Spices* can be read as “a radical and subversive critique of conservative patriarchal ideology, in particular that articulated in the Irish Constitution of 1937” and “a subtle threat to the narrow isolationist and xenophobic politics that ruled Ireland in the 1940s” (167; 168). Breen’s reading of the convent school is almost egalitarian and certainly idealized. For her, the school offers “an alternative to patriarchy, an all-female community which works for the good of all its members,” but it sets itself apart from the local community in its “lifestyle,” which is “comfortable, even opulent” (173; 181). She concludes that in the place of “the nationalist position,” the novel “propose[s] instead . . . a choice of cultures,” but also suggests that this still reproduces a hierarchy like that of patriarchy and “internalise[s] many of [its] most disabling methods,” and it is only “temporary” for most of its students (183; 188). The novel, in this reading, is invested fully in discouraging the foreclosure of women’s potential by Irish nationalism and offers an effective, if not unproblematic, means by which *some* women can realize liberation. The idea of *choice*, central as it is to O’Brien’s individualism, can never in her vision be a universal reality. It has to be delineated along lines of wealth and status, so it ultimately appears a matter of substituting one system of oppression for another. The solution to provincialist, nationalist sexism envisioned in the school’s cosmopolitan education is emblematic of a familiar insight from feminist intersectional analysis; women’s oppression is not uniform from woman to woman but inflected by other sources of oppression such as race and class.

O’Brien’s historical positioning – like the diminishment of Irish women’s rights in the years leading up to *The Land of Spices* – is also important to keep in mind in order to understand the novel’s historical layering, which pairs intense national feeling with

equally intense circumscriptions of the lives of women. While examining O'Brien's fiction, then, we have to consider the progress – and regression – women had experienced in early twentieth-century Ireland, and the relationship that this shifting status had with Irish nationalism. In *Twentieth Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender* (2007), Heather Ingman reflects on the disappointments created by the intersection between early Irish feminism and Irish nationalism:

If ... Ireland's history in the twentieth century is looked at from women's point of view, significance shifts from the beginning of the century, when the state was established, to the end when conditions finally allowed Irish women to become equal citizens in fact as well as theory. The nationalist struggle may have provided Irish women with a public platform and granted the freedom from the colonial oppressor, but whether an independent Irish state did much to improve the quality of Irish women's lives is debatable. (25)

Each movement set out a challenge to a particular form of domination, one patriarchal and one imperial, and these forms were often mutually constitutive. Accordingly, a number of Irish nationalism's key players – Constance Markiewicz, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Maud Gonne and others – were also among those most devoted to women's liberation. There were, however, limitations to their contributions to the nationalist movement, primarily because the power structure still reflected male privilege, and so women's leadership was more prevalent in suffrage than in nationalism: “only in the women's movement were women able to be leaders” (Ingman 9). Nevertheless, the promise of an Irish State independent of British government seemed to be egalitarian and

rooted less in gender hierarchy than the Republic that was ultimately created. Culminating in the 1937 Constitution's infamous authorization of idealized female domesticity<sup>7</sup>, and flying in the face of the relatively genderless past<sup>8</sup> implicit in the traditions to which nationalist Ireland had looked for inspiration, the early 1940s in Ireland were years of deflated and diminished expectations for women.

For Kate O'Brien, this disempowerment of women in the Irish nation is paired, at least on a few notable occasions, with broader anxieties about aggressive masculinity in Europe as a whole during the fascist drift of the 1930s and 1940s. We see it indirectly as early as *Mary Lavelle* (1936), which was written during the rise of fascism in Spain and draws explicit parallels between Spanish nationalism and the inherited narratives of Irish nationalism. Here, the authorized versions of Irish femininity threaten to stifle the protagonist just as authorized Spanishness under Franco will soon devastate the individualism O'Brien celebrates so much in Spanish life. It is in *The Land of Spices*, however, that Kate O'Brien develops her critique of Irish nationalism to its fullest and most direct expression. The later novel has the historical benefit of being written after the 1937 Constitution and yet set during the earlier nationalist period that would lead to Ireland's self-realization, so it draws our attention to the way that the social movements and intellectual positions that would lead to Ireland's freedom might also have contributed to the increasing marginalization of its women. Furthermore, the novel's awareness of World War I seems to also to reflect Kate O'Brien's awareness of a *new* world war emerging around her, and this layering of setting and contemporary events

---

<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the 1937 Constitution and its impact, see Ingman, pp. 7-9.

<sup>8</sup> See Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, pp. 175-9 and Lloyd, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space*, pp. 3-10.



gives her representation of Irish nationalism an even more harrowing edge. Although displaced historically, O'Brien's attentiveness to the internalization of both subordination and nationalist paranoia collapses these historical moments. By doing so, she reveals patterns of oppression and violence inseparable from male domination. It also, however, suggests some possibilities for resistance.

My goal in the chapter, then, is to examine the most prominent thread of nationalist anxiety in *The Land of Spices*, which centers on the conflict between cultural nationalism, especially in the Irish educational system, and the transnational European educational culture represented by the religious order *La Compagnie de la Sainte Famille*. Each of these points of view aligns readily with broadly masculine and broadly feminine value systems. Despite the initial distance between the two, O'Brien suggests not only that their goals may overlap, but also that their cooperation would help counter the misogyny endemic to Irish nationalism, which allows her to highlight the misogynistic and antifeminist dimensions of nationalism and suggest more fluid, inclusive alternatives for women and men alike. In rescuing devalued forms of social affiliation typically denigrated as weak or feminine, Kate O'Brien offers readers an alternative to the toxic and normalizing dimensions of nationalism. Rather than rejecting nationalism outright, however, O'Brien suggests that it might be possible to synthesize the socially progressive dimensions of anti-imperial nationalism with a broader cosmopolitan worldview. I hope to show, additionally, that although these characteristics derive in the novel from overtly female-centric social institutions, O'Brien takes care to emphasize the importance of cooperation by men as well as their potential for

transformation. The capacity for change, in other words, is anti-essentialist despite its conventionally-gendered origins.

## II. Nationalism in O'Brien Criticism

Before beginning an analysis of the novel proper, I should acknowledge the current state of Kate O'Brien criticism with regards to Irish nationalism, as I hope to build on it while departing from it in some crucial ways. Like Joyce before her, there is little critical consensus on O'Brien's feelings about Irish nationalism. Most critics identify her hostility towards it, although a few concede moments of cautious generosity on the author's part. Clare Wallace, discussing *The Land of Spices*, emphasizes the "several conflicts within the text in regard to the prerogatives and role of community structures such as the church, state, and family and individual rights and responsibilities, as well as ambivalences within the narrative structure of the text itself" (17). She notes the novel's "subversive elements, especially with regard to feminism," but rightly complicates any reading of O'Brien that sees the novelist endorsing radical change in a straightforward sense. These elements are "tempered by ambivalences" which "arise from the problematic bourgeois and hierarchical value of the closed world of the convent and from notions of detachment and judgement [sic]" (18). On the other hand, there has also been an occasional piece which overemphasizes O'Brien's concessions to nationalism, such as Adele Dalsimer's critical biography *Kate O'Brien: A Critical Study* (1990), which argues that, in contrast to Joyce, O'Brien "portrays the force of Irish nationalism from a more positive perspective" and that *The Land of Spices* is "marked less by ... polemical ambivalence ... than by a desire to present both sides fairly" (61).

In addition to charting her critique of and possible concessions to Irish nationalism, an increasing number of critics have been attempting to work through Kate O'Brien's particularly emphatic *transnationalism* and how it relates not only to questions of women's opportunity and desire, but also how it might be understood in relation to Irish nationalism. Karin Zettl, for example, argues that "Kate O'Brien located herself in a border zone between her native Ireland and the outside world and that border position shaped her narrative perspective" (41). Zettl's 2006 essay is one of the first to give primacy to the transnational contact space when discussing O'Brien; it is no longer, in this reading, an ancillary concern, but the essential key to understanding her work. Similarly, Ingman's generalization of O'Brien's writing sees marginal status as a woman into an "advantage as women use their voice on the margins to subvert entrenched nationalisms and open them up to a more fluid identity" (178). Ingman draws on Kristeva's *Nations without Nationalism*, arguing that women may be the key players in moving beyond models of nationhood built on violent exclusion and toward something "polyphonic, flexible and heterogenous"; as Ingman points out, this is a challenge for most nations, including Ireland, where "[f]ixed notions of gender were central to" national identity and feeling (179). Ingman identifies the way in which the novel deliberately evokes the "narrowly nationalistic and Catholic ethos of the future Irish nation" (189) and concludes that the novel offers a vision of the world in which the convent, "with its international network and its emphasis on the individual's choice of culture, has the potential to make its girls ... unsettling presences in the life of the Irish nation" (190).

My own reading is closest to Zettl's and Ingman's perhaps, but I would add that, in *The Land of Spices*, O'Brien teases out the possibility of reconciling and, at least tentatively, aligning Irish nationalism with transnationalism. At the very least, it is a matter of practicality; some of the Irish nationalists in the novel, misogynistic as they may be, are still convinced of the importance and possible contributions to come from all Irish persons, and they therefore mobilize their influence to challenge their more dogmatic peers. The Bishop is the most striking example of such an intermediate figure, but even Father Conroy has his moments. Because of this occasional – but essential – generosity, I disagree emphatically with critics when they suggest, as does Wallace, that the nationalist characters in the novel “are portrayed without sympathy” (22). When she writes that “Irish nationalism is undesirable [in the novel] as it is portrayed against wider European perspectives,” (26) it requires a disregard for any of the novel's compromises, including the cooperative moment between Reverend Mother Helen Archer and the Bishop that resolves the novel's main problem. Unlike Adele Dalsimer, however, I do not think the novel is entirely balanced in its treatment of the conflict between nationalism and transnationalism. For example, when Dalsimer points out the Bishop's description in the novel as “a forthright and progressive man” (qtd. in Dalsimer 64), she also ignores the text's coupling of that praise with the more negatively-valenced descriptor “authoritarian” (O'Brien 96). Although *The Land of Spices* may be more even-handed than some critics might suggest, it is still far more generous to cosmopolitans Helen Archer and Miss Robertson than it is to Father Conroy and the nationalist school movement.

Kate O'Brien's own critical writing may offer some helpful clues for understanding the complex interplay of national feeling and international aspiration in her novels. "Imaginative Prose by the Irish, 1820-1970," for instance, suggests that she holds a position not unlike that of her hero and forebear, James Joyce. Like Joyce, she recognizes the legitimacy of Ireland's historical grievances against the English, drawing the reader's attention to the ways in which the Irish were "chained down so savagely ... by those merciless Penal Laws" (306). Perhaps in reflection of her own privileged upbringing – she would not have felt the crippling effects of British imperialism quite the way that the poorer Irish would – she suggests that freedom is more valuable than "national" passion. She also argues that the Irish were *more* internally oppressed by religious institutions than they were by the English. She writes of the time after the abolishment of the Penal Laws, "although we were now free to go to Mass and to confess our sins, we had a Hierarchy to reckon with, a great body of bishops rightly more sure of its authority over us than England or Westminster could ever be" (309). Irish literature with an overtly nationalist dimension does not fare much better; although she remembers it fondly, as a "treasure," (311) she also terms it "propaganda" and deems it less important for Ireland's development, ultimately, than the transnational writing happening alongside it – Wilde, Shaw and eventually Joyce, whose "difficult" work earns her highest esteem (310-2). What the Irish have been best at doing, she concludes, may be synthesizing and hybridizing: "I think that in letters we Irish do more than hold our own—I think we often grab over, in fact, and snatch a bit from other races" (313). Her point is that the Irish were not disabled by the Penal Laws and the alienation from their own language but may actually have been enriched by it. It is something of a controversial position, and it again

reflects a position of privilege, but it nevertheless speaks to an egalitarian fluidity that sits –sometimes awkwardly – alongside the individualism for which she is often criticized.

Ultimately, O’Brien’s representation of the tension between Irish nationalism and European cosmopolitanism or transnationalism results neither in a simplistic dismissal of the former nor an unexamined endorsement of the latter. There is a clear bias, of course, but it is not an absolute one. Instead, we might see O’Brien as another writer in the modern and contemporary Irish conversation who is working toward an expression of Kwame Anthony Appiah’s “partial cosmopolitanism,” an ethical sensibility that recognizes international and global interconnectedness without dismissing or diminishing the legitimacy of local or national affiliation. This is particularly true of *The Land of Spices*, which consistently challenges Irish nationalism only to concede its potential value in the lives of the Irish, including Irish women. No matter how broadly we might conceive of ourselves in a global context, as Appiah reminds us, “the primary mechanisms for ensuring these entitlements [basic human rights] remains the nation-state,” not only because a global government would amass too much power, but also because it would be “unresponsive to local needs,” an ability antecedent to an effort by individuals and nations to “ensure that all states respect the rights and meet the needs of their citizens” (162). The kernel of convergence between nationalist and cosmopolitan impulses in the novel, in other words, in speaking directly to an Irish audience about Irish concerns, has implications for any number of potential readerships. We do not have to dismiss our neighbors or overlook injustice on a smaller scale in order to focus on the big picture; the two efforts are often coextensive and linked.

### III. Education, Gender, and Nationalism

*The Land of Spices* is something of an overlooked gem in twentieth century Irish fiction; the canonical stranglehold of Irish male modernists is certainly a factor here, as is the censorship by the Irish government which rendered the novel invisible for decades. The text is attuned, however, to many of the same concerns of its more canonical counterparts like *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: national identity, broken families, individual potential, religion and religious communities, art, and especially education. Set in the fictional Mellick, a proxy for O'Brien's Limerick, the novel tells the stories of two women from very different backgrounds who share a community for a brief period of time. One of these stories is that of Helen Archer, the English-born Reverend Mother of an Irish convent school. She represents *La Compagnie de la Sainte Famille*, an international order of nuns seated in Belgium. As an independent order, *Sainte Famille* is relatively free from interference by local clergy, but Helen feels the pressure to conform to nationalist ideology at every turn. As the daughter of a cosmopolitan literature scholar, Helen has sought solace in the structure and discipline of life as a nun ever since learning of her father's homosexuality; it is only in guiding and enabling young Anna Murphy that she begins to connect with another human being again, and this connection encourages her to stay in Ireland for some time despite her feelings of alienation and the locals' hostility toward her. The novel's second narrative is that of Anna Murphy, who comes from an upper-middle class family and begins attending the school at an early age because of her advanced academic accomplishments. Anna's success is stifled, however, by members both of the faculty and of her own family, who believe educating girls to be a waste of money, time, and resources. Although she nearly falls apart after the loss of her brother Charlie, Anna is able to make the best of a scholarship opportunity by the

novel's end, suggesting a path out of a normalized life for women made possible by female solidarity as well as the concessions of dominant authority; the scholarship, and her receptiveness to it, would not be possible without the encouragement of two cosmopolitan English women, Reverend Mother Helen Archer and the suffragette Miss Robertson, and one powerful nationalist man, the Bishop.

The Reverend Mother is the primary character most defined by her fluid national status. More often than not, her Englishness is a matter of Irish nationalist perception. Though she has reservations about Ireland's dogmatic nationalism, she does not see the Irish as wholly distinct from the English. Ruminating on Ireland's very British diet, for example, she observes to herself that "these Irish, who believed themselves implacably at war in the spirit with England," still "hugged as their own her dreariest daily habits" (57). Reverend Mother's views on her home country, in fact, are almost as critical and dismissive as those she holds of England. Ireland is no more "silly," comparatively, to her than are "England, Scotland, France or Greece" (79). However, clergy – Irish and continental alike – maintain their distance by Othering her in terms of her Englishness. She perceives, accurately, that she is disrespected and suspected "solely" because of her Englishness, (96), and Father Conroy takes issue with her not only because of her internationalist influence, but because of her particularly "cold, English tone" (97). Likewise, the Bishop "dislike[s] her English voice," and even a fellow nun under whom she worked in Poland identified her as "very English" (26). Reverend Mother, however, makes it clear that she does not want to speak for the English as a people, and does not see herself as representative. She taught English literature while in Poland, yes, and her father before her was an astute scholar of English poetry, but when Conroy insinuates



that she is part of the same system of British colonial education that has transformed cultures around the world, she answers, “wearily,” that she “only speak[s] for [her]self” (101). Desirous of disassociation with national identification altogether, she is unable to realize that distance because the Irish clergy insist on prioritizing that one characteristic. Arguably, because her nation is a nation with power, however, this is a privilege that she has which the Irish, as a subjugated people defined as a class for the purposes of maintaining imperial domination, do not share.

It would be tempting, perhaps, to read Reverend Mother’s choice of name as an indicator of her national identification. She shifts, after all, from Mary Helen Archer to *Marie-Hélène* over the course of her life and returns, at least in her consciousness, to Helen Archer by the novel’s end. As rigorously as she has been defined by others in terms of her Englishness and as critical as she is of the Irish clergy, it might seem to signal some kind of retreat from a transnational or Belgian-French identity back into an English one. The truth, however, is far more personal and reveals more about her relationship with her father and her attempts at coming-to-terms with his homosexuality and his irreligiosity. Born Mary Helen Archer and called, for most of her young life, Helen, the rejection of her birth name and its replacement by the French corollary signals her repudiation of her father. The foregrounding of *Marie*, for example, overwrites the similarities in the two names’ pronunciation, and, more importantly, emphasizes Catholicism over her father’s Hellenism. Rejecting her father, however, is not really a rejection of her Englishness; Henry Archer, after all, though a student of English literature, left England forever to stay in Brussels and shifted his philosophical interests to Greece. The text’s shifting nomenclature for Reverend Mother, in other words, follows

the trajectory of her distance from her Father. She is only identified as Reverend Mother or *Mère Marie-Hélène* for the first half of the book or so, and never with reference to her last name. When she receives the notification from her father that he is dying, including a letter in which he addresses her by “Helen,” there is a major change. The point-of-view, which is third-person limited, effectively follows Reverend Mother’s consciousness, and after receiving this letter, she is referred to mostly as “Helen” or “Helen Archer.” Both the French spelling and, for the most part, the “Mary” are dropped, signaling, at the least, her willingness to renegotiate the emotional rift between her and her father. There is no sentimentalizing about a return to Englishness, though. We learn through her memories that her mother often missed life in England, but Helen herself barely remembers it at all. The point is that she does not have any passionate identification with Englishness, only a powerful compulsion to make sense of the way she relates to her father. Her choice to be a nun was a way to manage, control, or even repress emotional trauma, but she was already something of an internationalist even before that decision was made.

As a means by which to index Reverend Mother’s national sympathies, in other words, her name is something of a red herring. She is no less a cosmopolitan when she is Helen Archer – the name by which she thinks of herself even as she ascends to the stewardship of an international religious order – than she is as *Mère Marie-Hélène*, and she is no more or less English as Helen Archer, either. The name connects her to her father, and they share a bond and an investment in English literature, but for each of them this is but one aspect of their intellectual selves. In a way, and wholly as a result of not being disempowered by her Englishness, she represents a sort of best-case scenario. She is not what Appiah identifies as a “nationalist who abandons all foreigners,” a

characterization which might apply to the majority of the novel's Irish clergy, nor "a hard-core cosmopolitan who regards" the people of her home country "with icy impartiality" (xvi-ii). She is not quite, however, his "partial cosmopolitan," either, largely because of her active distancing from nearly every person around her. Her refusal to adhere to either position, however, helps to move the novel as a whole toward what we might identify as a sustained discourse on hybrid and alternative modes of national and international being. She is constantly both English and Belgian, international and, perhaps occasionally, a little Irish.

The Bishop's concessions to female potential among the Irish are both necessary to the resolution of the plot and reflective of the circumstances necessary to any non-violent challenge to oppression. The privileged must recognize their own complicity in systems of domination and give up some power so that others' basic human entitlements may be met. The questions of power in this reading of the novel occur at the intersection of gender and national identity. Nationalism is aligned closely in the novel – as it has been historically – with male privilege and misogynistic social arrangements. Cosmopolitan and transnational subject-positions and values are, accordingly, both subversive and feminized. Kate O'Brien accepts this mapping of national identification and gender, generally, so when her characters challenge the nationalist paradigm successfully, they are also able to instigate change in gender hierarchy. In this section of this chapter, then, I will trace the particular intersections of nationalism and transnational or cosmopolitan ideas and the way in which the two are at least partially reconciled and brought together to work in Anna's favor. I will examine four major authority figures within the Church – Helen Archer and Mother Mary Andrew, two nuns; and Father

Conroy and the Bishop, the male clergy – as well as an outsider, Miss Robertson, and their varied attitudes toward nationalism, emphasizing along the way how their nationalism or cosmopolitanism affects their beliefs and practices regarding gender. Where gender is concerned, in other words, O’Brien has a distinctive response to the disempowerment of women in the nationalist state. I hope to elucidate O’Brien’s implicit argument about nationalism and how it relates to patriarchy and domination as well as rescue – at least partially – her representation of nationalism as a movement with potential benefits for individuals and society as a whole.

The disabling intersection between gender and nation is one of the first themes to emerge in the novel. The first chapter in *The Land of Spices* introduces the reader to *La Compagnie de la Sainte Famille*’s Irish convent school, as three postulants are being received into the order, and the response of the younger girls – the “hysterical fuss” (3) of their *Schwärmerei*, or enthusiasm – is juxtaposed with the solemnity of the veiling itself. We see, for the first time, the stolid detachment of the Reverend Mother and meet some of the other major characters briefly. It is standard expository work, for the most part. Interestingly, however, for a novel whose surface preoccupations could be described as emotional repression and the obstructed potential of women, O’Brien devotes more than half of the first chapter to a conversation between a handful of characters about the merits and deficiencies of nationalist and cosmopolitan approaches to education, topics to which she returns frequently. Although it never becomes the primary focus of the text, the method in the chapter echoes what will follow in the book as a whole, and this conversation lays the groundwork for the intermittent but recurring engagement with Irish nationalism which follows. Father Conroy, the closest character in the novel to a

nationalist archetype, initiates the conversation. Although it is – in the most technical and remote of ways – overseen by the local Irish clergy, *Sainte Famille* is a transnational order with its roots in Belgium. This decentering of authority – and the potential for foreign contamination it represents – rankles Conroy, who protests the novitiates' required tutelage in Bruges. Despite the “pointed playfulness” of his delivery, his anti-continental bias is fairly transparent: “It seems a shame,” he begins, “... that our own Irish girls have to go off to do their religious training in a barbarous place like that” (9). The comment is perhaps more “pointed” than “playful,” as the concern with cultivating a purer Irish culture remains a preoccupation for Conroy in his sporadic appearances. The choice of adjective, “barbarous,” furthermore, echoes, deflects and redeploys the reductionist Arnoldian characterizations of the Irish by the English in the nineteenth century. By implication, the Irish may become less barbarous or avoid barbarism by becoming more-sufficient and self-contained.

Reverend Mother's defense, like Father Conroy's subsequent response to her, gets at the heart of his objection. It has less to do with what Belgium is, it would seem, but what it *is not*. “Bruges is not a ‘barbarous’ place,” she says, “...and our novitiate there is one of the most beautiful religious houses in northern Europe.” There are two items of note in this response to Conroy's accusations. Rather than simply repudiating his accusation as she does in the first clause, she goes on to emphasize the comparative beauty of the house. Moreover, the standards of her comparison – northern Europe - remind the reader of the distance between the continental center of the order and its Irish iteration. Father Conroy concedes the house's beauty, although it is not clear that he has seen the house or the city, but in the process he also reveals his true objection: “No doubt,

Reverend Mother – but it isn't Irish. Is it, now?" (9). The conversation calms as Reverend Mother grows quiet and Conroy, who "seemed to think he had won some point or other," tells his company ("generously"), "That is all I meant" (10). As with his "pointedly playful" evocation of Belgian barbarism, Conroy's statement is more revealing than he realizes. Belgium's "not-Irishness" is a self-sufficient reason for him. He makes no qualitative argument or assessment about Belgium's or Ireland's relative merits; the nation itself is taken as the absolute index of its worth. For the brand of national enthusiast he represents, that "is all," is enough.

In addition to establishing the national and cosmopolitan perspectives in the extreme, O'Brien's construction of the scene helps to establish – figuratively here – the preeminence of male privilege and domination in nationalist discourse and the feminized disempowerment of the cosmopolitan. Two of the novitiates' mothers begin discussing the continent, somewhat awkwardly, but a more focused conversation on the cultural branch of Irish nationalism overtakes it. O'Brien's description of the conversation's spatial dynamics is key: "The Bishop *talked across the ladies' talk* [of Paris and Milan] to Mr McMahon, about the Irish language and its possible revival" (10, emphasis mine). The novel begins about a decade after Douglas Hyde delivered "The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland," a landmark in Irish cultural nationalism, and his subsequent founding of the Gaelic League, so the Gaelic League's efforts to reassert both Irish language and Irish culture, in other words, have had the time to seep into the national consciousness, including that of the clergy. For a Catholic Church on the tail end of centuries of Protestant privilege and suppression by the penal laws which O'Brien discusses extensively in "Imaginative Prose," the hope of galvanizing the Irish behind a

unified cultural identity was appealing. These are legitimate positions, as O'Brien recognizes, but the fact that this conversation happens "across the ladies' talk" does the double work of subordinating the women's conversations and obscuring their engagement with the continent.

These are isolated moments in the first chapter, of course, but they go a long way toward contextualizing the major players we meet in the chapter and eventually the novel as a whole, the figures that have the most profound direct effects on the education and life of Anna Murphy. The first of these figures I will discuss is Reverend Mother Helen Archer, the novel's most developed cosmopolitan and the character who – arguably, as the same might be said of Miss Robertson – makes the greatest strides toward freeing Anna from a life determined by her gender as she protects the young woman from the students and nuns alike who would see her fail. Not long after the aforementioned conversations about Irish cultural nationalism, O'Brien brings the novel into closer alignment with Helen. Immediately, we see how she differs from the nationalist men of the novel. Prompted by Father Conroy's contemptuous remarks, she recalls – in "a curiously desolate plunge across many years," the two and a half decades since her "final vows in the chapel at *Sainte Fontaine* in Bruges" (10). From Belgium, she had "gone out to her work as the Order directed. To Vienna, to Turin, to Cracow, then back to Brussels, to the *Place des Ormes*" for eleven years, and then finally, in "her fortieth year she had been posted to this Irish house" (11). Unlike the Irish, who – by political necessity – have been actively narrowing the parameters of their life and culture, Reverend Mother's life has been one of constant expansion, change, and exposure to new cultures. She has been able to assimilate and thrive, even if in nowhere as much as in Bruges. Ireland, however,

proves less hospitable and challenges her ability to acclimate. It feels as closed to her as she is to it; “now, “she reflects, “as these deft Irish voices flowed together, forgetting her – she forgot them” (11), leaving her alone with the trauma of her past. As for as the Irish characters’ estimation of her, it is likely that she is suspect for her Englishness. Either way, the challenge Ireland gives her is both unique and significant. Although O’Brien’s clearest sympathies here are with the Reverend Mother, Helen has her share of bias to work through. Her alienation comes, in part, from her childhood experiences, but her difficulty sorting out the individual voices in an Irish crowd suggests that she can as be prone to generalizing and Othering as anyone. She is not, however, disabled by this bias, making her both an honest and a laudable character as she works through it.

Helen’s ruminations on the difference between the order to which she belongs and the nation in which she has been placed figure prominently in the middle section of the first chapter, and provide a foundation for the reader’s sense of her character. Despite the decentered quality of her personal narrative, it is Bruges’s *Sainte Fontaine* which dominates these memories and which provides the most explicit foil to the male clergymen’s idealized Irish nationalist school system. *Sainte Fontaine* speaks clearly to the spirit of the disillusioned Reverend Mother, distrustful as she is of heteroromantic love and familial relationships. She recalls, more or less fondly, the “austerity over *Sainte Fontaine* that almost spoke aloud distrust of life, discomfort in it.” She remembers it as “old and graceful ... with the grace of hardened asceticism [rather than] of mellowness.” What the order and its center offered her, at the time, were “lessons of elimination, detachment and forgoing for which ... her hurt spirit craved somewhat hysterically” (12). There is something paradoxical in her bond with *Sainte Famille* and *Sainte Fontaine*. Her



experiences, the travels which she recounts, the repositioning within the order, all speak to the potential for endlessly expanding and proliferating human connection. One of the implied benefits of this transnationalism is the establishment of connection that transcends – while respecting – difference.

And yet, for Helen, the attraction of convent life is primarily that of solitude and even solipsism – asceticism is perhaps too strong a term, given her school's luxuries and her own penchant for indulging the girls with sweet treats and other surprises. It is as though, despite her own need for a space in which to separate from the world, she recognizes the value of maintaining connections all the same. Regardless of her *personal* attraction to a life of detachment, in other words, she fosters an active self-distancing from narrow forms of cultural identification. After all, she comes to recognize that it is “Father Conroy's little nationalistic commonplace” which has caused her “exasperated spirit [to flee] defensively to the sheltering cold and pride of *Sainte Fontaine*” (12). She is driven, in other words, to comfort in isolation because she finds Ireland unwelcoming to her. That said, while isolation may be temporarily restorative, O'Brien reminds us that it is not a solution in itself. Helen Archer's relationship with *Sainte Famille* and *Sainte Fontaine* is indicative, in a sense, of the author's tendency in depicting the individual's relationship with the collective. There always seems to be a need to recognize interconnectedness and mutual obligation, but this need is paired with a sense that individualism neither can nor should be quashed entirely.

For a number of reasons – her Englishness foremost, perhaps, as well as the transnational life she has lived and cosmopolitan values she holds – Helen finds Ireland inhospitable and disagreeable. She is aware of her own bias against the Irish but

recognizes, to some extent, that it is unfounded or based on an unfavorable impression of a select few. In other words, she is guilty of overgeneralizing, but she is also self-aware. She knows that a “nun should be ... tolerant and unselfconscious,” but when faced with particularly outspoken Irish like “Father Conroy, whose crudities she always found fatiguing in themselves,” she fails to meet her own standards, finding herself “resent[ing]” also his “good qualities ... because they made her too sharply aware of her own incongruity as Superior of an Irish convent” (14). But if her position in Ireland is, as O’Brien would have us believe, an ill-fitting one, it is also one that the novel suggests is necessary to temper the extremes of – and even, through her advocacy for Anna, help realize the egalitarianism implicit in – Irish nationalism. There is value, in other words, in dissenting voices and even, perhaps, in making ourselves uncomfortable. Consider the concerns she voices in a letter to Mother Superior about the nascent movement, admitting that she “will never understand the Irish character”:

At this moment I see in this country a rising tide of nationalism, a tide which cannot be resisted. But some of the nationalistic ideas I encounter here are so narrow, so textbook in nature that in the face of them my own attitude will be, I know, either neutral or uneasy. And this will only deepen the gulf that separates me from this mysterious country in which I feel so discouraged, and in which I fail. (302)

Helen does not dispute the goals of Irish nationalism explicitly; it seems rather that the enthusiastic or even fanatical quality it takes simply does not fit with her own more neutral disposition. But the novel does not dismiss her concerns here; as I will discuss later, there is a hint of xenophobic hostility and essentialism which permeates portions of

the novel and which seems to suggest that Ireland's legitimate grievances with imperialism might, when remedied, give way to its own brand of injustice. Accordingly, the choice of "textbook" here to describe Irish nationalism is telling; there may, it seems, be configurations of national enthusiasm which do not carry the potential for such consequences, but this is not the case – in Reverend Mother's estimation and perhaps O'Brien's – for Ireland. She seems to want to connect with the Irish or be more sympathetic as well, noting the "discouragement" of the "deepening gulf" and the potentially unfair judgment she harbors, but she is unable to do so until, perhaps, she sees a more measured and hopeful iteration in the Bishop's support of Anna. It is Anna, after all, who makes it possible for Reverend Mother to continue her station in Ireland. People like Reverend Mother need not ultimately obstruct nationalist goals; indeed, in this novel, they *do* not. They can, however, help to redirect it through recourse to more universal humanitarian goals and values. Accordingly, the communitarian impulse of female solidarity helps to bring the Reverend Mother back into harmony with the world beyond herself.

Father Conroy is Helen Archer's greatest foil in the novel. Whereas she is unassuming and subtle in her cosmopolitanism, he is vocal and even aggressive in his nationalism, and O'Brien attributes his outspokenness to his youth and origins in the countryside, in part, as well as to Ireland's heightened awareness of how culture and politics inform one another. Although his values may have some explanation, his depiction is nevertheless unflattering, and he is possessed of a personality which makes him distrust both Reverend Mother and the foreign order to which she belongs: "Father Conroy was a country boy, fresh from Maynooth. His work as chaplain to *Sainte Famille*

was made somewhat difficult for him by the enigmatic foreignness which he apprehended in this Reverend Mother” (14). Since O’Brien has dedicated several pages at this point to establishing both Reverend Mother’s extensive travels and decades of preparation for her position, Father Conroy cannot but come across as sheltered, inexperienced, and possibly naive. Helen knows more about the world than he does, both through variety of exposure and through accumulated experience. That he is still the most authorized religious presence in the school, then, highlights the deep inequity of convent life, as it is never as free from Catholic gender hierarchy as a sex-exclusive community might seem to be, and it also calls into question the judgment of Irish priests on matters beyond Irish shores, the details of which Conroy is indiscriminately dismissive and even critical.

Father Conroy, as established, harbors unambiguous antipathy towards the continent. More pointedly, however, his objections to Reverend Mother reveal a distinct Anglophobia; it is her “English speech [which] always alarmed him so much that in self-defence he became pugnacious.” Interestingly, however, he does not express it as such; the self-defense to which the narrator refers is articulated instead through a half-humorous attack on the school’s French-language requirements: “Oh, of course they’ll learn to *parley-voo*, Reverend Mother! But is that so very important nowadays?” (14). Conroy has a tendency to collapse continental European experience and his resistance to the English; although Englishness stirs the clearest emotional response, it is all the same to him. As Reverend Mother reminds him, the purpose of their learning French and of making the journey to Belgium is about heritage and understanding origins; in effect, it is a direct religious parallel to the secular cultural aims of the Gaelic League and the Revival. The discussion begins to sound a lot like the conversation between Gabriel

Conroy and Miss Ivors in Joyce's "The Dead"; Father Conroy, humorously, as the Miss Ivors figure claiming the cultural preeminence of Ireland, and the need to cultivate that culture, to Reverend Mother's Gabriel Conroy, who sees the continental connection as equally, if not more, legitimate. "But since they have chosen to be nuns," she asks, "can it hurt them to make contact with Christian culture, or to visit the fountain-head of their own Order?" Father Conroy's response is typical: "We had nuns in Ireland before there were any in Belgium, Reverend Mother!" (14). He goes on, likewise typically, to make appeals to the continuity of the Irish as a race and to their cultural autonomy. The conversation captures, in minute moments, the overall stalemate that characterizes the novel's interrogation into the legitimacy of nationalist and cosmopolitan worldviews; while clearly more sympathetic to outward-looking perspectives, and unable to forego them, the novel is also aware of the devaluation of the Irish and the rhetorical use for assertions of authentic Irishness. That Reverend Mother represents both a type of Englishness and a type of continental Europeanness to Father Conroy is unsurprising, because both have historical precedent as markers of culture regarded superior to Ireland's.

Father Conroy's biases not only bring him into conflict with Helen Archer, but they also complicate his relationship with his direct superiors. The Bishop and Father Conroy both believe in the importance of the Irish language, but language is only a building block for what the Bishop sees as a step in the direction of modernizing Ireland. The nuances of his vision elude the more myopic, zealous, and seemingly short-sighted Father Conroy, who is inattentive to the Bishop to the point of speaking over him: "If people are to progress," the Bishop tells Mr. McMahon, "you must educate them from

their own roots upwards...” The ellipses here mark Conroy’s intrusion, and they are telling; combined with Conroy’s enthusiasm, they suggest to the reader that the young priest cuts his superior off mid-sentence in order to piggyback on the elder’s authority when he addresses Reverend Mother “triumphantly,” telling her that the Bishop’s point was his own point all along. She does not, however “see the connection” (15). Assuming she is not simply baiting Conroy, which would be somewhat out of character, Helen’s responses suggest that she does not necessarily disregard all attempts to integrate cultural nationalism into education. Rather, it appears that her resistance to Father Conroy has more to do with the prejudice and indiscriminate disregard for all things not Irish which inform his appeals to a primarily Irish education. Conroy, however, reveals the worst in O’Brien’s take on Irish nationalism, as he misappropriates the words of his superior while undermining the assumed and accepted chain of command.

Unflatteringly as he is written, Father Conroy receives the most attention of the Irish clergymen in the novel, and O’Brien makes extensive use of his voice to represent the potential pitfalls of nationalism in the education system. As the chaplain, Conroy visits the convent frequently to lecture, and before his lectures he speaks with the Reverend Mother. In part, as Helen observes, Conroy’s misgivings reflect “the Irish hierarchy’s distrust of an independent religious Order” (96). But for his part, Father Conroy uses these conversations to attack Reverend Mother indirectly in terms of her nationality. Conroy is fairly inconsistent, in a way, and this inconsistency helps O’Brien illustrate one of the implicit problems with rigid conceptions of national subjectivity. Through the Reverend Mother’s position in a transnational religious order, she is a threat because she represents an external entity that is at once tied to a specific nation, Belgium,

as well as to transnational community. The Church as a whole is, after all, seated beyond Ireland's borders and the orders of which it is made are, by evangelical necessity, never truly national in character. Reverend Mother's, *Sainte Famille*'s, national indeterminacy may even, although the text does not imply it, threaten the religious nationalist's sense of subjective integrity. The Roman Catholic faith was and continues to be a pillar of Irish national identity, but the Roman Catholic institution has many, many parts in many places. Its interests can never be wholly Irish, and so a significant portion of normative Irish national identity is tied to connections with other people. In order to advance a nationalist agenda, in other words, Father Conroy has to disregard or distort aspects of culture which have been central to Irish identity for centuries.

Father Conroy's ideal educational scenario would be a combination of the general program of a national school in Ireland – Irish language, literature and culture at the forefront – and the twin hegemonic pulls of religious and domestic normativity central to Catholic education, and *Sainte Famille* is an integral part of this hegemony. Although Reverend Mother ultimately enables Anna Murphy to move beyond normative expectations for Irish women by encouraging her to accept a scholarship, the primary role of the school in girls' lives is – in Helen's words – to “educate [them] in the Christian virtues and graces,” and she notes the incidental “appeal” which these character qualities may hold for English husbands, to which Conroy objects. His objection is so strong, in fact, that it foregoes the religious elements to which he *should* be committed as a priest: “Our young girls must be educated *nationally* now,” he exclaims, “... to be the wives of *Irishmen* and to meet the changing times!” (97, emphasis in original). For Reverend Mother, the role that *Sainte Famille*'s education plays in enabling marriages is incidental.

The graces and values are the object, and if they appeal to a specific potential husband, that is a credit to both the young woman and her partner. The exclamatory sentence, with the added emphasis of italics, is atypical in O'Brien's text, and it draws the reader's attention to the fundamental difference between Reverend Mother's goals as an educator and Conroy's. There is no regard in Conroy's formulations for the potential of the young women, or for their spiritual welfare (this is also a point of divergence, incidentally from Conroy's superior, the Bishop). To Conroy, girls are simply to be shaped into the best Irish citizens they can be, and moreover as wives foremost. Who they are as individuals or as women is irrelevant or secondary to their position in relation to men. Father Conroy, then, anticipates the idealized and sanctioned domestication of women in the Irish Free State he so clearly desires; O'Brien's objections to Irish nationalism, it seems, have less to do with the state as such or with loyalty to the English than they do with the detrimental effect she had lived to see it have in women's lives. She is writing back to the moment of the Free State's conception – the move away from parliamentary politics and purely cultural nationalism – and suggesting that it was fated to this trajectory from the outset.

Kate O'Brien's more generous moments with Irish nationalism mostly involve Father Conroy's superior, the Bishop. The Bishop is a complicated character, and critical readings of him tend to have a schizophrenic quality. I would argue that he is much more the nationalist than not, but I would also emphasize that he is also more of a pragmatist than Father Conroy. The Bishop is, after all, as immersed in revivalist discourse as his subordinate, but he is also open to dialogue and willing to compromise with the novel's cosmopolitans. Most importantly, perhaps, he values Irish women more than Father



Conroy, even if he still relegates them to a secondary status. Nevertheless, he appears most of the time to be as troubling to Helen as Father Conroy is. Her bias, however, helps to highlight some of the shortsightedness of her cosmopolitanism and sets into relief the admirable qualities of the bishop. Although the historical nationhood of Ireland is disputable to say the least, the tone of her interior disdain at Father Conroy's claims to Ireland's status as an "ancient race" is condescending: "There were too many answers to this absurdity," O'Brien tells us, and "Reverend Mother dismissed them all" (14). The Bishop's expression of Irish cultural nationalism – and political nationalism for that matter – is written far more generously, although Reverend Mother still deems him an "authoritarian" exasperated by *Sainte Famille*'s "privilege" of independence and its "foreignness" (96). The novel as a whole, however, is a bit more generous to the Bishop than Helen Archer is.

The Bishop's clearest articulations of his position come in a conversation with the English suffragette, Miss Robertson. At one point, Miss Robertson confronts the Bishop about his ostensible view that the Irish "have a difficulty about causes and platforms," telling him that the Irish "seem to feel no difficulty ... about the cause, the platform, of nationalism." The Bishop's defense is among the more generous moments in the novel, and in O'Brien's work generally, towards Irish nationalism:

I personally feel none – but then, I believe it to be wrong that a nation fervently professing one Church should be subject to the rule of a nation professing an entirely other Church – so you see, for me, that platform is very closely allied to religion. And therefore I believe that, when such a state of things exists, education, for instance, should be very nationalistic

indeed, even what is called narrowly so, until such a political anomaly is renounced, by the educational process. (220)

These observations, of course, also ground his repudiation of *Sainte Famille* which, although “very Catholic,” is “too European for present-day Irish requirements,” with a “detachment of spirit [which] seems to . . . stand in the way of nationalism” (220). Miss Robertson, who defends that detachment, can afford to do so because she is oppressed neither by her religious nor ethnic identities. She declares the Sinn Fein emphasis on “ourselves” to be “an unattractive motto to give young people,” but the Bishop insists that it does not need to be so (221). The Bishop can be read as O’Brien’s major concession to the reality of Irish subjugation by the English. The transnational perspective, the seeming detachment of a Miss Robertson or a Reverend Mother, is clearly preferable for the author and might translate to more peaceful interaction, but it also runs the risk of perpetuating systems of oppression that might be read as at least analogous to the ones Miss Robertson challenges openly. Furthermore, the Bishop’s vision eventually emerges as clearly tactical and temporary rather than constitutive of a long-term strategy, as he envisions less prescriptive possibilities once the religious and political situation has been remedied. There is little resolution in the scene, or in the novel, and O’Brien’s greater sympathies still lie clearly with the cosmopolitan women, but the Bishop is tellingly allowed to make some reasonable observations about the complex intersection between broad humanitarian interests and the specific reality of the Irish colonial experience. She refuses to collapse his perspective into that of the type represented by Father Conroy, for example, who I have argued is motivated less by the concern and love for the wellbeing of the Irish than by his distaste for the English.

The Bishop remains, however, a figure of masculine power. As established, one of the first things we see him do is impose the topic of Irish cultural nationalism over a conversation between two women about European culture as a whole. Yet despite his assumption of male privilege, and despite his transparent political maneuvering, O'Brien writes him as both eloquent and, more importantly, occasionally thoughtful, even when he *is* talking over others:

... the Bishop, a forthright and progressive man, found it opportune to express himself clearly to Mr. McMahon on the subject of the Irish Language Revival. The latter, an orthodox Home Ruler and Irish Party man, was opposed to it, but he knew that the Bishop's views carried weight through the country, and he was interested to hear them. The Bishop also thought it well that they should be known to this influential Dublin lawyer. (15)

The passive aggressive non-debate between Reverend Mother and Father Conroy is marked by the casual indifference and contempt of the former and the passionate idealism of the latter. With The Bishop and Mr. McMahon, however, O'Brien presents two interlocutors with self-awareness and awareness of one another. It is worth pointing out that O'Brien characterizes the Bishop as "forthright and progressive" in this case. Although Father Conroy is clearly also interested in Ireland's future, it is the Bishop who is described in a more adulatory language of social reform. He is "forthright" and does not, by appearances, seek to manipulate or deceive. This also lends him a quality of insistence, but his nationalism never turns aggressive or implies prescriptiveness. As the novel bears out, in fact, he has a legitimate interest in not only the nation as a Catholic

body politic but also as individuals with needs, desires and potential to be met and enabled. He believes, more or less, in the same approach as Father Conroy, given his advocacy for language revival, and he also implicitly desires an Irish Free State, given the contrast with McMahon's "orthodox" belief in Home Rule and affiliation with the Irish (Parliamentary) Party. This political position and the party to which McMahon belongs are characterized by compromise, by the continuation of English sovereignty over Ireland in foreign matters. The Bishop, it seems, aims for a wholly Irish Ireland as much as Father Conroy, but represents a more subtle and graceful – not to mention pragmatic – variation on that vision.

The Bishop is clearly aware of, and makes use of, his authority, and like Father Conroy he questions foreign influence. O'Brien is not entirely critical of him for this, however, as he makes astute observations about the role of education which the plot will itself bear out, demonstrating his awareness of how Reverend Mother and *La Compagnie de la Sainte Famille* as a whole are part of the forces which will shape the Irish future. He does not dismiss completely the potential contributions of international religious orders in Ireland's future, but he does qualify their usefulness: "Irish national life is bound up with its religion, and it may be well that educational work will become difficult here soon for those Orders which adhere too closely to a foreign tradition," going on to remind Reverend Mother that *Sainte Famille*, as "educationists," have "power in [their] hands" (16). There are no decisions which the nuns of the Order can make which will not impact Ireland in one way or another; Irish language instruction would create a stronger identification with Irish culture, for example, and the Order's emphasis on delicacy and manners grooms young women for domestic lives as ideal wives – in theory. He is asking

her, simply, to recognize that power and think about how closely it aligns with the collective will of the Irish people. The language he uses when he explains the reasons for doing so – “it may well be that educational work will become difficult here soon” – is, however, more ambiguous, even sinister. Is this an appeal to the Irish will, or a moment in which the Bishop reminds the Reverend Mother that, despite her position within the convent, she is subordinate within the Church’s unambiguously patriarchal hierarchy? He has the means to make her life very difficult, although we see through the course of the novel that his designs are not so insidious.

The Bishop is, in the end, committed equally to the Irish national cause and to fair treatment of others, and it is reasonable to infer that he believes the two to be coextensive anyway. He respects Reverend Mother’s concessions to the language movement, for one thing. Despite her extended defense of *Sainte Famille* as an international (rather than Belgian) order, with branches ranging from Portugal to Chicago and Mexico City, which concludes with the declaration that “our nuns *are not* a nation, and our business is not with national matters,” and she relates to the Bishop that the students will be receiving language instruction from “an enthusiastic lady revivalist from Dublin” (17). Despite her bristly resistance to both Father Conroy and, to a lesser extent, the Bishop, Reverend Mother is attempting to facilitate an educational environment with particular attention to local needs and goals as well as broader transnational ones; her methodology, however much the emphasis may fall on the latter half of the formulation, is that of the “partial cosmopolitan.” This gesture is not lost on the Bishop, however much he seems to want to resist it. The power in his relationship with Reverend Mother is reconfigured with this simple acquiescence on her part: “He was just a man,” O’Brien tells us, “and this

unexpected progressiveness of the cold, enigmatic English Reverend Mother impressed him against his will,” leading to feelings of “surprised graciousness” (17). The language of his interiority suggests that, however unconsciously, some of the resistance he has seen in Reverend Mother may have been informed by his own bias against the English and his inability to understand her methods and motivations. Though he is shaken, he recognizes in this moment that the school’s potential to contribute to the Irish national goal need not rest on monolithic and hermetic notions of cultural identity. Unlike Father Conroy, he can and does change.

The final Church-affiliated character I would like to discuss in this section is Mother Mary Andrew, the nun who foregrounds some of the limitations on the transnational convent education as well as the consequences of internalized Irish nationalist values. Institutionally, she is aligned with Helen Archer, but her Irishness and her disregard for the problem of patriarchy make her more like the Bishop or even Father Conroy. She is one of many women in the novel who have internalized the subordination of women. On the whole, O’Brien’s concerns about the power dynamics endemic to Irish nationalism are not exclusive to men, as the patriarchal structure of both the nationalist movement and the Catholic Church have created a system by which adherence to normalizing forces is rewarded with social esteem and demonstrable power. Both men and women are encouraged, it seems, to partake in the everyday actions that support demeaning hierarchal relationships. There are two distinct, if interrelated, versions of this phenomenon with direct effects on women’s choices in the climate of Irish nationalism. One is the matter of internalized subordination; given the narrative of inferiority advocated both by nation and by religion, women restrict themselves from overt agency.

The women in Anna's family stand as the prime example of this trend in the novel; her mother quietly accepts her inefficacy while her grandmother attempts to direct Anna away from her potential to achieve and into a role subservient to the family. The other variation occurs when women find ways to use the patriarchal institutions of nation and Church to their own benefit – thereby becoming empowered – but only at the expense of actively repressing and disempowering others. This more conscious and active affirmation of general female subordination might be extended to the women of the Church in general, but O'Brien tends to be more generous than that. Instead, she includes one character whose overwhelming efforts to discourage Anna's progress continue through the entire novel: Mother Mary Andrew, Mother Scholastic.

As readers, we are encouraged from the very beginning of the novel to distance ourselves from Mother Mary Andrew. Even the Bishop regards Mother Mary Andrew with slight derision, noting to himself that this “nun [who] came from Tyrone ... had an unpleasant accent and was too pedantic for [his] liking” (17). Her voice becomes a point of fixation, as does her origin, with the narrator observing during one of Mother Mary Andrew's disciplinarian demonstrations that her “voice was cold and full of County Tyrone” (73). The narrator's view corroborates Reverend Mother's. We are told that Reverend Mother holds “much stronger and more anxious views” about Mother Scholastic than about the other nun she oversees. For Reverend Mother, there is something admirable in Mother Mary Andrew's character, but it is qualified heavily. “This nun was young, intelligent and self-opinionated; she was a very hard worker, and was, in Reverend Mother's opinion, excessively endowed – in view of her office – with health and with authoritativeness. The narrow class distinctions of her time ... had made

her shrilly snobbish” (77). O’Brien attributes Mother Mary Andrew’s unfavorable qualities to her social circumstances; she was born into a socioeconomic order hierarchized rigidly, and has to assert that status repeatedly with “elaborate, unnecessary tales” of her family (78). Being a Catholic from County Tyrone, Mother Mary Andrew would have had the privilege of membership in the religious majority. That said, any power her family might have had would have been compromised and certainly more tenuous than her Protestant peers and superiors. That constant need to maintain her position translates to a toxic environment for the children she should be supporting, making her hostile to Reverend Mother as English and “erratic and cruel” (78) to the students. Although Reverend Mother has hopes and imagines that Mother Mary Andrew might, under a different Reverend Mother, soften over time, the novel does not afford the space to bear that line of speculation out. Instead, we see an intelligent-but-insecure authoritarian controlling the development of the students as rigidly as she can manage.

Mother Mary Andrew’s coldness, and its seeming association with her status as a northerner, however, is secondary to her treatment of Anna Murphy. To indulge the common practice of reading *The Land of Spices* through the lens of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, we might call her the Father Dolan in Anna Murphy’s life. Rather than a physical punishment like pandying, however, Mother Mary Andrew demoralizes Anna by denying and invalidating her academic accomplishments on the grounds that Anna has not had to work hard enough for them. Every year, several students are granted special privileges for outstanding performance on a French examination. This “attractive institution,” “Emulation Holiday,” is designed as an opportunity to both recognize the students worthy of emulation – hence the name – and



grants the students “meals of a very festive character” and a table apart from their peers at these meals where they can speak in English, “free of the everyday drawback ... of French conversation” (103). But, because of a single conjugation error, Mother Scholastic refuses to acknowledge Anna’s good work and denies her the reward which is rightfully hers.

Her exam, graded initially by French instructor Mother Felicita, has been changed from “a big blue-pencil 75/100” to a “big red 0” in Mother Mary Andrew’s, a change which leaves Anna feeling “very frightened” (111). There is a moment of realization here that the school’s authority figures, rather than being uniform enforcers of a neutral and detached system of recognition, have the ability to rewrite, to *overwrite*, in fact, the students’ accomplishments – literally. Mother Mary Andrew subverts the authority of one of her peers on the grounds that Anna’s conjugation error is not a simple mistake, but an “absurdity,” an error “so silly as to show that [Anna has] no understanding of what [she] is doing, and so cannot receive marks like an intelligent schoolgirl.” The mistake leads to derivative errors, but errors “logically carried through the subsidiary parts of the verb” (111). Anna’s single mistake, then, while leading to a series of related errors, also reveals her mastery of the basic derivations. The insinuations Mother Scholastic makes based on this error, however, lead her to an *ad hominem* attack on Anna; she is not simply hasty or careless, but is implicitly beyond the privileged category of “intelligent schoolgirls.” Whereas, in most other cases, Mother Scholastic has tended to attribute her devaluation of Anna to the girl’s age, she instead identifies her pupil as a *type* of person for whom success of the sort for which she is destined is simply not possible.

The result is an exercise of power and a containment of potential; having been identified – repeatedly – as a show-off, Anna Murphy passes the exam with a margin of five points, scoring 70 of the required 75. She is not the highest achiever, but as the only representative of the younger girls in Second Preparatory, she does exceptionally well. Mother Scholastic's refusal to acknowledge her success amounts to a punishment for non-normative accomplishment. Although enacted within an all-female environment, Anna's trauma echoes that of women who accomplish despite social imperatives to maintain a low profile. It is a classic double bind; women's subjugation and oppression is justified, ostensibly, on their incapacity to accomplish anything beyond domestic servitude. If a woman does, however, achieve something great, then she is punished for transgressing an accepted role predicated on what has been proven a lie or faulty assumption. Most charitably, she is branded an exception or labeled masculine. Clearly, the particulars of gender are not in operation in this particular example, but the same logic applies. I would argue, in fact, that this moment represents a fusion of internalized subordination as well as use of patriarchal power by women against other women; Anna Murphy must be broken not only because she is accomplishing too much too soon, but because in a normative and gender-prescriptive Irish nationalist social vision, her path of least resistance would be the one of least individual accomplishment. By this twisted logic, Mother Mary Andrew is doing Anna Murphy and the girls to whom she now stands as a different *kind* of example a favor. She is reminding them to achieve under only the circumstances sanctioned by the dominant social order.

More generally, Mother Mary Andrew comes across as nearly obsessed with challenging Anna's entitlements, far more than the nun's primary objection – Anna's

youth – would warrant. She affects these challenges not only by direct intervention in Anna’s life, but by manipulating the emotional lives of Anna’s family, particularly her mother. Maud Murphy has a longstanding personal connection with Mother Mary Andrew; along with Mother Agatha, they had been schoolmates together at *Sainte Famille* years before the novel. Her muted assault on Anna’s place in the school focus primarily on the girl’s initial age. Although Mother Agatha – whose “habitual gush” Mother Mary Andrew “detested” – is quick to respond in defense of Anna, pointing out how admired she is in these early years at the convent, Mother Mary Andrew points out to Maud that Anna “was white as chalk when she came,” highlighting the girl’s anxiety upon arrival, and suggesting that, since Anna is “much more of a baby than anyone else,” it has been “difficult to fit [her] in” (44). Mother Mary Andrew’s formulations emphasize the relative immaturity of Anna, which is not really anyone’s fault, but she goes on to implicate Maud and the Murphy family in the young girl’s ostensible ill-preparedness for life away from home. The highest praise she can muster, after all, is that Anna “is a good child ... but a bit spoilt, a bit of a cry-baby” (45). The choice of “cry-baby” continues to emphasize Anna’s youth, but it also suggests that she has been conditioned to be this way. The cumulative effect is almost one of transferred contempt. Mother Mary Andrew harbors clear resentment for Maud, going as far as to use backhanded praise of Anna to communicate it. “I think she will be better at her books than you were,” she tells Maud. “But that wouldn’t be hard for her – now would it?” (44). Whatever the source of the friction between Mother Mary Andrew and Maud Murphy, the convent has provided the nun a platform by which to exercise power over her lay counterpart. O’Brien does not idealize convent life or women in general here; the school – because of the authority it

derives from the patriarchal Church – enables those who would do so to abuse power and manipulate others under the guise of best interests.

Mother Scholastic's attack on Anna, then, extends beyond using the daughter to attack the mother and beyond even a circumscription of the girl's own potential; she is being made an example for the other girls as well. Anny initially has the favor of many of the older students by virtue of her youth, but she has fallen out of their good will by this time. She is suspected of preferential treatment by Reverend Mother, for one thing, and she tends to overachieve. Yet despite their growing disdain for Anna, her elder peers recognize the trauma inflicted by Mother Scholastic. The girls, overhearing the conversation, are made "uneasy," and recall "ha[ving] been tortured by Mother Mary Andrew in their time," and so in turn "fe[el] frightened now for the child they could not help" (111). O'Brien's formulations, the characterization of *Sainte Famille's* older students, suggest an ongoing pattern of oppression within the potentially-liberating and supportive female community of the convent school. The system has become toxic. She does not overgeneralize, as there are both champions of the girls among the nuns and kindhearted nuns more generally, but the potential for the school and the people running it to create systems of reward and punishment based on degrees of complicity with the status quo galvanizes the plot. O'Brien clearly recognizes the convent school's potential to empower and enrich the lives of its students, but also its capacity to make the girl feel as Anna does, when she sees herself as "the victim of an injustice which she could not see" who are "shaken and dragged, and arbitrarily refused a pleasure she had won and been promised," crying herself to sleep (113). This feeling of dejection, of course, is what brings Anna closer to fellow outcast Molly Redmond, and so the novel is sure not to

overlook the greater possibilities of the female community in fostering solidarity, a theme which reverberates across the novel as a whole.

### III. Transnational Solidarity as Response

In sum, these four characters and their interactions with Anna Murphy – and with one another – represent a constellation of national and transnational perspectives. The female community, which is at its core also an international one, has the potential to foster resistance to patriarchal domination in various forms, including the forms enacted by women in the interest of an ostensibly greater good. Its effectiveness is limited, however, both by the Church's implicit male privilege and by the interests of Irish nationalism. The role of Irish nationalism is similarly complicated; it motivates Father Conroy and the Bishop, to say nothing of Mother Mary Andrew or Granny, to encourage conformity among women in the name of the national good. However, it also motivates the Bishop to disregard his gender bias on occasion because, at its best, it is founded upon the belief in the value of all Irish citizens, women and men alike. The influences on Anna's life, however, are not limited to the Church. Although I will turn to the novel's conclusion soon in order to detail the eventual cooperation by the Bishop and Reverend Mother Helen Archer, it is worth mentioning that much of Anna's liberation can be traced to a secular woman, Miss Robertson.

Before the Easter Rising and War of Independence, many Irish women were invested in challenging both Irish misogyny *and* British imperialism. Naturally, the internationalist element of the suffrage movement – which would have included some very close potential allies in Britain's women – created a dilemma regarding allegiance.

The solution, by and large, was to focus on nationalism and cut off these potential allies. By including an English suffragette in such a pivotal role – the role that sets Anna on the path that Helen and the Bishop will eventually clear – O’Brien asserts the importance of transnational community in women’s lives and imagines that it might be aligned, at least in some specific cases, with nationalist goals. Kate O’Brien personifies this potential in the person of Miss Robertson. Her relationship with Anna, as well as with Anna’s brother Charlie, and the antagonism she faces as an English Protestant among Irish Catholics, speaks directly to the influence of nationalist sectarianism in stymying liberation movements which, in their transnational character, not only offer hope for women but which might also, like the suffrage movement of the early twentieth century, glimpse a vision of community and cooperation that challenges the hegemony of insularly-imagined national affiliation.

O’Brien’s implicit position here feels like an extension of Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington’s concerns about Irish nationalism’s obstruction to women’s rights. Sheehy-Skeffington, committed equally to each movement, lamented this inconsistency at length:

It is remarkable, and a discovery that all rebels make in their time, how watertight the minds of rebels can be. Here were good Irish rebels, many of them broken into national revolt, with all the slogans of Irish revolution and its arsenal of weapons ... yet at the whisper of Votes for Women many changed to extreme Tories of time-servants who urged us women to wait till freedom was won for men. (92)

Much like Sheehy-Skeffington’s vision for Irish nationalism, *The Land of Spices* imagines the possibility and even emphasizes the importance of transnational cooperation

amongst members of oppressed and marginalized groups in challenging inequitable systems of power. The most obvious character to whom we might apply this is Reverend Mother, Helen Archer; she is a woman who has risen to a position of prominence within a patriarchal system and, rather than reinforcing ideas of inferiority in those over whom she exerts influence, uses her position to encourage self-actualization – for at least some girls, anyway. She is also, however, an Englishwoman of continental sensibilities who exercises that influence in Ireland. Reverend Mother is not, however, the only such character, and is in fact not the woman most committed to subverting the dominant paradigm. That honor goes to a different “old fogey from England” (206), as Harry puts it, Miss Robertson.

Miss Robertson’s presence is greatest during the “Summer with Charlie” chapter when the family goes to Doon Point on holiday. Like Reverend Mother, she is distrusted for her Englishness; unlike Reverend Mother, however, she is outcast also by her religion – she is a Protestant – and by her commitment to winning the vote for women. Whereas Reverend Mother’s strategy is covert, Miss Robertson challenges patriarchy through activism and optic markers like the ribbon she wears as a display of commitment. Her outsider status, which O’Brien does not let the reader forget, serves as a reminder of Irish hostility to the English for whom the “Irish Question” is of no concern. For those who see the national goal as antecedent to that of women’s rights – or even as the only goal – this indifference makes her effectively a part of the problem by virtue of her non-participation. In focusing the attention on anything other than the cultivation of Irish culture or the realization of Home Rule or Republic, she deters potential contributors to

the Irish cause. That, of course, is rather generous, because she is just as easily reduced to the status of “the enemy.”

It is a shame, O’Brien suggests, because like Reverend Mother, Miss Robertson is associated directly with Anna’s potential to succeed and in opposition to the circumscription propagated by Anna’s family, male and female alike. More specifically, of course, this circumscription comes at the hands of Granny, who, like Mother Mary Andrew, focuses on Maud as an example of why women should not worry themselves with accomplishment as well as their ostensibly innate inability to do so in the first place. Maud observes that Anna, who is once again excelling in school, might be “nearly as promising as Harry,” puzzling over “where [her] children get their brains.” Although Maud still qualifies her praise – it is comparative to Harry, the male achiever in the family – she nevertheless glimpses a possibility for her daughter to do something which might make the family proud. Granny, however, will have none of it; while she admits – perhaps even more than Maud – that Anna is a bright girl, she deems it only a waste: “I know you were never very bright at your books, my dear Maud – but *I* was, I’d have you remember. . . . I can’t help wishing that the brains hadn’t skipped poor Tom, and descended to Anna. After all, they’re wasted on a girl” (206, emphasis in original). There is a lot to unpack here. The affirmation of Maud’s relative unintelligence reinforces her negative self-perception, for one. But this passage also tells us a great deal about Granny and her objections to allowing girls to demonstrate intelligence and self-realize. She does not, it seems, resent Maud for underachievement, but rather laments that her own faculties – note the emphasis on “*I*” – were squandered on a life of domesticity. Granny does not see a life for Anna which will make the best use of her gifts. For the



grandmother, life has led her to believe that better than being intellectually gifted, to borrow Daisy Buchanan's words, is to be "a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald 21). Granny knows all too well that women can be as bright and intelligent as men, but she also knows that they are punished for it.

Anna's response to the dialogue between her mother and grandmother – she is present for the entire exchange – has layers of value for the novel's proto-feminist argument. When Granny suggests that intelligence in a girl is a waste, Anna quietly challenges her: "Miss Robertson doesn't think so" (206). Anna is able to offer a counterpoint to Granny's cynicism by appealing to an outside authority. She does not have to voice this opinion herself, does not have to play the role of insubordinate, but nevertheless has access to a counterpoint, a rhetoric of liberation. This formulation acknowledges the possibility of other perspectives than Granny's by referencing an outside framework, an extant dialogue. It is a reminder that within the confines of a nationally-defined system of prescriptive roles, concepts of power can become naturalized and even invisible. A disruptive voice from another culture, such as that of a Miss Robertson or a Reverend Mother, denaturalizes those assumptions accordingly. The more normative members of the family, Granny and Harry, try to dismiss Miss Robertson's authority on several grounds. For one, they challenge her authority because of her advocacy for women's rights: "But she's a suffragette," protests Henry, perhaps missing Anna's entire point with his circular reasoning. They also dismiss her on the grounds of her foreignness, and as soon as Maud realizes that she is probably "the lady Father Reilly was talking about – you know, the one who's been to prison, and wouldn't eat when she was there, or something, [and who] wears the suffragettes' ribbon in her

hat,” Granny has the borrowed authority of the Church to dismiss the Englishwoman with condescension as a “Poor misguided creature!” (206). As a participant in hunger strikes and continued supporter of the suffrage movement even after internment, Miss Robertson probably deserves more consideration and respect despite the disagreement, but the particularly Irish appeal to Catholic criticism of a disruptive force allows her to be dismissed almost farcically.

The conversation about Miss Robertson is also revealing because it highlights something we do not often see in Anna’s characterization in the novel, but which is indispensable to its argument about empowerment: subversion in the name of freedom can be a source of *joy*. Anna, by all appearances, resumes her day as she usually would after Granny’s dismissal of Miss Robertson, but is actually performing a role at odds with her inner experiences. She “assumed an expression of absent-mindedness,” the narrator tells us, but she does so strategically: “She knew that one false move would bring about a prohibition to speak again to Miss Robertson, and she intended to speak to her whenever she got a chance. She thought with *pleasure* now of the green, white and purple ribbon . . . [and] hoped that perhaps Miss Robertson would give *her* a piece of ribbon” (206, emphasis mine). Anna does not understand – cognitively anyway – what receiving the ribbon would mean. She regards it initially as a potential prop for showing off to a friend at school, but her thoughts soon turn to her “nervous[ness] about the shape her personal life might take, or have forced upon it” (207). While this leads her to a reflection on the family’s decreasing fortune and her brother Harry’s prospects, its position as a transitional moment has to be examined. Though Anna does not understand at the cognitive level the implications of her desiring the ribbon or the pleasure she takes in

quiet acts of subversion, they resonate with her on an emotional level. At the risk of sentimentalizing, I would suggest that she understands them with her heart. She is drawn almost compulsively to the suffragette, and the desire to strategically self-censor accordingly reads like self-preservation, a short-term compromise with a long-term goal in mind. The threat of coercion in her life – one which becomes very real in the coming year – leads her directly to identification with the novel’s central symbol of women’s right to self-determination.

Because the novel aligns the reader’s perspective at key moments with Anna’s point of view, we can begin to recognize how this pattern of transnationally-situated women creates a network of support for the young prodigy. Miss Robertson, in other words, is the secular equivalent of Reverend Mother, an English suffragist whose investment in women’s rights transcends national biases as the English nun’s belief in fairness offers a challenge to prescriptive cultural/national norms. One day in Doon Point, Anna, reflecting on the “English way” in which Miss Robertson speaks, tells her elder, “...you remind me of Reverend Mother at school, I think,” qualifying her comments by suggesting that Reverend Mother might disapprove of Miss Robertson’s “going to jail” (217). Although Anna thinks the similarity must be superficial and attributes it to the way Miss Robertson talks, Miss Robertson is quick to affirm Anna’s perspective and elaborate on it, helping her towards a greater recognition of the need for solidarity among women: “Wouldn’t she understand that? “ Miss Robertson asks, “After all, a nun knows more than you or I about devotion to an idea, or an ideal. If your Reverend Mother had been in jail she might quite easily have gone to jail for the vote!” (217). Miss Robertson’s comment is purely speculative, of course, but Reverend Mother’s willingness to

challenge systemically unfair practices characterizes her defense of Anna through the entire novel. Although she does not go to jail, she does confront the patriarchal authority of the clergy as well as the influence of the family unit, risking her own reputation for the sake of a single girl. It seems that, on some unconscious level, Anna is aware of the importance of women who are willing to be vulnerable for the sake of other women and sees this quality in both of her mentor figures. Furthermore, Miss Robertson is, like Reverend Mother, instrumental in encouraging Anna to consider “how vast the world is, and how much there is waiting to be done!” when the girl claims, with premature world-weariness, “I don’t think I want to be anything, Miss Robertson” (218).

What is perhaps most compelling about Miss Robertson, however, is that she represents a possibility for solidarity across gender that we do not see with any of the other characters, and helps to bring out something in Charlie that no other male character in the novel possesses: support for women and the potential for freedom from gender hierarchy. That she is met with such hostility because of her Englishness, however, reinforces the idea of nationalism as a potential obstruction or deterrent to other forms of liberation. Challenging privilege and oppression, of course, requires not only the activism of the oppressed, but also the cooperation and honest self-reflection of the privileged. O’Brien recognizes this; as we will see with the Bishop, the possibility for men to experience a change of heart and challenge male privilege exists. However, it is equally important – if not more important – for future generations to acclimate early, to normalize more equitable perspectives on the relationship between men and women, between sex and power. Miss Robertson – again, as a character free of national bias – plays a role in depicting O’Brien’s account of this potential, although it is cut tragically

short. In their series of encounters at Doon Point, Miss Robertson bonds with and enlightens not only Anna, but her brother Charlie. The trajectory on which Charlie seems to be before his death presents a radical departure from the values of the novel's Irish men; he overcomes his unquestioned anti-Protestant bias on the one hand and embraces, even celebrates, the notion of equality for women. The transformation is fairly rapid. Early in the chapter, Charlie recites a rhyme in reference to Mabel Bassett, a Protestant: "*Protty-wotty, ring the bell! / Call the Soupers down to hell!*," prompting Anna to call her brother "bigoted" (215). He has internalized the forms of prejudice, but he admits that the girl's religious upbringing is not of her own choosing. He shows the potential for transcendence, and the affection and admiration he develops for Miss Robertson – also a Protestant – affirms this transcendence. Later, when Anna gets a piece of the suffragists' ribbon from Miss Robertson – who is "delighted" at Anna's desire for a visible badge of women's rights, both are surprised by Charlie, who asks if he could have one, too. Miss Robertson seems puzzled, but Charlie tells the woman and his sister, "I'd like Votes for Women" (222). The ribbon becomes a focal point for Anna and her memories of Charlie. These tiny transformations in a young boy suggest – rather powerfully – that the biases seemingly inherent to an Irish Catholic male subject position are not so much natural, but naturalized. As a result, they might be unlearned. The novel refuses to sentimentalize the idea, and in killing Charlie off, suggests that there is a lot of work yet to be done, while maintaining that such transformation of the social order *is* possible.

The question of internalized subordination comes to a head in the debate surrounding Anna's scholarship. We first learn of the scholarship at Doon Point when Anna reflects on the possible prospects of the Murphy children. Harry, as the eldest boy,

has received the bulk of the family's support and was the first to win such a scholarship, although it would not cover all of his fees as a university student. The other brothers, Tom and Charlie, are placed into less expensive schools to help keep Harry enrolled at University College, Dublin. For Tom, who wants to play rugby, this is no loss. Anna, however, is troubled by the compromises so readily made for Charlie, feels "sad about the bargaining about him, for he seemed to her to be easily the most valuable person in the family" (208). Her prospects, however, are even sadder. She reflects on her interactions with both her Granny and Miss Robertson and begins to identify the double standard that inhibits the potential growth of young women in Ireland: "she saw now that whereas a boy and an eldest son may expect or command the sacrifices and co-operation of others to his ends, a girl can do no such thing. And that in fact if a girls sees liberty as the greatest of all desirables, she will have to spin it out of herself, as the spider its web – her self-made snare in which to catch Anna did not yet know what" (209). The freedom which she desires to be most fully herself is not socially sanctioned and therefore has to be produced from within. The language of the spider's web is curious, however, and the possibility of self-ensnarement – of self-derived marginalization – lies at the edge of her thoughts, unarticulated but implicit. She will win her own scholarship in due time, but the fallout from that accomplishment threatens the fabric of her family and her relationships with them; whereas Harry benefits from the family's support and their sacrifices for him, it is Anna herself who is expected to sacrifice when she meets success, for Granny, the family's benefactor, has internalized a vision of women particularly as consistent with De Valera's Ireland as with the normative Church.

The novel's climax, the ultimate confrontation between the figureheads of the various forces with a direct bearing on Anna's life – nation, family, mentors, religion – centers around this scholarship, which Anna wins in her final year at *Sainte Famille*. On the one hand are the voices of duty, those such as Mother Mary Andrew and, here especially, Anna's Granny, while on the other is Reverend Mother. It should be noted, at this point, that Mother Mary Andrew has softened somewhat to Anna, but only under the assumption that the girl may become a nun and never in defiance of the girl's family. The Bishop, at least initially, is something of a wild card. The relationship between Reverend Mother and the Bishop is not quite antagonistic, but it is tense. While "each tacitly admitted the other's character, or spiritual distinction," the Bishop's dislike of independent religious orders and especially his "belie[f] that he hate[s] the English race" keep him from being fully sympathetic with her as much as her dislike "to have nationalism intruded on religion, or on education" and of his "somewhat *naive* condescension" (265) keep her from being fully sympathetic with him.

Because, however, the Bishop really seems to believe in a vision of an Irish community that acts in the interest of *all* the Irish people, he sides in the end with his rival. It does not hurt, of course, that the scholarship is for a national school, but his generosity in this case, and Reverend Mother's subtle encouragement that he support Anna, represent a potential reconciliation between nationalist and cosmopolitan values. They represent, in other words, the text's most distinct expression of partial cosmopolitanism. He is, to invoke the earlier characterization, authoritarian, but he is also fair, despite his sexist leanings:

He liked intellectual competence and he liked Anna Murphy; he was a vigorous supporter of the National University and always eager that scholarships awarded by his county should fall to worthy candidates; and he believed in education – up to a point, or when they seemed worth it – of women. He said that, when they had brains, which was seldom, these tended to be fresher and more independent than the brains of men. (265)

Although the Bishop's formulations are clearly sexist, they are also incredibly flexible; they are based on generalizations – largely, one assumes, handed down and received – but they are flexible enough that, should he see enough evidence to the contrary, his assumptions might change. The only qualitative difference he expresses, in fact, is that among the most intelligent men and women, the women tend to be *more* deserving of praise and cultivation.

When their interests align, the Bishop does not allow his own personal biases to continue the marginalization of Irish women, and he challenges the authority of the family with that of the Church, pitting patriarchy against patriarchy. I maintain here that Mrs. Condon, Granny, represents the patriarchy despite her position as matriarch within the family. Just as in Doon Point, she is the mouthpiece of a position that would put any and all male children ahead of even the brightest female children. She is upset at not knowing that Anna was even in competition for the scholarship and will not hear of Anna doing anything but getting a job immediately after school and supporting her family financially. She is absolute and defiant to the nuns, declaring that there is “no question of Anna's taking up the scholarship – no question whatever” and that she “deplores the fuss and the wasting of time” (269). In contrast with the Bishop, who allows at least for



heavily qualified exceptions, Granny “disapprove[s] of money wasted on the academic education of girls,” and therefore wants Anna to be “near at hand and also to become of practical usefulness” (270). She wants her, in short, to quit school and work at the bank.

Reverend Mother remains a strong advocate for Anna during the scene, having the girl remain for the entire debate. Reverend Mother encourages her student, in fact, to be vocal about her own opinions. She asks Anna how she feels about the potential bank job, to which she replies that she “hate[s] it,” and then asks Mrs Condon plainly to identify “the authority by which [she] dispose[s] of the life and talents of another” (272). Granny, of course, speaks from the authority of family and of money; she is the most solvent family member and the one with the most influence. When she is told, however, that the Bishop wants Anna to take the scholarship, her entire tune changes: “But if you had told me, months ago, that so excellent a judge of merit as the Bishop particularly desired Anna to take the this scholarship! ...that alters everything, of course” (277). As Reverend Mother observes, “Mrs Condon is rich because she never quarrels with power, particularly hierarchical power” (278). The path is circuitous, but in the end, O’Brien leaves us with the impression that the interests of the nation and that of the individual – of the woman, no less – may align, and also that it might require the intervention of broader perspectives to facilitate that alignment. The internalized subordination, and its cyclicity, is ultimately broken by this uneasy compromise.

#### IV. Conclusion

The cooperation between cosmopolitan and nationalist figures in disabling the misogynistic consequences of prescriptive nationalism is perhaps the most optimistic

feature of the novel. It suggests that O'Brien does not believe that nationalism has to be coercive and prescriptive in order to make radical improvements in the lives of a decolonizing people, and it also suggests that nationalism does not have to be fundamentally isolationist. By recognizing the value of Ireland's women as well as its men, and by actively mobilizing support for the development of those women, the Bishop represents an evolution of cultural nationalism which might still be possible even after the 1937 Constitution. Were these the sum of the novel's findings on masculinity and nationalism, it would be a wholly encouraging conclusion. The novel ends, however, not with Anna's liberation, but with Reverend Mother's realization that she is transitioning to the head of a transnational order in the midst of intensely nationalist violence. Doing full justice to the topic would require another chapter entirely, but to ignore it entirely would be to misrepresent the complex and fraught relationship the novel has with nationalism as emancipatory.

*The Land of Spices* is structured on historical and national bifurcation. It has one eye on Irish nationalism of the early twentieth century. As a novel published in 1941, however, it reflects the officially sanctioned gender roles of the 1937 Constitution, themselves a product of nationalist discourse, as much as the Irish and European nationalisms of the 1910s, the period during which the novel is set – stopping, of course, just before both Britain's and Ireland's entry into World War I and the Easter Rising. The novel has the historical distance to anticipate those events, and they are effectively present on every page. The novel's other eye is on the Continent, but with an important qualification. Whereas other novels like *Mary Lavelle* imagined the possibility of challenging normative values in a transnational space, *The Land of Spices* points out the

existence of established cosmopolitan social institutions and insists upon them as a possible – but not absolute – palliative to the heterosexist and xenophobic elements of an otherwise celebrated national identity.

Although Irish nationalism, particularly its eventual authorization of hierarchical gender norms and the cultural decolonization of the school system, is the most pervasive expression of national feeling in *The Land of Spices*, O'Brien situates it among the broader European movement towards nationalism in the years before the Great War. Implicitly, this also raises questions and concerns about World War II, a conflict during which Ireland remained infamously neutral, with Eamon de Valera's refusal to grant Jewish refugees from the Holocaust sanctuary in Ireland remaining perhaps the most striking example. O'Brien's allusions to an impending war are infrequent, but they are profoundly transparent in their concern for nationalist hostility. For example, when Reverend Mother learns that she may be chosen as the next Mother Superior, she reflects on the politics of selecting the head of a transnational Religious order. In addition to a "powerful Irish Reverend Mother in Chicago," *Sainte Famille* could also look to the "venerable and holy Austrian Mother Provincial," but she recognizes that "European war clouds would militate against an Austrian appointment" (237). The letter from Mother Superior that precedes this reflection has an even more pointed resonance with World War II anxieties, as she warns her young protégé of "the great dangers now menacing the whole world," especially as "[i]t cannot be denied that Germany is positioning herself for a war against the Entente Cordiale," an impending assault on Great Britain and France which may have an "effect [on] Europe, ... the world, and ... the Christian Church" (305). Indeed, among Reverend Mother's closing thoughts in the novel, alongside the

more plot-centric concerns for Anna and for the convent's future, she prepares to "pray for courage and for judgment" in the times ahead as Mother Superior, reflecting on the now unquestionable arrival of war:

Shadows of evil and danger were indeed gathering. ... Germany, Austira, the Balkans, all were seething – and in Ireland too there were fear and passion in the air. No one could guess how war would come to Europe, but only that it was visibly on its way. When it came old faiths would be tested, and indeed all human hopes and dreams might have to undergo an ordeal impossible to imagine, and which might outspan lives of watchers younger than she. (294)

Reverend Mother is ultimately optimistic, but not without serious contemplation. The historical particularities of World War I disappear into a general condemnation of militant European nationalism that speaks equally to World War II. The aggressors in the First World War are among the same in the Second; without the specific date and the novel's setting in mind, we could reasonably infer either as the primary topic of Reverend Mother's thoughts. That she situates Ireland alongside the groups historically cast as the antagonists in these wars, then, constitutes a legitimate concern about the eventual direction of all nationalism and patriotism. It is clear that O'Brien understands the value of nationalism in challenging colonial oppression, but *The Land of Spices* refuses to overlook the potential consequences for both a nation's citizens and the international community.

O'Brien's layering of one World War over the other, then, reveals a concern that isolationism and separatism – byproducts of Ireland's transition to statehood – might be,

at best, a form of false consciousness. The communities that O'Brien depicts are porous and constantly changing; as the novel reminds us, the Catholicism to which Ireland so strongly clung in the early twentieth century was deeply transnational. Furthermore, despite political emancipation from English rule, Ireland remained largely heterogeneous, never fully to cast off English language, customs or affiliations. The war that would devastate England, in other words, would have had emotional reverberations in the Irish population, and separatist neutrality does not preclude racism and hostility toward perceived threats. The cumulative effect of this move to recontextualize Irish nationalism, then, is twofold. First, it reminds the reader that, despite the occasional generosity O'Brien exhibits toward nationalism as a decolonizing tactic in *The Land of Spices*, there are limitations to nationalism which, if overlooked, have consequences which extend beyond geopolitical borders. Second, however, it also reinforces the novel's commitment to the development of transnational subject-positions, even if the practical means by which that shift might be made never quite emerge.

Ireland is, in some ways, implicated in this violence, and O'Brien is clearly uneasy with the direction her nation is going. Non-intervention appears to be the same as tacit approval of militarism, imperialism, and eventually fascism – the ultimate rejection of the plurality and variety which the novel suggests is so important in creating a more equitable world. Partial cosmopolitanism is a high ideal, and the novel suggests it can make a difference on some level, but in the end it is not convinced of the ethical position's lasting global viability. Like Joyce before her, and in much more specific and plausible ways, Kate O'Brien imagines the world being improved by an expansion of

what community might mean. But, also like Joyce, she ultimately seems more skeptical than hopeful of Ireland's – or of the world's – realizing such a dream.

## CHAPTER FOUR

“Rubbed-out men in the rabbled empire of the Queen”:

Transnational Utopianism in Sebastian Barry’s *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*

### I. Introduction

More than any other author I have discussed in this dissertation, Sebastian Barry has the advantage of historical perspective. In previous chapters I have examined the emergence of a hegemonic nationalist narrative and a potential cosmopolitan counternarrative, but the writers under question created this counternarrative contemporaneously with the social and political forces that would shape modern Ireland or with minimal historical distance. At the time these texts were written, in other words, Ireland was just beginning to author itself. By 1998, when Sebastian Barry published *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*, the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland had been fully independent for nearly fifty years, and the Troubles in Northern Ireland, while closing in on a peaceful resolution, had been going on for thirty. Although Barry has more perspective on Irish history, then, his shared preoccupations with his precursors – not to disregard his substantial thematic and topical divergences – suggest a continued dissatisfaction with Ireland as it was realized as well as a desire to transform it into the nation it might be. *Eneas McNulty* is, in short, a convergence of the Utopian undercurrents running through the works of writers who came before him. Like Stoker, Barry’s writing reflects the possibility of the social body living and thriving despite, or perhaps because of, divergent perspectives, narratives and ways of being. Like Joyce, Barry recognizes that the necessary decolonization of Ireland lead to the internalization and normalization of violence, possibly even the reinscription and reconfiguration of

imperialism. Finally, like Kate O'Brien, Sebastian Barry's works are committed to the idea of modeling alternative forms of social affiliation with a transnational or even supranational character. *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* is the effective culmination of a century's worth of Irish writing about what it means to be Irish in a context that can never be *just* Irish, a series of attempts to construct a subject-position that is attentive to Irish particularities but always aware of the limitations and consequences of intense national feeling. It is, perhaps, the apotheosis of partial cosmopolitanism in Irish writing, both the most hopeful and most despairing representation thereof.

Barry's strategy is to revisit much of the twentieth century in Irish history through the perspective of a liminal or doubly marginalized figure, and his choice to do so has led to a heated debate; although the body of criticism on the novel is minimal, what exists is incredibly charged. Barry has been accused of contorting and distorting history, on the one hand, in order to create a straw-man argument for the reintroduction of loyalist Catholics into the Irish story while also being praised on the other for complicating and expanding the perspectives available to us as readers. From Barry's own accounts, his concerns about hegemonic nationalism are clear, and he is outspoken about them. His cosmopolitan leaning, however, and his understanding that this social inclination is the result of being a post-colonial subject, are also clear. In "Lies and More Lies" (2006), for example, Barry recounts his childhood in Dublin and then in London, where he was educated in a diverse community: "I was a child among black, Chinese, Indian and Irish children at the London County Council school ... there must have been a few English kids there also, but our faces were the portraits of a dissolved empire" (641). His reflection on his own identity as a post-colonial subject appears to be focused on



connections, on the positive dimensions, but as with his texts, he does not entirely downplay the role of imperialism in creating a world full of exiles with a mutable – or lost – sense of home.

Barry's formulations in interviews and non-fiction writing, like his creative texts, have the effect of obscuring human agency in making history happen, and this tendency risks mystifying relations of power, on the one hand, and victimizing all of his protagonists on the other. "I have found it difficult," he says, "to write about anyone without finding them enmeshed in the nets of history, poor fish of circumstance that we are" (qtd. in Kurdi 42). Similarly, he speaks of his own plays as though they are a matter of happenstance and coincidence: "I could not stress enough the accidental nature of my plays, the lack of choice in the themes, the found or given nature of them" (qtd. in Kurdi 43). Accordingly, some of the strongest responses to Barry's creative output have taken him to task for deliberately misrepresenting Ireland's fraught history. Elizabeth Cullingford's 2004 article "Colonial Policing: *The Steward of Christendom* and *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*" has become, in my estimation, the preeminent critical work on Barry's novel and highly influential in readings of his plays. Although she concedes the novel's affective power and praises Barry's lyricism and characterization, she eviscerates him for what she sees as ideologically-inflected historical revisionism. The play and the novel each, she argues, misrepresent historical reality in the service not only of Barry's family, who provide the inspiration for his major characters, but also of loyalist Irish dissenters. Rather than provide a more balanced look at Irish violence, which Barry ostensibly sets out to do, Cullingford sees him instead obscuring exploitation and violence on the other side and manipulating the reader. She concludes

that “Barry borrows the rhetoric of silencing from radical critics and appropriates it for conservative ends,” arguing that a “desire to give voice to the historically occluded native collaborator is a literary extension of the project of historical revisionism” (12). As I hope to show of Barry’s novel, at the least, conservative resonance does not necessarily negate its radical revisions to concepts of affiliation and belonging.

Read on these terms, Barry is at best under-informed or, at worst, manipulates readers deliberately and obscures the reassertion of imperialist hegemony in his works by artificially drawing attention to aspects of those texts which are, in fact, secondary, such as Barry’s project of reconstructing his extended family’s shadowy and mysterious story (13). That family story is colorful, and it informs most of his work. Writing of his plays, for example, Maria Kurdi argues that Barry is “inspired by the stories of his family and autobiographical elements, although much imagined and invented” posit “alternatives of Irish identity” (41). Cullingford, however, is more skeptical of Barry’s accomplishments in mining his family’s history. *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* is based on a long-lost uncle who died in a hotel fire in London’s Isle of Dogs, while *The Steward of Christendom* follows a fictionalized version of his grandfather, one of the Dublin police officials responsible for ordering the violent suppression of demonstrators in the 1913 Lockout. While Cullingford sees this as part of the past that Barry is at once trying to elide as well as to use to leverage his own credibility, it is worth pointing out that Barry himself has spoken of his grandfather’s service in the British military as increasingly anti-colonial. “At the end of his life,” Barry says, his grandfather “regretted the colonial attitudes he had put on with his uniform, the contempt for ‘natives’ and so on. Because he realized at last that he was a ‘native’ also, in spirit and history. So I was entranced by that

change in him” (qtd. in Kurdi 44). Barry is aware of the potential consequences of service in the military, the obscuring of potential lines of spiritual kinship and the complicity with oppression. It might be reasonable to infer that Barry’s attempts to reinsert his family’s voice into Irish history have less to do with advancing a neo-imperial revisionist agenda than they do celebrating the potential for personal and social transformation. His models are people who recognize their own implication in these systems but who refuse to succumb to reimagined versions thereof, those who seek community based on inclusion and shared experience rather than exclusion and difference. Self-revision, the willingness to recognize wrongdoing and to self-correct, almost seems the ultimate virtue.

Barry’s idealization of self-correcting figures extends beyond his family to national icons, particularly Michael Collins. One of Cullingford’s main accusations of Barry is that he changes his grandfather’s dates of service, which in reality ended before the War of Independence, to end in 1922, in order to provide the author “a point of entry into present-day political and historical controversies,” playing into increasingly troped representations of a near-totalitarian Eamon de Valera and a near-sainted post-Treaty Michael Collins (20-21). Collins, in *Steward* and *Whereabouts*, is venerated for his late disavowal of violence, and this lends some credence to the accusation that Barry wants to have it both ways. His idealized Irish nationalism is sanitized – violent as long as it is necessary, but remembered for the refusal to continue the violence. De Valera becomes simply the symbol for oppressive and repressive Ireland. Cullingford sees Barry participating in a continuing trend, in fact, which “uses Ireland’s lost leader [Collins] as a stick with which to beat his rival, Eamon de Valera, and by implication the whole of the

subsequent republican tradition, including the contemporary IRA” (21). *Whereabouts* becomes, then, a “less legitimate generalization [that] all nationalists, with the inevitable exception of Michael Collins, are killers and crooks, and freedom itself is the disaster” (23). The reasoning in these two claims suggests that a condemnation of the contemporary IRA or even the early Irish Free State is somehow to repudiate the nation itself or the means by which it is established, and it also denies Barry’s implicit critique of empire. Could the novel not also simply signal a desire to accept that change while looking forward to less antagonistic conceptions of collective selfhood?

Moreover, Barry seems to have arrived at a more hesitant position regarding Collins by 2004 – six years after *Whereabouts* but two years before Cullingford’s article – suggesting that Collins, as a symbol, is as problematic as it is hopeful. Barry claims to have been

very taken by the notion of Collins for many years, as an antidote to the politicians we had experienced, trading sometimes under his banner. But, I wonder ... whether he can be fished back from the dark waters of the 1920s? For all that, I think of him as admirable, approachable, if unfortunately murderous. I also think he was passing out of the time for ruthlessness, into a new time, when he was murdered himself. (qtd. in Kurdi 44).

He makes no bones about celebrating Collins, of using him as a figure “you could give allegiance to,” a victim of “Irish public humiliation” (qtd. in Kurdi 44). There is a lot to take in here. Like Charles Stewart Parnell, Barry’s Collins is victim to a particularly Irish brand of *schadenfreude*. Those public figures that serve the national interest but qualify

or compromise the vision are subject to scorn and judgment, or so the story goes. Ireland rejected the transformed Collins and the potential for a transformed nationalism he represented. Barry does not whitewash Collins, however – he is, at least in this interview, described as “murderous” and “ruthless,” but he also implies that these characteristics are temporary and tactical, necessary steps in decolonization which should then be abandoned as they are “passing out of [their] time.” Collins’s treatment in the novel – Eneas’s gradual acceptance of Collins, who has been an inspiration even to his peaceful sister, the nun Teasy – reflects Barry’s comments, though I will not go into it at length here. Returning to the point, Barry’s ideal Irish nationalist is not necessarily anti-militant, but rather understands the limitations of militarism and continuously moves towards a more peaceable model. Rather than deception or manipulation, then, we could read his texts as enacting a utopian desire to understand, through earnest probing, what might have been and *what might be*.

A number of writers since Cullingford have been responding to her work either explicitly or implicitly. Victor Merriman and Paul Deane, though they each vary in their recognition of the latent radicalism in Barry’s work, ultimately echo Cullingford’s accusations of revisionism and anti-nationalism, while Seamus O’Malley may be closer to a productive reading of Barry’s oeuvre when he writes that “Barry’s characters challenge both the nationalist *and* the loyalist received notions of history,” both of which are subject to “collective forgetting” and “willed amnesia” (124; 126, emphasis mine). On the other end of the spectrum, however, are writers like Roy Foster, whose praise for Barry includes a defense against Cullingford (as well as one of himself, implicitly), and Christelle Serree-Chaussinand. Foster notes the consistency of Barry’s themes, especially

the “connection between allegiance and identity” and “the necessity of reconciliation” (183), the latter of which he views more generously than does Cullingford. Foster recognizes Barry’s attempts to represent the “uncertainty of Ireland’s position in the Victorian empire- part colonized, part colonising, neither the one thing nor the other” (184). By emphasizing only Ireland’s subjugation and not its role in reproducing and reinforcing subjugation in Africa and India, a reading along Cullingford’s lines risks a distortion of Irish agency in empire that is equally problematic. The Irish may not have asked for their own oppression, but we cannot discount Irish participation in empire around the world for the sake of the moral high ground. Foster, in other words, aims to complicate the perception of Barry as a revisionist by emphasizing the murkier ambiguous spaces in his texts which Cullingford – to whom Foster refers tactfully as “one critic” (187) – downplays. Seree-Chausinand, by contrast, may go further in a radical reading of Barry than Foster, seeing *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* as “a subversive text” which “considers Irish history from a subaltern point of view by insidiously challenging a twofold ideological consensus,” part historical and part religious, and “re-reads and challenges the collective and individual dimensions of history” (53; 54). Where she most clearly departs from readings of the novel that emphasize Eneas’s complicated relationship to British imperialism or label him a Catholic loyalist, Seree-Chausinand instead centralizes Eneas’s Irishness as his defining quality: “If we take into consideration his genuine, and all too human, attachment to Sligo as home, there is no denying that Eneas is a true Irishmen” despite his “lack of patriotic commitment and even his treason, [which] are a matter of chance and ignorance” (57). She swings so far in the other direction from Cullingford here that the reading risks

indulging the ideological devices uncritically, but she also allows us as readers to see Eneas in a less reductionist light. What is most helpful in her work is perhaps the distinction she draws between ethics and patriotic ethos, which leads her to conclude that “Barry’s novel is not an instance of radical revisionism, but rather it gives us a greater understanding of the complexities of history thanks to a challenging exploration of its sub-continents” (64).

For my part, I neither wish to dispute Cullingford’s claims about *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* nor to embrace them fully. Even if we agree with Cullingford’s assessment, it is worth spending some time thinking critically about the implications of Barry’s ideological gestures in the novel. In particular, there are two presuppositions which follow Cullingford’s argument that would benefit from some complication. The first of these is that the novel’s anti-nationalist ideology compromises its affective accomplishments. Such a reading rests on the conviction that a reader’s emotional response cannot be valid if it is not based on an unbiased or neutral perspective. At the risk of feeding the hegemonic troll, I would posit that the neutrality Cullingford seems to be writing from is in fact a defensive and pro-nationalist position (and therefore not neutral after all). I do not dispute the efficacy and necessity of violence and the cultivation of national pride in response to British imperialism, but I believe that short-term tactics can have long-term consequences and become, in their own right, coercive and normalizing in toxic and socially destructive ways. They can become, in short, a new ideology. To be neutral, on these terms, is to see only the historical accomplishments of Irish nationalism and to dismiss the intranational violence and oppression it required and sanctioned as collateral damage. It requires a binary

conception of national selfhood that belies Ireland's incredibly (and increasingly) complex hybridity. To make a quantitative comparison between the suffering of a few families and individuals and the suffering of an entire people, of course, is dubious. To participate in the erasure of those experiences, or rather to invalidate them as human experiences, is, however, equally dubious.

The second, and related, presupposition in Cullingford's argument is that the novel's ideological qualities invalidate any points the novel makes about Irish and human history. This line of reasoning focuses so intensively on Barry's mistakes or, worse, his manipulative distortions, that it overlooks his contributions to a fuller understanding of twentieth century Irish history; even if his perspective is ideological, that does not mean that nationalist narratives may not be equally so. Attempting to understand the situation requires a willingness to engage with and work through – not to reject entirely – distortions of all shapes and sizes. However much it may or may not compare with the injustices committed by Britain and by Irish loyalists, the damage done by nationalists with the best intentions deserves consideration, and novels like *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* give us some insight into what it feels like to inherit both sides of this historical trauma. We have to approach it with some skepticism, but the novel provides a powerful counternarrative not only because it complicates our received notions of history, but also because it encourages us toward a deeper and broader human sympathy.

Like Joyce before him, Barry sets out achieving his goals in part by subverting the epic genre, by calling into question the narrative structures through which national selfhood has been understood. Although Barry says that his novel's use of Virgil "is quite informal," less structured than Joyce's systematic use of Homer, the Irish writers' aims



appear to converge in a number of striking ways. Because the “founding myths in Ireland have been based on revolutions and new beginnings,” Barry claims to have set out to write an “unfounding myth. . . . An anti-epic with an ambiguous hero” that might navigate “the two traditions, Nationalism and Unionism . . . in order to create a new ground for a new beginning” (“Conservation” 6). Like Joyce, Barry seems drawn to the epic tradition because of the position it has afforded, historically, to violence as the inaugural moment of nationhood. Subverting the genre allows for a new configuration of national selfhood and has the potential to accommodate other ways of being, to rethink extreme binaries and oppositional categories of national subjectivity. It is worth noting that Barry refers to Eneas as an “ambiguous” hero. We are not *quite* in the realm of the anti-hero, which we typically think of as characters without traditional heroic qualities. Eneas, after all, has them in spades – he is caring, compassionate, devoted, resourceful, and self-sacrificing – with the exception of the willingness to choose violence. Stretch of plausibility though it may be, Eneas manages to survive several World Wars and a few in Ireland without killing a single soul, fulfilling much of the criteria with the notable exceptions of patriotism, in any recognizable form, and military prowess.

The novel’s humanism is, in the end, what I think is lost in more critical readings, and what is underdeveloped in the more charitable ones. Although it is ultimately curtailed and cut off by history, *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* not only sets out to negate one particular nationalist historical narrative, but also to invite us to imagine alternative models of affiliation and subject-formation to which we might look, to which we may even *have* to look, if we have any legitimate objections to politics of radical exclusion and systems of self-perpetuating internecine violence. The ideological bent of

the novel, in other words, is perhaps problematic for its unbalanced perspective on Irish history, but it is also valuable because it helps direct our attention to the possibility of connection, community, harmony, and forgiveness. In the very plainest terms, I hope to show in this chapter that Barry's ideology betrays a utopian desire for transnational communitarianism, continuing and refining the thread which has been running through all of the texts I have explored in previous chapters. As with his forebears from Bram Stoker to O'Brien, however, Barry always maintains the importance and power of one's nation – of one's home – even in an ever-expanding and ever-proliferating concept of the human community.

## II. Anti-Nationalism

In beginning to explore the ideological function of *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*, it makes sense to start with the text's insistently and almost unrelentingly negative depiction of Irish nationalism, a representational strategy at the core of the criticisms levied against Barry by Cullingford and critics similarly inclined. Barry's depiction of Irish nationalism has very few redeeming qualities, an approach which arguably undervalues the contributions of and necessity for a unified oppositional consciousness in Ireland. In *Eneas McNulty*, there is little room for conscientious dissent or indifference; to be conflicted and indecisive is to enact Dante's "Great Refusal," with the IRA meting out the punishment. The novel's nationalists have a chokehold on Sligo and on Ireland, making it impossible for anyone to maintain a neutral position. Regardless of personal conviction, characters consistently find themselves regarded as either loyalist or nationalist and treated accordingly.

At the core, of course, this is a novel focusing on one person, and so the personal loss that comes from nationalism is the most developed and most profound effect Barry charts. Eneas's relationship with Jonno Lynch, replaced and surpassed ultimately by Eneas's brotherhood with Harcourt, represents both the potential of mutually edifying friendship and community in Ireland and laments the inevitable loss of that potential. It is, in a way, a deeply mythologized and biblical story, beginning and ending as it does with fruit-stealing in an orchard on one end and a lake of fire on the other, containing both a fall and redemption. For the bombastic structure, however, it is also quiet and sad. The initial draw of Jonno is, to Eneas, the chance to be part of something larger than himself. He sees Jonno and friends playing before he ever meets his star-crossed pal, and "longs to call out Jonno's name through the dust and be one among many" (5). For Eneas, then, the relationship is measured by its ability to make him feel a sense of belonging or community. By the time the two actually meet, however, Jonno is no longer notable for his "soft face" (5), but for being "an upright man" who "doesn't walk along the street but marches to his own hidden fife and drum," a "soldier through and through" (16). He leads Eneas, whom he has "enlist[ed]," in a series of adventures, pilfering apples from orchards and dreaming of "construct[ing] a flying machine out of sheets from the Convent laundry" (16-17). They are united in their poverty, and in their vision, but there is a latent militancy and ambition with Jonno that Eneas does not share. There is potential for their friendship to go almost anywhere at this point, but as soon as they are young adults, things change.

Jonno, of course, becomes involved with the militant nationalist movement, a decision which seems to be as much for personal gain as for a commitment to Irish

freedom. The split in his personality is evocative of Joyce's Citizen. Both are exponents of nationalist values and make claims based on legitimate historical grievances, but both quickly compromise their ethical positions through their willingness to exploit their fellow countrypersons. At the same age where Eneas is dreaming of France and sexual encounters with young women, Jonno has already begun his ascension in the nascent IRA. He "launches himself into the informal suit of a messenger boy, full of whistles and wads of orders stuck in his important pockets," determined to succeed regardless of "whose heart he has to break" (30). This ambition leads Jonno directly into the employment of O'Dowd, who sends the boy on "errands [which] are peculiar and little linked to land deals and such" (30). O'Dowd is doing whatever it is he is doing out of sight for some reason and Jonno has become wrapped up in it out of his own ambition. It is hard to say who gets the worse treatment by his respective creator; while the Citizen hurls biscuit-tins and anti-Semitic invectives, Jonno's violence is more present and demonstrable within the text.

It is Eneas's choice to join the British Merchant Navy, however, that tips the scales and ends their friendship. Remember that Eneas does not do this in support of the British military or of the war effort, but rather out of his love for other nations. To Jonno and O'Dowd – perhaps rightly, in effect – this is an affront to nationalist ambitions. Even so, when Eneas returns home after the war, he does so aware of "a rip in his head where Jonno Lynch's friendship once was," hoping "to patch it" (49). This does not work out, of course, because Jonno puts his allegiance to O'Dowd and the IRA over his friendship to Eneas, taking a hardline ideological defensive. It is as though, for Jonno, being part of the Merchant Navy has actually transformed the deeply-Irish Eneas into an Englishman, an

imperialist, a metamorphosis which would square with Barry's own perspective on his grandfather's time in uniform. Eneas comes to this understanding first through his brother Jack, who relates Jonno's belief that "Eneas has been going about in ships as if he were an Englishman and busying himself during an English war." Eneas finds it laughable, referring to his former shipmates as "[p]oor sailors, afraid of sea, afraid of land," (53) but Jonno refuses his company all the same. Jonno's world is one in which intent has very little impact on a person's place in society; Eneas feels no allegiance to the British, but his actions made him part of the economic arm of the same system that had been and continued to oppress the Irish for centuries. After Eneas's time in the RIC – which has a much more direct and deplorable history where interactions with the lay Irish are concerned – there is no ambiguity, and Jonno has to tell Eneas that unless he kills the Reprisal Man, he is subject to "the, the, you know what I mean, the old death-sentence" (113). Like Eneas, Jonno's heart is not in it. He awkwardly dances around the bare facts of the sentence, but does not let his emotional connection to his childhood friend stop him from delivering it. Eneas, thinking Jonno a "madm[a]n" (and himself one as well), is cast out of "his Pappy's old garden" like Adam and Eve (112). For Eneas, however, the hardest pill to swallow is not the political or social exile, but rather the emotional distance it entails. He is haunted continually by Jonno's words at the end of the exchange: "We all hate you. And I pleaded for you because, I don't know why. I hate you" (115). In the end it is the emotional experience of Eneas through which we, as readers, are expected to think about nationalism. It is not that Barry's implied accusations are unfounded. Most of them can be supported. The convenience of a limited point of view, however, allows the

novel to be caustically critical of the nationalist side while making little more than a cursory observation or two about imperialist exploitation.

More broadly, Irish nationalism troubles Barry's novel in a number of ways. It leads to an isolationism that cuts off empathy and humane courtesy, as when the boat of Jews are refused harbor during the Holocaust, and creates a racialist and racist mindset whereby the Irish's self-respect is contingent upon their ability to "act the whiteman" (82). In fact, Barry's indictment of Irish neutrality in World War II is something that sits uneasily with a number of writers in the twentieth century, and Barry's publicized feelings about World War II are helpful paratextual materials. As he has observed in interview, "Ireland was supposed to be neutral in these matters, but of course the mind is never neutral and official; the mind is full of adherences and theaters we cannot control. Men and women had killed men and women without mercy or end. The hunger for death seemed to make man's saving graces very small beer" (qtd. in Kurdi 51). *Eneas McNulty*, however, not only questions the morality of non-intervention and indifference, but makes strong implications about the potential slippage from nationalism as an anti-imperial tactic to nationalism as fascism. Although this connection begins to emerge when Eneas recognizes a kinship in the Jewish refugees, it becomes explicit when Eneas returns to Sligo later in the novel. His mother, defending her husband Tom's politics, says that he's "no blueshirt" (172). Eneas asks his mother if she is referring to fascism, and she responds half-jokingly, "You don't know the half of it" (173). Where this turn in nationalist policy is a source of humor for his mother, however, it is far more serious to Eneas. Soon after this exchange, for example, Tom asks his son if he killed any German soldiers. Eneas says that he did not, giving Tom the opportunity to connect the dots for

readers: “Well . . . Jonno Lynch would be pleased. I think he fancies them Germans in the days to come. The United Republic of Germany and Ireland or some such, with Jonno for gaultier maybe” (180). This is kind of a slippery move on Barry’s part, as there are fewer universally-reviled historical powers than Nazi Germany, but it is not an entirely unreasonable connection to make. As enemies of England, and as models for the enforcement of an essentialized national subjectivity, there was an appeal in identifying with Germany despite Ireland’s neutrality. Echoing the phraseology of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and disputing the difference between the ostensible “Republic” and the “Kingdom” it replaces, Barry suggests that Ireland is gravitating knowingly and willingly from one iteration of imperialism to another. This ties in, of course, with Jonno’s ambition, as Tom suggests that Eneas’s former friend might become a regional representative of Nazi power, betraying his allegiance as had the Irish who pledged support to the English; for all of their claims to difference and independence, Barry suggests, the nationalist mindset is perfectly capable of reconfiguring oppression and exploitation.

In addition to greed and ambition, the novel suggests that nationalism sometimes, if not always, creates a culture of paranoia, mistrust and coercive relocation that threatens to unravel the very social fabric that tactical anti-imperial nationalism might otherwise strengthen. Eneas wants a normal life, the novel tells us, “but O’Dowd’s imagination and the imagination of a score of worried men in Sligo are afire with conspiracy and secrecy” (61). Ireland in the 1920s is a place where everyone who joins the RIC “is suspected by both sides of informing, one way or another, and a man is rendered greater innocence by being posted to an unfamiliar town” (56). The violence that necessitates these feelings, or

which alternately stems from them, is very real: “[F]erocious events are afoot in the sacred web of fields and rainy towns. It isn’t just murders and such or killings, you couldn’t call them that. Whenever an RIC man uses a gun and wounds or kills in a skirmish, some man in his uniform is taken and God help him in the dark hedges and isolated farms,” killed like animals and drained of blood (57). Over the course of the novel, Barry represents this in part as an inability to put conflicts to rest once they are over; Eneas, for example, implies to his mother that he cannot stay in Sligo with a sly comment about “Short wars and long memories” (196). But the morality of war, even during the time of the war, is not always above reproach. Barbara Ehrenreich, for example, has argued that “War not only departs from the normal; it inverts all that is moral and right: In war one *should* kill, *should* steal, *should* burn cities and farms, should perhaps even rape matrons and little girls” (12). Barry’s novel shares this sensibility, to some extent, representing the internal conflict of Irish nationalists during executions, such as that of Sergeant Doyle, which is described with punishing brutality. A gunman fires first on the right side of the face then “a second time into the left cheekbone, or where it might well be if the bold and splinters and scraps of flesh were cleaned off,” but Eneas’s reading of the executioner’s face is even more harrowing, for it “has the set effort in it of a person struggling for precision in a world of vagueness and doubt, struggling with a physical task in a world of Godless souls and wormy hearts” (65). The executioner is expressing a tension faced by all who choose – or who are forced to choose – violence; killing requires self-consciously or deliberately imposing order and a set of values over a disorderly and bloody mess.



The primary mechanism for this division is the Irish economy, which nationalists not only control but to manipulate to their express advantage. As readers, our point of view is aligned with that of Eneas, and so employment opportunities within the nationalist project all appear to require a compromise in ethics or morals, even though they might otherwise represent a defensible anti-imperialist commitment. Instead, the novel focuses on how nationalism, as a source of employment, maintains social inequity while providing both status and wealth to those who are willing to compromise their morals. Anti-English militancy becomes the sole means of gainful employment authorized by the emerging Irish powers, and were Eneas to accept the offers made to him by Jonno and O'Dowd, he could at once have his name expunged from the blacklists and, it seems, have his pockets lined with money. The employment afforded to and by Irish nationalists, however, begins quickly to appear as opportunism and selfishness in the name of an ostensibly greater social good. O'Dowd and Jonno Lynch alike, though not representative in the level of the success they achieve, reveal at least one of Barry's major criticisms of Irish nationalism. Through their wealth, the novel suggests that nationalism's noble aims are susceptible to appropriation by greedy individualists, one facet of a deeply ironic truism in the novel: what is done in the name of others is often done for the benefit of the self, and what is done in the name of the many may in fact be largely in the benefit of the few.

The key figure whose power goes beyond political influence and reflects a disproportionate accumulation of wealth is O'Dowd. We first encounter O'Dowd after a sermon "about the evils of gold in the modern world" that prompts Eneas to reflect on his previous observations of the nationalist leader, whom he "has only glimpsed ... passing

in his Ford motorcar.” O’Dowd appears sharply dressed, covering his baldness with “an excellent hat” which he “angl[es] expertly against the flow of sun and fashion” (73). As readers, then we are confronted immediately with the disparity between the apparent affluence of O’Dowd and the poverty of the people for whom he claims to act. The people of the town are being conditioned to accept their poverty, in effect, as a sort of marker of virtue in asceticism. O’Dowd is an exception, permitted wealth and even admired for it despite the clerical admonition. O’Dowd has fine clothes and a fine car, and the effect is one which, coupled with his sociability in public, helps to hide his more insidious activities; “Oh Jesus,” Eneas thinks to himself, this is bad, the pleasantness of the man” (75). There is a distinct dissonance between the message being preached to the Irish and the values their leaders actually practice. In a way, the poverty that drives Eneas to questionable employment appears to be in part the result of the vision propagated – but not lived – by Irish figures, a formulation which resonates with Eamon De Valera’s articulated goals for Ireland in the 1940s. By the time Eneas returns to Sligo after World War II, in fact, his brother Tom remarks on the gap between the leader, O’Dowd, and the common Irish subject. Eneas fears going to the pub because of the death threats he has received, but Tom tells him that it will be okay because “O’Dowd will be sitting out in his big house at Rosses Point, wonderful great mansion he has out there, he must be a feckin millionaire that lad, so you needn’t fear bumping into him” (182). To a point, one might excuse O’Dowd’s excessiveness as commensurate to the importance of his job, or read it as a defiant projection of self-worth in the face of British devaluation of the Irish, but it is ultimately, on Barry’s account, the triumph of individual ambition over communitarian goals.

Reprisal killings during the war are one thing. To some extent, they are to be expected. Although they are “daily sorrows” and occur “no matter what allegiance was in [the victims’] hearts at any daybreak” (58), most people understand them as part of the normal function of war. As Barry represents it, however, the nationalist mindset does not transform into a peaceful and affirmative one overnight, and the violence can become cyclical, if not eternal. Eneas recognizes this as early as the Civil War which follows the War of Independence, observing that “the so-called peace” following independence “is eating Ireland,” and recognizes that “his own private war” is like that of Ireland, “Endless” (109). Like James Joyce, Sebastian Barry attributes some of the internalized normalization of violence to the rhetoric of heroism central to both cultural and militant iterations of Irish nationalism. Eneas, for example, is to be killed “for the honour of old Ireland and her heroic dead” (118), and Jonno, as the novel’s most primary nationalist mouthpiece, evokes shades of Pearse in his appeals to Eneas:

This is war, Eneas, we’re in the middle of a war. ... I’m a soldier, Eneas, a real soldier with proper papers and one of Collins’s trusted men, now, I don’t mean he knows me or anything .... No, no, but listen, Eneas, this is a grand thing, this is like Cuchullain and the like, you know, and Ferdia, and fighting, and Ireland, and freedom. It’s me who’ll be the hero of all that, you know, I don’t mean especially (82).

In this rendering, the nationalist mindset oscillates between collectivist and individualist impulses, appealing to legitimate social needs in order to justify less noble desires that are specific to the individual. Jonno begins by attempting to legitimate the actions of the IRA as political in nature, but quickly reveals the fulfillment he feels personally by

participating. There is nothing in his discourse, at least here, about redressing wrongs, but rather a series of boasts. Although he qualifies it continually, he repeatedly returns the first person singular, making war seem solipsistic. Most strikingly and ironically, he likens himself to the ancient heroes – Cuchullain, whose self-defeating violence I covered in a previous chapter, on the one hand, and Ferdia on the other. Adding to the irony here is that Ferdia was a close friend of Cuchullain’s who came to die at the more famous warrior’s hands because of their respective and differing loyalties. Barry seems to be forcing a familiar question: if we know how these stories end, why do we keep looking to their protagonists as models?

And yet, like Doyle’s executioner and his post-execution breakdown, there is a disjunct between the heroic acts being celebrated and the devices the novel’s nationalists use to mask the reality of those acts. Eneas sees this pretty clearly, as his responses to Jonno’s instructions from O’Dowd – kill the Reprisal Man to earn Ireland’s trust – reveal. Jonno tells Eneas that it would be okay because the murder “would be for Ireland,” but Eneas “just sees Doyle ... saying those last words, and the little snubby gun against his cheek, and then the other cheek, and the blood and uselessness of it.” He does not attempt to argue with Jonno about whether the goals of Irish nationalism are noble ones, and concedes that they may be, but he objects to their methods because of his own moral reservations: “Maybe the freedom of Ireland and all that is right and proper,” he tells Jonno, “But, killing a man is a very particular thing ... and I couldn’t do it ... freedom or no freedom, I can’t see that I will ever want to bring death to a man” (83-4). Eneas does not respond directly to Jonno’s language choice, but he clearly sees through it and sees something different in his friend’s words. For Jonno, it is entirely a matter of abstractions

and glory, but for Eneas it is blood and guilt. Furthermore, Jonno continues to rationalize or justify nationalist methodology despite the fact that Eneas has reduced it to its barest empirical reality. Heroism is a set of values attached to the actions, but to Eneas it is virtually a set of disvalues because of the actions themselves. Eneas's sense is that Jonno and the nationalists are encouraging Eneas to assassinate the Reprisal Man to "prove his loyalty to the heroic ideals they cherished" (118), rather than for justice, and this speaks volumes about the novel's concerns that some versions of Irish nationalism might be, or might have been, underconsidered.

Barry also draws our attention to the use of euphemisms to cloud understanding of nationalist violence, as the whole of nationalist rhetoric is questioned equally for the substitution of positively-valenced terms for more neutral ones. Jonno, for example, tells Eneas that he "don't like the killing," but sees it as being part of the "*sanitation* of the country" whereby the "load of rats [are] being killed now quick, *executed*, you know, quick and quiet and official-like" (115, emphasis mine). It is a familiar but worthwhile line of inquiry, as Barry asks the reader to consider the way that our perception can be transformed by something as simple as substituting "sanitation" and "execution" for "killing" as well as the role that the literal dehumanization of the enemy, made here into vermin, might play in getting us to acquiesce and support violence. In this case, the act of taking life becomes defensible because it is political, and doing it might possibly even be the only means for the carrying out of justice. Of course, because of the novel's alignment with Eneas's subjectivity, we do not stop to question the protagonist for using the term "murder," which has as much potential to direct a reader's emotional response, but if the motivations for killing are justifiable, then it does not really matter. Embracing

the baldness of “murder,” in fact, might be the most ethical choice, because it registers the moral severity of the action rather than obscuring it.

Barry’s depiction of militant Irish nationalism emphasizes immaturity and a near-worship of symbols and ideals over humane, ethical, or even practical considerations. His nationalists have so deeply internalized the values necessary for a life of merciless killing that they cannot, even after decades of peace, let the past remain in the past, as Jonno and his young accomplice hunt down Eneas when the two childhood friends have grown into old men at the end of the novel. Having already chased Eneas around the globe, forcing him to deny his family and home in Nigeria, the IRA reveals that its long reach is not only spatial, but temporal. When, at the outset of the Northern Irish Troubles, Jonno turns up on Eneas’s doorstep with a young accomplice, Jonno speaks of the *new* black-lists and tells Eneas that the time has come to clean up the old ones, as though the now-elderly survivors from the originals have to be dealt with before the people who may actually pose a threat in the present moment can be addressed. His speechifying suggests that Jonno identifies himself as, or the novel treats him as, anyway, an agent of fate, and furthermore synthesizes everything implicit in Barry’s sustained critique of the militant mindset:

All comes round, Eneas. All comes round. Nothing going on for forty, fifty years, then, bang-bang-a-doodle, we’re back in business. Have to show the young the ropes. Fight’s on again, boy. Oh, we’ll have the great days now. Freedom for the poor lost Catholic Irish of the North. That’s the new story. (297)

Eneas himself is oblivious to the Troubles, further reinforcing his difference from both nationalist and anti-nationalist ideologies, but Jonno continues to go on about the “[t]hings that make great men,” about the “[g]reat notions” and “[p]owerful classes of feelings” that “[p]atriots” feel (297). Jonno’s acknowledgement that the names remaining on the old blacklists have caused no harm for years is a troubling way to start off his rationalization. Despite decades of inactivity and peace, the old promises of execution have to be carried out. It is a purely formal exercise, achieving no perceptible immediate political ends. The language, with its “bang-bang-a-doodles,” is still marked by informality and immaturity, and – lest we forget the economic advantages Barry has accused the nationalists of exploiting – reduces the effort, on some level, to a matter of “business.” The idealization of abstract values returns here as well, as Jonno spends more time talking up the “great days,” “great notions,” and stirring emotions over the broadly-defined political goals.

### III. Pro-Imperialism

Anti-nationalism is not the only arguable ideological aspect of Barry’s novel. From a nationalist perspective, or from a perspective informed by primarily nationalist sensibilities, the most ideological position would be to support imperialism. Although it is clearly relevant to the novel’s context, however, Sebastian Barry says little about imperialism at all. It is not, when it does come up, represented favorably, but the text does have some features which might support a reading sympathetic to imperialism. Foremost among these is the fact that that Barry has created a nearly unassailable protagonist. If, as readers, we are to suspend judgment, then the character has no

articulable flaws beyond a Forrest Gump-like simplicity. On accounts like those of Cullingford, this is pure manipulation, an attempt – conscious or not – to position the reader in opposition to Irish nationalism and effectively in support of English loyalism. I maintain, however, that if the novel is a loyalist one, it is only so at a deeply sublimated level. The novel seems convinced, to paraphrase Yeats, that England might have kept faith after World War I where Home Rule was concerned. For example, although the tone stops short of judgment, the narrator clearly sees the Irish nationalists as opportunistic and works to blur the lines between loyalties: “the war finishing was only the signal to the hidden men of Ireland to brew their own war, and sometimes in the ironic song of Ireland those selfsame cornerboys so recently out of the King’s uniform leak away into the secret corners of the town to drill and become another kind of soldier” who have left behind “[t]heir recent brothers in the ruined fields of France” (50-1). Moreover, nationalism is motivation enough for many who might have opposed the Great War on moral grounds to change their story, as the narrator observes that some who had “kept their hands clean of the European war” transform into persons “inclined to get blood on the selfsame hands in a war for the old prize of freedom for Ireland” (51). By suggesting that the Irish might have been better off waiting, might have attained freedom without internal bloodshed, Barry virtually romanticizes a history that never was.

This questioning of freedom as an absolute value is probably where the novel most aligns itself, intentionally or not, with the interests of British imperialism. In not identifying explicitly with resistance to oppression, the novel is complicit with the reproduction of normalized oppression. When Eneas returns to Ireland at the birth of its independence, he is unable to celebrate his nation’s victory and instead “stands there



crying in his dancing suit” as “Jonno’s prophecy [Freedom] has come to pass” (95). For the majority of Ireland, this is great news, but because he has alienated himself through service in the British Merchant Navy, Eneas is excluded and marked as an outcast. On the novel’s account, exact allegiances have to be maintained, and therefore Eneas is one of an entire class cut off. The pattern continues when Barry explores Nigeria’s decolonization and the effects it has on Harcourt, who also served the British without expressing any loyalty to them. Eneas’s observations are appropriate to each situation: “But nothing is certain now. Bloody politics! Deathly, killing, seducing politics. Feckin ould freedom anyway” (248). Eneas’s reflections may be somewhat deluded, of course. He refers to the murderous side of nationalism and glosses over the violence of imperialism by and large, and instead chalks it up to an abstract appeal, a “seduction” of the oppressed by politics. This fits with Barry’s representation of O’Dowd and Jonno, especially the way their political self-positioning leads to their economic empowerment, but like most of the insights about decolonization in the novel, it sees the protagonist – despite his exceptional empathy – either unable or unwilling to think about the need for freedom among those who have been harmed most by subjugation.

The novel also goes to great lengths to which it goes in order to keep its protagonist’s hands clean, reinforcing a potential pro-imperialist reading. Repeatedly, Eneas is denied agency, blown about by the winds of history, a victim of circumstance and social change. The novel and the protagonist share a sense of fatalism from the earliest chapters. His first meeting with Jonno Lynch, for example, is described as “fateful” (16), and soon thereafter, the novel likens Tuppenny Jane’s influence on the lives of the men who sleep with her to France’s influence on Eneas because each is

“remote but important, vague but fatal” (22). When the Second World War ends, and although we know he is eager to return home, it is not Eneas’s choices that matter, but that “God brings Eneas again to the shore” (153). The precise nature of the relationship defies naming, but clearly indicates a lack of choice for Eneas. And yet, as Cullingford has pointed out, it is not as though Eneas does not realize the implications of some of his choices. He is aware, even when he joins the British Merchant Navy as a young man, that it “was better, and more discreet with the politics going about those days, to cross from wily Connaught into the indifferent and more English-minded counties, for to take the King’s shilling in Belfast” (34). Denying Eneas agency is a way of denying him responsibility, and in turn, of denying the responsibility of anyone whose actions did not unambiguously and intentionally keep imperial-colonial relations afloat.

Furthermore, we are positioned as readers to feel tremendously bad for Eneas even as we admire the moral high ground he repeatedly claims. The only constant in his life is loneliness. He is repeatedly cut off from his family and from the potential for love, most profoundly with Viv, a woman with whom he has an affair but whose father, being pressured by the nationalist presence in Sligo, sends Eneas packing. For all of this disavowal by his countrymen, however, Eneas does not grow to love England or its military presence in Ireland; although he has to work with the Black and Tans for the sake of employment, “Eneas in his heart cannot say that he enjoys the policing he is set to do,” romanticizing instead “the more usual duties of the RIC, in days more peaceful” (59). Indeed, he finds that the “trouble and sorrow of being a peeler is a revelation to him” (60). Whether such days ever existed is historically contestable, but Eneas’s moral

inclination is pretty much unimpeachable. If he is deluded, it is a grand and noble delusion.

For all of its indulgences and the situational gymnastics required to make Eneas so likable and devoid of culpability, the novel does not erase the role of empire in creating the circumstances that make nationalism necessary and which leave Eneas without a home. Although his protagonist and the real-life persons who chose, however beneficently, to align themselves with imperialism are not above reproach, if they are victims of anything other than themselves it is of empire. Eneas and Harcourt, like the disaffected subjects they ostensibly represent, are less the victims of nationalist hostility in the end than they are “[r]ubbed-out men in the raveled empire of the Queen” (249). This quotation is hardly a detailed interrogation of imperialist exploitation or destruction, but it does reveal Barry’s concession that the nationalists are not themselves the root of the problem. It does seem to conform to the novel’s tendency to exculpate its protagonists from responsibility, but to some extent, they *are* historical victims, put into positions with limited options because they are members of populations decimated by imperialism.

#### IV. Poverty and Fatalism

One such consequence of British imperialism Barry charts is the poverty and social stratification of the colonized. The McNulty family is poor, and while this helps Eneas develop the character traits we admire him for, Barry also implies that it leaves Eneas and those like him little choice but to conform. This is clear from the opening paragraph of the novel, which focuses largely on ownership and sets the stage for the discussion of poverty to follow. Eneas is set up to be little more than a footnote in Sligo’s

story, living as he does in his home for so short a period. In the “small bracket in the long paragraph of the street’s history” in which it belongs to Eneas, we meet a character will “endure” some of the twentieth century even though “none of [it] will belong to him.” There is a Utopian possibility in this, it seems, as everything around him and in the world as a whole is “equal to Eneas at five, and nothing his own, but that temporary little room” (3). Already Eneas is designated as character with no possessions, but his lack of wealth is associated in a nebulous way with his belief that the world is largely “equal.”

As is the case with all of his residences, Eneas’s time on John Street is brief and temporary. In this transient setting, Tom McNulty attempts to teach his son dignity, noting a time when their “own people ... wore the better clothes and were respected,” at once affirming the role of material wealth in signifying social status and attempting to undermine that function by stressing Eneas’s continuity with those people. “Their circumstances,” however, “are pinched” (4), with both father and mother working at the lunatic asylum to make ends meet. What are we, as readers, to take from Tom’s appeal to a more dignified past? It seems to reinforce the importance of social stratification by drawing Eneas into a world where he is somehow connected to it, but it also reminds us that wealth is fluid and unreliable and, as such, prepares us for one of the novel’s subtler arguments: when circumstances restrict our understanding of our own agency in making choices, we do not or even cannot see the choices which outsiders may see us as having. There is no shame in being poor, the novel seems to suggest, but there is still need.

By the time of the Great War, the poverty in Sligo comes into focus as something afflicting the entire town, not just the McNulty family. It appears abruptly, but the discussion of emotional investment in the war gives way almost immediately to the

economic incentives for those who would enlist. In other words, Barry's structure mirrors the reality of war's outset for many people: "There is the war now beyond and a few of the men of Sligo have departed and many more are saying they will go. There is a great feeling in the town that they must send soldiers to the war, and aside from that it is in the line of genuine employment" (20). The emotional experience is foregrounded here – the "great feeling" – but it is short-lived and vague. Is there some sense of national kinship within the United Kingdom at work? Is it a reflection of the marginal nationalist belief that service in the British armed forces might lead directly to Home Rule and even independence? Barry does not dwell on this, instead, shifting to "genuine employment" for at least half of the long paragraph which follows and emphasizing the sense of foreboding that surrounds Sligo's fishing industry (the balance of which is Eneas's and Sligo's francophilia):

The docks are still a mighty enterprise, but people are saying the docks are doomed and the grass will grow between the old bollards yet and it is the devil's own job to keep the channels clear. Some are saying that there is a new terrible drift of sea-sand com down from Coney Island and thereabouts, that the autumn tides have gouged the channel ... and pushed a frightful tonnage of sand and silt ... up into the docks. Men have seen salmon in the shallows of the Garravogue where formerly there were deeps, and they are dredging but some hold that dredging is a fool's errand... (20)

The narrator concedes Sligo's continuing success with the butter trade, but the penetration of anxiety at the loss of the town's staple income appears thorough. If the

docks are still “mighty,” the “but” houses a real concern that natural changes in the environment will ultimately transform the town’s ability to fish. They stubbornly continue, perhaps, but it is clear that the options available to Sligo’s young men are becoming increasingly limited, and that this limitation weighs far more heavily than the emotional or ideological attractiveness of war for loyalists and unionists alike.

Eneas’s time in the British Merchant Navy raises the suspicion and encourages the nationalists who gain control over Sligo in the 1920s to limit his opportunities, and so – at least as the novel would have it – they are to some extent culpable for Eneas’s more egregious transgression, his service in the Royal Irish Constabulary. Through most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the RIC aligned again and again with the imperial army, and often appear to have been more brutal than the soldiers. The Jonnos and O’Dowds have good reason for being wary of Eneas, because in becoming a ‘peeler’ he joins a disreputable lineage of imperialist cronies. Fairly or not, however, Barry discourages us from seeing Eneas in these terms. From the outset of World War I through the War of Independence the opportunities have continued to dry up. It is not as though Eneas does not *know* the RIC’s reputation. His turn to their employment, in fact, is as fraught with anxiety as it is plagued by need:

He knows why there are places in the peelers when there are places nowhere else. The RIC is composed no doubt of lost men, ordinary fellas from the back farms of Ireland, fools and flotsam and youngsters without an ounce of sense or understanding. And the legends of the RIC are all evictions, murders and the like though many an Irish family was reared on those wages, and many a peeler was a straight-forward decent man ... He

can't live a life to please Jonno Lynch, ... And a fella must work, must toil  
in the dry vale of the world. (56)

This is either a textbook example of Barry trying to have it both ways, or it is a realistic depiction of the place where ethical misgivings intersect with limited opportunity.

Through most of this excerpt, the text suggests that Eneas has no choice in joining the RIC. They have jobs when the jobs have dried up everywhere else, presumably because they are funded by British Empire and act in the interest of British Empire. The people who end up working in the police are not innately cruel, but they lack either the intellectual capacity to do anything else or lack the opportunity altogether. Eneas has to contrast this "salt of the earth" mentality, however, with his knowledge of what has been said and recorded about the RIC. They are the colonial enforcers, those perhaps most internally subordinate, and every man who joins knows what he is getting himself into. That said, they are *also* largely "decent men" who ostensibly have no choice. Eneas himself only expresses reservation, however, because of his desire to please a lost friend. And yet, as the paragraph concludes, the literal and figurative bottom line, a man "must work, must toil." In these terms, Eneas's participation is not a matter of choice to begin with, but rather one of many major life choices in which he feels fatalistically drawn, naturalizing and mystifying the process by which his choice disappears.

Eneas is not empowered by his time in the RIC but finds himself doubly disowned, released from police service but held at arm's and gun's length by the IRA. The coercion he had experienced prior to his time in the RIC is amplified afterwards; Eneas has, after all, witnessed a particularly gruesome murder and cleaned up after many others, and his loyalty is more suspect than ever, and it is "assumed Eneas has given,

given gladly, to the Reprisal Man descriptions and the like, and when he denies it simply, they know he is exercising a clever caution and concealment” (66). Eneas comes to learn of a rumor – a stigmatizing, fear-inducing rumor – that he is now on “a black-list growing as long as the Shannon,” a list with which the IRA keeps track of both its victims-to-be and how it plans to dispose of them (67). Eneas, Barry implies, is hardly an exception in his status as a target, and represents a growing number of Irish men who have a home neither with nationalists nor with loyalists. He has a chance to get back in with the nationalists, of course, if he is willing to inform on and murder the Reprisal Man, but he chooses neutrality. The novel echoes the *Inferno*’s punishment for the apolitical in times of crisis, as those who cannot or will not commit bring onto themselves a life of suffering.

#### V. Utopian Possibility

So far, I have been discussing the ideological dimensions of Barry’s novel and emphasizing the ways in which it supports, directly or indirectly, an anti-nationalist or pro-loyalist reading. But it is not simply an imperialist novel, and so to read Barry’s characterization in *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* more charitably is not to dismiss its effective loyalism, but to recognize the possibilities it offers the Irish and readers in general of finding more fulfilling and inclusive ways of being, ones which fall outside of convenient binaries. Furthermore, however, it keeps us from overlooking some of the most compelling arguments implied in the final half of his novel. His authority on decolonization in Africa may be questionable, but Sebastian Barry, in relocating his protagonist to a decolonizing Nigeria, makes two implicit claims. The first is that



colonialism was a broadly traumatic pattern of experience, something neither exclusive to Ireland nor to be overlooked as a central precondition for the story of identity he is telling. Barry recognizes that the suffering and poverty his characters live in is a direct result of European capitalism and imperialism, but responds to it unconventionally. The second is related to the first, in so much that Barry questions the ethical and moral dimensions of coercive and violent nationalism as a response to imperialism. The conditions of empire may not be universal or consistently *the same*, but they may be generalizable, the text seems to say, as are the experiences of nationalist reprisal. From these shared experiences, Barry tells us, a more just and humane society might be built.

This paralleling is implicit in the very first meeting between an unnamed-Harcourt and Eneas, which occurs before Nigeria's decolonization is even underway. Their lives are similar to one another's for circumstances not owing directly to imperialism, especially their status as soldiers, since "war throws up all inhabitants of the earth in strange places, rearranging and re-siting its creatures" (164). Despite their propensity to wander in service to the crown, Harcourt draws Eneas's attention to their continued secondary status. "We're all mad to the English, that's for sure," Harcourt begins, clarifying "all" as a substitute for "Irish, African, Chinese man, all the boys from far away..." (165). Harcourt's assessment of imperialist Othering is astute. Although there are fewer optic markers of difference between the Irish and the English, or perhaps *because* there are fewer, than the English and African or East Asian peoples, racist logic and an emphasis on cultural irreconcilability were invoked vehemently against the Irish in the nineteenth century. Declan Kiberd, for example, spends a sizable portion of the introduction to *Inventing Ireland* (1996) explaining the ways in which Ireland served

as England's primary and most necessary foil in cultivating a sense of national selfhood. Harcourt's casually tossed-off line, then, is actually an acknowledgement of geographically and culturally diverse instances of British orientalism.

The novel's two major sites of resistance to British power, then, are both historically relevant settings for exploring the consequences of decolonization, prompting Harcourt's observation that "Lagos is almost the same word as Sligo, give or take an i or an a" (241). In terms of culture and customs, Sligo and Lagos are clearly different, but the structures of feeling are, on Barry's account, remarkably similar. Following their release from the civil engineering projects that bring them together, Eneas and Harcourt detach themselves entirely from military association and drift through life until Nigeria's resistance starts to centralize and escalate. They observe the youths of Lagos slowly accumulating both fake guns and real ones, and Eneas cannot help but recognize some familiar sights as "freedom, that dreaded thing," emerges as the principle goal. Police presence intensifies, for one, and so do mob responses to their authority, leaving Eneas happier to be "a broken drinker now than an army man," no longer identifiable as a coconspirator with imperialism since "there is no trace of uniform or employment about him" (240). The Nigerian police, Eneas realizes, "are just like" the RIC, "in the wrong suits to please the patriots," and they will, like Eneas, "lose their Vivs and their Sligos" (142). The use of such highly specific proper nouns *as* categories or classes of nouns gets at the core of Barry's implied argument here; the specifics of Eneas's story are not necessarily all that unique. Harcourt and Eneas seem poised to drift through Nigeria's fight for freedom in a drunken haze, but just as Eneas has experienced in Ireland, the nationalist insurgency has to exercise some control, if for nothing else than as a

demonstration of power, over anyone who might represent a threat. Harcourt, as a former British military man, becomes a target – as does his father, who is forcibly drowned in Harcourt’s moonshine.

Seeing these patterns, what remains is to construct a reading to the novel which is sensitive to its ideological indulgences, even its sleights-of-hand, but which also accounts for Barry’s efforts to shake off the inheritance of both British imperialism and Irish nationalism and posit this new, fragile, social vision. Eneas McNulty’s complex relationship with his homeland is an essential component for doing so. In a way, Eneas’s experiences and attitudes reflect those of Sebastian Barry, who makes an implied distinction between his nation and the state: “I am, I suppose, at odds with the official nature of the present country. Not out of criticism so much as a lack of understanding. I do not understand this Ireland, and what I do understand I distrust. Of course I am speaking of the Republic” (qtd. in Kurdi 49). He objects to something in the “official nature,” but he does not discredit Ireland as a people or as a culture. It is the “Republic” who he cannot trust, the system of laws and values that codify a particular way of being, a particular type of person, at the expense of others. There is a sense of love and affinity for the people, but some hesitancy to embrace the governmental and social practices it has developed through the twentieth century. For Barry and Eneas alike, Ireland is nation to be celebrated, but the Republic of Ireland is a state deserving of skepticism.

Eneas’s narrative raises questions of what decisions are defensible in a decolonizing nation where neutrality – somewhat ironically given Ireland’s World War II history – appears to be a non-option. In no single case does Eneas consciously position himself against the emerging or newly-emerged nation; rather, he follows a mix of

ostensibly-nobler motivations such as his empathetic humanism and love for his family on the one hand, while conceding economic necessity on the other. As with most of Eneas's character qualities, his formative years lay the groundwork for his ethical and moral development. He adheres to the lessons he learns from his mother, father, and acquaintances, refusing to acquiesce the normalization of competition, domination, and violence. While this is arguably the root of his complicity with loyalist power in Ireland and the resistance he represents to decolonization, it is also the key to his most admirable qualities. While others, like Jonno, may dream of wealth, military glory, or elevated social status, Eneas desires fame for an entirely different reason and on different terms: "Some day he will be famous for his friendships or so he believes. No treasure in life beyond pals, his father decrees. He will be heroic and carry the round red apples off into town in his best gansey, that his grandma Mrs Byrne created – *created*, says his mother – out of an exhausted shawl, and the people of Sligo will admire him for it" (5). This early fantasy reflects his emergent egalitarianism as well as his inability to internalize the stigma of poverty. Eneas's dream is not to distance himself from – or repress – his childhood economic duress, but rather to embrace the value that such a life has taught him on friendship and community. He wants to share, and to be admired for sharing, to be admired furthermore for his family's ability to make and to do despite adversity. To be "heroic" is to give despite a clear lack of resources. So much of the life he ultimately creates with Harcourt can be traced back to these early years.

There is a risk of romanticizing poverty in these passages, but much of that is a result of Eneas's naïve and innocent point of view. There is also something valuable here. Barry balances this, furthermore, by including Eneas's interactions with his mother, and

their collective interactions with Sligo. His mother's story is something of a mystery, a source of shame which is likened at some points to the town's pubescent prostitute, Tuppenny Jane, but in fact boils down to her status as an abandoned child with no conventionally legitimate parents. Although this puts a sour note on his mother's interactions with the people of Sligo, it also helps bolster Eneas's moral center, his empathetic predisposition, as well as his indifference, if not quite aversion, to materialism and affluence. Eneas's father Tom provides the insight by which Eneas learns of inherited social status – as well as a perspective that challenges that status as the primary source of one's worth. As Eneas is falling asleep one night after an embarrassing stop in a local café, his father gives him an important lesson:

‘Some people have trouble that they never themselves did cause. Some people have a queer start in the world because those that have them in the first place don't know what they're at. Mams and Pappys are not the same parish by parish. Some fall at the first fence, and little mites are left to fend for themselves. It's a story old as mountains, your Mam's own story. But, she's a queen. She is. ... Never mind, child, what you hear, the whispers of a little town, the little whispers of Sligo...’ (13)

Again, these fateful words, a father's simple explanation for a routine snubbing, anticipate so much of Eneas's life and map so clearly onto his moral development. The degree to which Eneas McNulty is a plausible character is contentious, even laughable. The circumstances by which he can seemingly be without real responsibility or agency in his life are rhetorically useful for Barry's political argument, too, but setting aside the novel's ideology, Tom McNulty's speech describes with eerie prescience the

circumstances of Eneas's life as he finds himself on the wrong side of public opinion time after time and despite his best intentions. Following the logic of this speech, Eneas's contrariness to Irish nationalism is less about resistance and more about indifference, which yield similar results. The passage also speaks to the economic dimension of Eneas's enlistment and that of other Irishmen, in that the only material security to be found on the nationalist side seems to be in a violence to which Eneas cannot commit. Eneas and the other economically oppressed Irish Catholics have the choice to remain poor, to grow wealthy under questionable circumstances, or to fall into conventional career paths that maintain the status quo.

So, then, Eneas might be said to derive here a sense of personal victimhood, a belief in his loss of agency. A pro-nationalist position, of course, would argue that because the moral imperatives of Irish nationalism outweigh personal reservations about violence, this hesitancy is a matter of false consciousness. Each perspective is persuasive in its way, but it is important not to lose sight of the humanism and empathy that continues through the rest of Tom McNulty's account of his wife. Although some patterns of life may present themselves, the lives of people within a culture may vary, as they do here "parish by parish." Accordingly, no one comes to another person's life with the necessary perspective to pass judgment on that person without first getting to know him or her. Mrs. McNulty is just like so many other women and men who are without a definite heritage. And yet, Tom says, she is "a queen." Her worth is as great as any other living person's, Tom seems to be saying, though she has come from literally nothing and accomplished little that is remarkable. In a sense, the novel and Eneas demonstrate a deep commitment to the value of a simple life. For all of Eneas's travels, and for the

unbelievable circumstances, the things he actually does are relatively mundane, and his character is revealed mostly in quiet moments of kindness. That he is ultimately discouraged by his father from listening to the disparaging remarks of his provincial home reinforces the idea that the community, though comprised of people who all matter, does not have the authority to determine any member's worth. Likewise, for Eneas, the Irish state may condemn him, but it does not diminish him as a human being.

Eneas's youth and adolescence are filled with such moments that reveal his character. It is clear, for example in his love for France, which is never explained fully but emerges powerfully at the outset of the Great War. It is partly provincial romanticizing, of course, as Eneas contrasts Sligo as "a little place" to "realms beyond it of great interest and high tone aspects," knowing well that "everything is imagined, a picture painted with hints and horrors and news items" (21). But the feeling remains with Eneas, and germinates into a legitimate concern for the wellbeing of others with whom he does not share geopolitical borders. His tendency toward love and generosity is reinforced as well by his interactions with Tuppenny Jane, who "has been down the lanes often with some of the family men of the town" (21). Fittingly for Eneas, however, her reputation for sexual indiscretion is rescued in the novel as a manifestation of beneficent human connection. She confronts Eneas, who is aware of her reputation and is himself sexually awkward at the age of sixteen, and his socially-constructed notions of sexuality, mixing vulgar provocation with profound insight: "I won't ask for your tuppence, I knew your ould joke to yourself there ... put that little snaily thing of yours in there that has you dizzy in the bed, nights, from steering it, and we'll be happy. There's nothing to happiness only generosity." Eneas wanders off, wondering why he "must ... hear

mysteries from Tuppenny Jane” (26). Barry’s choice of “mystery” cannot be accidental here. Although Eneas may not be entirely aware of the significance, the philosophical profundity of the connections Tuppenny Jane is making between expressions of physical intimacy given freely (she is not, after all, asking for money this time) and happiness reflect the older, religious meaning of mystery, what the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as “religious truth known only by divine revelation.” Over the course of the novel, love and intimacy of various shades figure into even the worst of the circumstances in which Eneas finds himself. He is not coerced into loving Harcourt or even, in the end, Jonno, but both cases are deeply moving and indicate the novel’s implied argument about affiliation; nationalism may require a semblance of connection or affiliation, but nationalism may equally require one to disregard his or her values in the service of an ostensibly greater good. Eneas’s ability to maintain that impulse is precisely the source of his final, explicitly spiritual transcendence.

Eneas McNulty is not in sync with the dynamics by which the world seems usually to operate. He is motivated for material reasons, of course, but some of the more abstract hegemonic factors – primarily shame – affect him far less than they would most people. His inability to understand shame, in fact, makes him in Barry’s and Eneas’s own words “unsuited to the world” (26). Instead, Eneas is driven by the desire to understand others who, like his mother and Tuppenny Jane, find themselves outside of social approval. Could he but adopt a normative and normalizing mentality, he imagines, he could get by in the world just as anyone else does. If he could “gain a proper sense of [his mother’s] shame,” he reflects, he could integrate socially. It would be “the key to everything” (26). Normative social relations, as Eneas infers, revolve around the



stigmatization and exclusion of others to affirm one's worth and elevate one's status, or to do likewise for groups rather than individuals. More often than not, this can be unjust or seem arbitrary to those marginalized and Othered. The way the novel ultimately victimizes Eneas might be problematic because it has to vilify the Irish nationalists – who are reacting to legitimate grievances – in order to cast the protagonist in such a glowing light. It is precisely this risk, however, which enables Barry to envision the novel's progressive and transgressive Utopianism. Stark examples of shame, punishment, and humiliation permeate the novel, perhaps exaggeratedly, but they also highlight its celebration of pluralism and transnational, transcultural exchange.

Through the chapter, I have alluded to various instances in which Eneas demonstrates remarkable flexibility and adaptability; he is the consummate sailor, making a home anywhere he goes, and his hesitancy to pass judgment on others is paired with a desire to understand them as human beings. As we see during his time in France, he does not remain tied to an infantile idealization of other cultures, but upon interaction with them comes to appreciate them for what he finds and observes. His disposition is such that even his ejection from Sligo and from Ireland becomes for him as much an opportunity as a punishment. He will often be sad, and always homesick, but neither emotion dominates. As Eneas reflects, his “heart lighten[ing]” at the thought, “He has the world before him after all. The sorrow of leaving is yes also the joy of going forth or borders each upon each” (49). New encounters, intermingled as they are with departures and loss, are always the consolation, always cause for “joy.” While “going forth” is the obvious source of joy in this sentence, the coordinating conjunction “or” suggests that “borders each upon each” can also be read as Eneas's reason for joy. In other words,

borders – including geographical and cultural borders – may grow blurry and indistinct, affirming human relationships rather than cutting people off along imagined lines of difference. Appiah associates this impulse with a form of conversation, as he writes, “in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association” (xix). The wellspring of Eneas’s humanism and of his life’s meaningfulness comes from his ability to not only coexist, but to converse, to interact with and learn from others.

With these too-familiar forms of division replaced by or even transformed into the means of connection, Barry, through Eneas, suggests that we need to recognize that the value of human life and experience can never be quantified. The novel suggests that human emotions are no more – or less – important here at the level of nations than they are at the level of families or of individuals. At one point when Eneas is home, his brother Jack’s wife gives birth to a child who “doesn’t last but the few hours,” and the family goes through “a great colloquy of misery, silence and dark looks” (Barry 183). Eneas struggles with his brother’s grief, which runs deeper than words, and with Jack’s wife physical pain, as the “birth has ripped the guts out” of her” (184). He is only recently back from World War II at this point, and has for a frame of reference the suffering of an entire nation and continent, but is just as moved by his family’s loss. After some reflection, he comes to two realizations. First, “didn’t ... have the key to his brothers distress” and second, perhaps more profoundly, that the “size of [his family’s] grief astonishes him,” because though the “grief of France was immense, the grief of this small child [is] the equal of it” (185). In a way, this suggests the prioritization of feelings towards those closest to Eneas. Despite his cosmopolitanism, his love for his family is the

strongest love he knows. As Appiah argues, however, this does not disqualify Eneas's brand of cosmopolitanism, but might actually give us a reason to endorse it over other cosmopolitan models. Appiah challenges the notion that "cosmopolitan moral judgment requires us to feel about everyone in the world what we feel about our literal neighbors," encouraging us instead to "start with the recognition that they don't" (157-8). One of Appiah's points in the chapter from which this observation is drawn, the final in *Cosmopolitanism*, is that we may, in trying to equate local and distant feelings of affiliation and obligation, make ourselves ineffective, frustrated, or even numb. Without these more intimate ties, in fact, we may not learn the types of respect and empathy that should be the foundation of our interactions with the larger human population. If Eneas could not feel this way about his family, it is unlikely that he could feel so strongly about France or anywhere else. By reminding us of the importance of recognizing suffering on a small scale, and connecting it with suffering on a larger scale, Barry asks us to remember that both are important. For Eneas, *everyone* matters and *every one* matters. If we focus only on global perspectives, we might lose sight of the human emotions people experience in the global context that make such matters matter at all.

As freely as some critics describe Eneas as a loyalist to the crown, his love for his family, for his town, and for even the members of the community who actively seek his death, is the one constant in his life. The pull of home is such that Eneas repeatedly risks his life over the course of a half century just to breathe Sligo's salty air. At times, it is represented as an addiction or compulsion. He is drawn to "the tobacco, the opium, of returning home" (163). But perhaps the most apt and fully-developed symbol for Eneas's relationship with his home – and the most tragic – is that of the salmon. On one particular

return home, after his service in World War II, Eneas is followed by some men into the woods. Having spent a portion of his adult life cleaning up after reprisal executions, he fears the ineptitude of these potential amateur killers, who are unlikely to provide “an efficient shooting or a good sincere cutting of the throat,” but instead a mix of “clumsy and vicious” bumbling (191). He runs and throws himself into an icy river where some men are fishing for salmon. The experience is invigorating and confusing, implying first the relationship that Barry is developing between fisherman and fish, then capturing the ambivalence of Eneas’s relationship with Ireland: “What are salmon to him? He hates the taste of salmon ... He loves this river but its chill is deathly ... It’s bloody electrocuting him!” (192). Eneas does not yet understand the import of his baptism-by-salmon, but the mix of love and pain in the river, the stubborn insistence on returning home, is all implicit in his physiological and psychological response to the cold.

The ways in which the fish’s experiences mirror Eneas’s own, however, and the way in which he cannot ultimately realize the full potential of his aquatic counterpart, continue to develop through this section. As he leaves the river, he is transformed, as “the salmony world is devouring and spitting him out at the same time, destroying and remaking him!” (193), and by the time he prepares to leave Sligo once more, he does so “with his soul as simple as a salmon’s” (201). What is it, exactly, that makes Eneas so like this fish that, pages earlier, had confounded him? More than any other aspect of the fish, most people are familiar with its brutal reproductive cycle. Salmon often travel hundreds of miles against the currents of rivers, returning to their places of birth in order to spawn. To indulge in a moment of sentimentalism, they return home, to their place of birth, to start a family. The moment he returns home after the baptism, in fact, Eneas is

faced with the failure of his journey upstream, as he “sees his niece and his brother and feels the bareness of his own life ... No children, no wife, no picture house where human actions unfold and are so warmly enacted” (195). It is though he is fated, to borrow the language of the novel, to continue returning home, to share the salmon’s journey, but never to realize the more hopeful and affirmative side of its trajectory.

Even as Eneas grows into something of a world citizen, and even as he encounters hostility and violence from within the home with which he identifies, he never comes to think of himself as anything other than an Irishman, a Sligoman. His connections to others may still be based in love or admiration, such as we see in his early francophilia, but they are strongest when filtered through his sense of home. His connection with Harcourt, to which I will return later, is so powerful because he sees so much of Sligo’s experience in decolonizing as a parallel to Lagos’s. The affective experiences of home, the empathy and care, in other words, are developed in and because of Sligo, but translate and extend beyond it. As Appiah has implied in *Cosmopolitanism*, we are most capable of caring about others and treating them ethically because of the cultivation of humane ideas and practices at home. If we do not or cannot love those closest to us, we cannot even approach any meaningful feelings or attitudes towards those whose home, whose context, is so removed. There is a reason why, even after Eneas has established bonds of friendship and kinship with his fellow sailors in the British Merchant Navy, he “feels the inclination of a pigeon to go home, to his proper home” (45). That pull is always stronger, but the strength of that pull comes from Ireland’s function for Eneas as a resource of love that makes other versions of home possible at all.

Eneas McNulty, then, is an exceptionally, even an implausibly, unique character, a striking exemplar of one of Barry's most common types, what Christina Mahony calls his "innocents" who the author "makes credible by coupling their unshakable belief in the goodness of others with their adherence to their own belief systems," a type capable of "ris[ing] to moments of illumination and clarity which the more fortunate among us can envy" (3). There is need for caution, as I have argued, because this risks the kind of ideological work Cullingford sees in Barry's texts, since the characters become so innately good that the reader may have little choice but to sympathize with them despite their problematic social and historical positioning. He lives through international and intranational wars, time as a police officer, firing but never hitting, never committing violence in any successful way. He has no investment whatsoever in political change, but he does love his family and his community. Taken at face value, he is hard to criticize except for his ignorance. By extending this characterization to an innumerable quantity of similarly-fated "boys of the black-lists" (97), Barry asks us as readers to extend the same sort of sympathy to other Irishmen who may be caught between worlds, as if the unlikely Eneas were more the indicator of a pattern than an aberration. Surely not all Irishmen who found themselves bankrolled by the British government were not so innocent. Recognizing this sleight of hand on Barry's part, however, does not disqualify from our consideration the real sense of loss for those who would find themselves like Eneas, "wandering and never coming back and always maybe be telling strangers of his love for Sligo and never seeing Sligo again" (97).

Returning to the point at hand, all of this is to say that Eneas's cosmopolitanism is highly qualified, or highly *partial*. When he does insinuate himself in other communities,

it is always a necessary compromise, and always begins as or at least becomes an attempt to translate what was great about his home to a new geospatial context. His journeys begin when, too young to enlist in the military proper, Eneas joins the British Merchant Navy. He does not, of course, relish his position as “a British sailor,” reflecting that to him, it “is death to say those words” (41). Despite the Anglo-sympathetic accusations, in other words, Eneas is conflicted about his connection to the British empire. Although part of the same economic system and chain of supplies which supports the war, Eneas does not even make it to the defense lines of the France he loves, nor does he engage in a single skirmish. Instead, he bides his time in Galveston, Texas, building a makeshift community with his fellow sailors, compatriots whose rootless and anchorless lifestyle is flexible and fluid enough to accommodate just about anyone.

## VI. The Northern Lights Hotel

These disparate and perhaps contradictory elements prepare the novel for its ultimate expression of Utopian possibility, the Northern Lights Hotel on the Isle of Dogs. It takes a group of unforgiven and disaffected social outcasts banding together because they are without homes to create the most welcoming and unconditionally accepting, tolerant home in the novel. Without the violent exclusion resulting from nationalist antagonism, and without first the intrasocietal ruptures of colonialism, Eneas and Harcourt, and the postcolonial types they represent, would not be able to create this haven. There are some problems with this, of course, because it might read as an apology for imperialist conquest on the grounds that it “brings cultures together,” but at the same time we cannot dismiss the novel’s resolution to imagine the best possible expression of

humanity to come from systems of oppression. In addition to being the novel's last desperate attempt to rescue something from the detritus of imperialism, however, it is more positively the culmination of successive representations of homes and communities through the novel.

Some of it, as I have suggested earlier, begins during Eneas's time in Sligo. In particular, his humanism and his empathy are clear results of his affinity with his family and the influence of his parents and Tuppenny Jane. When Eneas goes abroad, however, first with the British Merchant Navy, and then with the Navy proper to France and eventually Nigeria, he and the reader alike accumulate a set of lessons or values which will in turn be redeployed in the context of the Northern Lights Hotel at the novel's end. This accumulation begins with his time in Galveston Texas, where Eneas is among "a handful of men [who] can jimmy up a semblance of home" nearly anywhere. The implication is that it is the interactions and the system of support that matter more than the particular place. Although Eneas laments the loss of Sligo, he is able to find adequate substitutes. He does not yet know that he is to be permanently exiled from his birth home, but all the same he draws strength from the notion that he has the "liberty" of visiting "all the different versions of home in the ports of the world" in addition to the "peculiar but adequate home in the person of the boat" (36). His home could, in effect, be geographically anywhere but theoretically the same. It is in this exact context that makes his first connection to the "canopies of the Northern Lights," and it is here that "his formerly bleak heart sings privately in the dark of the humming boat" (37). In effect, the Northern Lights Hotel, with its name hearkening back to Eneas's peaceful state, becomes an attempt to extend this peacefulness to others who are similarly embleakened. Though



he is derided by his fellow sailors, and although he will lose some of this bright-eyed optimism, Eneas's adaptability, and the ultimate if melancholy willingness to cede geographic specifics, will suit him and his companions well when they establish their hotel. Moreover, it gives him a new sense of what it means to have a national identity, reducing a complex cultural inheritance or political process to a deliberate cognitive adjustment; Eneas, who "would like to be an American," decides that "[i]t is a matter of hailing himself as such, he supposes, in his own mind" (38).

Eneas's time in both France and Nigeria are equally important to the development of the Northern Lights Hotel's unassuming cosmopolitanism. Eneas meets Jean, a French winemaker, during World War II. He has arrived in France and been knocked unconscious during his first skirmish only to awake in chains in Jean's home. He begins bound and is soon put to labor, but ends feeling as though he is a member of a family whose members – mostly dead – he has not really even met. Waking in chains, Eneas's first reason for helping Jean around the vineyard is because, with his French captor, he need not worry about death. The vineyard is a better place to be than "find[ing] an unknown spot to die on with a bullet housed in his breast" (147). The move from captive to comrade is typically troubled, as Barry verges on romanticizing what is more or less slavery. It is discussed far less frequently than the novel's imperialist apologetics, but Eneas does go from literal shackles to being "shamelessly embrace[d]" by his captor, the old man who proceeds to break into sobs (148). It slowly starts to appear as though this is just a man with no clear sense of who it is he has captured, but the conditions of Eneas's servitude are initially, for all intents and purposes, slavery. With that qualifier in mind, however, Eneas's experience in France continues to cultivate the values on which the

Northern Lights Hotel is founded and “fulfils mysteriously for Eneas the dreamed love of his youth” (148). There is something dignified and noble in labor in service to others, the novel seems to be suggesting, as Eneas “works for Jean not so much because it makes any sense to him but because as Jean’s servant he serves his own dreams” (148). This service makes him one of the family, in a sense, as “he grows to love the poor sons in their permanent beds” (149). Jean because a second father of sorts to Eneas, despite the circumstances, and Eneas in turn demonstrates the capacity to integrate himself not only into new national contexts, but also into the most intimate of human relationships.

France is, as I have been suggesting, not a perfect representation of Utopian possibility. If anything, Eneas at times takes on the character of a revered family servant, the type who in Victorian Britain felt themselves part of the family even as their labor was exploited. He comes to think of himself, or rather comes to aspire to be, “the handmaiden, the midwife, the messenger of the old man’s happiness” (149). For all of its conflicting messages, the undercurrent of work in services to others, which grows increasingly in the novel to be work among and for equals rather than for superiors, emerges as a cardinal virtue. Although Eneas has no desire to fight or kill literally, he “is willing to fight the fight of clay and seed as long as he is allowed” (150). It goes unremarked by the narrator and by Eneas alike, but this observation is something of a turning point. Somewhere, his labor becomes volitional and even desired rather than forced, and his intimacy with Jean increases proportionately with his freedom of choice to serve. It becomes a way to respond to both his own anxiety and the sadness of this man who has lost so much. By the time he prepares to leave France, he and Jean are dancing together, working side by side to squash the grapes, and together “acquire the honour of

their labour” (152). Perhaps this is another case of Barry’s ideology, putting the lion’s share of the burden on the oppressed to transform social hierarchy, but it is also a profound representation of compassion creating equality and carving out a space for dignity where there had been none.

The importance of shared effort and responsibility carries over into, and is refined by, the development of Eneas’s relationship with Harcourt in Nigeria. As with Galveston and with France, Eneas is far from home, but he finds a surrogate family among his fellow labors. The horizontal, communitarian, and egalitarian comradeship he shares with Harcourt is particularly resonant with socialism and labor movements, in fact, given Harcourt’s insistent use of “brother” as a form of address. Their friendship becomes in turn a relationship of *healing*, as well. Eneas’s healing of Harcourt is fairly straightforward. Harcourt suffers from epileptic seizures, is ashamed of them and has to leave his employment because of them. He is told that “an afflicted person should not be seen among other men or work at their sides” (235). Eneas, rather than retaining his income, chooses to stay with his friend. In doing so, he reveals himself to be a far more compassionate human being than their boss Benson, who is rendered less humane by his use of a “vaguely oratorical” manner of speech. Eneas puts the needs of his friend’s health – and, again, his self-respect and dignity – above his own basic needs, a gesture that anticipates the deep forgiveness and turning of blind eyes which characterize the Northern Lights Hotel.

Harcourt’s healing of Eneas is more subtle and psychological, but equally profound. As the two work together, they begin to offer one another exactly what is most needed. Eneas’s “simpler heart,” we are told, “needs the balm of another person’s

bountiful friendship,” lulled to peace even if he is, as he believes, “beyond healing truly” (223). With time, Eneas grows increasingly afflicted with post-traumatic stress. When he can no longer physically manage the labor, however, Harcourt is there “digging for him, for his health, digging for it like a pirate digs for gold” (228). The wealth of the novel’s worldview is clearly in friendship and support; we know that Harcourt considers himself to be an intellectual, somewhat removed from the work, but he is as invested in it when it is for Eneas as the greediest man is when he looks to satiate that greed. Eneas “yearns for the refuge of an English madhouse,” and is “mortally exhausted sometimes by being this Eneas McNulty,” but when he begins to wish himself dead, “Harcourt . . . brings him back to the simpler world” of digging and communal work (228). The simplicity of life, which is tied into their brotherhood and the particulars of Harcourt’s capacity to heal his friend, carries over to the philosophy that underlies their proprietorship of the Northern Lights Hotel.

I will turn, now, in the closing section of the chapter to the section of the book which has been, in my own estimation, overlooked criminally. The Isle of Dogs, and in particular the Northern Lights Hotel Eneas and Harcourt open together, becomes a symbol for the possibility of a world beyond both imperialism and nationalism, a community that seeks neither to denigrate difference nor to extol it for its own sake, opting instead for loving acceptance. As I have suggested, the groundwork for this vision is laid as early as Eneas’s time in the Merchant Navy, where he first encounters the Northern Lights, and again where he is first exposed to the idea of home as a variable and often decentralized concept. It is fitting, then, that Eneas’s final home and the site of the Northern Lights Hotel is the Isle of Dogs. “Dogs” has a particular resonance with sailing

and with home; the term “rain dogs,” has been used historically to describe sailors who could no longer return home. The idea implicit in the metaphor is that the rain has washed away the smells of home, and so the dogs are lost. The sailors, then, have been away for so long or under such circumstances returning home ceases to be an option. Barry does not make this parallel explicit, but he does pepper the text with allusions to the phenomenon, such as the moment when, during one of Eneas’s final visits to Sligo, his mother observes that his clothes have become “oddly scentless” and “no longer carry the odour of his journeys” (200). Time slowly dissolves the markers of Eneas’s kinship with Sligo, and with his other homes, making him an ideal proprietor for a hotel on the Isle of Dogs.

The Isle of Dogs becomes a home for the homeless, then, a place where people who want neither to be found nor to cause any trouble can retire, however meager the existence they eke out. Barry uses the geographical features of the Isle of Dogs to his advantage here, turning topography into a metaphor for the Isle’s simultaneous positioning within and without England. The Isle of Dogs is not exactly an island, but more of a peninsula, attached to London by a tiny strand. More than anything, it is “a station fashioned after the hankering of his heart” and the preferred spot,” a “port as old as England herself” (282). And yet for Eneas, it does not even qualify *as* England. When, in the novel’s climax, Harcourt reassures Eneas that Jonno and his companion would not dare shoot him because they are in England, not Ireland, Eneas corrects his friend simply, “Isle of Dogs” (294). His response is actually somewhat pessimistic; he believes his new home to be beyond the concerns of the English, and therefore beyond their protection. At the same time, however, it also indicates that Eneas conceptualizes the Isle of Dogs and

the Northern Lights Hotel to be a nation apart, even an anti-nation or postnation. It is a hobo's Vatican, in other words, but without the problem of an empowered hierarchy. It is *within* England spatially, seated on the River Thames and Britain's highway to imperialism no less, but it subverts the logic of empire and disregards English sovereignty in favor of communitarian populism.

This compassion and acceptance of others can also be traced back to Eneas's time in the British Merchant Navy, as a sailor observes to him that the Isle of Dogs is a place where "sailors and such are understood" (48). This "and such," vague and unexplained, is implied in the residents of the Isle and of the hotel in particular. Sailors are one group of many who are dispossessed and exiled, unforgiven or simply uncared-for by society, and this kernel of an idea comes to fruition as a low-key institution in a makeshift Eden. Eneas, in fact, wonders if before creation "God Himself [stood] there before mankind ... with his [sic] ample creation, feeling the wind of His winds against His face, the water of His waters against His feet," "paddl[ing] in the river He had made?" (284). These are sacred waters to Eneas, or at least they may be. They seem to precede the fall or any notion of sin and the need for forgiveness. To cross them is to undergo a sort of baptism in water's blessed by God's presence. Given the novel's implied conviction that forgiveness is the ultimate virtue, situating a home beyond nations at this spot suggests a clean start, or at least a final refuge, for those who seek but cannot find forgiveness.

The Northern Lights Hotel institutionalizes and embodies these values. It is not a new building, but a repurposed old house Eneas purchase with years of his pension money. He upgrades it a little, adding convenience, dignity and privacy for his residents in the forms of locks and toilets, but otherwise changing little; the function of the

building is far more important than its appearance or its amenities. Save for a “mighty sign” bearing the hotel’s name, there is little adornment. Most of the hotel’s initial description is focused, instead, on its purpose: “And into this hotel they receive the battered wanderers, the weary sailors, the refugees from ferocious lives, the distressed alcoholics, the repentant murders if Harcourt’s suspicions are ever accurate – and the general flotsam of the great port river of life” (283). Socially, we are conditioned to stigmatize and distance ourselves from these kinds of people for various fears, whether of losing property, facing injury, or falling under pernicious influence. This is especially true of the last few categories; the “refugees” recall the boat of Jewish exiles that De Valera had kept out of Ireland, the recipients of Eneas’s greatest sympathy in the novel. The hotel’s acceptance of refugees, on some level, reads like a repudiation of neutrality that denies compassion. “Distressed alcoholics” are often threats to others, and “murders” unambiguously so. Eneas and Harcourt do not know for sure, but Harcourt suspects. That they have these suspicions but are willing to overlook them, that they assume a spirit of repentance and change without having to be shown proof, makes Eneas and Harcourt model agents of a reconciliatory paradigm, letting bygones be bygones without dismissing the moral weight of past actions.

It is not all easy. In fact, Eneas and Harcourt work hard to maintain the hotel. They are accustomed to it, though, from years of labor, and so every night Eneas “blesses the Northern Lights Hotel like a small farmer includes his holding in his night prayers” and “the medicine of nondescript and toiling years restores him” and Harcourt alike, as “not a trace of epilepsy disturbs, in his own grateful raise, his ‘social standing’” (283). Their generosity in unquestionably accepting – and effectively pardoning – the various

persons who find their way to the hotel is returned to them. What it does for Eneas, providing a purpose and a distraction, is fairly straightforward. What it does for Harcourt is more ambiguous and arguably more profound. He is either healed in a literal sense or, more poignantly, freed from the judgment that comes from a position of subordination in a social hierarchy. The mocking quotation marks around “social standing” suggest that everyone is on equal footing here, and if he is still having seizures, he no longer experiences the trauma of stigmatization. The Northern Lights appears to be, at least for a time, a model of civility and good humor found in the unlikeliest of places. In the end, it is fitting that Eneas comes to think of the hotel as an “ark” (304). It functions both as a physical reminder of a covenant of sorts, of a near-sacred bond between human beings, and yet it is also more simply a means by which to preserve life like a home in a great flood.

Ultimately, the hotel is neither particularly prosperous, nor is it fraught with financial difficulty, so most of the narrative treating the hotel focuses on how it improves the lives of those who stay there. The benefits are clear. Forgiveness is foremost among these, as is its potential to restore and enable change. The hotel is also a place that is not only tolerant and pluralistic, but even celebratory of difference. Death is inevitable, even in the most ideal of societies, but the way that the residents of the Northern Lights Hotel respond to it reveals both a depth of feeling and a lack of judgment, a desire to inhabit, at least for a while, the cognitive and emotional space of one’s fellow human beings. When the inmates die, “not violent” deaths but “the easy epic deaths of the lonesome,” Eneas and Harcourt model a deeply ecumenical spirit:



The proprietors of the Northern Lights Hotel don't fail observe the proper obsequies of their inmates, whether Methodist, Jewish, Baptist or renegade. The rabbi is called for to gather his man to the breast of Yahweh, the never-written name, or the minister for a strayed sheep of the Presbyterians, scratched though he be by briars. Father Connolly is fetched to honour the end of the odd stray Irishman. Therefore the Northern Lights is a kind of lean-to or hedge-school of the religions of the world and all are united at last in the long peace of decay. (285).

“Religions of the world” might be a bit of an overstatement based on the limited representation, but the idea works; because the Northern Lights does not discriminate, and because it goes as far as to adopt, however briefly, the practices of each of its inmates, those who live and die they have a sustained dignity and respect until the very end. The tone of the passage itself is very secular – it is the physiological substance of death that ultimately unifies everyone – but it is also completely respectful of the range of beliefs it represents. Like a hedge-school's impromptu and varying curriculum, religion at the Northern Lights is a hodge-podge of various concepts and ideas that nevertheless achieve a quiet harmony.

## VII. Conclusion – Transcendence and Ideology

The novel ends when Eneas rushes into the burning Northern Lights Hotel in an attempt to rescue Jonno from the fire that the IRA veteran himself started. Gruesomely, Eneas's hand is melted into the door handle and he is met by a “huge demonic tide of roaring fire” (305). The fire of judgment, which has haunted the book in the frequent

allusions to the biblical Lake of Fire, is upon him. Eneas, the bedraggled cosmopolitan, and his cosmopolitan hotel are consumed by the fires of unmerciful nationalist violence. As in each of the other texts I have discussed, the novel's ending invites several ideological readings. It is, after all, the ultimate destruction of a Utopian community by ideological forces, and it is also a moment which seemingly fits the convention of displacing the work to be done in the here and now by shifting focus to the hereafter.

After his protagonist's death, Barry continues Eneas's story as the Irishman's soul flies free. Eneas's "days on the earth are over," but "he rises in a fashion of immaculate peace and the fire does not harm him" (305). Again, we could levy another criticism of ideological indulgence at Barry here. If death is not *really* death, and if a lifetime of suffering is only a preamble to the hereafter, then does that not compromise the necessity of working for a better world? Arguably. Eneas's death is unabashedly transcendent and sentimental. He sees his family, both the living and the dead, as he heads for the stars. He first sees the living: his brother Jack is working on the docks while his spiritual brother Harcourt runs to safety from the burning Northern Lights Hotel. He is then reunited with the dead, as his sister Teasy greets him, cheerfully, in a "familiar garden" as "ambassador of that rubbed-out terrain." The father's garden, of course, is the book's literal point of reference here, but the prelapsarian implications are impossible to miss. He finds that his sister's "ould thing," cancer, has been "sorted" before she leads him on his way. As he leaves, he "looks . . . intently at the people he has known, without the least distraction, caught in their bottles "and recognizes that they "are treasure." He prays, however, for "the difficulties of *all* living persons, and wishes them good journey though the extreme

shoals of the long lake of fire” (307, emphasis mine). Everyone, he realizes, will burn, but through this burning are redeemed.

Life itself, it appears, is a purgatorial fire, but it is not one of judgment as Eneas had once thought: “Once through the fire [all men] are given their suit of stars. God the Tailor accepts the fabulous lunatics of the earth and stitches the immaculate seams” (308). Despite its overt sentimentality, the novel reinforces both the exceptional and exceptionally *common* qualities Eneas has. What makes him special, in the end, is really that he is able to see the value in other people. In his moment of death, he has the clarity and perspective – as he is rising literally above the earth – to see each person and to acknowledge each person’s worth. Tied up with seeing that value is seeing that each person suffers in different ways. This perspective allows him to act with love and kindness even in death, and it turns the whole notion of divine judgment and reward on its head. In the end, Eneas finds that God is watching, but he also finds that God is very much like his earthly parents, a tailor who clothes and accepts the alienated and outcast. It just turns out that this category comprises all of humanity. This is important.

Eneas’s afterlife is not a *reward* for his good behavior or for his beliefs, but rather an affirmation of the importance of each and every person. So although *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* arguably presents us with a distraction from the necessity of addressing social injustice, I am much more inclined to see it as a reminder to think about the significance of human life and human lives. Recognizing this is the first step to the cultivation of a meaningful ethical engagement with the world. Regardless of where we or Eneas are going when we die, the novel’s glimpse from beyond the grave is a call to reassess the way we live. Oppression is real, and challenging it is an ethical and moral

imperative. Preventing it, however, is also an ethical and moral imperative. Finding ways to institute change without reconfiguring oppression is challenging, and may more often than not be a matter of corrective action. Sometimes, the novel suggests, this will put us in murky relationships with systems of power, but we can and should challenge it with compassionate and vigilant commitment to love and to one another.

## CONCLUSION

In the introduction, I set out to chart one of the major issues in Irish studies as outlined by Declan Kiberd. Kiberd identifies a key imperative for the Irish in learning “how to distinguish what is good in nationalism from what is bad, and how to use the positive potentials to assist peoples to modernize in a humane fashion” (7). I have followed one impulse in Irish fiction that attempts to do precisely that. Although his formulations emerge from a historically and culturally distinct moment, I have found Kwame Anthony Appiah’s notion of “partial cosmopolitanism” useful in understanding that impulse. Reflecting on the work that I have done, however, I believe it would be useful to look to an earlier writer, Randolph Bourne. Like Appiah, Bourne’s work emerges from a cultural and historical moment far removed from most of the writers studied here. His key distinctions between “nation” and “state,” however, might help to explain and to understand the logic behind how these Irish writers looked beyond Ireland’s decolonization to imagine more inclusive and generous ways of relating to one another and to the world. Furthermore, it might help us think of Irish literature’s turn to partial cosmopolitanism as a case study in registering and challenging oppression without enabling its reinscription in new forms, a problem with which anyone interested in social transformation has ultimately to contend.

In the pages which remain, then, I have two objectives. Because Bourne is less prominently featured in my close readings of the texts, I will look back over the novels I have been examining in order to highlight their demonstrable investment in the Irish nation as a people as well as their criticism – even hostility – to Ireland as a nascent and

operative state. I will also touch on the varying degrees to which the writers in question adopt or endorse a version of Appiah's "partial cosmopolitanism." A striking feature of these novels is, after all, the conviction that a more efficacious nationalism is supported and enriched, rather than threatened, by dialogue with people and ideas beyond Ireland's borders. Finally, I will explore in brief the ways in which this project might be expanded in the future.

Although distinct from its continental contemporaries in being a movement with anti-imperialist intentions, Irish nationalism came to prominence at precisely the same historical moment as national sentiment writ large transformed Europe as a whole. In 1918, a year after the United States entered World War I, Randolph Bourne started writing *The State*. A long treatise that would go unfinished because of the writer's death the same year, Bourne's examination of national pride and careful distinctions between nations, states, and governments was written with a highly particular emphasis on the United States and its wartime patriotism. His ideas, however, function at the general level to help distinguish between types of national feeling and, in turn, can be abstracted with some qualifications to illuminate some ways by which these Irish writers resisted hegemonic nationalism without abandoning the love of their country.

Although Bourne was writing about a nation (the United States) entering a war (World War I), his observations are relevant inasmuch as Irish nationalism before, during, and after its overtly militaristic phase, has maintained a coercive mentality. When the actual wars – the Anglo-Irish and Irish Civil Wars – had past, coercion became focused inward on the newly-liberated Irish subject. *The State* makes a distinction between three terms which are frequently used interchangeably: nation, state, and

government. Following Bourne's delineation, at least roughly, we can begin to identify the general shape of a form of national affiliation and pride which still allows for, even invites, productive dissent and criticism, focusing inwardly on connection and loyalty rather than on paranoia and insistent affirmation of power. To paraphrase Kiberd, we might draw on Bourne's definitions in order to distinguish the good in nationalism from the bad or, in less charged terms, the useful from that which is no longer useful.

As many other writers have observed, the onset of war brings with it the sanctification or sacralization of the state and of violence. Some go as far as to suggest that nationalism is *itself* a religion (Ehrenreich 204-5). Bourne's assertions are more measured, but highly relevant to the case of Ireland. Patriotism, he argues, causes people to lose "all sense of the distinction between State, nation, and government." War may bring with it a "sense of sanctity of the State," despite the fact that governments are "composed of common and unsanctified men" who might still be "legitimate object[s] of criticism and even contempt." Setting aside, then, the flesh-and-blood personages of the government, we are left with the sacred state on the one hand and the nation on the other. In times of peace the nation (or country, in Bourne's terminology) is nebulous and non-political. It is identifiable geographically, but the "idea of Country concerns itself with the non-political aspects of a people, its ways of living, its personal traits, its literature and art, its characteristic attitudes toward life." Nations, following this logic, are defined by a shared land, the people who live in it, and the cultures of those communities. A nation need not be homogeneous, Bourne argues, as we "may be intensely proud of and congenial to our particular network of civilization" or, alternately, "detest most of its qualities and rage at its defects" despite being "inextricably bound up in it." Our feelings

and thoughts about our nations, as cultures and populations, may vary, but there are no sanctioned or legitimated consequences for dissent.

Internationally, this sense of nation *as* the people, is not intrinsically hierarchical or exceptionalist. In fact, Bourne argues, it is “essentially noncompetitive” because “[o]ur interest turns within rather than without, is intensive and not belligerent.” The state, on Bourne’s account, is to be understood in direct opposition to the nation (or country) despite their frequent conflation: “Country is a concept of peace, of tolerance, of living and let live,” while “State is essentially a concept of power, of competition ... signif[ying] a group in its aggressive aspects.” This is a critical point. Nationalism, following these definitions, might be an intensely-felt national pride which neither seeks to subjugate or dominate other cultures nor to authorize a prescriptive code of citizenship. I am suggesting that, in his or her own way, each of the authors in this study shows strong feelings of affiliation and love for the people and culture that constitute the Irish “nation” in Bourne’s sense. But these writers have been treated almost uniformly as anti-nationalist because of their critical attitudes toward the Irish state and its use of coercion.

The defining features of the state are the legitimacy of its power and the citizens’ acquiescence to that power. It is, Bourne writes, “the group acting as a repository of force, determiner of law, arbiter of justice.” These are – arguably – valuable functions which help to ensure the wellbeing of a national population. While not a departure from Bourne’s more critical perspective, some might go as far as to say that force has been, historically, a necessity for decolonizing nations like Ireland, and few would disagree that justice is an indispensable concept in any society, even though they may disagree about what justice looks like in practice. A state is identifiable by these acts of power: “When a



country acts as a whole in relation to another country, or in imposing laws on its own inhabitants, or in coercing or punishing individuals or minorities, it is acting as a State.” Following its trajectory from the years before independence and into the twentieth century, we can see all the good and bad of Ireland as a state. The cultivation of a resistance mentality and securing of independence through military action, while by definition violent, were necessary and probably inevitable steps in casting off imperialist oppression and exploitation, but the downsides are equally striking. The subsequent violence of the IRA, though not officially sanctioned by the government proper, can still be seen as being a state function in the minds of the participants who insistently maintained the notion of an Irish Republic in their name. More subtly, the disenfranchisement of Irish women and of religious minorities in the Republic, are equally reminiscent of Bourne’s warnings about the state.

At times of war and violent struggle, the function of the state is carried out not only by the elected officials and enforcers of the law, but by the citizenry – the nation – itself. The IRA is, again, the obvious place to look, but the people as a whole are largely transformed. The blurring of lines between nation and state leads to mistrust, for example, as each “individual citizen ... becomes an amateur agent of the Government in reporting spies and disloyalists,” as “[m]inority opinion ... becomes ... a case for outlawry,” and “[p]ublic opinion, as expressed in the newspapers, and the pulpits and the schools, becomes one solid block.” Bourne is speaking of the transformation which takes place in times of war, but his argument also suggests that this mentality is endemic to the state at times of peace. Likewise, I would argue that Ireland, psychologically, never stopped being at war even after gaining independence. The need to continue steering

Ireland toward greater cultural unity, a byproduct of the strategic valorization of Irishness largely constructed and used by the British as justification for their rule, ensured that. Conditioned to think of itself as being perpetually at war, Ireland has only recently begun to function more as a nation and less as a state. If, as Bourne famously concludes, “[w]ar is the health of the state,” then the Irish state remained, and remains very healthy, even if the war has turned inward.

Bourne’s distinction between nation and state are helpful in rescuing “nationalism” from its negative connotations. “Nation,” understood as the positive feelings which come from community and a relationship to place and culture, does not have to be collapsed into “state,” the institutional expression of force, coercion, and hegemony. Nationalism, then, has been vital for creating community and challenging British oppression and internalized ideas of inferiority, although it has also, in its enabling of the state, damaged the Irish people. I hope that by emphasizing alternatives forms of Irish nationalism, ones that celebrate the Irish people and culture but that turn outward to resist the effects of the state, we can begin to rethink not only the too-easy binary of imperialist and nationalist expressions in Irish literature, but also recognize models for reconceptualizing national affiliation and subjectivity.

Of the four authors whose work I have explored in detail, Bram Stoker is the clearest outlier. All of his work was produced before the 1916 Easter Rising, and he wrote little that dealt directly with Ireland or Irish nationalism. What he did write, though it toyed with stereotype and romantic convention, was affirmative and celebratory. *The Snake’s Pass*, despite its gombeen villain and the implicit superiority of its English narrator, nevertheless depicts an Irish population that is sometimes generous, capable of

great courage and intelligence, and fluent in capturing and communicating knowledge through alternate epistemologies. They are bad as well as good, but they are not homogenous as a people. There is in *The Snake's Pass* no singular Irish essence, but rather a varied society with a rich and layered oral culture. Building on Bourne's definition of a nation as a people bound together by a non-competitive and non-hierarchical love of place, *The Snake's Pass* appears nationalistic without tipping into the paranoia of patriotism. The cosmopolitanism of *Dracula* is as much an extension of this philosophy as it is an expression of a much-younger Stoker's university speeches. Freed from the naturalized assumption of a hierarchy of nations, the more famous novel's transnational collective borrows, melds, and revises national and individual selves in order to meet the challenge of a foe who would impose upon them, by way of vampirism, a deadly uniformity. In short, we can follow an arc from *The Snake's Pass* to *Dracula* in which Stoker's reevaluation of national character enables him to postulate a free subject-position that is informed by many nations but bound by none.

If there are glimmers of Bournian nationalism in Stoker's esteem for Ireland's people, place, and culture, he does not engage it as a state. There are obvious reasons for this, of course, as Ireland was still decades away from statehood, but the refusal to settle on an authorized notion of Irishness (or appropriate personality more generally) hints at what one assumes would be a resistance to state prescriptivism. By the time Joyce published *Ulysses* serially, however, the way Ireland would function as a state was becoming clear. Joyce was able to look back on the movements to which Stoker was a rough contemporary and identify the militarism, what Bourne would call patriotism or paranoia, which infused cultural nationalism and Joyce personified them in the Citizen.

The Citizen is the mouthpiece of an Irish state-to-be; he recognizes and articulates, as did Joyce, the wrongs committed by the English and the potential of the Irish hindered by their colonial status. His response to those wrongs, however, involves the cultivation of a hypermasculine and essentialist, even pseudo-imperialist, Irish cultural identity that Joyce seems to fear would turn prescriptive. Leopold Bloom's presence, and his deeply internalized identification with Ireland, reflects the hybrid reality of Irish experience and of the modern nation more generally. His Irishness and his Jewishness are not mutually exclusive or incompatible. On the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing, especially in the ways they help Bloom conceptualize a nation bound less by geographic proximity than by shared interest as human beings. Conventionally speaking, the Citizen is the nationalist in this pairing, but on Bourne's alternative view of nations and nationalism, Bloom is an even better candidate. He is both nationalist and cosmopolitan, perhaps even the archetype of the Irish "partial cosmopolitan." The Citizen, then, becomes simply a personification of the state masquerading as nation.

Kate O'Brien, as I have argued, wrote in response to the 1937 Constitution and the rapid erosion of rights faced by women in the Irish Free State. As such, she is the first writer in this study to respond directly to the realized political expression of Irish sovereignty. The displacement of *The Land of Spices* to Ireland in the early twentieth century does nothing to temper its association of conventional Irish nationalism with patriarchy and male privilege. Father Conroy, Mother Mary Andrew, and Anna's grandmother all encourage the young protagonist to subordinate her own growth to the needs of the family and of the nation. Conroy, in particular, is also a vocal proponent for the liberation of Ireland from British rule, and like the Bishop, he does not always appear

unreasonable. The Bishop, however, emerges as a nationalist with the actual interest of the people *as a whole* in mind. Though not devoid of statism entirely, his view is tempered by his cooperation with Reverend Mother Helen Archer, the one character who, among all the others I have examined, may come closest to what Appiah calls a “hard-core cosmopolitan” (xvi). She is barely swayed by, and scarcely articulates, any attachment to her home nation of England or her current home in Ireland, and she instead seems to associate all nationalism with its expression in the form of the state. That Anna Murphy’s future is opened up, ultimately, by a cooperative gesture between cosmopolitan and nationalist figures, moreover, implies a potential rehabilitation or recovery of nationalism.

As O’Brien’s loving portraits of Spain in both fiction and non-fiction attest, the author herself recognized that love of people and culture did not have to lead, as she feared it sometimes would, to coercion, violence, or fascism. Her hispanophilia, in fact, might make the case for her status as a Spanish nationalist – on highly particular terms. The account of individual potential cut short in *Farewell, Spain* resonates with the future Anna Murphy narrowly avoids in *The Land of Spices*; each is the result of confusing state and nation, of prescriptivism rooted, at some level, in a charitable and well-intentioned spirit. Like Joyce before her, and like Kiberd long after, O’Brien appears convinced that, no matter how difficult it might be, the good in nationalism might ultimately be separated from the bad done by the state.

I have argued that Sebastian Barry’s *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* is one of Ireland’s most fully-realized expressions of partial cosmopolitanism. But it is also one of the novels that most clearly demonstrates the distinctions Bourne makes between

nation and state. Although he finds himself on the blacklists, is exiled from Ireland, and is ultimately murdered by the IRA, Eneas McNulty is a thorough nationalist in the sense that he is always compelled to return home and ceaselessly expresses his love for Sligo and its people. No other character I have treated here, in fact, demonstrates as much devotion to Ireland. But, as Bourne suggests, nationalism might be experienced in a transnational world, it is not for Eneas a matter of superiority or exceptionalism. Ireland is home, and it is beautiful, but France is wonderful, too. And Texas. And Nigeria. The cosmopolitan influence is not contradictory to national feeling for Eneas. Instead, it is made possible and legitimated by the forms of love Eneas cultivates first at home. The “bad” of nationalism, then, is really the coercion of the state. It is the economic disenfranchisement of those who refuse violence, the marginalization of women, the cyclical paranoia that goes under the name of patriotism and, in the final moments of Barry’s novel, burns a transnational Utopia to the ground. Eneas’s love for his nation is not underdeveloped; it is too developed for his own good.

From Bourne, then, I take the position that nations can and should be understood as distinct from states. He is not alone in making this distinction. One finds similar accounts in the work of Ernest Gellner, for example. But by offering a thoughtful and provocative classificatory system for social organization, Bourne seems more convinced of the ethical and moral importance of recognizing and acting on these distinctions. Nations are, for Bourne, an expression of community and connection, of love of people and of place, while states are the repositories of force through which oppression thrives and by which international violence is made possible. Although, as I have argued in several chapters, even cultural nationalism can be implicitly militaristic, conceptualizing

nations in this way allows us to think of alternate nationalisms freed from the self-perpetuating mentality of violence. Similarly, it might encourage us to recognize and validate the diversity intrinsic to any nation rather than adopting a prescriptive mindset that recognizes and authorizes a right way to be. Challenging the state, then, challenging the unquestioned authority of military leaders and the Irish Republic, might be seen not as anti-nationalist but *pro*-nationalist.

There are, I believe, a number of directions to go from here. I would be interested to see, for example, the degree to which other postcolonial literatures can be understood in these terms. I am also interested in how other Irish writers working in other genres, but with an explicit interest in both the national and transnational, might fit into the conversation. Seamus Heaney is a quintessentially Irish poet, but some of his deepest insights about Irish nationalism and violence come not from his poems about Ireland but from his Scandinavian bog poems. What do these structures of feeling and patterns of experience, remarkably similar despite geographic distance, suggest for different ways of conceptualizing transnational identification and solidarity as a response to the more negative experiences of nationalism? There are also questions of influence. What, for example, does Ireland's repeated cultivation of nationalism on the stage as a means to affect change, from the *Abbey* to *Field Day*, tell us about playwrights in other decolonizing cultures like Derek Walcott? My suspicion is that, beyond the particulars – which cannot and should not be overlooked – we might, through the study of this literature, continue to move towards the articulation and refinement of those most elusive abstractions: empathy, forgiveness, and even love.

## WORKS CITED

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Ed. 1983. New York: Verso, 2006. Print.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: Norton, 2006. Print.
- Arata, Stephen D. "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization." Auerbach and Skal 462-9. Print.
- Arnold, Matthew. *On the Study of Celtic Literature, and On Translating Homer*. MacMillan: New York, 1883. Print.
- Auerbach, Nina and David J. Skal, eds. *Dracula*. New York: Norton, 1997. Print.
- Barry, Sebastian. "A Conversation with Sebastian Barry." *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*. Unnumbered. Print.
- . "Lies and More Lies." *The Princeton University Library Chronicle* 68.1-2 (2006): 640-8. Print.
- . *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*. New York: Penguin, 1998. Print.
- Boland, Eavan. "Continuing the Encounter." Walshe 15-23.
- Bourne, Randolph. "The State." *Untimely Papers*. 1918. *Fair Use Repository*. Web. 12 March 2015.
- Breen, Mary. "Something Understood? Kate O'Brien and *The Land of Spices*." Walshe 167-89.
- Buchelt, Lisabeth. "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*." *New Hibernia Review*. 16.1 (2012): 113-33. Print.



- Burns, Christy L. *Gestural Politics: Stereotype and Parody in Joyce*. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2000. Print.
- Cheng, Vincent J. *Joyce, Race and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Cronin, Edward. "'Citizen James Joyce': Some Possible Sources for 'Cyclops.'" *Irish University Review* 15.1 (1985): 20-37. Print.
- Cullingford, Elizabeth. "Colonial Policing: *The Steward of Christendom* and *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*." *Éire-Ireland*. 39.3-4 (2004): 11-37. Print.
- Dalsimer, Adele. *Kate O'Brien*. Boston: Twayne, 1990. Print.
- Daly, Nicholas. "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*." *Literature and History* 3.4 (1995): 42-70. Print.
- Davison, Neil R. "'Cyclops,' Sinn Fein, and 'The Jew'." *Journal of Modern Literature* 19.2 (1995): 245-57. Print.
- Deane, Paul. "Rebels Without a Cause: Sebastian Barry's *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*." *Notes on Modern Irish Literature*. 13 (2001): 28-32. Print.
- Deane, Seamus. *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980*. Winston-Salem: Wake UP, 1985. Print.
- Doyle, Laura. *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2008. Print.
- Dwan, David. *The Great Community: Culture and Nationalism in Ireland*. Field Day: Dublin, 2008. Print.
- Eglinton, John, W. B. Yeats, A.E., and William Larminie. *Literary Ideals in Ireland*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1899. Print.

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997. Print.
- Ellman, Richard. *James Joyce*. 1959. New and Revised Edition. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983. Print.
- Foster, Roy. “‘Something of Us Will Remain’: Sebastian Barry and Irish History.” Mahony 183-97. Print.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Second Ed. 1983. Ithaca, NY: Blackwell, 2006. Print.
- Gifford, Don with Robert J. Seidman. *Ulysses Annotated*. 1974. Revised and Expanded Ed. Berkeley: U of California P, 2008. Print.
- Harrington, John P., ed. *Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Norton, 2009. Print
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1983. Print.
- Ingman, Heather. “Translating between Cultures: A Kristevan Reading of the Theme of the Foreigner in Some Twentieth-Century Novels by Irish Women.” *The Yearbook of English Studies*. 36.1 (2006): 177-90. Print.
- Jameson, Frederic. “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture.” 1992. *The Jameson Reader*. Eds. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 123-48. Print.
- Joyce, James. “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages.” 1907. *The Critical Writings*. New York: The Viking Press, 1959. 153-74. Print
- . *Ulysses*. 1934. New York: Vintage, 1990. Print.

- Kane, Anne. *Constructing Irish National Identity: Discourse and Ritual During the Land War, 1879-1882*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011. Print.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996. Print.
- Kurdi, Maria. "‘Really All Danger’: An Interview with Sebastian Barry." *New Hibernia Review*. 8.1 (2004): 41-54. Print.
- Ladrón, and Juan F. Elices Agudo, Eds. *Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2011. Print.
- Langan, John. "'Through the Gates of Darkness': The Cosmopolitan Gothic of J. Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker." *Studies in the Fantastic* 1 (2008): 59-70. Print.
- Lennon, Joseph. *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Syracuse: Syracuse U P, 2004. Print.
- Lloyd, David. "Black Irish, Irish Whiteness and Atlantic State Formation." *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas*. Eds. Peter O’Neill and David Lloyd. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 3-19. Print.
- . *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity, 1800-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Print
- Lynch, Patricia A., Joachim Fischer and Brian Coates. *Back to the Present, Forward to the Past: Irish Writing and History Since 1798*. New York: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2006. Print.
- Maddox, James H., Jr. *Joyce’s Ulysses and the Assault Upon Character*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1978. Print.

- Mahony, Christina., ed. *Out of History: Essays on the Writings of Sebastian Barry*.  
Washington, D.C.: Catholic U of America P, 2006. Print.
- Manganiello, Dominic. *Joyce's Politics*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. Print.
- Merriman, Victor. "B(e)aring Uncomfortable Truths: Intranational Translation as Critical Strategy In Plays by Barry, Bolger, and O'Kelly." *Drama Reinvented: Theatre Adaptation in Ireland, 1970-2007*. Ed. Thierry Dubost. New York: Peter Lang, 2012. 171-81. Print.
- Morash, Chris. "Ever Under Some Unnatural Condition: Bram Stoker and the Colonial Fantastic." *Literature and the Supernatural: Essays for the Maynooth Bicentenary*. Ed. Brian Cosgrove. Blackrock, Dublin: Columbia Press. 1995. 95-119. Print.
- Murray, Paul. *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker*. Pimlico: Random House, 2004. Print.
- O'Brien, Kate. *Farewell, Spain*. New York: Doubleday, Doran, & Company, 1937. Print.
- . "Imaginative Prose by the Irish, 1820-1970." *Myth and Reality in Irish Literature*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1977. 304-13. Print.
- . *Mary Lavelle*. 1936. London: Virago, 2006. Print.
- . *The Land of Spices*. 1941. London: Virago, 2006. Print
- O'Malley, Seamus. "Amnesia and Recovery of the Great War in Plays by McGuinness and Barry." *New Hibernia Review*. 16.4 (2012): 110-26. Print.
- Pearse, Patrick. "The Coming Revolution." 1913. *Irish Writing; An Anthology of Irish Literature in English*. Oxford, NY: Oxford Press, 2004. 185-9. Print.
- Potts, Willard. *Joyce and the Two Irelands*. Austin, TX: U of Texas P, 2000. Print.

- Reizbaum, Marilyn. "Urban Legends." *Éire-Ireland* 45.1-2 (2010): 242-65. Print.
- "Revelation." *New King James Version*. Bible Gateway. Web. 3 13 2015.
- Russell, George ("AE"). "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism." 1899. *Imaginations and Reveries*. 1915. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 3 March 2015.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ed. 1978. New York: Vintage, 2003. Print.
- Schmitt, Cannon. "Mother Dracula: Orientalism, Degeneration, and Anglo-Irish National Subjectivity at the Fin de siècle." *Bucknell Review* 38.1 (1994): 25-39. Print.
- Schwarze, Tracey Teets. "'Do You Call That a Man?' The Culture of Anxious Masculinity in Joyce's *Ulysses*." *Masculinities in Joyce: Postcolonial Constructions*. Eds. Christine van Boheemen-Saaf and Colleen Lamos. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001. 113-135. Print.
- Seree-Chassunand, Christelle. "Irish Man, No Man, Everyman: Subversive Redemption in Sebastian Barry's *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*." *Sub-Versions: Trans-National Readings of Modern Irish Literature*. Ed. Ciaran Ross. The Netherlands: Rodopi, 2010. 53-64. Print.
- Stevens, David. "Nationalism as Religion." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*. 86.343 (1997): 248-58. Print.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1897. Auerbach and Skal 1-327. Print.
- . "The Necessity for Political Honesty." 1872. *Bram Stoker's A Glimpse of America and Other Lectures, Interviews, Essays*. Ed. Richard Dalby. Essex, UK: Desert Island Books, 2002. 154-61. Print.
- . *The Snake's Pass*. 1890. Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Brandon, 1990. Print.

- Thiel, Markus. *The Limits of Transnationalism: Collective Identities and EU Integration*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2011. Print.
- Ungar, Andras. *Joyce's Ulysses as National Epic: Epic Mimesis and the Political History of the Nation State*. Gainesville, FL: U P of Florida, 2002. Print.
- Valente, Joseph. "James Joyce and the Cosmopolitan Sublime." *Joyce and the Subject of History*. Eds. Mark A. Wollaeger, Victor Luftig, and Robert Spoo. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996. 59-80. Print.
- Valente, Joseph. *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood*. Chicago: U of IL P, 2002. Print.
- Wallace, Clare. "Judgement in Kate O'Brien's *The Land of Spices*." Lynch et al. 17-26.
- Whitman, Walt. "Song of Myself." 1891-2. *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. New York: Norton, 2002. 26-80. Print.
- Wilde, Oscar. "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." 1891. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde: Stories, Plays, Poems and Essays*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008. 1079-1104. Print.
- Yeats, William Butler. "Man and the Echo." 1938. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*. Rev. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Ed. Richard J. Finneran. New York: Scribner, 1996. Print.
- Zettl, Karin. "Transcending Borders – Limerick, Ireland, Europe: Kate O'Brien as Critic and Novelist." Lynch et al. 41-9.

## APPENDIX A: Debate in *The Dublin Daily Express*

George Russell's "Nationality or Cosmopolitanism" was, in fact, the endpoint of a debate in *The Dublin Daily Express* which was collected in 1899 under the title *Literary Ideals in Ireland*. As the Editor's Note in the collection explains, the "articles constitute a controversy which was not intended when the first article was written," but which came together into "a certain organic unity" (Eglinton et al. 5). John Eglinton's "What Should be the Subjects of National Drama?" initiated the conversation, with Eglinton asking straightforwardly the question of the proper topic for "a writer of dramatic genius" in Ireland: "Would he look for it in the Irish legends, or in the life of the peasantry and folklore, or in Irish history and patriotism, or in life at large as reflected in his own consciousness?" (9). Eglinton sees the literature of continental Europe losing its originality and suggests, rather prophetically, that the twentieth century will be full of "great social and political questions and events which can hardly have immediate expression in literature," imagining the possibility of Ireland becoming a potential home for great literature, because, in Eglinton's words, Ireland has "no great tradition to be upset or much social sediment to be stirred up" (10). Of course, Eglinton is fully aware of the Irish cultural tradition, but he sees it as distinct from the project of a forward-thinking modern movement. Indeed, much as Russell does later in the debate, Eglinton argues that the ancient legends have as much value as more globally-recognized classic traditions like the Greek. He does not, however, anticipate their having any intrinsic value just for being Irish and worries that the use of the ancient Irish mythos as source material would lead simply to an aesthetic and ephemeral type of writing, to "[b]elles lettres," which "seek a subject outside experience" unlike "national literature," which reflects "a strong

interest in life itself” (11). Perhaps, given his absurdly ironic claim that Ireland is without “social sediment,” Eglinton does not seem to have seen the potential social and political implications of writing in dialogue with the ancient Irish tradition. This did appear, after all, in a unionist paper. In fact, he reads that dialogue as purely intellectual or aesthetic, and regards the pursuit of them as self-defeating. Even as he romanticizes the past, he warns the would-be-revivalist, “The truth is, these subjects ... obstinately refuse to be taken up out of their old environment and be transplanted into the world of modern sympathies” because the “proper mode of treating them is a secret lost with the subjects themselves” (11). The core of his resistance to a national literature built on tradition is that the value of the material may not extend beyond the immediate context within which it was written. Eglinton’s formulations imply a punctual break between past and present, a version of the discontinuity revivalists themselves attempted to repudiate. In order for Ireland to “exchange the patriotism which looks back for the patriotism which looks forward” (12), it will have to focus on the contemporary moment.

Eglinton’s inadvertent initiation of the nationality-cosmopolitan debate was, in effect, in its inception more a debate about the appropriate material for the Irish writer. Yeats’s initial response, portions of the piece entitled “A Note on National Drama,” suggests that the Irish might become, like the continental traditions before it, a model and influence beyond its geographical borders (19). Despite deriving from a specific cultural context, ancient legends can have implications for diverse cultures with very few surface historical or cultural similarities; what may be narrow in national focus may, in fact, have transnational resonance and influence. Part of what Yeats is doing in defending the Irish tradition as relevant material is, in fact, part of the larger project of empowering the Irish:



“The Irish legends, in popular tradition and in old Gaelic literature, are more numerous, and as beautiful as the Norse and German legends, and alone among great European legends have the beauty and wonder of altogether new things” (19). The Irish literary tradition has the potential to enrich the global literary and cultural worlds because it has not had the same level of exposure as other traditions and is as much about the folk tales of recent generations for Yeats as it is the ancient legends. In fact, “A Note” effectively elides the question of a gap in continuity altogether. Situating himself and the contemporary Irish writer in general as part of an ongoing tradition (rather than a forgotten one), he argues:

Our legends are always associated with places, and not merely every mountain and valley, but every strange stone and little coppice has its legend, preserved in written or unwritten tradition. Our Irish romantic movement has arisen out of this tradition, and should always, even when it makes new legends about traditional people and things, be haunted by places. It should make Ireland, as Ireland and all other lands were in ancient times, a holy land to her own people. (19)

The repetition of the pronoun “our” is significant for several reasons. First, it suggests that Yeats and Protestant writers are as much heirs to the Irish past as the Catholic peasants. These are *ours*. Additionally, it implies a lineage of producers of Irish culture and writing in which the contemporary figures are part of the same collective as the ancient. What appears discontinuous is, in fact, embedded in the continued telling of stories tied to a sacred national space. The fullest expression of the individual, again anticipating Russell’s later intervention, might be in this shared and holy space. In effect,

it might be accurate to say that Yeats here is less interested in rediscovering and reviving the past than he is in demonstrating that it is alive in the present. Writing that borrows from or focuses on the legends, then, *is* writing of contemporary significance.

At times, the debate verges on a debate about pure aesthetics, but the nationalist implications never disappear fully. Eglinton rebuts in “National Drama and Contemporary Life?,” somewhat defensively but insightfully, that he “did not deny the possibility of a poet being inspired by the legends of his country,” but suggests that something changes in the process of bringing the past into the present, as “these characters and situations become entirely new creations by virtue of the new spirit and import which [the poet] puts into them” (23; 24). His concern with writing inspired by the past is that a writer “looks too much away from himself and from his age, does not feel the facts of life, but seeks in art an escape from them,” an escape which, in foreclosing “the expression of the age and of himself—cannot be representative or national” (27). Eglinton’s suggestion that art represents an escape rather than a means by which to confront the problems of the nation and the age, rather ironically, anticipates the type of aestheticist-escapist desire one might read in Yeats’s later poetry. Too much regard for formalism and for recreating a spirit (which, again, Yeats would perhaps suggest did not need to be recreated but simply uncovered), might yield a culturally impotent form of writing, beautiful but unable to offer anything substantial. As Eglinton writes later, in “Mr. Yeats and Popular Poetry,” “the Irish legends have come down to us in a certain form and language, proper to the original conception of them, and they can be only be made to live again by something new added to them out of the author’s age and personality” (42). Yeats, of course, would suggest that this is precisely the point at times,

as he does in “John Eglinton and Spiritual Art,” where he proclaims “I believe that the renewal of belief . . . will more and more liberate the arts from ‘their age’ and from life, and leave them more and more free to lose themselves in beauty,” and positions great poetry as less utilitarian and engaged with a criticism of life than enabling of “a revelation of a hidden life” (36).

The aforementioned “Mr. Yeats . . .” is Eglinton’s final word in the debate, and it is here that he calls specifically for the sort of universalism that will be read, in turn, as cosmopolitan by Russell. “The facts of life with which poetry is concerned,” writes Eglinton, “are not the complex and conventional, but the simple and universal” (42). It is at this point A. E., George Russell, offers the first intervention in the debate, which he sees as having grown increasingly erudite and abstract. He sees the two as talking about slightly different matters altogether, as engaging in what amounts to two distinct debates, and in fact reads them rather generously as holding positions more similar to one another than either would concede. In “Literary Ideals in Ireland,” Russell describes the progression as a movement from a “comparatively simple issue” to “a divergence into the elemental principles of art and a consideration of life itself” with “the disputants ask[ing] of each other questions as difficult to answer as the question asked of Christ by Pilate” (49). He engages both Yeats and Eglinton dialogically, first challenging Eglinton’s notion that the ancient material cannot be abstracted for the purposes of the present through an interpretation of what Russell believes Yeats is actually trying to do. Ancient history and myth eventually grow to have “the character of symbol,” which is “more potent than history,” and compares the “heroic spirit” of Prometheus to that of Cuchulain, the beauty of Helen to that of Deirdre (51). The national can, in fact, speak to the universal. Russell

does not think that Yeats and Eglinton actually disagree – it is just that Eglinton has misunderstood Yeats. Memory of the past, embedded in culture, makes it as present as current events (51-2).

In his sole contribution to the discussion, “Legends as Material for Literature,” William Larminie agrees with and expands on Russell’s position by pointing out that there is a widespread and generally accepted poetic practice of looking to legend and tradition for material. In very plain terms, he writes that “it seems a little hard that those of Ireland alone should be tabooed” (58). He suggests, however, that too much formalism may be symptomatic of deeper social deprivation, that a lack of cultural enthusiasm yields only empty aestheticism and forecloses any means of truly vital creativity (60). So, despite some sympathy with Russell, there are important qualifications, especially with regards to how each interprets Yeats’s position – which Larminie attacks for being too indebted to French symbolism. While Larminie is “by no means inclined to exclude Irish legends from the subjects permissible to Irish poets,” he asserts the importance of discussing the “desirability of dealing with them, and, incidentally, the best mode of dealing with them” (57). Simply put, Larminie suggests that without anything “stimulating the whole community” (60), its art cannot be more than formal beauty, echoing Eglinton’s admonitions against belles-lettres. Yeats’s own final contribution, “The Autumn of the Flesh,” then, constitutes a defense of formalism in which he imagines the artist and the poet taking up the position of the priests and “lead[ing] us back upon our journey by filling our thoughts with the essences of things, and not with things” (74), implying that the ideals may prove corrective for the course of the nation, and that the forms and legends have inherent transformative potential.

## APPENDIX B: Patrick Pearse and Militant Nationalism

If cultural nationalism, especially as mediated by its highly visible Protestant advocates, appears ambivalent about Ireland's potential realization as an independent political entity, the prominent voices in militant nationalism are more harmonious and forthright. Although it has become somewhat clichéd at this point to characterize the Easter Rising as a writers' rebellion, the interplay and overlap between Ireland's intellectual sphere and its militant contingency cannot be overstated. Whatever Yeats's later self-attribution in "Man and the Echo" suggests to us, however, a direct causal relationship between text and action is hard to substantiate. It is also unnecessary. Although the primary thrust of nationalist political action in the late nineteenth century focused on reclamation of Irish lands from the English or Anglo-Irish and Home Rule, violence remained a regular experience and a default tactic for significant numbers of Irish nationalists. By the time of the Literary Revival, then, violence was a familiar and increasingly normalized part of the Irish experience. Likewise, and perhaps more acceptably, sacrificial rhetoric came to inform historical memory and literary production, transforming monumental defeats like that of the 1798 Rebellion into venerated narratives of death for a greater good. The reemergence of heroic myths from Ireland's distant past, the stories of Fionn and Cuchulain, as well as the transformation of recent history into narrative form, began to solidify a body of texts in which dying for the Irish cause was the highest and noblest aspiration, among both the Catholic Irish and even the Protestant Anglo-Irish with deep British sympathies.

In the years following Parnell's fall from favor, the covert – and overt – militarism of cultural nationalism complicates, increasingly, these classificatory schemes

with which we generally discuss Irish nationalism. The ideas of the former are clearly resonant with those expressed in the latter, and the emerging leaders of Irish military resistance, especially Patrick Pearse, begin to address the collapsing of the two, retroactively revising and altering the entire project of cultural nationalism in the process. In Pearse's 1913 essay "The Coming Revolution," published in the Gaelic League's *An Claidheamh*, or *The Sword of Light*, Pearse articulates what Regan identifies as "an unwavering commitment to armed insurrection" (488). Moreover, Pearse suggests that this is the natural culmination of all nationalism which preceded it. The essay was written in response to the arming of Ulster loyalists in the North, and it indicts the nationalist Irish for letting their guns be taken away. Pearse begins by addressing the Gaelic League, telling his audience that "the Gaelic League, as the Gaelic League, is a spent force" and that he is "glad of it" (185). Promoting the Irish language, as an end in itself, or for the restoration of dignity per the guiding principles of cultural nationalism, is no longer adequate in the face of potential violent resistance to Home Rule by Orange sympathizers. Instead, he understands the League to have been harbingers for the Irish cause, casting the move for Irish independence as an explicitly sacred enterprise: "The Gaelic League ... was a prophet and more than a prophet ... the people itself will perhaps be its own Messiah, the people laboring, scourged, crowned with thorns, agonising and dying, to rise again immortal and impassible. For peoples are divine..." (186).

Pearse invests his explicitly political writing about Ireland with the same transformative sacred rhetoric that he does in his poetry. The implication, from the very beginning, is not that the Irish are being called to sacrifice for Ireland, but rather that any sacrifice they could make is part of an ongoing historical martyrdom. Death and suffering

are a part of the Irish reality, but like Cathleen ni Houlihan's promise of eventual victory, the Irish for Pearse may rise like Christ to lead themselves out of British rule. This, he says, is the greatest reason for the Irish to have joined the Gaelic League: "We did it for the sake of Ireland. In other words, we had one and all of us (at least, I had, and I hope that all you had) an ulterior motive... We never meant to be Gaelic Leaguers and nothing more than Gaelic Leaguers. We meant to do something for Ireland, ... to re-possess ourselves, ... re-enter our mystical birthright" (186).

Pearse takes care to craft a relatively inclusive vision of Irish nationalism here, acknowledging that people have different ways of contributing to the movement, some of which may not sit easily with what others may offer; in that sense, his vision of Irish nationalism is inclusive: "There will be in the Ireland of the next few years ... bewildering enterprises undertaken by sane persons and insane persons, by good and bad men, many of them seemingly contradictory, some mutually destructive, yet all tending towards a common objective, and that objective: the Irish Revolution." Although he suggests the importance of the fight for the "*Essential Irish*" (186, emphasis mine), Pearse point recognizes the importance of collaboration and cooperation. The Revolution, however, cannot be simply cultural anymore (if it ever had been), and Pearse makes this plain when he declares that "there can be no peace between the body politic and a foreign substance that has intruded itself into its system: between them only war until the foreign substance is expelled or assimilated" (188). Although generous enough to suggest that the Hibernicized English might become part of the diverse fabric of the Irish social whole, a formulation that complicates the idea of essential Irishness to which he has just made

recourse, Pearse's conviction is that death must be both dealt and suffered for Irish independence.

The concluding paragraphs of the essay are rhetorically heavy-handed, repeating over and over the inevitability of violence and sacrifice. When Pearse writes that an "Irish Nation" cannot be "achieved without stress and trial, without suffering and bloodshed," he means the blood of both the Irish and the English. Accordingly, the inefficacy and emasculation of the Irish is a direct result of allowing disarmament: "We suffer things men do not suffer ... We have ... allowed ourselves to be disarmed" and must rearm, because "Ireland unarmed will attain just as much freedom as it is convenient for England to give her; Ireland armed will attain ultimately just as much freedom as she wants" (188). There is an implicit sense of divine will in these lines. There is an absolute conviction in the certainty of Irish military action to achieve freedom, despite the demonstrable military superiority of the much larger and much wealthier British army. This fits, of course, with the divine undercurrent of the whole piece. In addition to preemptively acclimating the Irish to violence, Pearse concludes with this most emphatic linkage of sacred martyrdom and Irish militancy, and incidentally attempts to prepare his reader for the reality of accidental or unnecessary death: "We may make mistakes in the beginning and shoot the wrong people; but bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed; and slavery is one of them" (189). As has been the case throughout, Pearse mostly avoids discussing who will be shedding the blood. In a sense, it is as though it does not matter. All of the blood spilled for Ireland, whether that of the martyrs or that of the oppressor, is



part of the necessary ritual of renewal. Ireland, Cathleen ni Houlihan, will grow young again only when her men are willing to die – and kill. Pearse, in these brief pages, makes explicit the implicit merger of cultural and political nationalism that characterizes his creative work and that of even his Protestant peers.

## VITA

Jason Cash graduated from Bridgewater College with a B.A. in English in 2002 before earning his M.A., also in English, from Rutgers-Camden in 2009. He will graduate from Lehigh University's Ph.D. program in English in May 2015. At Rutgers, he focused on twentieth-century British and American literature as well as British literature of the Romantic and Victorian periods, and he was the recipient of both the James L. Sanderson award for graduate student writing and two Teaching Assistantships. At Lehigh, he studied British and American modernism, Irish literature, and he was awarded a University Fellowship, Teaching Fellowship, and finally a Senior Teaching Fellowship. He has been teaching since 2007 and, in addition to the above interests, has taught courses in composition, comics and graphic novels, holocaust literature, and women's literature. His conference presentations have varied, ranging from papers on Thomas Malory, Dante, and Shakespeare to Maria Edgeworth, Bram Stoker, and William Butler Yeats.