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**IRISH WRITING AND CENTRAL/EASTERN
EUROPE:
LITERATURE AND POLITICS**

Special Issue

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Introduction

The significance of Central/Eastern Europe for Irish writing from the late nineteenth century may first be identified in three canonical publications: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Arthur Griffith's *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904), and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). Stoker subliminally transposes the historical, political, and religious anxieties that Ireland presented for England unto one of the most remote and oldest regions of Europe, at least from the vantage-point of Stoker's base in London: Transylvania. Just over seven years after the publication of *Dracula*, Griffith turns to Hungary as a model for modern Irish nationalists to take up in their goal of Irish sovereign independence. *The Resurrection of Hungary* would become the founding document of his party, *Sinn Féin* (Ourselves Alone) in 1905, a small organization that was transformed into the major political driving force for Ireland's break from British rule, following its massive success in the General Election of December 1918, immediately after the First World War. During the same year in which an Irish parliament sat in Dublin independent of London rule for the first time, 1922, Joyce's *Ulysses* was published. The novel includes one of the most widely known characters in European modernist literature of the early twentieth century: Dublin-born Leopold Bloom, whose father was a Jewish Hungarian.

The term "Central/Eastern Europe" announces a certain topographical ambiguity that inflects Irish writing when looking Eastward to the opposite side of the European continent. Illustrative of this uncertainty, Sinéad Sturgeon and Lili Zách opt for an alternative descriptor, "East-Central Europe," in their essays below. Sturgeon does so when addressing James Clarence Mangan's engagement with Austrian poetry and politics of the 1820s, and Zách when addressing diplomatic relations between the Irish Free State and Hungary in the 1920s and 1930s. "Central/Eastern Europe" might simply be taken as a convenient geographical description of territories traditionally identified with *Mittleuropa* and those located immediately to the East of this region while still regarded as European. Yet the phrase also carries with it a set of value judgements concerning centre and periphery within Europe. The example of Hungary is telling in this respect. Part of what interested Griffith about the country was a perception that it had somehow become simultaneously Central and Eastern European within the continent and, as a consequence, both powerful and peripheral. It was Central European as a partner in what came to be regarded as a significant political force in the later nineteenth century: the so-called Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the same time, Griffith admired Hungary precisely

for regaining a strong measure of independence from Vienna, thereby validating its own Eastern European language, culture, identities, and narrative of origins in the East. Sturgeon's discussion of James Clarence Mangan in the opening essay of this Special Issue suggests that Griffith's double vision has a gothic precedent in the poetry of pre-Famine Ireland. She illustrates how Mangan turns to a cultural and historical centre-point of Europe through his translations of poems by the Vienna-based and Silesian-born poet Joseph Christian Freiherr von Zedlitz, a locus that leans sharply towards the European East.

The case of Poland is invested with a similar ambiguity between Centre and East, a country that historically has been subject to the power of Germany, especially Prussia, on its western side and that of Russia in its eastern regions. Set against Hungary and Poland, there are such territories as the Transylvania that interested Stoker or the Russia that interested Irish writers like George Moore and Frank O'Connor. Undoubtedly, Stoker presents Transylvania as assuredly Eastern European, almost Oriental, in fact. Yet to speak of Transylvania as a peripheral region in *Dracula* underplays the fact that it was part of the Kingdom of Hungary during the time in which Stoker's novel was published, and thus a constituent partner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The case of Russia as a source of literary influence for Irish writers is likewise riven. In its remoteness from Western Europe, Russia could well be regarded as peripheral in the Irish mind: yet to view such a vast territory as marginal is absurd since territorially Russia dwarfs the historical continent of Europe in size.

This Special Issue of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica* explores Irish representations and engagements with Central/Eastern Europe in order to show how the ambiguity around this geographical designation is reflective of the diverse and sometimes contradictory ways through which Irish writers and intellectuals have responded to the region. There is something paradoxical, for example, in Griffith looking beyond Ireland to modern Hungary when arguing for Irish political self-reliance. Griffith and Joyce turn to the same territory out of different perceptions of Ireland as much as Central/Eastern Europe. Whereas Griffith admires the national standing that Hungary had achieved through a redefinition of its relation with Hapsburg-dominated Vienna, Joyce represents the same territory as an exotic internationalist presence in the Dublin of 1904 through the character of Leopold Bloom. These alternative yet interrelated tendencies towards nationality and cosmopolitanism find a unique precedent in the writing of James Clarence Mangan, a Dublin poet who moves between gothic and Romantic nationalist tendencies in his fiction and poetry translations of the 1830s and 1840s. Addressing the place of Vienna in Mangan's creative work, Sinéad Sturgeon unveils a feature that pre-empts Griffith's interest in Vienna-Budapest political relations of the nineteenth century and Joyce's positioning of Bloom's ancestry in a Hungarian town bordering Austria, Szombathely. Cryptically alluding to contemporary Vienna in his 1838 short-story,

“The Man in the Cloak,” and translating works by Vienna-based poet, Zedlitz, Mangan conveys his awareness of state oppression in post-Napoleonic Austria. Sturgeon demonstrates how the Dublin poet’s cognisance of circumstances in the meeting point of Western and Eastern Europe not only demonstrates Mangan’s sophistication as an Irish poet in the gothic mode who absorbs German Romantic sensibilities and perspectives. She also directs attention to the manner in which, through the setting of Vienna and through his translations from Zedlitz, Mangan surreptitiously alludes to political circumstances in Ireland under the Union with Great Britain that became law in 1801.

Following this exploration of the place occupied by Eastward-looking Vienna in Mangan’s early nineteenth century work, Eglantina Rempfort shows just how deeply the example of Hungary entered Irish nationalist intellectual discourse in the early twentieth century, bringing out the complexities of such discourse in the process. These become evident in identifications made between the case of Ireland and that of Hungary, raising such issues as nationality, language, coloniality, and empire. Rempfort looks at Patrick Pearse’s response to *The Resurrection of Hungary* with regard to Pearse’s educational philosophy and the role that he identified for the Irish language in the new Irish-centred system of education to which he aspired. Rempfort illustrates how Pearse’s endorsement of *The Resurrection of Hungary* was mediated through his sympathy for the arguments of Douglas Hyde’s “The Necessity of De-Anglicising Ireland” and the place that Pearse granted to the Irish language and Irish mythology in the curriculum for the schools that he founded in Dublin. Contextualizing Griffith’s discussion of Hungary in this manner, she compares aspects of the movement for language revival in early nineteenth-century Hungary with the Irish language revival that Hyde inaugurated, Pearse assisted, and Griffith commended at the start of the twentieth century. In an echo of Mangan’s Germanophilia, Rempfort traces a direct connection between the two movements in the figure of Kuno Meyer, the German philologist who exerted a profound influence on Douglas Hyde and who also wrote to Hyde admiringly on the subject of the Hungarian language when visiting Hungary. She also identifies a context largely ignored in Irish historical accounts of Griffith’s *The Resurrection of Hungary*: the Millennial Celebrations in Hungary during the 1890s–1900s, marking the arrival of the Magyar tribes into the Carpathian basin almost one thousand years earlier.

The question of language arises again in another essay within this Special Issue: Sorchá de Brún’s discussion of the first Irish-language translation of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* by Seán Ó Cuirrín, published in the 1930s. While there has been considerable critical argument in favour of the view that Stoker’s representation of Transylvania owes much to traditions around ghosts and the supernatural in his native Ireland, de Brún tests this critical perspective by looking at the ways in which Ó Cuirrín conjures the character of the Count and the landscape of Transylvania through the Irish language medium. De Brún demonstrates some fascinating aspects

of Ó Cuirrín's bestselling translation, especially the way in which it moves beyond the original Stoker work of 1897 to present Dracula as a figure inviting sympathy as much as foreboding and the landscape of Transylvania as redolent of rural Ireland. In the English-language original, Stoker sets up a diametric opposition between the modern London from which Jonathan Harker travels and the ancient Transylvania where the Count dwells. If this narrative strategy conceals Stoker's liminal identification of the Eastern European landscape with the remoteness of the rural West of Ireland and the recurring stories of haunting in the Irish folklore tradition, then this association becomes manifest in the Ó Cuirrín translation of *Dracula*. Neither Stoker's original nor Ó Cuirrín's translation evoke Transylvania in a realistic fashion since the distancing element of exoticism is fundamental to the tale. Having said this, de Brún's ground-breaking reading of the Irish-language translation of *Dracula* suggests that Ó Cuirrín's work has the merit of weakening the mechanism of Othering that controls Stoker's original narrative, a mechanism that produces the ultimately reductive stereotype of Transylvania as epitomizing the pre-modern Uncanny.

De Brún's reading of Ó Cuirrín's translation of *Dracula* indicates how much the representation of Central/Eastern Europe in Irish writing involves movements between identification and distancing. This characteristic reflects tensions within Irish culture and politics between varieties of nationalist and varieties of unionist positions from the early twentieth century. These become manifest in a remarkable pamphlet that was published by an important and overlooked figure within movements for Irish cultural and economic revival from the late nineteenth century: Thomas William Rolleston. The extent of neglect of Rolleston may be indicated by the fact that no cultural, scholarly, or civic event has been held in Ireland to mark the centenary of his death in 1920. The First World War entered its third year in 1917, following the rebellion for Irish independence that was led by Patrick Pearse in April of the previous year. Writing as a member of the British Ministry of Information during the War years, Rolleston responded critically to identifications that had been made at this time between the circumstances of Ireland under British rule and those of Poland under both Prussian and Russian domination. My discussion of Rolleston's pamphlet examines his refutation of these identifications. I consider Rolleston's views on Poland in relation to his understanding of Irish Home Rule and of British Government policies towards Ireland during the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Arguing for fundamental differences between the circumstances of British-governed Ireland and the Prussian-controlled territories of Poland, Rolleston moves stridently against the pattern of identification between Ireland and Central/Eastern Europe that we find in Griffith's *The Resurrection of Hungary* or in Ó Cuirrín's translation of *Dracula*. I draw attention to the fact that his insistence on the differences rather than the similarities between Ireland and Poland during the period following the 1916 Rising could not be easily discounted by Irish nationalists.

Rolleston supported the Irish-language work of such scholars as Standish Hayes O'Grady, co-founded the Irish Literary Society in London, and involved himself in the work of the Irish Co-operative Movement for the resuscitation of economic life in rural Ireland. My analysis of *Ireland and Poland: A Comparison* sheds further light on the language question that Rempfort and de Brún address, since one of the key issues to arise in Rolleston's pamphlet is that of British Government attitudes to Irish language revival as compared to German policies on the Polish language in the Prussian-controlled regions of Poland.

Discussing the development of diplomatic relations between the Irish Free State and the new small nation of Hungary that came into being following the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Lili Zách extends an understanding of the political aspects to the movement between Irish identifications with and Irish distancing from Central/Eastern Europe. Zách's reading of the evolution of diplomatic connections between the Irish Free State and the post-Trianon State of Hungary is particularly significant with regard to the figure of Hubert Briscoe. She illustrates how instrumental Briscoe was in developing links between the two countries in the 1920s and 1930s. Zách shows Briscoe as a Catholic intellectual and diplomat whose moves to strengthen ties between Ireland and Hungary were reflective of the Catholic religious ethos that shaped the Irish Free State in its formative decades. Her reading illustrates how identifications between Ireland and Hungary through diplomatic initiatives were made on a strongly Catholic basis during the 1920s and 1930s. It also indicates one of the legacies of Griffith's association of Ireland with Hungary in the foreign policy of the Irish Free State Governments during the 1920s and 1930s.

The practices of identifying Ireland with Central/Eastern Europe or of stressing the distance between the two regions also involve questions of exile and belonging. One of the most striking instances where these matters arise is found in the character of Leopold Bloom from Joyce's *Ulysses*. Leaving Ireland at first for Paris, then for Zürich, and eventually for a long-term settlement in Trieste, Joyce appears famously as the modernist writer who chooses exile over the conservatism of the middle-class Catholic Irish society in which he grew up. Through the figure of Bloom, Joyce turns to Hungary as Griffith would do during the year in which *Ulysses* is set, 1904, and as Briscoe would do in his capacity as an Irish Free State diplomat later during the 1930s. In her reading of Bloom and the Hungarian dimension of *Ulysses*, Márta Goldmann illustrates how the basis of Joyce's association of Ireland with Hungary was radically different from the types of identification that we encounter in the thought of Griffith or the diplomatic initiatives of Briscoe. Goldmann introduces the Jewish background of Bloom as the defining feature of his Hungarian family history, distinguishing him from both the Catholic Irish nationalist and the Protestant British unionist traditions within the Ireland in which he lives. Placing Bloom at the centre of her reading of the interconnection between Ireland and Hungary in *Ulysses*, Goldmann alters the critical perception of one vital element within dominant forms

of Irish identity in Joyce's lifetime: the significance of history. Whereas history presents itself in Irish nationalist discourse under the aspects of native traditions or the traumas of colonial dispossession and subjugation, Bloom introduces a broader dimension to the "nightmare of history" in *Ulysses* with reference to the experience of Jewish people of Hungary. Drawing upon Walter Benjamin's dialectical reading of history in Paul Klee's painting, *Angelus Novus*, Goldmann considers some of the ways in which Bloom's character, circumstances, and experiences in *Ulysses* form a premonition in *Ulysses* of the ultimate terror visited upon the Jewish people of Central/Eastern Europe: the Holocaust. Pivotal to Goldmann's evaluation is Bloom's identity as the son of a displaced migrant from a Hungarian Jewish background, one who makes his home in Ireland. Goldmann develops her reading of key moments of anti-Semitism in the Dublin of 1904 as represented in *Ulysses* by turning our attention to the real-life history of the Jewish community of Szombathely in western Hungary, from which Bloom's father, Rudolph, had emigrated. Her discussion troubles the opposition between practices of identifying Ireland with Central/Eastern Europe and those of distancing the two regions. In the figure of Dublin-dwelling Bloom, Central/Eastern Europe cannot be easily distanced from Ireland. Yet neither can Ireland be automatically identified with Hungary in the case of Bloom. The unique history of Szombathely's Jewish community from the nineteenth century, and the real-life obliteration that would be visited upon it subsequently in 1944, separates him from the many other native Dublin characters with whom he interacts through the course of Joyce's modernist masterpiece.

A question posed by the figure of Leopold Bloom is where Irish writing turns in its relation to Central/Eastern Europe subsequent to the appearance of *Ulysses* in 1922. One answer may be found in some of the short stories of Frank O'Connor. Márta Pellérdi discusses the influence of Russian author Anton Chekhov on O'Connor, arguing that Chekhov's naturalism represents a form of modernist experimentation in fiction. This view is an interesting counter to the critical perspective of literary modernism as a reaction to naturalism, particularly when naturalism is considered to be a species of realism in literature. Pellérdi's idea of Chekhov as experimentalist and realist in one carries important ramifications for his influence on writers like Frank O'Connor. Pellérdi successfully argues for Chekhov's influence on O'Connor stretching beyond the superficial, alluding to Chekhov's "Uprooted" and "The Lady with the Dog" in relation to O'Connor's story, "Uprooted," published in one of his short-story collections during the 1940s. While Pellérdi makes no claim for any association of Ireland with Russia in O'Connor's fiction, she illustrates how Chekhov's work enables O'Connor to express an idea concerning the human condition, namely, the nature of loneliness. In her assessment of Ned Keating's lack of belonging in O'Connor's "Uprooted," Pellérdi identifies an intriguingly paradoxical aspect. She regards this rootlessness as deriving from Ned's choices and thus a consequence of what Chekhov sees – within the Christian tradition but somewhat

subversive of it – as the greater seriousness of the “venial” over the “mortal” sin. The paradox that Pellérdi illustrates stems from the significance of Chekhov to O’Connor’s achievement in many of his short stories. The failure of such characters as Ned Keating in “Uprooted” to ground themselves in their Irish localities and traditions is one that O’Connor articulates successfully by absorbing the influence of Chekhov’s writing, utterly removed from Ireland in its Russian settings. Without any connection to O’Connor’s native country, Chekhov nonetheless is shown to be immensely important to O’Connor when tackling the subject of displacement within Ireland. This is especially poignant when considering that O’Connor wrote during an era in which notions of homeland and belonging were stressed in the policies and practices of Irish Governments, following the achievement of Irish independence in 1922.

The final essay of this Special Issue brings us to the representation of Central/Eastern Europe in contemporary Irish writing. Orsolya Szűcs discusses the 2015 novel, *The Little Red Chairs*, a work of fiction by Edna O’Brien, Ireland’s pre-eminent feminist novelist since the 1960s. Based mainly on the convicted war criminal Radovan Karadžić from the Balkans conflict of the 1990s and moving from the rural West of Ireland to the International Criminal Court at The Hague, O’Brien’s story expresses her enduring concern with the emotional character of Irish society. She does so with a keen eye for the globalization of Irish experience over the past twenty years through the advent of the Celtic Tiger economy and its subsequent collapse in 2008. Szűcs’s reading of *The Little Red Chairs* illustrates how the novel addresses recurrent themes in O’Brien’s fiction. These include sexuality and religion in Irish life, the Irish landscape as a living character in its own right, and the blurring of distinctions between the animal and the human in remote rural settings. Through her consideration of the main protagonist, sex therapist Dr Vlad Dragan, Szűcs identifies the ways in which O’Brien’s novel draws upon long-enduring stereotypes of Eastern Europe as mysterious, alien, and barbaric.

Szűcs’s insightful discussion of *The Little Red Chairs* is of value in its own right, but also as a coalescence of several themes that are addressed in the earlier essays. The attention that she draws to Dragan’s association of the rural Irish landscape with that of Montenegro is continuous with the association made between rural Ireland and Transylvania in Ó Cuirrín’s translation of *Dracula*, as analysed by SORCHA DE BRÚN. The presence of the Serbian Dr Vlad troubles the conventions of a rural Irish village in *The Little Red Chairs*, one still shaped by Catholic traditions in a largely secular contemporary Irish society. His character also brings to mind the gothic element in Mangan’s turn to Vienna’s poet Zedlitz as discussed by Sturgeon, but also Goldmann’s reading of Bloom in *Ulysses*. Like Dr Vlad, Bloom is a figure of Eastern European origins who disrupts the conventional assumptions of Irish nationalist and British unionist discourses in Irish society. Dragan’s presence in twenty-first century Ireland also recalls Bloom’s presence in 1904 Dublin when

confusing the distinction between Irish identification with and Irish distancing from Eastern Europe. As Szűcs's reading of *The Little Red Chairs* illustrates, Dragan ingratiates himself intimately into the rural Irish village where O'Brien sets the first part of the novel. Yet he retains the quality of an outsider with concealed origins in Eastern Europe, one partly reflective of the circumstances of Eastern European migrant workers living in rural Ireland during the post-Celtic Tiger era.

The tension between belonging and wandering in the figure of O'Brien's Dr Vlad, to which Szűcs draws our attention, recalls the dilemma of the characters in Frank O'Connor's short-story "Uprooted," as assessed by Pellérdi. As O'Brien chooses a Serbian character through which to explore this conflict in a globalized contemporary Ireland, so O'Connor also turns Eastward in the 1940s when drawing upon the Russian author, Anton Chekhov, to express human loneliness and restlessness in the rural Ireland of his time. Furthermore, Dragan carries with him in *The Little Red Chairs* a dark and hidden history of mass killing in Eastern Europe during the Balkans War, a contemporary reminder of the much wider trauma of the Holocaust that Goldmann links to Bloom in *Ulysses*. O'Brien's Dragan recalls Joyce's Bloom in that, like Dragan, Bloom is associated with an eruption of mass murder in Eastern Europe. As the premonition rather than the witness of this terror, *Ulysses* is a work in which the violence of the Holocaust obviously cannot be addressed directly. Likewise, the barbarities of the Balkans War remain hidden in the character of Dragan in the Irish village of Cloonoila in *The Little Red Chairs*.

A novel that concerns itself directly with political upheavals in late twentieth-century Europe, *The Little Red Chairs* is a reminder of the relationship between literature and politics that constantly influences the manner through which Irish writing treats Central/Eastern Europe. Indeed, Szűcs's essay returns to questions that are raised by Sturgeon's examination of Austrian political contexts for Mangan's translations of the poetry of Zedlitz in the 1830s and how his turn to Austria in poetry was an indirect means of registering concerns regarding political circumstances in Ireland during the years preceding the catastrophe of the Great Famine in the 1840s. O'Brien's 2015 novel lies open to the accusation of ignoring or forgetting the history of Irish political identifications and associations with Eastern Europe from the early twentieth century period. Rempert's reading of *The Resurrection of Hungary* demonstrates not just the significance of Hungary for Pearse, executed leader of the 1916 rebellion for Irish independence. She also observes that the book inhabits both the worlds of Irish and Hungarian nationalism in the 1900s. Presenting the Radovan Karadžić figure of Dr Vlad as the Eastern European Other, *The Little Red Chairs* also appears unaware of the diplomatic relations and initiatives between the new independent Irish Free State of the 1920s–1930s and that of Eastern European countries like Hungary, connections that Lili Zách traces in some detail. O'Brien's novel in some ways typifies the presumption made in contemporary Irish writing of exploring relations between Ireland and Central/Eastern Europe, as if for the first

time. As far back as 1917, T. W. Rolleston challenged arguments for identifying the circumstances of Ireland and Poland with one another. Yet Rolleston was certainly alert to the potency of such arguments, recognizing that in profound ways they arose from the calamitous conditions of the First World War in Europe. Sturgeon draws our attention to James Clarence Mangan's concern for the plight of Poland as far back as the 1846 in his poem "Siberia." This piece appears in print almost one hundred and seventy years in advance of O'Brien's treatment of a politically loaded Irish-Serbian encounter.

The impetus for this Special Issue on Irish writing and Central/Eastern Europe has its origins in the formation of a Budapest Centre for Irish Studies (BCIS) in 2013, an association of scholars based in Budapest universities with Irish literature and history interests. The BCIS is an institutional member of the European Federation of Centres and Associations of Irish Studies (EFACIS), headquartered at KU Leuven, Belgium. Five contributors to this Special Issue are members of the BCIS: myself as Director of the Centre, Dr Eglantina Remport, Dr Lili Zách, Dr Márta Pellérdi, and Ms Orsolya Szűcs. Their essays reflect the rich and varied interest in Irish and Central/Eastern European connections among scholars of the BCIS. The preparation of this Special Issue has been a very rewarding experience thanks to the professionalism of the editorial team at *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica*. I am grateful in particular to Judit Pieldner in communicating so efficiently when preparing the volume for publication despite the challenges presented by the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The Special Issue is dedicated to the memory of Thomas William Rolleston, a fellow native of South County Offaly, who died one hundred years ago in December 1920 and is perhaps best remembered among past generations in Ireland for his English-language version of Aongus Ó Giolláin's fourteenth-century Irish poem, "The Dead at Clonmacnoise."

Michael McAteer



East-Central Europe in the Writing of James Clarence Mangan

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Abstract. This study explores the significance of East-Central Europe in a range of James Clarence Mangan's poetry and prose from 1838–1847, focusing particularly on his depiction of Biedermeier Vienna (in the short story “The Man in the Cloak”), revolutionary uprisings in Poland and Albania (in the poems “Siberia” and “Song of the Albanian”), and his translations from the work of Bohemian-born Viennese poet Joseph Christian Freiherr von Zedlitz (1790–1862). I argue that Mangan's interest in this region is twofold. On the one hand, it stems from the amenability of East-Central European culture and writing to the themes and tropes of the gothic, a genre central to Mangan's imagination; on the other, from an underlying affinity in the historical position of the Irish and East-European poet in negotiating complex and contested politics of identity. While Mangan is a poet keenly conscious of “the importance of elsewhere,” and closely engaged in contemporary continental politics, I suggest that these European elsewheres also function as Foucauldian heterotopias, mythopoetic mirrors that enable the poet both to participate in Irish cultural nationalism and to register his dissent and distance from it.

Keywords: James Clarence Mangan, Gothic, Vienna, Napoleon, Zedlitz

Introduction

The cosmopolitanism of the imagination and work of James Clarence Mangan is now well established in literary criticism. There are few other writers of the period for whom “the importance of elsewhere” – to use the phrase of the English poet Philip Larkin – is so clearly central to their work (Larkin 1988, 104). This is all the more striking given that Mangan never left Ireland in the course of his lifetime; indeed, he only rarely left Dublin and – eschewing the common practice of his contemporaries, who turned by necessity to the greater opportunities and marketplace of London – published solely in Ireland. The bulk of his prolific oeuvre is in translation: from

Western Europe (France, Spain, Italy, and particularly Germany), from the Persian, Arabic, and Turkish (then becoming available in Europe via the work of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall), and from the Irish. Critics have learned to be wary of Mangan's sophisticated and frequently misleading translation practice; often his translations turn out to be original poems, or "pseudotranslations," as they are now termed. In a self-penned obituary published shortly before his death, Mangan writes that he has been "overmuch addicted" to this practice, described as "the antithesis of plagiarism." He dryly adds: "I cannot commend it. A man may have a right to offer his property to others, but nothing can justify him forcing it upon them" (Mangan 2002b, 224). While he also produced more conventional renderings, Mangan was consistently creative in his translation practice; such changes will be attended to in the argument below as a means of understanding the Irish writer's interest in East-Central Europe. While Mangan scholarship has now produced a diverse and fascinating body of work on his German and Oriental translations, the "Anthologia Germanica" (1835–1846), the "Literæ Orientales" (1837–1846), and his translations from the Irish, the role of East-Central Europe in Mangan's work remains largely overlooked.¹

The omission is surprising, given the established connections between Ireland and Eastern Europe which have become increasingly visible in recent years. This study contends that there are two leading and interrelated aspects to Mangan's interest in this part of the world: one is political, the other more purely imaginative. The purview of the first can be usefully condensed by another, more recent Irish poet. In *The Government of the Tongue* (1988), Seamus Heaney writes that he keeps returning to the poets of Eastern Europe "because there is something in their situation that makes them attractive to a reader whose formative experience has been largely Irish" (Heaney 1988, xx). The affinity seems to lie in the particular burden of the poet born into a small country that is dominated by a larger, more powerful neighbour, and in a period of volatility and unrest. These are literary traditions which perforce demand a public role of their poets, however unwilling or uncomfortable they might be of the prospect. This study will argue that this politico-poetic affinity is central to understanding the significance of East-Central Europe as it is depicted in Mangan's prose and poetry from the late 1830s, becoming more urgent towards the end of his life in 1849, as nationalist momentum gained in Ireland, and the devastation of the Great Famine unfolded. There is also the other more purely imaginative attraction of East-Central Europe for a writer of Mangan's sensibilities and susceptibilities. To begin with, then, East-Central Europe makes its way into Mangan's imagination via the gothic.

1 For Mangan's practice of translation, his translations from the German and the Irish, and its relation to Irish cultural nationalist politics, see David Lloyd's groundbreaking *Nationalism and Minor Literature* (Lloyd 1987). Michael Cronin's study *Translating Ireland* valuably contextualizes Mangan's translation practice within an Irish tradition (Cronin 1996); for Mangan's Oriental translations, see Lloyd 1986 and Fegan 2013; for his translations from the Irish, see Welch 1988 and Chuto 1976.

From Paris to Vienna: Mangan's "The Man in the Cloak" (1838)

Austria first appears as a significant presence in Mangan's work in his short story "The Man in the Cloak," published in the November 1838 issue of the *Dublin University Magazine*, a conservative, unionist, and anti-Catholic journal. The story is subtitled "A Very German Story," but it is in fact a translation of Honoré de Balzac's *Melmoth Réconcilié*, first published in 1834 (Balzac 1901). This was a kind of sequel to the influential gothic masterpiece *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), written by the Irish novelist and clergyman Charles Robert Maturin, one of Mangan's literary heroes (Maturin 2008). While Mangan follows the essential contours of Balzac's story, there are some significant alterations, as I have discussed more fully elsewhere (see Sturgeon 2010). The most consequential of these changes is also the one most relevant to our interest here: Mangan changes Balzac's setting from Paris to Vienna, and repeatedly draws attention to this relocation in the course of the narrative. "I would rather abandon life itself almost than my dear, darling delightful, native town, W***" (Mangan 2002a, 246), Livonia tells her lover Braunbrock. Jacques Chuto notes that, as "Vienna" appears in full in the preceding paragraph, Mangan here makes use of the city to wink at the contemporary convention of disguising place-names (Mangan 2002a, 378–379). The repetition in two languages further serves to underscore the relocating of the story as well as to encode textually a kind of doubling or ghosting of identities that is central to the story itself, at least as it emerges in Mangan's hands. It is worth noting that Mangan is exacting about the period, too: "we live in the second quarter of the nineteenth century," Braunbrock tells the Man in the Cloak; "such a compact is not possible" (2002a, 252). The switch from Paris to Biedermeier Vienna has thus far escaped critical attention despite increasing interest in the story as a kind of foundational text for Irish Catholic Gothic writing (see Haslam 2006). To what ends, then, does Mangan move Balzac's story from Paris to Vienna?

The ancient city of Vienna had long been one of the most pre-eminent in Europe, a prestige reasserted at the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, where the continental political map was redrawn following the downfall of Napoleon. The ancestral home of the Habsburg dynasty, Vienna's significance derived in no small part from its location at the centre of the continent, a long-standing geographical and cultural meeting-point of East and West. In Mangan's time, Vienna was the capital of the formidable Austrian Empire, which brought the Kingdom of Hungary firmly under Habsburg control. Most obviously, Mangan's relocation of the story to Vienna anticipates the migration of the Irish gothic genre to Eastern Europe, as exemplified in the seminal gothic texts of Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker. Le Fanu, whose gothic story "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess" appeared in the same issue of the *Dublin University Magazine* as Mangan's "The Man in the Cloak,"

sets his vampire tale *Carmilla* (1871–72) in the Austrian state of Styria, some ten leagues “from our little capital of Gratz” (Le Fanu 2013, 38); the narrator’s father has served in the Austrian military. This Eastern trajectory was extended yet more emphatically and influentially still in Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). While the Eastern European setting to these Irish gothic texts has long been regarded by critics as little more than a cultural lens by which to more evocatively amplify Irish colonial history and political crisis, Matthew Gibson has argued that it is in fact evidence of a rather more straightforward engagement with the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Balkan politics of Central and Eastern Europe, albeit with the Irish situation still in mind. Both Le Fanu and Stoker, Gibson concludes, take conservative positions on political developments in the region. Read as an anxious response to the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* of 1867, when Hungary at last gained its own parliament independent of Vienna, *Carmilla* negatively frames Hungarian resistance to Austrian domination as a dangerous destabilizing of the status quo and a harbinger of Ottoman power in Europe: “the embedded national allegory represented by the vampire is of a brutal Hungarian past set to destroy an orderly present” (Gibson 2006, 44). The danger of the *Ausgleich* to conservative unionists such as Le Fanu manifests itself subsequently in Ireland. Arthur Griffith used Hungary’s achievement of equal status with Austria under Empress Elisabeth to argue for a similar political solution for Ireland in his 1904 book *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland*, the founding document of his new nationalist party, *Sinn Féin* (Ourselves Alone). In *Dracula*, Gibson contends, Stoker is concerned to undermine the idea of Balkan freedom by the depiction of his titular vampire as “a blood-thirsty vampire and sexual deviant, and the further denigration of his warlike activity as being no more than the behavior of a childlike criminal” (Gibson 2006, 95). It should be pointed out, however, that the first critic to focus a reading of the much-studied *Dracula* on the “Eastern Question,” Eleni Coundouriotis, reads the novel in a manner opposite to Gibson: that Stoker is setting in motion a de-legitimation of the Ottoman history of Eastern Europe through the figure of the vampire (1999–2000).

In a similar vein to Gibson’s readings of Le Fanu and Stoker, there is a distinct and intriguing political aspect to Mangan’s use of Vienna, though my analysis will position Mangan in a subversive rather than a conservative light. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Vienna was the centre of a repressive political government under the iron fist of Metternich. The Austrian-American writer and journalist Karl Anton Postl gives a vivid sense of this regime in his 1828 polemic, *Austria as It Is* (published anonymously in London): “Never, perhaps, has there been exhibited an example of so complete and refined a despotism in any civilized country as in Austria” (1828, vi). Metternich’s crackdown on liberalism and the Romantic politics of reform was markedly focused on the city’s press and its rich cultural life, as critiqued by Postl:

A more fettered being than an Austrian author surely never existed. A writer in Austria must not offend against any government; nor against any minister; nor against any hierarchy, if its members be influential; nor against the aristocracy. He must not be liberal – nor philosophical – nor humorous – in short, he must be nothing at all. [...] Should an Austrian author dare to write contrary to the views of the Government, his writings would be not only mutilated, but he himself regarded as a contagious person, with whom no faithful subject should have an intercourse. (1828, 209–210)

Metternich's strict censorship had an inevitably stultifying effect on Viennese writing, journalism, and debate; clubs of any kind were quickly infiltrated by a wide network of police spies. The artists and writers of the *Ludlamshöhle* group in the 1820s are perhaps the best known; the club was under police surveillance from 1822. In 1826, the members were interrogated and placed under house arrest, the society disbanded under suspicion of being a centre of political activity (Yates 1977, 112). Appropriately for this charged context, the period's most notorious cultural rebel and champion of the oppressed, Lord Byron – a sworn foe of Austrian hegemony – makes a brief appearance in "The Man in the Cloak." In another digression from Balzac's original, Mangan's version features a phrenologist, the pointedly-named Baron Queerkopf, who discusses Byron's head as a kind of scientific exemplar as to the unreliability of beauty.

The truth is, that to a common observer the head is any thing but an index to the nature of the man. Look, for example, at Byron's head. It is a positive and undeniable fact that what we imagine the superior appearance of that head is solely attributable to its deficiency in several of the most beneficial organs, and its redundance in some of the most morally deteriorating. It lacked Faith, Hope and Veneration, and exhibited but moderate Benevolence, while, on the other hand, though Conscientiousness was fair, an undue and preponderating proportion of cerebral development manifested itself in Self-esteem, Combativeness, and Firmness. (Mangan 2002a, 242)

Byron was regarded with deep suspicion by the Austrian authorities; they watched him closely when he was in Northern Italy and banned many of his works, including *Childe Harold* for its criticism of Austrian tyranny (see Dowden 1955). Himself a devoted admirer of Byron, Mangan delights here in depicting the famously handsome English poet as viewed by the Viennese state authorities with whom Baron Queerkopf is aligned and who find him, unsurprisingly, much less good-looking than commonly supposed.

Under Metternich's regime, Vienna's renowned theatrical culture was strictly circumscribed; indeed, as W. E. Yates observes, "the very centrality of the theatre

in the life of Vienna meant that the censorship laws were imposed with particular severity in the theatre” (Yates 1977, 110). The pivotal narrative scenes of “The Man in the Cloak” are set in the Viennese theatre, where, in rapid succession, Braunbrock sees staged before him his forgeries discovered by the Minister of Police and documents drawn up “deposing to all the facts, and which were to be forthwith transmitted to the official authorities” (Mangan 2002a, 249). Braunbrock then watches with mounting horror his own arrest and “the trial scene in the assize-court, which terminated in his condemnation to his twenty years of hard labour in a stone fortress at G***” (Mangan 2002a, 251). The final scene of his imprisonment at Gratz carries distinctly Foucauldian overtones:

[...] after being branded on the arm and breast by the common executioner, he saw himself loaded with irons, in the midst of sixty other criminals, and driven along into a side and drear court-yard—the place of labour and punishment—under the *surveillance* of an overseer, who carried a knotted knout in his hand for the instruction and advantage of the lazy or the refractory. (Mangan 2002a, 251)

The reference to the *knout*, a brutal whip used for corporal punishment with often fatal effects in Czarist Russia, again emphasizes the story’s relocation to the East, with an associated interest in repressive and tyrannical regimes. This theatrical spectacle of crime and punishment is staged only for Braunbrock; the rest of the audience enjoys a conventional vaudeville performance. The theatre, with its associated art forms of drama, music, and opera, is thus made an executive arm of the judicial and penitentiary organs of the state. This suppressive and punitive Austrian context is also amplified in a subplot concerning Livonia’s lover Rudolf, who has been scheming against the Government (presumably agitating for reform) and now faces arrest and execution. Braunbrock’s forged bank-notes, Livonia’s faithlessness, Rudolf’s treasonous plotting – on one level, the story could be read as a moral lesson on the inevitable punishment of crime and deceit, enacting the kind of rigid sociopolitical and cultural control for which Austria was well known. The environment of urban Vienna is made distinctly carceral from the offset: the story begins with a panoptical view of Braunbrock as he forges bank-notes at his desk: surrounded by “the iron safes and sealed strong boxes imbedded in the walls of his temporary prison [...] he saw peering through the grated door of his box two dark, burning and searching eyes” (Mangan 2002a, 239). The police state of Vienna swiftly accommodates gothic themes of criminality, guilt, and paranoia which develop from the central Faustian plot.

Yet the agent for uncovering all these crimes and misdemeanours, the man in the cloak, is also the means for subverting and ridiculing state authority in his effortless evasion of the Viennese police, those “dogs of justice,” as he describes

them (Mangan 2002a, 253). In a carnivalesque episode which does not occur in *Melmoth Reconçilié*, the Viennese police arrest the man in the cloak and imprison him in a coach, but subsequently discover their prisoner to be “a bag of feathers,” “a bag of devils,” “a sack of chaff,” “a bundle of hay,” and finally “a mere man of straw, with very thick legs of about ten inches in length, and a hollow pumpkin, stuffed with old rags, for a head” (Mangan 2002a, 254). This spectacle of the disintegration of identity is emphatic, and the means of a relished humiliation of the police-state, as the “rotund and spectacled sergeant” complains: “Upon whom the blame of this rescue may fall I know not, but it will be no wonder, if, after a circumstance of this kind, our police should sink in the estimation of Europe, Australia, and the two Americas!” (Mangan 2002a, 254).² While Mangan is clearly satirizing the authoritarian policies of the Austrian state, this matter of tyrannical rule also struck much closer to home for the Irish writer. Demand for political reform dominated Irish public debate in the 1830s as the country grew increasingly restive under repressive British rule. Catholic Emancipation had been largely negated by the government’s raising of the franchise and in 1831 Mangan’s name appears on a list of law clerks petitioning for parliament to consider repealing the 1800 Act of Union. In a series of satirical pieces published in the radical newspaper *The Comet*, he attacked Westminster and the British aristocracy as despotic and corrupt: “The Two Flats; or, our Quackstitution” (3 June 1832); “Sonnets—by an aristocrat” (24 June 1832); “Very Original Correspondence” (13 January 1833); “The Assembly” (23 December 1832). Mangan’s version of “The Man in the Cloak” allows him to comment refractively on Irish issues and events, but this subtext is firmly subordinated to the story’s primary interest in the repressive Austrian regime and its amenability to the tropes and themes of the gothic.

Revolution and Starvation: Mangan’s “Siberia” and “Song of the Albanian”

East-Central Europe reappears in Mangan’s work in the mid-1840s in poetry more soberly engaged with contemporary nationalist struggles in Poland and Albania. “Siberia” and “The Song of the Albanian” mark Mangan’s accelerating attention to Eastern Europe both as a topical interest in and of itself and as a prism through which Irish events might be more evocatively and effectively expressed. First published in the *Nation*, on 18 April 1846, and frequently hailed as his masterpiece, Mangan’s “Siberia” has been well described by Heaney as “a poem that belongs

2 The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the first usage of “police State” in its modern sense with reference to nineteenth-century Austria: “Austria has become more of a police State than she was before” (*The Times*, 15 August 1851). <https://www-oed-com.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/view/Entry/146832?redirectedFrom=police-state#eid> (last accessed: 26 August 2020).

not in the past but in the eternal present of living art” (Heaney 2003, 16). The poem has long been read by critics, including Heaney, as an allegory for *an Gorta Mór*, the Great Famine, that was then beginning to decimate the Irish populace. Jacques Chuto, however, points out that “Mangan had no doubt been reading in the *Nation*, specifically in the issue of 11 April, about captured revolutionary leaders in Russian Poland;” those who were spared execution were “degraded from their rank, and condemned to exile and hard labour in Siberia” (Mangan 2002c, 449). Furthermore, Chuto reveals the poem to be an unacknowledged translation from the German poet Ernst Ortlepp’s “Sibirien” (Chuto 1999, 208). Ortlepp was just the sort of writer to attract Mangan’s interest: a translator of Byron and Shakespeare, Ortlepp’s poetry grew increasingly radical as agitation for political reform coursed through Europe in the 1830s and 40s. Like Byron, Ortlepp fell foul of Metternich in 1836, who banned the poet’s *Fieschi* (concerning the would-be assassin of the French king Louis-Philippe I). Ortlepp was sympathetic to the Polish nationalist cause, and his “Sibirien” protests the fate of its leaders; Mangan’s version seems to work, Matthew Campbell argues, “from suggestion as much as direct translation or even plagiarism,” offering “an invented prosody of frozen numbness, a kind of zombie metre” (Campbell 2013, 120).

As Campbell concludes, Mangan’s “Siberia” “might just be about Poland and Russia and not Ireland at all” (Campbell 2013, 120). Poland, divided up between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, was of particular interest to Irish nationalists, who saw in the country’s struggle to regain sovereignty a parallel to their own position under union with Britain (see Healy 2017). Mangan’s imagination is piqued not by military conflict or nationalist rhetoric but by the punishing exile endured by the Polish revolutionaries, which stills their dissent as effectively as execution: “Therefore, in those wastes / None curse the Czar. / Each man’s tongue is cloven by / The North Blast” (Mangan 2002c, 158). Much like Braunbrock’s vision of his incarceration in “The Man in the Cloak,” “Siberia” lays bare the gothic ability and will of the imperial state to imprison the individual it deems transgressive, condemning them to a kind of living death that becomes literally indistinguishable from a carceral landscape: “When man lives and doth not live, / Doth not live—nor die” (Mangan 2002c, 158).

Mangan’s “Song of the Albanian. 1826,” published in the *Nation* the following year (15 August 1847), is an original poem, appearing under the signature of “J.C.M.” The poem is a kaleidoscopic merging of several national scenes of revolt and distress; it addresses the Albanian uprising against the Ottoman Empire by way of referencing the Greek War of Independence, the titular date of 1826 denoting the famed Siege of Missolonghi (also the place of Byron’s death, as would have been of no small interest to Mangan) (Mangan 2002c, 477–478). Several of the poem’s nightmarish passages also seem to comment upon the plight of the Irish in “Black ‘47,” the worst year of the Famine.

Gaunt Famine rideth in the van,
 And Pestilence, with myriad arrows,
 Followeth in fiery guise: they spare
 Nor Woman, Child, nor Man!
 The stricken Dead lie without barrows
 By roadsides, black and bare.
 [...]
 Oh, God! It is a fearful sign,
 This fierce, mad, wasting, dragon Hunger! (Mangan 2002c, 339–340)

Citing the example of Albania's neighbour "Glorious Greece [...] Reborn from that drugged Sleep of Death," the poem seems to incite nationalist revolt:

Come, Charon, then, and crown thy work!
 The few heroic souls thou leavest
 Surviving still are strong to wrest
 Their birthright from the Turk!
 Slay on! Perchance the task thou achievest
 Is one Heaven's Powers have blessed! (Mangan 2002c, 340)

Yet the call to arms is undercut by the repeated invocation of the Greek psychopomp "ghastly Charon;" the reality of the Famine, as Ciara Hogan observes, "beggared the romantic consciousness before historical fact" (Hogan 2010, 9). Mangan pairs the starving Albanian and Irish masses in an imagined community that is marked by suffering and death rather than the heroic romantic nationalism of the kind espoused by the *Nation*. "Song of the Albanian," as Hogan writes, "is a very caustic evocation of the national perfectionist paradigm, and, in its mode of figuration – its 'myriad arrows' – it appears both self-implicating and self-lacerating" (Hogan 2010, 10).

Both "Siberia" and "Song of the Albanian," then, sit somewhat uneasily in the pages of the radical *Nation*, whose editors demanded rousing nationalist ballads to inflame the patriotism of its readers – "racy of the soil," as the paper's motto stated, and written by poets that "neither fear nor doubt for their country" (*Nation*, 25 March 1843, 376). David Lloyd has identified "a certain nervous tension" in Mangan's nationalist exhortatory verse, one "that is generally absent from Young Ireland balladry" (Lloyd 1984, 185). As Lloyd has demonstrated, Mangan – addicted to masks, aliases, literary posturing and parody, immersed in the foreign, incorrigibly multiple – challenges the homogeneity of cultural nationalism. While Mangan is evidently interested in these European elsewhere for their own sake, Siberia and Albania also function as a kind of Foucauldian heterotopic space, mirroring Irish history and allowing the poet both to participate in the cultural nationalism that

was dominating Irish politics in the 1840s while still registering a muted dissent and distance from it.

Byron, Napoleon, and La Poète Hongrois: Baron Zedlitz and Bohemian Gothic

In the same intensely prolific period that produces “Siberia” and “Song of the Albanian,” Mangan publishes a clutch of translations from the Bohemian-Viennese poet Joseph Christian Freiherr von Zedlitz (1790–1862). Zedlitz was born in Javorník in “Austrian Silesia,” as Mangan terms it in the potted biography he provides of the poet in his 1846 anthology “Stray Leaflets from the Oak of German Poetry,” published in the *Dublin University Magazine* (Mangan 2002c, 445). Silesia, along with Bohemia and Moravia, formed the three historical Czech lands, then part of the Austrian Empire (the present-day Czech Republic). Zedlitz served in the Austrian army during the Napoleonic wars before settling in Vienna, where he became a poet of some note and in the late 1830s joined the Austrian court as a diplomat. His Eastern European roots persisted however; in 1829, he was still described by the French poet Barthélemy as the “poète Hongrois” (Raschen 1926, 257). In her travelogue *Vienna and the Austrians* (1838), Frances Trollope describes Zedlitz as “the admired translator of *Childe Harold*, and the author of many greatly esteemed original poems,” who “appears at present to be the poet par excellence of Austria” (Trollope 1838, 250). Zedlitz’s literary interests seem to have existed in a somewhat strained or even antagonistic relation to his government career: he was a member of the *Ludlamshöhle*, and his admiration of Byron and Napoleon (see Spink 1931 and Raschen 1926) was at odds with the authoritarian temperament of Metternich and the Austrian Empire. As noted above, Mangan too was a devoted admirer of Byron, an interest that draws him in part to Zedlitz. He comments approvingly on Zedlitz’s “excellent translation” of *Childe Harold* and selects the stanzas on Bryon from Zedlitz’s *Todtenkränze* (1828) – in which the poetic speaker lays poetic wreaths on the graves of great figures from history – for inclusion in “Stray Leaflets from the Oak of German Poetry” (*Dublin University Magazine*, March 1846). Mangan was likely also attracted by the susceptibility to the gothic of Zedlitz’s dreaming nightscapes and revenants, which nostalgically conjured the heady memory of romantic heroic nationalism, as personified in the figure of Napoleon, as analysed in the poems below.

Zedlitz makes a brief but memorable appearance in “Anthologia Germanica XXI” (*Dublin University Magazine* September 1845), where Mangan concludes his selection “of the later German poets” with “The Midnight Review,” his version of Zedlitz’s “Die nächtliche Heerschau,” first published in 1828 and later included in his collection *Gedichte* (1832). The poem imagines a ghostly reveille of Napoleon

and his imperial troops; in general, Mangan's translation is reasonably faithful though some key differences emerge with the entrance of Napoleon in the ninth and tenth stanzas.

Und um die zwölfte Stunde
Verläßt der Feldherr sein Grab,
Kommt langsam hergeritten,
Umgeben von seinem Stab;

Er trägt ein Fleines hütchen
Er trägt ein einfach kleid
Und einen fleinen Degen
Trägt er an seiner Seit. (Zedlitz 1832, 17)

And when midnight robes the sky,
The EMPEROR leaves his tomb,
And rides along, surrounded by
His shadowy staff, through the gloom.

A silver star so bright
Is glittering on his breast;
In an uniform of blue and white
And a grey camp-frock he is dressed. (Mangan 2002c, 92)

Zedlitz's description invokes Napoleon as "the little corporal," whose modest, simple dress recalls his demotic origins. Mangan's Napoleon is a more remote figure, whose aloofness is stressed in his military uniform and grey "camp-frock" (an unusual term that Mangan seems to have coined for the occasion) and glittering "silver star." The allusion to the *Légion d'honneur*, the award created by Napoleon to commend those of non-noble birth, sits uneasily with the translation of "Feldherr" as "EMPEROR," in emphatic font (a more accurate equivalent might be "general" or "commander"). This is a reminder of how Napoleon's revolutionary idealism later turned to monarchical tyranny. In the final stanza, Zedlitz places Napoleon's ghostly return "Im Elyseischen Feld," the Elysian fields reserved by the Greek gods for the righteous and the heroic (Zedlitz 1832, 18); Mangan, however, recreates "Elyseichen" as "the wolds," the kind of rolling, open uplands more fitted to a ghost story, in keeping with his richly gothic and atmospheric version.

Despite having fought against him, Zedlitz is a fervent admirer of Napoleon, and "Die nächtliche Heerschau" is typically read as an evocative and popular example of the Napoleon cult that gained momentum throughout Europe after the death of the Emperor on Saint Helena (see Raschen 1926, 254). It was the revolutionary

politics of Napoleon, the sweeping liberal reforms set out in his *Code Civil*, that seem to have won Zedlitz. Otto W. Johnston compares “Die Nächtliche Heerschau” to the “poetic portraiture created by Pierre Jean de Béranger, the French poet chiefly responsible for transforming Napoleon into the ‘little Corporal’ – the soldier of fortune and friend of the little people to whom he had shown the road to greatness” (Johnston 1974, 619). In Zedlitz’s *Todtenkränze*, Napoleon is among the honoured dead; Raschen records that Zedlitz’s “fulsome eulogy made him a doubtful patriot in the eyes of many of his compatriots, who had fought with him against the invader Napoleon at Wagram and Aspern” (Raschen 1926, 256). Zedlitz’s sympathy with romantic ideals of liberty and democracy perhaps lay more with the “poète Hongrois” than with Zedlitz the Austrian government employee; in Metternich’s Vienna, such allegiances and aspirations had to be negotiated with care, especially in the era of the Czech National Revival. In “Die nächtliche Heerschau,” Zedlitz cloaks his admiration for revolutionary politics in a kind of Bohemian gothic scene, centred on a mythopoetic Napoleon and his spectral battalions.

Mangan returns to Zedlitz at greater length the following year with a short biography of the poet and two further translations in the anthology “Lays of Many Lands” (*Dublin University Magazine* September 1847), published just a month after “Song of the Albanian.” The first one of these, “The Phantom Ship” (“Das Geisterschiff”), again features the ghostly return of Napoleon, this time combined with the legend of the Flying Dutchman. The poem envisions Napoleon returning to “his belovèd France” on the phantom ship only to find his legacy vanished: “But, how changed seems all! That land resembles / The wreck, the shell of a burnt-out star!” (Mangan 2002c, 342). The most significant alteration comes in the final stanza, where Mangan once again renders Napoleon rather differently to Zedlitz.

»Wo bist Du,« – so ruft er, »o Kind, das schon
 In der Wiege mit Kronen gespielt?
 Die Tage des Glücks, sie sind entflohn,
 Als im Vaterarm ich Dich hielt!
 Meiner Liebe Weib, meines Herzens Sohn! –
 Dahin mein ganzes Geschlecht!
 Der Knecht war, sitzt auf des Königs Thron
 Und der König ist wieder Knecht!« (Zedlitz 1832, 83)

“All, all are gone!” cries the Desolate-hearted—
 “My glory, my people, my son, my crown!
 Oh, how are the days of my power departed!
 How lost is the nation I raised to renown!
 My house and my hopes alike lie prone
 In an all-engulphing Grave—

A slave now sits upon Cæsar's throne,
And Cæsar hath sunk to a slave!" (Mangan 2002c, 342–343)

With emotive references to his wife and son, Zedlitz emphasizes Napoleon as a grieving family man, whereas Mangan's "Desolate-hearted" is again removed from the quotidian, an icon of history. The evocation of Caesar, whose statecraft also slipped into tyranny, is double-edged and again intimates ambivalence towards the French leader. A poem that was published not long before Mangan's death, "For Soul and Country" (*Irishman*, 28 April 1849), keeps moderate nationalism alight in the aftermath of the failed 1848 Young Ireland uprising. The speaker reflects on the Napoleonic cult, concluding that:

Napoleon sinks today before
The ungilded shrine, the *single* soul
Of Washington:
TRUTH's name alone shall Man adore
Long as the waves of Time shall roll
Henceforward on! (Mangan 2002d, 123)

Another iconic figure of European history is revisited in Mangan's second translation from Zedlitz in "Lays of Many Lands." This is "Wilhem Tell," a poem in which a father-son dialogue relates the story of Switzerland's fourteenth-century folk hero, who assassinated the tyrannical Albrecht Gessler and thereby launched Swiss rebellion against Austrian domination. In Zedlitz's original, the tyrannical Landvogt remains unnamed; in Mangan's version, he is given the odd amalgamation of "Herr Percy, the Bailey," combining the German honorific with a surname of English, aristocratic and judicial connotations. It also involves a punning play on bailey, which at once suggests *bailiff* (phonetically summoned by the use of the archaic *caitiff*), a public administrative authority, the architecture of a feudal castle, and the British seat of the Central Criminal Court.

»Sieh dort, herjagend auf stolzem Roß,
Den Landvogt reiten, noch fern sein Troß.«
»»Still, Knab'! so Gott Dir helfen mag! –
Landvogt, dieß war Dein letzter Tag! –«« (Zedlitz 1832, 39)

"Look, my dear father! Herr Percy, the Bailey!
Rides he not hitherward bravely and gaily?" –
– "Ha! The grand villain! ... Now, caitiff Herr Percy,
Bless the good GOD if He shew thy soul mercy!" (Mangan 2002c, 343)

Hugh Percy, Third Duke of Northumberland, known for his anti-Catholic views and opposition to Catholic Emancipation (see Thompson 2004), was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1829–30, when Emancipation became law. This seemingly progressive step was immediately negated by Westminster’s raising of the franchise, adding fuel to the campaign to repeal the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland. By 1847, tensions were running high: the Irish confederation was formed in this year, a breakaway faction from Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal Association of Young Irelanders who brooked no compromise in their demand for an Irish Parliament with full legislative and executive powers. Zedlitz’s “Wilhelm Tell” allows Mangan to again mobilize a cultural-political attack on the Austrian Empire which resonates with the political ferment in Ireland, on the cusp of the 1848 Young Ireland rising against tyrannical British rule.

Conclusion

Exploring Mangan’s interest in Austria, Poland, Albania, and – via Zedlitz – Bohemia, reveals a poet very much engaged with contemporary European politics, a salutary reminder of the wider continental networks in which some Irish poets worked over the centuries. Indeed, “The Man in the Cloak” is interesting simply for its somewhat rare representation of an Irishman (as the eponymous character is often described in the course of the story) at home in mainland Europe. Mangan’s story, it has been argued here, satirically subverts the efforts of state authorities to police the living stream of culture; much like the man in the cloak, my narrative ultimately contends that such anarchic energies cannot be contained. The relationship of culture to politics, particularly that of nationalism, is also at the heart of Mangan’s poetic excursions to Siberia (via Poland), Albania, and the Bohemian gothic nightscapes of Zedlitz; these European elsewheres are a heterotopic space for Mangan, mirroring the Irish nationalist struggle while enabling the poet to articulate a muted wariness of the human costs such political movements entailed. For the Irish as well as the East European poet, writing is a navigation of the entangled histories and identities of place and being, shaped by similar pressures of overbearing imperial politics. There is, as Heaney writes of this long-standing affinity between Irish and Eastern European poets, “an unsettled aspect to the different worlds they inhabit, and one of the challenges they face is to survive amphibiously, in the realm of ‘the times’ and the realm of their moral and artistic self-respect” (Heaney 1988, xx). For Mangan, working in the febrile volatility of Ireland in the 1830s and 40s, East-Central Europe was a means to both explore and contest the imperative of “the times.”

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Language Revival and Educational Reform in Ireland and Hungary: Douglas Hyde, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Griffith

Eglantina REMPORT

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Abstract. Patrick Pearse’s editorial in the journal of the Gaelic League, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, is the starting point of this essay that explores Irish perceptions of the Hungarian language question as it panned out during the early nineteenth century. Arthur Griffith’s *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (1904), to which Pearse refers in his editorial, is the focal point of the discussion, with the pamphlet’s/book’s reference to Count István Széchenyi’s offer of his one-year land revenue to further the cause of the Hungarian language at the Hungarian Diet of Pozsony (present-day Bratislava) in 1825. Széchenyi’s aspirations are examined in the essay in comparison with the ideals of Baron József Eötvös, Minister of Religious and Educational Affairs (1848; 1867–71), in order to indicate the strong connection that existed between the question of language use and religious and educational matters in Hungary. Similar issues were discussed in Ireland during the nineteenth century, providing further points of reference between Ireland and Hungary in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Finally, the debate between language revivalists and reformists is studied in some detail, comparing the case of Hungary between the 1790s and the 1840s with that of Ireland between the 1890s and the 1920s.

Keywords: education, language reform, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde, *The Resurrection of Hungary*, Ireland

Introduction

Patrick Pearse wrote a glowing review of Arthur Griffith’s *The Resurrection of Hungary* in the Gaelic League (*Conradh na Gaeilge*) journal, *An Claidheamh Soluis* (The Sword of Light), in the autumn of 1904. Pearse began his editorial with the following words: “We do not know that there has been published in Ireland in our time any book in English more important than ‘The Resurrection of Hungary’” (1904, 7). This was so, argued Pearse, because “it crystallises into a national policy

the doctrines which during the past ten years have been preached in Ireland by the apostles of the Irish Ireland movement” (1904, 7). The “Irish Ireland movement” was inspired by the foundation of the Gaelic League, an organization that aimed at fostering the revival of Irish language use in Ireland, as articulated by founder of the Gaelic League, Douglas Hyde, in his 1892 lecture on “The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland.” Pearse draws attention to the fact that Arthur Griffith presents the case of Hungary to his Irish readers as one in which “the story of national revival [...] had its origins in a language movement” initiated by Count István Széchenyi’s offer of his one-year land revenue at the Hungarian Diet in 1825 to further the cause of the Hungarian language in a country where the official languages had been Latin and German (1904, 7). Quoting Griffith on the matter, Pearse hails Széchenyi’s achievements in the language revival movement, alongside those in the educational reform movement and in the furthering of industrialization in Hungary. Pearse described the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century as “free,” “prosperous,” and “renowned,” and he was not alone in holding this view (1904, 7). Hungary was celebrating its Millennium at the end of the nineteenth century with countrywide events that reached all the main cultural capitals of Europe. At the time, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy governed a large landmass, was a strong economic power, and exercised a significant influence on political matters in Europe, so the relationship between its constituent parts (Austria and Hungary) was closely examined by both scholars and politicians in Britain and Ireland in much the same way as was the relationship between Norway and Sweden, and Russia and Finland. The following essay examines the language revival and the educational reform movements in both Ireland and Hungary, arguing for a connection between the Irish and the Hungarian case, taking into account Arthur Griffith’s ideas as communicated to his fellow Irishmen on the pages of *The Resurrection of Hungary*.

Douglas Hyde, the Gaelic League, and the Irish Language Question

Séamas Ó Buachalla explains the complicated situation that existed with regard to the use of the Irish language in Ireland when the Gaelic League was founded in the early 1890s: only a small percentage of the population used Irish as their first language and only a small number of schools taught Irish as a second language. Furthermore, argues Ó Buachalla, the National Board of Education, which was established by the British government in 1831, discouraged the teaching of the Irish language in the National School System, and the British government itself looked at the issue of Irish language use in schools with noticeable disfavour (1984, 75–78). This was so because of British government fears that encouraging the use of the

Irish language would lead inevitably not only to rekindling Irish national feeling but also to re-igniting nationalist political sentiments throughout Ireland, where the population was divided along Irish/Catholic and British/Protestant lines.

This religious-political divide was an issue during the Home Rule negotiations of 1892–1893, during which period the Gaelic League was founded in July 1893. Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1893 aimed to provide Ireland with a certain degree of legislative independence and intended to give the newly established Irish parliament the right to pass laws on certain areas of Irish life. On 25 November 1892, amidst this political debate about the future of Ireland within the United Kingdom, Douglas Hyde gave a lecture at a meeting of the Irish National Literary Society, the aforementioned "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland." Hyde's lecture is considered to be the founding moment of the Gaelic League. On that momentous occasion, he said that Nationalists and Unionists should unite in "build[ing] up an Irish nation on Irish lines," should show interest in the old Gaelic literature of the land; and that "every Irish-feeling Irishman [...] should set himself to encourage the efforts, which are being made to keep alive our once great national tongue" (1892, 2–3). He also proclaimed that under the proposed new Home Rule government the Irish language should be on a par with other classical or modern languages in examinations, that children whose mother tongue was Irish should be taught in Irish, and that "Irish-speaking schoolmasters, petty session clerks, and even magistrates [should] be appointed in Irish-speaking districts" (1892, 3). Hyde finished his lecture with the following rousing statement: "because upon Irish lines alone can the Irish race once more become what it was of yore – one of the most original, artistic, literary, and charming peoples of Europe" (1892, 4).

Hyde's address to the Irish National Literary Society in 1892 should be understood and interpreted within a very particular discourse on nation and race in turn-of-the-century Britain and Ireland. This social and political discourse was encouraging both inclusion and exclusion: Hyde specifically called for the Irish people's rejection of what he termed "West-Britonism," meaning the obedient and unhesitating imitation of all things English (1892, 3). What is interesting in Hyde's speech from the point of view of language use is that in parts it reiterated some of the goals of an earlier Irish language campaign that was fought by the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language back in the late 1870s. Hyde himself had been in touch with members of the Society who had sent a memorandum to the British government in 1878, signed by "most of the prominent figures in the public life of Ireland, irrespective of creed and denomination," with a request for the Irish language to be "placed on a similar footing to Latin, Greek and French [based on a variety of] cultural, academic, and political considerations" (Dunleavy and Dunleavy 1991, 75 and 106; Ó Buachalla 1984, 77). The Society did not achieve its goals, but the social and political discussion that the memorandum generated advanced the cause of bilingual education in Ireland: from 1878, Irish could be

taught as an extra subject outside the regular school curriculum; from 1884, the number of Irish teacher trainees began to rise; and from 1893 the Gaelic League successfully encouraged wider educational reforms in Ireland. All of these combined efforts resulted in two new developments at the beginning of the twentieth century, both welcomed by the Gaelic League: the introduction of the New Programme for National Schools of 1900 and the Bilingual Programme of 1904 (Ó Buachalla 1984, 80). The Gaelic League had every reason to be satisfied with such progress, writes Ó Buachalla, because “the status of the Irish language in the national schools was [being] gradually raised,” along the “native and autochthonous lines,” as Douglas Hyde put it in his speech to the Royal Commission on University Education in 1902 (qtd. in Ó Buachalla 1984, 80).

Patrick Pearse, St Enda’s School, and Irish Educational Reform

Patrick Pearse became a member of the Gaelic League in 1896 and took on the editorship of its bilingual journal, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, in 1903. He soon made a name for himself as someone who was passionate about the revival of the Irish language and the reformation of the Irish educational system. Pearse identified with the main aims of the League: “the preservation of Irish as a national language of Ireland,” “the extension of its use as a spoken tongue,” “the study and publication of existing Gaelic literature,” and “the cultivation of modern literature in Irish” (National Library of Ireland 1916, 7). As the official leaflet of the League states, these were to be achieved through holding public meetings and lectures on the Irish language, running voluntary Irish classes; encouraging children to learn Irish songs, read Irish literature, and listen to Irish music; publishing and distributing books and pamphlets in Irish; collecting folk stories, poems, and riddles from the *Gaeltacht* districts in the west of Ireland; publishing the *Gaelic Journal* (National Library of Ireland 1916, 7). As a member of the Gaelic League, Pearse travelled to Belgium to examine the country’s bilingual educational system in 1905, a visit that would leave a mark on his editorial contribution to *An Claidheamh Soluis*. Supported by Dr J. M. Starkie, who was Resident Commissioner of the National Board of Education in Ireland and staunch ally of the League in introducing the Bilingual Programme for National School of 1904, Pearse first travelled to the small town of Fontenoy in France to view the battle site where an Irish Brigade had fought in 1745 during the War of Austrian Succession (Augusteijn 2010, 149; Ingelbien 2016, 124). Pearse accompanied there the so-called “Fontenoy Committee:” Irish republican nationalists John O’Leary and Major John MacBride. He journeyed from here onto Belgium, where he visited a large number of primary and secondary schools, grace of the Ministry of Public Instruction in Belgium (Augusteijn 2010, 150). Pearse had

been familiar with the Belgian system through T. R. Dawes's *Bilingual Teaching in Belgian Schools*, a book based on Dawes's visit to Belgian schools in 1899 as Gilchrist Travelling Student. Pearse saw the direct benefits of a well-functioning bilingual system in Belgium and, on his return to Dublin, he wrote a number of articles in *An Claidheamh Soluis*.

Elaine Sisson observes that Pearse was considered to be a "passionate and hardworking advocate" of the educational and language goals of the Gaelic League and that when he opened his own bilingual educational institution in Dublin in September 1908, there was a high level of "[o]ptimism for the success of the school" given "the reputation of the highly respected Pearse" (2005, 6–7). John Henry's editorial for *An Claidheamh Soluis*, published on 12 September 1908, remarked that Pearse's new school "will be a nursery of character, intellect, patriotism, and virtue, which may eventually exert a benign influence on the private and public life of our country" (qtd. in Sisson 2005, 6). Pearse's bilingual school, founded at Cullenswood House in Rathmines, was located in "the heart of south Dublin's prosperous Victorian suburbia" (O'Kane 2000, 73). Pearse had issues with the close proximity of Dublin and decided to move the school into the more remote area, near hayfields and grazing grounds: in Rathfarnham, County Dublin, he had found an eighteenth-century country house surrounded by acres of woods and parkland (O'Kane 2000, 73; Connell 2011, 66). Pearse's bilingual institution now became St Enda's School, and it opened its doors to students in September 1910. St Enda's was a liberal educational institution where children were encouraged to embrace their Irish heritage through dancing, singing, drawing, sculpting, and literature classes (Connell 2011, 66). Children were schooled in modern and classical subjects and were sent out to play the traditional Gaelic sports of hurling and football on the school grounds (Sisson 2005, 128–130). The language of instruction was Irish; only those subjects were taught in English which lacked the necessary vocabulary to be taught in Irish such as the main science subjects (Connell 2011, 66). St Enda's school's magazine, *An Scolaire (The Scholar)* was issued in Irish, and pupils participated in annual celebrations of mediaeval Irish culture both at Cullenswood House and at the Hermitage (Augustejn 2010, 172–173; Connell 2011, 66). Pearse himself wrote some of the plays and pageants performed by St Enda's players. Besides showcasing Pearse's own interest in the legendary tales of Cuchulain and Fionn MacCumhail, these adaptations should be considered as responses to Douglas Hyde's call to celebrate the old Irish material through the manner in which they were celebrated by nineteenth-century British and European scholars of Celtic literature. Hyde's "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland" proposed that Irish men and women of letters should follow the renowned European Celticists Kuno Meyer, Ernst Wilhelm Oskar Windisch, and Marie Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville in celebrating the Celtic heritage of Ireland (1892, 3).

St Enda's pupils received an education that was unique at the time, through a school curriculum that made the most of what the bilingual educational reform could

offer for Irish children at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ó Buachalla writes that under a new educational scheme introduced by Chief Secretary for Ireland Augustine Birrell in 1907 fee-paying schools were allowed to have their own bilingual educational programme (1984, 82). The scheme was welcomed by the Gaelic League and was put to good use at St Enda's under the watchful eyes of its Headmaster Pearse and its Second Master Thomas MacDonagh. Pearse scholars, however, draw attention to the fact that by the middle of the 1910s, the issue of reforming the Irish education system becomes intertwined in Pearse's reformist thought with the more pressing political matter of Ireland's cultural and political independence from Britain (Augusteijn 2010, Connell 2011, Sisson 2005, Walsh 2007). As Pearse elucidates in his essay on the failures of the British education system in Ireland, "The Murder Machine" (1913), he included the Irish legends in St Enda's curriculum in order to "re-create and perpetuate in Ireland the knightly tradition of Cuchulainn" (1916, 38). Although St Enda of the island of Inishmore (off the west coast of Galway), after whom the school was named, was the leading light of mediaeval monasticism in Ireland, it was not the practice of silent contemplation that the school's pupils learned during their daily routine. Their daily study of the heroic behaviour of mediaeval Irish knights and warriors, such as Cuchulain and Fionn McCumhail, instilled in them an honour code that drew them to the call of Ireland in times of rebellion: St Enda's pupils fought alongside Pearse, their teacher, at the General Post Office (GPO) during the Easter Rising of April 1916. Pearse noted at the end of the first day of the Rising, Easter Monday, 23 April 1916: "[t]he St. Enda's boys have been on duty on the roof [of the GPO] since we came in," adding that "[t]hey are all in excellent spirits although very sleepy" (qtd. in Ryan 1960, 89). The fears of the Commissioners of National Education back in the early 1830s – that the Irish language movement would rekindle separatist nationalist sentiments in Ireland – became a political reality on the occasion of the Easter Rising. However, it must be noted that it was not the language movement itself that led to a rebellion against British rule in Ireland but rather the widespread militarization of the island from the early 1910s onwards, the postponement of the enactment of the Home Rule Bill passed by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords in 1914, and the outbreak of the Great War in the summer of 1914. During the war, Irishmen were called upon to join the British imperial army to go into battle on the European Continent.

Arthur Griffith, Language Revival, and *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904)

Owen McGee writes that when *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* first came out in a serialized form in the *United Irishman* newspaper in 1904, Arthur Griffith suddenly found himself at the centre of Dublin's influential literary

and professional circles that were discussing the political future of Ireland (2015, 69). Griffith argued vehemently that Ireland should seek a similar political contract with Great Britain that Hungary had signed with Austria in 1867. Griffith reasoned as follows: since the *Ausgleich* of 1867, Hungary had “outstripped the majority of European countries” in both material progress and cultural achievement and had established the Hungarian language as the official language of the state, “used in all state documents, in all courts of law and [...] in public offices” (1904, 77 and 73). Griffith returned to the question of language revival on a number of occasions during the run of his articles, stating that there was a direct connection between the achievements of the language revival, the intensification of national feeling, and the increase of Hungary’s economic productivity after the *Ausgleich* (1904, 80). Griffith decided to present the case of Hungary as an example for Ireland, asserting that “[t]o-day we are fighting precisely the same fight in Ireland as the Hungarians did in the early Forties,” drawing a parallel between the Ireland of his time and the Hungary of the Reform Era (1904, 80). Pearse was aware of Griffith’s interest in the Irish language movement though his countryman would have taken different sides to the Gaelic League on the non-political end of the language revival. Pearse knew that Griffith had high hopes for the national revival in Ireland, writing in his review of *The Resurrection*: “[he] enunciates with regard to political nationality the truth which the Gaelic League enunciates with regard to spiritual nationality: that the centre of gravity of a nation must be within the nation itself” (1904, 7). Given Griffith’s conviction on the matter and Pearse’s involvement in the “Irish Ireland movement,” it is little wonder that Pearse concluded his editorial with the following words: “[t]he moral of the whole story is that the Hungarian language revival of 1825 laid the foundation of the great, strong and progressive Hungarian nation of 1904. And so it shall fall out in Ireland” (1904, 7).

As mentioned, Griffith identified Count István Széchenyi as the initiator of the Hungarian language movement with the offer of his one-year land revenue to found the National Academy of Sciences at the Diet of 1825–27 (1904, 14). Griffith cites Széchenyi’s legendary speech given on 3 November, the opening day of the parliamentary session, in response to Pál Felsőbüki Nagy’s powerful *exposé* on land, taxation, and language reform. As the story goes, Széchenyi listened to Felsőbüki Nagy’s speech and then made the offer to fund the establishment of a Hungarian *Tudós Társaság* (Society of Scholars). The Society later took the name “Academy” and had an impressive palace built near the Chain Bridge, on the left bank of the Danube. Griffith presents Széchenyi in glowing terms: he was a true patriot, the “leader of the nation,” aware of “his country’s needs” and “equipped by study, observation, and character” to help her build a more prosperous future (1904, 15). Griffith writes that the following advice Széchenyi had given to his countrymen summarizes the Count’s teachings: “[r]evive your language, educate yourselves, build up your agriculture and your industries” (qtd. in Griffith 1904, 15). There was truth in what Griffith

wrote about Széchenyi's influence in Hungary: he and his countrymen initiated countrywide railway and waterway building projects; the running of steam boats and steam trains on railways and waterways; the re-introduction of horse breeding and horse racing; and new construction of bridges, especially that of the suspension bridge over the Danube (which later came to be known as "the Chain Bridge").

Thomas Kabdebó remarks that part of Griffith's admiration of Széchenyi may well have derived from a direct connection to the Irish separatist nationalist movement of the mid-nineteenth century: William Smith O'Brien, one of the leaders of the failed Young Ireland rebellion of 1848, visited the Hungarian Diet held in Buda in 1861 (2001, 26). There he listened with admiration to a famous speech of Ferenc Deák declaring the law-making autonomy of the parliament – he would later orchestrate the *Ausgleich* of 1867 and would be praised for doing so by Griffith. As Kabdebó discovered, William Smith O'Brien's guide for the first part of his visit to the city was Count Széchenyi's son, Count Béla Széchenyi (2001, 26). However, in *The Resurrection*, Griffith intended more than merely to celebrate Széchenyi as "the greatest Hungarian," as he had come to be known in Hungary. His intention was to encourage his fellow Irish countrymen and women who were involved in various revival movements at the turn of the twentieth century, offering the Hungarian example as a model of what could be achieved. Critical as he often was of the various Irish organizations and their members (devastatingly so in the case of Dublin's Abbey Theatre), Griffith still saw great value in the work of Douglas Hyde and Patrick Pearse for the Gaelic League; that of Horace Plunkett and George Russell for the Co-operative Movement; and that of Lady Augusta Gregory, John Millington Synge, and William Butler Yeats for the Irish Literary Revival. Griffith realized that the social, cultural, and educational programmes they were trying to implement in Ireland had every potential to bear the same fruits as "Széchenyi's programme." It was this belief that led him to support Pearse's candidacy for the editorship of *An Claidheamh Soluis* in 1903 (Augusteijn 2010, 101).

One Hungarian who is given little attention in Griffith's celebratory work of Hungary is Baron József Eötvös, member of the *Magyar Tudós Társaság* (Hungarian Society of Scholars), President of the Hungarian Academy of Science, and Minister of Education and Religious Affairs (1848 and 1867–72). Eötvös and Széchenyi differed significantly in their views as to the end of the language revival and the aim of an educational reform. Széchenyi held the view that, first and foremost, the Hungarian language should be made suitable for verbalizing and interiorizing the new scientific achievements of the industrial age, paving the way for the country's economic growth and future industrial progress. Contrary to the "Széchenyi legend," it was for this reason that he had offered his one year's land revenue for the establishment of the *Magyar Tudós Társaság*. Further to this, he believed that the material progress facilitated by the language movement would lead to more political rights being secured for Hungary within the Habsburg Empire. Széchenyi

feared that should the education system be reformed first, it would lead to a scenario in which large masses of enlightened people would call fervently for more civic and communal rights, possibly resulting in serious social unrest or even rebellion (Bényei 1996, par. 6). Eötvös, on the other hand, argued that educational reform was essential for economic progress to take place, maintaining that the education and cultivation of the population would eventually lead to the people of Hungary acquiring more political rights (Bényei 1996, par. 6 and 8–9). Eötvös did not share Széchenyi's concerns that there was no point in discussing educational matters at parliamentary sessions so long as final decisions lay with the Habsburg monarch and him averse to reforms, in fear of undermining his political power as Head of the Habsburg Empire (Bényei 1996, par. 7). Eötvös, therefore, pushed ahead with the programme of making the Hungarian language the official language of the country, a move that contributed to a wider nation-building project on which the Hungarian liberal political élite had embarked at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Partly as a result of his efforts, Hungarian language classes were made compulsory in elementary schools from 1843 onwards and the Hungarian language was declared the official language of Hungary in 1844.

Miklós Bényei reminds us that one of Eötvös's aims was to create "national unity" by means of education, convinced that, in the long run, only this could secure Hungarian control over social and political affairs in a multicultural and multinational country, only half of its population being Magyar (Bényei 1996, par. 10). Benedict Andersen and Joep Leerssen write about systematic and enforced "Magyarization" of all the minorities living on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary during the nineteenth century (Andersen 1982, 101–106; Leerssen 2008, 154–156). There is truth in these critical comments, in that the "de-Germanization of Hungary" – long preceding Douglas Hyde's call for the "de-Anglicization of Ireland" – meant the strengthening of the political influence of the Hungarian language in the Carpathian Basin. However, the situation was more complex than Andersen and Leerssen present it in their influential critical studies on the emergent nationalist movements in Europe. First, nineteenth-century Hungarian history involved many different phases: the final period of Habsburg absolutism in the early nineteenth century, the reform era of the 1820s–1840s, the revolution of 1848–49, the post-revolutionary oppression (including the Bach era) from 1849 to 1866, and the decades of the Dual Monarchy from the *Ausgleich* of 1867 until the end of the century. Over the course of this turbulent century in Hungary's history, the question of education was riven by the often rivalrous interests of the Habsburg monarch, the Hungarian nobility, the Roman Catholic Church in Hungary, and the different ethnic minorities such as the Croatians, the Serbians, the Saxons, and the Romanians (Dobszay 2003, Pajkossy 2003, Csorba 2003).

Second, this multicultural and multi-ethnic population of nineteenth-century Hungary was divided along many different confronting and/or correlating lines,

not just along the oft-cited ethnicity/minority (*nemzetiségi*) line (Dobszay 2003, 163 and 167). Out of these, the division along class (*rend*) lines was the strongest, often matching the ethnicity/minority line as in the case of the Saxons and the Serbians (Nagy and Katus 2010, 4). Quite understandably, the more prosperous an ethnic minority had become, the more it held onto its communal rights (*közösségi jog*) such as the right to use its own language and run its own educational institutions. Nagy and Katus remark that the “nation-building” of the various ethnic minorities in the region was taking place simultaneously with the larger “political nation building project” envisaged by the Hungarian social and political élite and that they were successful in preventing the hegemony of the Hungarian language in the Carpathian Basin until the 1890s (2010, 4–11). Finally, there was the issue of religious affiliation and the power of the various “official churches” (*hivatalos egyház*), each of which had the right to run their own educational institutions in which children were taught in the language of the religious denomination/ethnic minority that financed the school (see articles 38 and 44 in the minority and education legislation of 1868; Nagy and Katus 2010, 15). For instance, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, and the German Lutheran Church were recognized as “official churches,” and in various parts of Hungary these churches had the right to choose the language of instruction in their educational institutions. Eötvös’s aspiration to the use of the Hungarian language in the new “political nation” post-*Ausgleich* did *not* mean the enforced ending of bilingual, or in some cases trilingual, education of children in certain parts of the Kingdom of Hungary. Curiously, professor of Celtic languages Kuno Meyer, who had received treatment in the thermal baths of Pöstyén in the Slovakian territory of Northern Hungary, wrote in a letter to Gaelic League founder Douglas Hyde that the people of Pöstyén were fluent in three languages: Slovak, Hungarian, and German (Ó Cróinín 2016, 37). Meyer’s correspondence with Hyde in 1904 and 1905 is indicative of their shared interest in the Hungarian language movement of the nineteenth century, in particular in the foundation of the Hungarian Academy, with Meyer promising to acquire the statute of the Hungarian Academy to provide example for the foundation of what he tentatively called the “Irish Academy,” or “Academy of Irish Learning” (Ó Cróinín 2016, 37–38). Pearse refers to Meyer’s address to the Gaelic League in Liverpool in 1904, entitled “The Need of an Irish Academy,” in his editorial in *An Claidheamh Soluis* as one to follow on further parallels between the language movements of Ireland and Hungary (1904, 7).

Language Reform and Hungarian Millennialism

One of the issues not addressed in Griffith’s *The Resurrection of Hungary* was the manner in which the Hungarian language had been reformed in the nineteenth century. Since the last decades of the eighteenth century, prominent priests,

poets, and encyclopaedists had been urging a more extended use of the Hungarian language, but their efforts had been crushed by the Austrian absolutist political élite, who feared that any concession towards broadening Hungarian language use would lead to the strengthening of the national identity of Hungarians. Similar arguments would resurface in the British Government's disregard and/or disfavour of the use of the Irish language during the 1830s and 1840s. As concessions began to be offered at the Habsburg court in Vienna towards the Hungarians during the 1820s and 1830s, however, a serious debate started to unfold between *neologists* and *ortologists* with regard to the way in which the Hungarian language should be revived. *Neologists* (or reformists) believed that a standardized new linguistic corpus should be created by means of derivation, suffixation, and word invention, one that would serve the widening linguistic needs of a country undergoing an industrial revolution. *Ortologists* (or revivalists) maintained that the language movement should work towards preserving the wide variety of dialects that existed in the Carpathian Basin, enriching the language with the linguistic diversity in the long term (Dobszay 2003, 170–174). Similarly in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century, *progressivists* and *nativists* clashed over the manner of the revival of the Irish language. O'Leary writes that the debate between *nativists* and *progressivists* went on for a good while on the pages of *An Claidheamh Soluis* in the late 1900s and that, while *nativism* was a strong strain within the Gaelic League, *progressivism* was still a “fundamental element in the league's programme” because it was understood that both language and literature “must confront the realities of twentieth-century European life” (1994, 233). As this happened in Ireland in the early twentieth century, so it happened in Hungary in the early nineteenth century: the debate about the future of the Irish and the Hungarian languages was won by those who argued for the creation of a new, logical, and more scientifically assured linguistic corpus that would meet the needs of political, religious, social, and literary discourse. This argument was won in the hope that both early-nineteenth century Hungary and early twentieth-century Ireland might achieve significant economic development.

Returning to Baron Eötvös's aforementioned calls for the extended use of the Hungarian language within the new Kingdom of Hungary post-*Ausgleich*: he held that the newly-formed Hungarian “political nation” (*politikai nemzet*) should use the newly-reformed Hungarian language as it would serve the needs of trade, industry, and agriculture better than the old-fashioned languages of German and Latin that had been the official languages of the Habsburg Empire during the long eighteenth century. Griffith, for his part, paid little attention to the nuances of the language reform movements either in Hungary or in Ireland despite the incredible amount of background research he had done in preparation for writing *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland*. Griffith's intentions could be better understood when considered in relation to the Millennial Celebrations that were held around the Kingdom of Hungary from the mid-1890s onwards. On the one hand, these country-wide celebrations were conceived

by the social and political élite as the culmination of the Hungarian nation-building project of the latter half of the nineteenth century, celebrating the Hungarian presence in the Carpathian Basin during the previous one thousand years. On the other hand, the events were used to showcase contemporary artistic talent in the fields of music, painting, sculpture and architecture, living and working in post-*Ausgleich* Hungary. At the time, museums, music halls, and theatre houses were built and construction work was underway on the new Houses of Parliament on the Danube, with doors opening in 1892 and construction completed in 1904, the year of publication of *The Resurrection*. News of the Millennial Celebrations had reached Ireland in forms of newspaper articles and journal reviews as well as in forms of art shows such as the one that exhibited Mihály Munkácsy's award-winning *Ecce Homo* (1896) at the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin in 1899. Tekla Mecsnóber noted that James Joyce had seen the Munkácsy exhibition at the Royal Irish Academy and had written an essay on his artistic impressions of *Ecce Homo* (2001, 347). This is most intriguing given that Griffith's biographer, Owen McGee, draws a direct link between Joyce and Griffith: "Ultimately, Joyce's experimental novel *Ulysses* (Paris 1922) would be set in Dublin on the same day (16 June 1904) as the last of Griffith's 'Resurrection of Hungary' articles appeared in the *United Irishman*" (2015, 70). Within this Millennial context, Griffith's editorial/pamphlet should be considered as a "Millennial text;" similar in vein to Joseph de Jekelfalussy's edited volume, *The Millennium of Hungary and Its People*, a book that was attached to the Millennial National Exhibition of 1896 held in Budapest. *The Resurrection of Hungary* was not just the inaugurating publication of the political party *Sinn Féin* (Ourselves Alone), which Griffith founded in 1905; it was also a contribution to the Millennial Celebrations that were held in Hungary and in other parts of Continental Europe.

Conclusion

Pearse recommended that every member of the Gaelic League buy Griffith's pamphlet and "study it for himself" (1904, 7). Griffith himself wrote that there was a hint in it for the Gaelic League, especially with regard to the way the "Irish Ireland movement" was to evolve in the decades ahead (1904, 82). Griffith mentioned enthusiastically the establishment of a national press in Hungary, reporting on all areas of life from sport to women's fashion, the building of a National Theatre and a National Museum in Buda-Pest, the foundation of the Hungarian Academy and the National University, and, finally, the filling of bookshops with Hungarian works of literature (1904, 80–82). As advocate of the revival of the Irish language in Ireland, Pearse found Griffith's ideals regarding the successful "resurrection" of the Hungarian language in all areas of Hungarian life most intriguing. One area where Griffith revealed little in his study of parallels between Ireland and Hungary was that of

education, but Pearse here turned to the ideals of the “Irish Ireland movement” of the Gaelic League. With the foundation of St Enda’s School, Pearse realized one of the main aims of the movement: bilingual education of Irish children, schooling them to embrace their Irish-language heritage. St Enda’s was an experiment in education and cultivation, a realization not only of Pearse’s educational ideals but also of his social and political thought. Griffith’s political ideals differed significantly from Pearse’s political thought, especially as Pearse began to embrace, and disseminate in public, a more radical, revolutionary ideology in the mid-1910s. Pearse and Griffith agreed that the “whole national life” of Ireland could be revived and rejuvenated through the Irish language movement in much the same way as it had occurred in nineteenth-century Hungary through the Hungarian language movement (Pearse 1904, 7). Hyde was perhaps keener on promoting the use of the Irish language in schools and public life and on rediscovering the old legends of Ireland preserved in mediaeval Irish manuscripts than actively promoting either a radical or a more moderate political view during the 1890s and 1900s. Still, when the time had come, all of them took an active role in Irish politics: Patrick Pearse read out the *Proclamation of the Irish Republic* on behalf of the Provisional Government, and as Commander-in-Chief, during the Easter Rising in April 1916; Arthur Griffith was one of the signatories of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 that established the Irish Free State, and he acted as President of Dáil Éireann, putting together the Provisional Government of 1922; and, finally, Douglas Hyde was made first President of Ireland in 1938, following the enactment of the Constitution of Ireland in 1937. At one point in their lives, each of these ideologists and politicians considered nineteenth-century Hungary as a model for Ireland to follow in building a more successful and more prosperous future for the country as it entered into the first decades of the twentieth century.

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T. W. Rolleston's Ireland through a Polish Prism

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Abstract. A founding member of the Irish Literary Society, an early member of the Gaelic League, and a leading figure in the Irish Co-operative Movement, Thomas William Rolleston was one of the most notable figures in movements for Irish cultural and economic revival during the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Rolleston also had a keen interest in German literature and culture, developed originally from the four years that he lived in Wiesbaden and Dresden between 1879 and 1883. This experience granted him some appreciation of conditions that obtained in Germany prior to the outbreak of the First World War, including Prussian-Polish relations. In 1917, Rolleston published a significant pamphlet assessing Irish-British relations during the decades preceding the 1916 Rising in Ireland as compared with relations between Prussia and Poland over the same period. Rolleston rejects a widespread view in Ireland that the moral authority, which the British Government had accorded to itself as a defender of the rights of small nations in the war against Germany, had been fatally compromised by its willingness to countenance Polish independence while continuing to oppose Irish independence. This essay considers the contrasts that Rolleston draws between Ireland and Poland in 1917 in the light of his general views on the Irish language question and Irish politics during the 1900s.

Keywords: Rolleston, Ireland, Poland, First World War, 1916 Rising

Rolleston on Ireland in European Context

Despite an impressive range of achievements and activities over several decades in Ireland, Germany, and London during the era of the Irish Revival, Thomas William Rolleston has been largely neglected in the field of Irish criticism. There is not a single book-length critical study devoted to him in the one hundred years since his death in 1920. The only biographical account is to be found in his son's somewhat sketchy work of 1939 (Rolleston 1939). Conor Morrissey's recent discussion of Rolleston in the context of Protestant involvement in Irish nationalism during the 1900s is a welcome development, though he covers but a brief period in the writer's/activist's

life in relation to a wide range of other figures from the period (Morrissey 2019, 20–44). Symptomatic of the critical neglect that Rolleston has suffered, his pamphlet of June 1917, *Ireland and Poland: A Comparison*, has been largely disregarded even though it appears at a critical time in modern Irish history, just over a year after the Irish rebellion of 1916 and during the third year of the First World War. This essay addresses the arguments that Rolleston lays out in *Ireland and Poland* in the light of this historical context and with regard to the following considerations. First, there is the significance of Rolleston's standing in Irish literary and political circles for evaluating the pamphlet's content. Second, there is the pamphlet's uniqueness as a publication in comparing the political circumstances of Ireland under British rule with those of Polish regions under Prussian rule during the decades preceding the outbreak of the First World War and the 1916 Rising in Ireland. Third, the pamphlet is significant for the arguments that it makes in contrasting land and language policies in British-governed Ireland with those exercised in Prussian-governed Polish territories during this same period.

Rolleston's *Ireland and Poland* is striking as much for its timing as its content. It enters public domain just over a year after the defeated Irish uprising of April 1916, the subsequent execution of the rebel leaders, the arrest of around three thousand five hundred people, and the deportation of over one thousand eight hundred participants to internment camps or prisons in Britain (Ferriter 2005, 154). Yet it also appears at a time in which the last of these prisoners were released under the orders of the British Government, with Prime Minister Lloyd George calling together an Irish Convention in June 1917 in the hope of finding a solution to the Irish political situation against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Europe (Lee 2008, 163). When regarded in this context, *Ireland and Poland* demonstrates just how deeply political developments in Ireland following the 1916 Rising were tied up with the course of events during the First World War. Rolleston was an Irishman who had lived in Germany for a number of years in the early 1880s while also being involved with such notable Irish cultural and economic organizations as the Irish Literary Society and the Irish Co-operative Movement.¹ He was therefore well positioned to offer a cogent assessment of the Irish situation in a Central European context during the last years of the War.

In her major study of the place of Poland in Irish nationalist discourse from the early eighteenth to the early twentieth century, Róisín Healy suggests that, given how Rolleston was employed in the Department of Information in London during the War years, the British Government may have sponsored the publication of

1 Rolleston lived in Wiesbaden and Dresden between 1879 and 1883. He co-founded the Irish Literary Society with W. B. Yeats and D. J. O'Donoghue in London in 1891. Through his friendship with the founder of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society (IAOS), Horace Plunkett, Rolleston became an important figure in the Irish Co-operative Movement, supporting the work of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction after it was set up in 1900.

his pamphlet as a counter to Irish protests over the contrasting policies that the Government was adopting towards Ireland and Poland from 1917 (Healy 2017, 253). Healy points to an increase of resentment across the spectrum of Irish society in 1917 when, as part of the Entente Powers, Britain declared its full support for an independent Polish state. This new position stood squarely at odds with the Government's Irish policy, where Home Rule had still not been agreed upon even after the huge upsurge in nationalist anger at the British Government after the defeat of the 1916 rebellion. By 1917, Lloyd George's Government agreed to implement Home Rule but only on condition that the predominantly Protestant north-east of Ireland would opt out for a period of at least six years (Healy 2017, 250–252). Healy shows that comparisons between Ireland and Poland had been made in the Irish press since the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 as part of a longer history of Irish identifications with Poland that dated back to the early eighteenth century. She points to debates in the *Freeman's Journal* in late 1915–early 1916, in which reports of Prussian suppression of Polish people were taken as indications that a victory of the Central Powers might very well enforce the suppression of Irish rights under German rule rather than bring about Irish independence. One of the most significant interventions in this debate was made by Patrick Pearse in December 1915, just over four months prior to his leading the Irish rebellion in Dublin. Healy draws attention to Pearse's provocative claim that, horrific as the war was, it was still not worse than the long history of Polish enslavement by Russia and Irish enslavement by England. Pearse wondered if the war might prove to be the context within which both countries could achieve their freedom (Healy 2017, 245–246).

Rolleston on Irish Language and Political Questions

The contribution of Rolleston's pamphlet to the comparisons made during the years of the First World War between circumstances in Ireland and those in Poland was significant for two reasons. First, Rolleston's views commanded respect, even among those Irish nationalists who strongly disagreed with him, because of his prominence in those cultural and economic revival movements that gathered momentum in Ireland during the 1900s. Second, he had acquired strong proficiency in the German language when living in Wiesbaden and Dresden for four years in the early 1880s, so it was not that easy to dismiss his arguments as biased or uninformed. In 1894, W. P. Ryan described how Rolleston came together with others to initiate the Irish Literary Society in the Southwark district of London. The Society was founded upon the Southwark Club, inaugurated by Galway native Francis A. Fahy and Offaly native John T. Kelly in 1883. The Southwark Club had been promoting Irish literature, primarily through translations of old Irish-language literary works, in a part of London with a significant Irish emigrant

community (Ryan 1970, 11–18). Along with D. J. O’Donoghue, Rolleston met up with W. B. Yeats at Yeats’s residence in Chiswick to take the work of the Southwark Club on to a new level, founding the Irish Literary Society under the shadow of the British Museum near the end of December 1891 (Ryan 1970, 35–36). Rolleston became the Honorary Secretary of the Society, and, while he did not support the view that a new literary movement exclusively in the Irish language was feasible, he did earnestly argue that Irish literature in English could succeed in creating a distinctively national literature by drawing upon the inheritance of the Irish-language oral and literary traditions. This view was laid out in an article published in *The Irish Weekly Independent* in 1896, one that Rolleston’s son Charles quotes in full in his biography of his father (Rolleston 1939, 11–23).

Given that one of the questions arising when comparisons were drawn between Ireland and Poland was that of language rights, Rolleston’s position on the Irish language is a matter of importance. He was certainly at odds with his friend Douglas Hyde, a fellow graduate of Trinity College Dublin whom he supported in the founding of the Gaelic League in 1893. Unlike Rolleston, Hyde was fervently committed to reviving Irish as a living vernacular throughout the country. Despite their difference of opinion, Rolleston’s views on the language question would have been taken seriously, particularly since he himself had advocated an interest in the Irish language and Irish-language literature through his involvement with the National Board of Education, originally established by the British Government for Ireland in 1831 (Lyons 1973, 82). In August 1900, Rolleston criticized the attitudes to the Irish language among the various school committees throughout Ireland that ran under the auspices of the National Board, arguing that the enormous decline of the Irish language through the course of the nineteenth century was not brought about by England. On the contrary, Rolleston asserted with some degree of justification that it was the broad mass of the Irish people themselves and their leaders who “cooperated eagerly with the National Board of Education in digging the grave of the ancient tongue” (Rolleston 1900a, 1). A few months earlier, Rolleston praised some recent English translations of old Irish-language works, describing Standish Hayes O’Grady’s *Silva Gadelica* (1892) as “the greatest monument of Gaelic scholarship” since the days of Irish antiquarians Jeremiah O’Donovan and Eugene O’Curry from the early to mid-nineteenth century (Rolleston 1900b, 2). In his biography, Charles Rolleston explains that his father’s scepticism towards the revival of Irish as a living vernacular was not borne out of any hostility to the language. It was simply his belief that, because the language had fallen into disuse, it lacked the words for a wide range of modern objects and activities. New Irish-language words would have to be invented if the language was to become an effective means of communication in modern times, and, when grafted onto the old language, the new vocabulary would “deprive the latter of that individuality and character which a language can only acquire satisfactorily by a process of natural and continuous evolution” (Rolleston 1939, 23).

Rolleston's political thought on Ireland during the years of campaigning for Home Rule is perhaps best encapsulated in a pamphlet that he published in 1900, *Ireland, the Empire, and the War* (Rolleston 1900c). So taken was the editor of the *All Ireland Review* with the article that Standish James O'Grady gave over a full page of his newspaper to reprinting passages taken from it (O'Grady 1900, 5). This pamphlet was published at a time when hostility towards Britain as an imperial power took on a new shape among Irish nationalists in the form of a protest movement against the British war with the Boers in South Africa. Irish opposition was manifested in the pro-Boer Transvaal Committee that was founded in December 1899, leading an anti-recruitment campaign to dissuade young Irishmen from serving in British Army regiments that were then fighting the Boers (McCracken 1989, 50–53). The most striking aspect of this pro-Boer campaign was the contingent of five hundred men who travelled under the command of John MacBride to fight as an Irish Brigade alongside the Boers against British forces from September 1899 to September 1900. Donal McCracken provides a book-length study of the history of this Irish Transvaal Brigade (McCracken, 1999).

In responding to these attitudes and circumstances, Rolleston criticized what he saw as a fundamental inconsistency in the political attitudes that obtained among Home Rule nationalists in Ireland. On the one hand, there prevailed a spirit of rebellion in which Britain and its Empire was consistently the subject of scorn among supporters of Irish Home Rule or complete Irish independence. Yet, at the same time, the Irish Parliamentary Party sat at Westminster Parliament, took an oath of allegiance to the British Crown, and made political alliances with English Parties, while enormous numbers of Irish youth took up positions in the British Imperial Civil Service or in the British Armed Forces (O'Grady 1900, 5). Given Rolleston's conviction that the existence of a completely independent Irish nation-state had no historical precedent and was not the desire of the majority of the Irish people in any case, he proposed that the pursuit of Home Rule was the only sensible and viable option. Instead of maintaining some kind of grassroots appeal through an anti-British rhetoric of anti-Imperialism, however, Rolleston argued that Irish politicians and civic leaders should fully embrace Ireland's position within what he termed "the Anglo-Celtic Empire," in the pursuit of an Irish Home Rule parliament (O'Grady 1900, 5). He admitted that the history of the Empire had been "stained by many errors and many crimes," but he put these down largely to "a detestable English failing, the inability to think that anything can be successful and admirable and worthy of being taken quite seriously which is not English" (O'Grady 1900, 5). Rolleston appeals to Irish supporters of Home Rule to distinguish between "English" and "British," arguing that while the English "oppressed and plundered" Ireland for many centuries, the British Empire has done "nothing but good" for the country, the Union flag being as much a symbol of Ireland as of England or Scotland (O'Grady 1900, 5).

Land and Language in *Ireland and Poland*

Róisín Healy highlights the importance of the historical moment during which Rolleston's 1917 pamphlet appears for the appreciation of its arguments. Her emphasis suggests that these arguments were primarily contingent upon the circumstances that obtained in Ireland at that time in the context of the ongoing European war, particularly the fall-out from the 1916 uprising. A close scrutiny of the pamphlet, however, also raises the alternative possibility that Rolleston's views in 1917 were actually consistent with his attitude to the revival of the Irish language or to Irish nationalist opposition to Britain many years earlier during the period of the Boer War.

Two points should be noted in relation to this question before turning to the substance of the pamphlet itself. First, Rolleston's scepticism towards the identifications made between Ireland and Poland in 1917 is something he makes clear from the outset: "as though the peoples of these two countries were suffering the same kind of oppression, the same injustice, the same denial of the right of every man to live and prosper in his own land on equal terms with his fellow-citizens in every other part of the realm" (Rolleston 1917, 3). The barely-concealed tone of exasperation in these words is nothing new. It recalls his lamentation over seventeen years earlier at how his fellow Irishmen "cheer on every foe of the Empire without the slightest consideration of the merits of their cause" (O'Grady 1900, 5). Second, Rolleston would have been the last person to indulge that hatred of all things German which became rampant in England during the First World War. Having lived in Germany for four years, having learnt the language, having introduced the poetry of Walt Whitman to German audiences, having written a biography of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and translations of Richard Wagner, Rolleston's sympathy for German culture obviously ran deep.² He was bold enough to defend the achievements of German literature in a piece that was published in *The Hibbert Journal* during the first months of the war in October 1914. Rolleston argued that the German literature of *Dichter* was sharply distinguished from the culture promulgated through the state education system from the universities down. He also regarded the militarism and organizational bureaucracy at work in Germany during the years leading into the war as a predominantly Prussian phenomenon. Rolleston maintained that the stories of Rudolf Lindau, the dramas of Gerhard Hauptmann, or even the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche had nothing to do with the militant nationalism of Germany. If anything, they stood at odds with the militaristic spirit

2 Rolleston entered into a significant correspondence with Whitman (Frencz 1951). He was instrumental in making Whitman's work more widely appreciated among literary circles in Dublin and London, publishing an important essay on the poet in German in 1871, one translated into English in 1893 (Rolleston 1971, 230–239). Rolleston also published his biography of Lessing in 1889, an English translation of Wagner's *Tannhauser* in 1900, and a translation of *The Tale of Lohengrin* in 1913.

of popular German literature as it appeared in the years leading into the First World War, exemplified for Rolleston in the mass popularity of a novel like Bernhard Kellermann's 1913 *Der Tunnel* in Germany (Rolleston 1914–1915, 82–88).

In *Ireland and Poland*, Rolleston describes an anti-Polish policy adopted by the German Government since the 1880s. He asserts that between 1886 and 1906 this Government spent on average the equivalent of one million pounds sterling to buy out Polish landowners and plant ethnic Germans in their stead. He mentions that in 1904 the German Government banned Polish people from building new farmhouses without a licence. He describes an even more oppressive law coming into force in 1908 through which “in clear defiance of the German Constitution, the Prussian Government actually took powers and were voted funds – from taxation paid by Poles and Germans alike – for the compulsory expropriation of Polish owners against whom nothing whatever could be alleged except their non-German nationality” (Rolleston 1917, 7–8). The result of these government policies was that Polish people living and working on their land had come to be regarded as a nuisance who ought to be replaced by Germans. Rolleston sets this German policy in stark contrast to that of the British Government's approach to the land question in Ireland during the late nineteenth-early twentieth century period. He acknowledges that most of the land of Ireland had been confiscated from the native Irish people in wars of conquest during the seventeenth century and granted to an aristocracy mainly of English descent. He also asserts, however, that over the same period as Prussian subordination of rural Polish peoples, the British Government's policy had been one of transferring the effective ownership of land from the Anglo-Irish aristocracy to the Gaelic Irish peasantry. In support of this view, he mentions the terms of various British Government Land Acts from the 1870s that resulted in Irish tenants only being liable for rents that were fixed under law, with the freedom to sell their leases whenever they wished. Rolleston also points to the British Government's land purchase scheme that enabled Irish tenant farmers to buy their lease-holdings in fixed instalments at a rate lower than the rent due. He observes that almost two-thirds of the rural Irish population had become the owners of their land as a result, with the remainder of tenants enjoying conditions almost equal to that of outright ownership (Rolleston 1917, 9).

Another matter of great importance to Irish nationalists that Rolleston addresses in the pamphlet was that of language. He begins by drawing attention to the foundation of the National University in 1908 as a solution to the question of British Government funding for a Catholic University in Ireland, noting that while the National University was open to persons of all creeds, its Government was primarily in the hands of the Irish Catholic hierarchy (Rolleston 1917, 13). He also highlights knowledge of the Irish language as a requirement for matriculation in the National University. Rolleston presents a stark contrast between British and Prussian government policies on the Irish language in the nineteenth century. He

observes an official policy of weakening the use of Polish within the territory of Poland that Prussia acquired after the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. Relying on William Harbutt Dawson's *The Evolution of Modern Germany* (1908), Rolleston asserts that no Polish was permitted to be used at public meetings, that since 1873 German alone was taught in national schools, that German had to be the language of instruction wherever half of the students could understand it, that a decree of 1899 forbade teachers even to speak Polish within their own family circles, and that Polish literature could be confiscated and its possessor imprisoned if this literature was deemed to carry the least trace of pro-Polish propaganda (Rolleston 1917, 14).

Rolleston sets this account of a deliberate Prussian Government policy to suppress the Polish language against the situation obtaining in Ireland. He states that the Irish language was spoken by up to half of the population in the 1830s. This is followed by a crucial and contestable claim: "No restrictive measures were in force against it" (Rolleston 1917, 15). This statement ignores the fact that the Irish language had no legal status in nineteenth-century Ireland under the Union (nor, indeed, under the Irish Parliament of the eighteenth century), meaning that all native Irish speakers were forced either to acquire knowledge of English or to depend upon people fluent in English if they were to have any recourse to the law. Rather astonishingly, Rolleston makes no mention of the Great Famine that afflicted Ireland during the 1840s when accounting for the decline of Irish as a spoken vernacular subsequently. Instead, he explains this decline in terms of the attitudes to the Irish language among Irish political leaders, beginning with Daniel O'Connell in the 1820s and the National Board of Education set up by the Government in 1831. Observing that the census of 1911 recorded just 16,000 people in Ireland who spoke Irish only, Rolleston asserts that the abandonment of Irish by the majority of Irish people took place with the approval of Irish political leaders and the vast majority of the Irish Catholic clergy (Rolleston 1917, 16). He quotes from Douglas Hyde's introduction to his 1890 collection of Gaelic folk stories, *Beside the Fire*, in support of this view (Hyde 1890, xliii–xliv). Turning to Hyde's effort to revive the Irish language with the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893, Rolleston notes its successes, particularly the translation of Irish texts and the compilation of the first modern Irish-language dictionary. He observes also that the British Government did not block these efforts but instead permitted the teaching of Irish in elementary schools, with grants being made available for the training of Irish language teachers and over 12,000 pounds sterling being paid annually from the British Government Exchequer in support of the Irish language (Rolleston 1917, 17–18). Rolleston presents these official support schemes as evidence of a benign British Government response to efforts to revive the Irish language at the end of the nineteenth century, offering a sharp contrast to that of the Prussian Government's policies concerning the Polish language.

Considering these arguments that Rolleston makes over the land question and the language question in Ireland and Poland, it is evident that his position was

strongly consistent with views he expressed long before the First World War. British Government policies on land ownership had brought about a situation by the 1900s whereby Irish agricultural tenants had become effective owners of the land that they worked; the movement to revive traditional Irish culture in the form of the Irish language at the end of the nineteenth century encountered no British Government opposition but did receive financial support. These developments, as presented by Rolleston, were entirely consistent with his belief in *Ireland, the Empire, and the War* from 1900 that the Irish Home Rule movement should proceed on the basis of fully accepting Ireland's powerful position within the British Empire, through which it could acquire the best of both worlds: Irish governance of Irish affairs coupled with the benefits of a strong connection to the British Imperial administration through Ireland's continued membership of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Irish circumstances within the United Kingdom in the 1900s represented for Rolleston a stark contrast with Polish circumstances under German rule in the Prussian-controlled region of the former Polish–Lithuanian Empire. His pamphlet essentially amounts to a refutation of the Irish nationalist charge against British Government hypocrisy in accepting the case for Polish independence in 1917 yet refusing to recognize the case for Irish independence much closer to home. Rolleston makes this refutation on the basis of a demonstration of the gulf between British policies towards Ireland from the late-nineteenth century and Prussian policies towards Poland over the same period.

Misreadings in *Ireland and Poland*

There are three serious weaknesses in the argument of *Ireland and Poland*. First, comparisons between the situation of Ireland and that of Poland were not only drawn by Irish nationalists. In fact, none other than the British Prime Minister himself, Henry Asquith, insinuated the comparison in a speech delivered in Dublin on 25 September 1914, exhorting Irishmen to join the war effort against Germany and its allies: "How can you Irishmen be deaf to the cry of the smaller nationalities to help them in their struggle for freedom, whether, as in the case of Belgium, in maintaining what she has won, or, as in the case of Poland and the Balkan States, in regaining what they have lost or in acquiring or putting upon a stable foundation what has never been fully theirs?" (Asquith 1914, 31). If the point of Rolleston's pamphlet was to accuse the Irish nationalist movement of opportunism in making an open identification between Ireland and Poland during the year following the 1916 Rising in Dublin, then he would have been obliged to direct this same accusation against Prime Minister Asquith's carrot dangling during the first months of the War in 1914. That Rolleston ignores this matter is evidence of the fact that, as an employee of the British Ministry of Information during the War years, he was not

writing from a position of objective indifference. Second, if Prussian mistreatment of the Polish people under its jurisdiction was as bad as Rolleston claimed, why did the British Government not agree to recognize the legitimacy of Polish independence until 1917 as part of the Entente Powers, and then only provisionally so? Jeffrey Mankoff indicates why this was the case. The British Government was vacillatory in its Polish policy, even internally divided on the question. Influenced by Polish statesman Roman Dmowski, the Foreign Office inclined to the view that a strong, independent Polish nation-state would stabilize Eastern Europe; fearing Russian territorial ambitions, the War Office preferred to rely on Germany rather than Poland in preventing any Russian advance westward in post-First World War circumstances (Mankoff 2008, 763). A major concern for the British during the years of the War was that Polish independence could jeopardize Britain's alliance with Russia since a new Polish nation-state would have to incorporate a territory that was part of the Russian Empire. The British even considered that independent Poland switching its alliance from the Entente Powers to the Central Powers was a significant risk (Mankoff 2008, 743–745). Mankoff points out that as late as Tsar Nicholas II's abdication in March 1917, just three months prior to the publication of Rolleston's pamphlet, the British Government still had not decided its policy on Poland definitively (Mankoff 2008, 756).

The third and possibly most fatal weakness in the argument of *Ireland and Poland* is that Rolleston relies entirely on one source only for his information on recent Polish experience under Prussian rule: William Harbutt Dawson's 1908 book *The Evolution of Modern Germany*. Running to almost 500 pages, this is a very reliable study providing a far-ranging and in-depth analysis of Germany's economic and political rise to power over the course of the post-Napoleonic era and especially since the age of Bismarck. However, its discussion of the Polish question is confined almost entirely to the last chapter, and it is upon this that Rolleston depends for his information in his *Ireland and Poland* pamphlet. It is clear that Rolleston is highly selective in maintaining an image of Prussian aggression towards Poland that he sets in contrast to Britain's benign treatment of Ireland during the decades preceding the First World War. He neglects to mention, for example, that Dawson does not argue that German treatment of Polish peoples was uniformly and consistently oppressive. The author is certainly critical of Prussian policies towards the Polish people but not because they were completely despotic in character; rather because they were consistently inconsistent, Prussian rulers having "throughout vacillated between yielding suavity and unbending rigour" (Dawson 1908, 470). This could well characterize Britain's Irish policies during the late nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth. The Land Acts of 1870, 1881, 1885, 1887, and 1903 all worked progressively towards Irish tenant ownership of land. Yet these were accompanied by Coercion Acts in 1881 and 1887 under which many agitators for Irish tenant rights and many Irish constitutional political leaders (including

Irish Party leader Charles Stewart Parnell) found themselves imprisoned at various points and for varying durations.

In *The Evolution of Modern Germany*, Dawson draws attention to a marked increase in the Polish presence within German territories that was a significant factor in Prussian coercive measures towards Polish landownership and the Polish language, a consideration that Rolleston ignores in his pamphlet. Dawson points out that in 1860 Polish workers were non-existent in the industrial districts of Westphalia and the Upper Rhine; by the early 1900s, their numbers had risen to two hundred thousand (Dawson 1908, 469). Furthermore, Rolleston also chooses to ignore one of the most blatant acts of discrimination against the Poles under Prussian rule to which Dawson alludes in his study. This is put simply by a member of the Prussian Lower House, Dr Jazdzewski: "No Pole can plead his own cause before the courts in his mother-tongue, and should he wish to employ it before the administrative authorities, he is not heard" (Dawson 1908, 472). The reason for Rolleston choosing to overlook this example is obvious: the same situation obtained in the British-governed legal system in Ireland with regard to the Irish language, and had done so for several centuries. Given that his own father was a respected magistrate in County Tipperary, Rolleston would have been fully aware of this fact.

Conclusion

Despite these failings, Rolleston's *Ireland and Poland* remains an enormously significant pamphlet for several reasons. It appears at a crucial time in modern Irish history, in the aftermath of the British Government's disastrous mishandling of the 1916 rebellion in Dublin, swelling the support-base for Irish independence in a way not seen since the time of Daniel O'Connell in the 1830s and early 1840s. It was published in the same month that Prime Minister Lloyd George called the Irish Convention, representing the last attempt by the British Government to find agreement among nationalists and unionists to finally implement an Irish Home Rule parliament. In relation to this specific context, Rolleston's pamphlet might be described as the final intellectual defence of the Home Rule position from one who had been closely associated with the formation of some of the literary/cultural movements that gave impetus subsequently to a number of the leaders of the 1916 Rising: Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, and James Connolly. More than anything, it illustrates how the contest for the political future of Ireland after 1916 was tied up with the course of events during the First World War. Lloyd George had taken over from Asquith in December 1916; March 1917 saw a major upheaval within the Entente Powers when Tsar Nicholas abdicated following a socialist takeover in St Petersburg; April 1917 saw America enter the war on the British, French, and Russian side. The temporary recognition by the Entente Powers of Poland's

case for independence has to be understood within these circumstances, and such recognition obviously lent strength to the Irish nationalist case for an independent republic. Rolleston had lived in Germany for a number of years and became an important authority in Britain on German cultural affairs in his position as editor of the German language and literature section of *The Times Literary Supplement* from 1908 (Welch 1996, 500). Coupled with his involvement in Irish literary affairs and with the Irish Co-operative Movement, this experience enabled him to articulate a broadly pro-British Government perspective on Irish nationalist identifications with the cause of Polish independence. His approach was one that contextualized recent Irish history engagingly in relation to Central Europe against the backdrop of the ongoing fallout from the 1916 Rising.

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Joyce’s “Nameless” Hero and Hungarian Jewish Experience

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Abstract. The essay considers the background of James Joyce’s “nameless” hero, Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, from the point of view of his Hungarian Jewish ancestry: his family history in the Western Hungarian town of Szombathely and the Jewish history of his town. It shows how a certain reading of the “Circe” and “Cyclops” episodes of *Ulysses* reveals them in hindsight as anticipating the nightmarish future of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. This reading is enabled when taking account of the strong parallels that run between the crisis of progress in human history that *Ulysses* addresses and the idea of history in Walter Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* of 1940. 1882, the year of Joyce’s birth, was a turning point, if not actually a new beginning, in the long history of anti-Semitic feelings in Hungary. There was a blood libel case in the town of Tiszaeszlár in Eastern Hungary that year. More widely-known and central to the story of modern anti-Semitism in Central Europe was the holding of the first International Anti-Jewish Congress in Dresden in 1882. A local politician from Szombathely, called Győző Istóczy, is linked to both of these events, Szombathely being the town from which Leopold Bloom’s family originates in *Ulysses*. By unfolding some of the oblique references hidden in the novel to the history of the Jews in Eastern Europe, and revealing the background of the invented Bloom (Virág) family, the essay shows what tragic fate awaited the real-life Jewish families to which they allude and what would have happened to the Joycean “nameless” hero had he remained in Szombathely.

Keywords: James Joyce, Leopold Bloom, Szombathely, holocaust, Walter Benjamin

Benjamin, Bloom, and the Holocaust

During the course of a study tour in Portbou, Spain, in December 2019, I came across the following quotation on the memorial of the great German Jewish thinker, Walter Benjamin, a victim of Nazi persecution: “It is more arduous to honour the

memory of anonymous beings than that of the renowned. The construction of history is consecrated to the memory of the nameless” (Benjamin, “Preparatory notes for the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*”). The spectacular spot in the Pyrenees Mountains by the Mediterranean Sea, where this unique memorial stands, is the place where Benjamin spent his last hours before committing suicide, after having failed to escape German-occupied France and inevitable deportation to the Nazi concentration camps, his hope being to find eventual freedom in the USA. The quotation commemorates all those who have vanished namelessly from our planet. A comprehensive historical narrative would not ignore their lives. My sympathies are with Benjamin: history should concern the fates of the nameless more than those of the renowned.

One such nameless hero is James Joyce’s protagonist from his 1922 modernist masterpiece, *Ulysses*: Leopold Bloom. Morton P. Levitt states that in Bloom Joyce “created the archetypal Modernist figure, the man whose history, attitude, condition come to represent all of humanity in the twentieth century” (2004–2005, 146). Paradoxically, Bloom has become the most well-known “nameless” hero in modernist literature: a “nameless” figure in so far as his rootless, humanistic, wandering Jewish family history and complex ethnic-religious identity are concerned. We follow his past and present life through his experience of everyday events in the Dublin of 16 June 1904 over the course of nine hundred pages. Bloom, an ordinary man by social status, is in constant search of his family’s past and the meaning of his present life. He is one whose ancestors were people whom we would call today “migrants.” They left their homes in a faraway country in the hope of finding a better life in another place, just as Irishman James Joyce and German Walter Benjamin did, albeit for very different reasons. Benjamin fled from the Nazis to save his life. Joyce’s exile was self-inflicted, motivated at least in part by his desire to leave what he experienced as the suffocating and intolerant atmosphere that prevailed in 1900s Dublin in order to find a place where he would be free to express his own ideas. Being a migrant is a personal characteristic that connects the fictional “nameless” character of Bloom to Joyce and Benjamin. It has been argued that in certain forms of literature exile is a fundamentally Jewish condition. Drawing on the thought of George Steiner, Ira Nadel examines this theme in *Joyce and the Jews: Culture and Texts* (1996, 5). This is one of a number of works that reflect the growth of interest within Joycean criticism in the Jewish subject over the past thirty years. Jews became a “metaphor for what had gone wrong in modern society” with their “perseverance through centuries of persecution,” as Morton Levitt claims (2004–2005, 148). Going further, Mark Scroggins has highlighted an interesting development in his review of these two books written on Joyce and the Jews (2000). The books in question are Neil Davison’s study of the construction of Jewish identity in European modernism (1996) and Marilyn Reizbaum’s exploration of Joyce and Judaism in *James Joyce’s Judaic Other* (1999). These studies involve

a shift from exploring Joyce's experimental technique "to the cultural and social marginality of its protagonist, Leopold Bloom" (Scroggins 2000, 79).

This essay examines the invented history of the family of our "nameless hero," Leopold Bloom, to show what would have happened to Bloom had his father not emigrated from the Hungarian town of Szombathely to Dublin. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we may assume that real-life ancestors, upon whom the fictional Bloom's ancestors would have been based, belonged to some "nameless" Jewish family in Szombathely. Had they stayed there, a similar fate would have awaited them to that of Walter Benjamin: they would have become the victims of the Holocaust together with the more than three thousand Jewish people from the town of Szombathely.

Towards the end of his life, Joyce had become all too aware of the monstrous shape that anti-Semitism had taken in Europe. Ira Nadel points out that during the last four years of his life Joyce assisted in getting official documents for German and Austrian Jewish people to escape to the USA (1986, 306–308). Peter Chrisp notes that Joyce added a reference to Hitler in the "Shem the Penman" chapter in *Finnegans Wake* in 1938 (2020). However, in 1922, the year of the publication of *Ulysses*, Joyce could not have foreseen the fate of the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe. Yet for today's readers of the novel, who possess 2020 hindsight, it is impossible to ignore the tragedy of the Holocaust. A modern reader cannot appreciate the character of a descendant of a Jew from Szombathely without imagining the probable fate of Rudolf Virág's Jewish fellow sufferers in Hungary.

Quite surprisingly, the word "holocaust" appears twice in *Ulysses*, although with a very different meaning from the one it has today: the industrialized mass murder of the Jews, the Roma, and other minority groups by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War.¹ Originally, the Greek word meant "sacrifice by fire, burnt offering." Later, from the seventeenth century, it was used in a figurative sense as "destruction, massacre of a large number of people" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). In its present sense, it was not first used until 1957. Therefore, when Joyce used the word, he could not have had its current meaning in mind.

It is still worth considering the two occurrences of "holocaust" in *Ulysses*. It first appears in the "Lestrygonians" episode, when Bloom laments a boat accident that happened in New York on 16 June 1904. More than one thousand children and women died, many of them burnt to death (Gifford and Seidman 1989, 186): "Where is the justice being born that way? All those women and children excursion beanfeast burned and drowned in New York. Holocaust" (Joyce 1986, 149). The second time that the word is mentioned is in the "Ithaca" episode, when Bloom recalls the events of the day one by one in association with Jewish celebrations.

1 President of the James Joyce Society of Hungary, Ferenc Takács, drew my attention to this interesting fact concerning the word in Joyce's novel; Dr Takács is preparing to publish his findings related to the meaning of the word and its different Hungarian translations.

When he gets to his rather unfortunate encounter with the anti-Semite “Citizen” in Barney Kiernan’s pub, he uses the word again in brackets: “the altercation with a truculent troglodyte in Bernard Kiernan’s premises (holocaust)” (Joyce 1986, 599). In the first case, the word probably means “a massacre of a large number of people.” In the second, according to Gifford and Seidman, besides meaning “burnt offering, total sacrifice,” it is also used to refer to the ceremony held to commemorate the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD (1989, 601). In fact, the Yiddish term for destruction, “hurbn,” was used in reference to the destruction of the Temple, and survivors of the genocide after 1945 used the same word to describe the murder of the Jews. In both instances from *Ulysses*, there is an element of burning: either literally, in the physical sense of people burnt to death on the ship in New York, or figuratively, in the sense of “a burnt offering.” In what follows, I discuss two different thematic renderings of the holocaust in *Ulysses*. One relates to the affinities between Walter Benjamin’s and James Joyce’s ideas concerning progress in history. The other one addresses the circumstances and the fate of the real-life Jewish ancestors in Szombathely, Hungary, upon whom the Szombathely ancestry of the fictional Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* draws.

The Crisis of Historical Progress in Benjamin and Joyce

Certain episodes of *Ulysses* share with Benjamin’s work,² *On the Concept of History*, a disconcerting anticipation of an imminent cataclysm. In *On the Concept of History*, this sense is most striking in Benjamin’s famous ninth thesis concerning Paul Klee’s painting, “Angelus Novus:”

A Klee painting named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin 1968, 257–258)

2 My thanks to Michael McAteer for his suggestions on the affinities between Benjamin’s ideas on history and history as it is treated in *Ulysses*.

Benjamin identifies in the image a representation of progress as a contradictory historical movement. Despite moving forward, there is no improvement, neither material nor spiritual. The Angel is looking backward at the past, where he can see disaster, rather than forward into a paradise of freedom and enlightenment. Although he would try to restore the destruction and revive the dead, a force propels him forward into the future. When he arrives, the catastrophe lies in front of his eyes. According to Benjamin, progress is independent of the person's intention and will and is largely determined by historical forces. It is not something positive that improves things but rather the opposite. Goodwill has no effect on it. Humanity may anticipate the malign signs in time but is unable to change direction because a force beyond human power drives humanity towards an inescapable destiny. The past disaster remains and fully expands into a cataclysm in the future. Progress does not yield to material or intellectual development but to destruction and suffering. When Benjamin recorded his ideas in 1940, he had already seen and experienced historical events as moving towards a total disaster: the Second World War had started, Hitler had taken power in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, Franco in Spain, while Stalin had turned the Russian Revolution into a repressive totalitarian regime.

Less than two decades before the publication of Benjamin's enigmatic theses, Joyce had already expressed a similar sceptical idea regarding the Enlightenment idea of progress in history in *Ulysses*. Early in the novel in the "Nestor" episode, Stephen Dedalus makes his rather pessimistic statement about history after listening to Mr Deasy, his Private School Headmaster, make anti-Semitic comments: "History [...] is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (Joyce 1986, 28). The phrase recurs in Stephen's thoughts later in the "Aeolus" episode, in a slightly altered way: "Nightmare from which you will never awake" (Joyce 1986, 113). After reading the whole novel, one gets the impression that Stephen Dedalus is predicting a disaster in this utterance, represented as cataclysm in the nightmarishly surreal "Circe" chapter at the end of the novel and in the actual historical developments that occur during the two decades after the publication of the novel. Like Benjamin, it seems as if Joyce could foresee the end at the beginning: the nightmare and the road leading to it. In Mr Deasy's stereotypical comments about the Jews, Stephen recognizes how such "identifying mark of a people [...] become disseminated unquestioned, and through generations, become unquestioned" (Davison 1996, 196).

Mr Deasy's anti-Semitic outburst in "Nestor" foreshadows a more explicit appearance of anti-Semitism in one of the most powerful episodes of the novel in terms of anti-Semitic aggression, the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*. It is important to note that despite the content of their common anti-Semitic feelings and utterances, Mr Deasy and the Citizen represent two completely different political ideas concerning the British-Irish question. While the former is a pro-British Unionist, member of the Orange Order, devoted to the Protestantism of the English monarchy, the latter is a narrow-minded Catholic, pro-Sinn Féin Nationalist, who

passionately yearns for Irish independence. In fact, in her book, *James Joyce and Nationalism*, Emer Nolan regards the Citizen as “the mirror-image of Mr Deasy in Chapter 2” (1995, 98). Both of them have black-and-white, one-sided views in their approach to the Anglo-Irish relations. Therefore, it is not surprising that they share certain extremist, discriminatory ideas targeting the Jews. In his influential study, *Joyce, Race and Empire*, Vincent Cheng attempts to explain the background of these narrow-minded, nationalistic discourses. Both British unionists and Irish nationalists could only think in terms of binary oppositions: in order to highlight their racial superiority and dominance over the other group, they degrade and dehumanize the opponent (1995, 18). Such extremist ideas could only be maintained by applying xenophobic narratives and assuming the “purity” of the given nation, which implies the exclusion of people with different ethnic backgrounds, including the Jews. Cheng rightfully states that in *Ulysses* Joyce “reverses all these derogatory analogies to other races by using them in a positive, vital, and enabling manner; analogizing and equating the Irish with other races and colonized peoples by accenting the flattering aspects of such comparisons and by suggesting a solidarity of the marginalized and othered” (1995, 27). It is significant that early in the novel, in the “Nestor” episode, a parallel and solidarity is built between Stephen and Bloom when Stephen tries to defend the Jews in his reaction to Mr Deasy’s anti-Semitic comments, anticipating Bloom’s defence of himself later in the “Cyclops” episode. Stephen’s feeling of history as a nightmare when listening to Deasy after teaching his morning class is shared by Bloom later in *Ulysses* during the row with the Citizen in Barney Kiernan’s pub: “Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations” (Joyce 1986, 271).

In “Cyclops,” the Citizen’s slogans become extremist arguments as the dispute turns aggressive, Bloom humiliated and metaphorically crucified by the Citizen because of his Jewish origins: “I’ll crucify him so I will. Give us that biscuit box” (Joyce 1986, 280).³ The insult develops into a physical assault when the nationalistic, xenophobic Citizen throws a tin of biscuits at Bloom.⁴ He even threatens to kill him: “Where is he till I murder him?” (Joyce 1986, 281). Walter Benjamin’s storm drives the Angel/Bloom from his past towards his future destruction, which unfolds in the surreality of the “Circe” chapter. The Citizen’s attack is followed by the description of a catastrophe, in the form of an earthquake, anticipating the cataclysms in the “Circe” episode.

3 In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus names himself as “nobody” – a “nameless” person –, but in fact, in Joyce’s work, it is the narrator of this episode who remains “nameless” in this instance, rather than Bloom.

4 The tin of biscuits was manufactured by W. and R. Jacob & Company, Ireland’s largest biscuit producing company. Despite the Jewish-sounding name of the family that might lend the Citizen’s threat an element of farce, the owners were actually Quakers in origin (Gifford and Seidman 1989, 379; Jacob 1940, 134).

Two important moments in the "Circe" episode represent catastrophe and relate back to the Citizen's threat of the crucifixion and burning of Bloom as well as to the earthquake shaking the world. This is the scene where the "nightmare of history" from "Nestor" manifests itself in full "reality," and it is magnified into a cataclysm. We enter a realm where it is sometimes difficult to separate dreamlike hallucinations from reality. In this episode, Joyce's vision of the crisis of human progress reaches its final destination. In "Circe," a dream features the ascendance of Bloom to recognition and fame followed by his downfall, crucifixion, and death. The fire brigade sets fire to him, and "Bloom becomes mute, shrunken and carbonised" (Joyce 1986, 407). Before Bloom achieves all his secret desires, his unconscious ambitions are fulfilled: he is elected as Lord Mayor, then Crowned as Leopold the First, a city is named after him (Bloomusalem), at some point he changes his sex and gives birth to eight "male yellow and white children" (Joyce 1986, 403) who become very successful people, and finally he even becomes the Messiah! In the Bloomusalem of Bloom's fantasies, as Vincent Cheng argues, he is given the opportunity to refute all the false accusations and prejudice of the Citizen in "Cyclops." He becomes the king of the Celts and the Jews since in "Bloom's vision of an Irish nation they would both be welcome" (1995, 219–220). However, during this process he is metamorphosed into a demagogue dictator, is admired and praised by everyone, even by those people who have excluded him, thereby rising beyond the exclusivism of Irish and British nationalism. Despite all his success, Benjamin's storm of history grabs him and carries him towards his destiny. People start questioning him about the sins that he has committed; hostility grows and is followed by persecution. People who admired him before turn against him now, even his Jewish friends mock him. He is tortured and murdered as a heretic in a mediaeval inquisition: "Invests Bloom in a yellow habit with embroidery of painted flames and high pointed hat. He places a bag of gunpowder round his neck and hands him over to the civil power" (Joyce 1986, 406). Sadly, it is the Citizen from "Cyclops" who first expresses his relief at Bloom's arrest by saying "Thank heaven" (Joyce 1986, 406).

Towards the end of "Circe," Benjamin's apocalyptic vision becomes manifest. The Irish nationalist Citizen appears again in a heavy argument with the British Major Tweedy, tension increasing between the two men. While Bloom is trying desperately to make peace between them, the unavoidable disaster happens: "Dublin's burning! Dublin's burning! On fire, on fire" reaches a cosmic level: "The midnight sun is darkened. The earth trembles. The dead of Dublin from Prospect and Mount Jerome in white sheepskin overcoats and black goatfell cloaks arise and appear to many" (Joyce 1986, 488). Eventually, a Black Mass is performed, a reference to the Last Judgement. The world has come to an end, and the future is laid in front of us: this is the stage to which human progress has led. As with Benjamin, Joyce's vision of so-called progress is a dark one. Knowing with hindsight of the

destiny of the six million Jewish people in Europe during the Second World War, one cannot help but associate that great tragedy in the burning images as described in these pages of *Ulysses*.

Modern Jewish History in Leopold Bloom's Szombathely

Acknowledging, of course, that *Ulysses* is a work of literary fiction and Bloom a fictional character, it is nonetheless of value to regard the real-life circumstances of the Jewish people of Szombathely in Western Hungary. This is so both with respect to deepening our understanding of the fictional character that Joyce created and also to gaining a better appreciation of the cultural and historical significance of *Ulysses* to the horrors that engulfed the Jewish people of Central and Eastern Europe less than twenty years after the publication of Joyce's work, especially those of a Hungarian background. With this in mind, I turn to non-fiction, describing what happened in reality to the "nameless" Jewish people: Bloom's Jewish ancestors and their descendants, who remained in the small town of Szombathely.

Let us start with the name of the town: Szombathely, famous as the birthplace of St Martin. It began its documented existence as a Roman town called Savaria. The name Szombathely is from the Hungarian "szombat," which literally means "Saturday," and "hely," which means "place." The name of the town is thus presumably derived from the fact that mediaeval markets were held on every Saturday. The Hungarian word for Sunday is "vasárnap." The word "vásár" means "market" in Hungarian and "nap" means "day." We know that for Jewish people Szombat/Sabbath is supposed to be the most important day of the week. However, the legal situation for the Hungarian Jewish community was that they were not allowed to trade on any of the one hundred and four regular weekly markets or on any of the five annual markets until 1840. This was one of many restrictions that the repressed Jewish communities suffered up to the nineteenth century in Hungary, and the history of this repression carries some interesting Joycean resonances.

1882, the year of Joyce's birth, witnessed two notorious events related to the oppression of the Jews in Central Europe. In Hungary, there was a blood libel case in Tiszaeszlár. Although the falsely accused Jews were acquitted in the Tiszaeszlár blood libel trial, the case led to a strengthening of anti-Semitic feeling throughout Hungary. In 1883, there were attacks on Jews in Budapest and in other places. These outbreaks assumed such proportions that in certain districts the authorities were forced to proclaim a state of emergency in order to protect the Jews and their property. More well-known and central to the story of anti-Semitism in Central Europe was the first International Anti-Jewish Congress in Dresden also in the year of Joyce's birth, 1882. Both of these events can be linked to a local politician from Szombathely, called Győző Istóczy. Istóczy's prominence in Hungary was such that

he represented Hungary at the Dresden Congress, his credentials confirmed by his recently established Hungarian Anti-Semitic Party. There was also another infamous anti-Semitic politician from Szombathely, László Bárdossy, who was a prime minister in Hungary for a period during 1941–42. He promulgated the notorious Third Jewish Law of 1941, banning marriages between Christians and Jews. He was a political representative for Szombathely until 1944 and was subsequently executed for war crimes in 1946.

While Joyce himself could not have known what horrible events were to be visited upon Europe's Jews, he may very well have acquired some knowledge of the conditions pertaining to Szombathely, a place that informs the invented background that Joyce creates for the character of Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*. In Joyce's adopted home of Trieste in Northern Italy, despite a few anti-Semitic incidents, the Jews lived relatively in peace, tolerated and protected, for example, by Emperor Leopold in 1675 and by Maria Theresa during the eighteenth century. John McCourt remarks that in "Trieste [...] the Jews were singled out for exceptionally favourable treatment, and simply because they were useful to the city and the empire" (2000, 221). In Szombathely, unfortunately, circumstances for Jews were much less accommodating despite their contribution to the economic and cultural prosperity of the town. Up to the eighteenth century, when the municipal authorities rented shops to Jews, they were only permitted to remain in the town during the day, and then only without their families present. Down to the early nineteenth century only three or four Jewish families succeeded in taking up permanent residence in the town. Consequently, members of the little Jewish community of Szombathely dwelt not in the town itself but in the outlying districts. When the Jews of Hungary were emancipated by the law of 1840, the town was obliged to open its doors to them. Jews could now settle down everywhere, carry out commercial activities, set up factories, companies, and educate their children. Most Jewish families were involved in small businesses, and in a town that had very few Jewish businesses before the emancipation new opportunities arose. After 1840, Szombathely became a target of Jewish migration. From a Jewish population of thirty-six people, the number increased to three hundred by 1848 following the 1840 emancipation (Balázs and Katona 2005, 1).

At the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, anti-Semitic riots broke out in the town. The authorities intervened, however, and when peace was restored, the community quickly resumed its rapid development. We can see that development in the history of local education and religious practice (Balázs and Katona 2005, 5). A small Orthodox Jewish congregation in Szombathely, numbering about sixty or seventy members, separated from the main body in 1870 following a dispute within the Jewish community over some rituals and liturgical issues. This created separate Orthodox and Neolog⁵ groups in the town. The Orthodox had their own cemetery,

5 The Neolog and the traditionalist/conservative Orthodox congregations became two separate denominations following the Hungarian Jewish Congress of 1868–69. The Neologs are socially

rabbi, synagogue, and, inevitably, an Orthodox school was founded in 1898. In 1880, the growing and prosperous Jewish community founded what became a symbol of their civic status, a large Neolog temple (Balázs 2008, 116). This temple is one of the most beautiful edifices of its kind in Hungary. Designed by Ludwig Schöne, it combines oriental Moorish and Romantic elements. It is one of the first synagogues in Hungary to be built with a tower. Shorn of its original religious function, this building was converted to a concert hall in 1975. A memorial outside commemorates the Jews deported from the locality during the Second World War. Around the 1900s (during the period in which *Ulysses* is set in Dublin), the Jewish community, now firmly established in Szombathely, began to be identified with the town's prosperity. Known as "the Queen of the West," Szombathely's Jewish businesses and Jewish taxpayers enabled the building of some impressive public infrastructure. Between the two world wars, Jewish lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, industrialists, and artists belonged to the intellectual and economic élite of the town. This community produced a number of prominent Jewish Hungarians, all of whom seem to have perished in the Holocaust.

The "Nameless" Victims: Leopold Bloom's Szombathely Relatives

What do we know of the Szombathely ancestors of our nameless hero, Leopold Bloom? We find the following information about Bloom's migrant ancestry in the "Ithaca" episode of *Ulysses*: "Rudolph Bloom (deceased) narrated to his son Leopold Bloom (aged 6) a retrospective arrangement of migrations and settlements in and between Dublin, London, Florence, Milan, Vienna, Budapest, Szombathely with statements of satisfaction" (Joyce 1986, 595).

A wandering people, the Blooms as Jews in Western Hungary had probably come from Moravia or Austria, where they had lived with Western Ashkenazi Jews and spoke Western Yiddish and German (Mecsnóber 2013, 36). Following the failure of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, in which many Jewish soldiers had fought, riots and pogroms broke out in the country. The famous Neolog Rabbi of Szombathely, Béla Bernstein, published a history of Jewish participation in the Revolution (1898). According to other sources, about twenty thousand Jewish soldiers fought in an army of around one hundred and eighty thousand soldiers, thus representing an enormous proportion of the Revolutionary forces. Despite this commitment, Jews were blamed for the defeat of the Revolution. Many Jews decided to migrate to Western Europe, which is probably why Rudolf Virág set off

more liberal and modern and had been more supportive of the integration into Hungarian society since the Era of Emancipation in the 19th century. Their members were representatives of urban, assimilated middle- and upper-class Jewry.

on his journey to Ireland. Tekla Mecsnóber shows how the migration of people from Eastern Europe was accompanied by peculiar changes in surnames, especially in the case of Jews (2013, 35–46).

Under an edict ordered by Emperor Joseph II in 1787, Jews living in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were compelled to change their original family names from Hebrew to German in the eighteenth century. This explains why Rudolf Virág's family in *Ulysses* probably had a German surname originally. Mecsnóber explains that Virág means "flower" in Hungarian, not "bloom:" so, Leopold's surname "Bloom" in *Ulysses* is more likely to derive originally from the German name "Blum" than the Hungarian "Virág." "Blum" was a typical surname among Hungarian Jews in the nineteenth century, and a number of Jewish families called "Blum" lived in Szombathely. However, from the mid-nineteenth century, as a result of the Jewish emancipation in 1840, many Jews changed their surnames into Hungarian as a gesture of willingness to assimilate into Hungarian society. Rudolf Blum, for example, took on the Hungarian surname "Virág" and later changing it to the English version, "Bloom," when living in Ireland.

Among the Jewish families to settle in Szombathely in the nineteenth century was that of the textile merchant Márton Blum. From 1843, they rented Mihály Bossányi's house at 36 Gyöngyös Street, now Fő tér, the current location of James Joyce's statue in Szombathely. Márton Blum's eldest granddaughter was called Josephine Paula, her name appearing as Blum Paula in later documents (the surname appearing first in Hungarian convention). In *Ulysses*, Bloom is referred to as Leopold Paula Bloom, a possible echo of Szombathely's real-life Paula Blum. Henrik Blum was the name of one of Márton Blum's sons, a reminder of Henry Flower in *Ulysses*, the name of Leopold Bloom's alter ego.

In *Ulysses*, the reader learns that Leopold Bloom's father, Rudolf, also had relatives in the Hungarian town of Székesfehérvár: "An indistinct daguerreotype of Rudolf Virag and his father Leopold Virag executed in the year 1852 in the portrait atelier of their (respectively) 1st and 2nd cousin, Stefan Virag of Szesfehervar, Hungary" (Joyce 1986, 594). It is possible that a real-life Hungarian Jewish allusion is at play here. Examining lists of photographers living and working in Hungary during Joyce's lifetime, the librarian at the Hungarian National Museum, Endre Tóth, discovered the name of a photographer called Sándor Virág from Székesfehérvár, a possible relation to the portrait photographer Stefan Virag, referred to in *Ulysses* (Tóth 2005, 22–23). Róbert Orbán points out that Sándor Virág happened to be working in Székesfehérvár between 1907 and 1916, so Joyce may have seen his name on a photograph while living in Trieste (2005, 14).

Interestingly, one of the first Jewish settlers in Székesfehérvár was also a man called Márton Blum. At least one person knew the Blums of Szombathely and the Blums of Székesfehérvár: Rabbi Mayer Zipser, who lived in Székesfehérvár between 1844 and 1858 before moving to Rohonc, where he remained until his death in 1869.

Rabbi Zipser and his brother Markus were well-known scholars in Jewish public life. Markus Zipser's son moved to Trieste and was the member of the Hungarian Circle, where he may very well have heard of Joyce, if not met him in person at some point. He had a printing company and later published newspapers (Orbán 2005, 14–15). As for the Hungarian Circle in Trieste with which Joyce was familiar, *Il Circolo dei Magiari*, it was located near the city synagogue, and two-thirds of the members were Hungarian Jews, who organized cultural events. John McCourt notes that the president was a woman called Nidia Frigyessy Casterlbolognese, whose husband, Rácalmási Adolf Frigyessy, was one of the wealthiest Jewish people in Trieste, founder and President of the Adria Insurance Company (RAS) (McCourt 2000, 94–95).

There is a possible link between the salacious kind of low-brow fiction in *Ulysses* that Bloom enjoys and the work of the real-life grandson of Márton Blum in Szombathely: Ödön (later named Edmund), born in the town in 1874. After completing his education in Szombathely, Edmund went on to study medicine at the University in Vienna. He started writing and published in a German-language local paper. He worked as a dentist in Vienna from 1907. His first book, a collection of political and historical essays, came out in Munich in 1913: *Warum lassen sich die Juden nicht taufen?* [Why Do the Jews Not Let Themselves Be Baptized?]. In 1920, he set up a publishing house called E. B. Seps Verlag and launched a book series, “Blum Bücher,” which was later followed by “Intime Bibliothek.” In 1928, he established a new publishing house called Bergis Verlag. He published about thirty books under his name, but sometimes he used a pen name. His books were erotic, sexual-psychological novels in cheap editions and in a large number of copies (similar in kind to a favourite of Bloom's, *Sweets of Sin*, in *Ulysses*); no wonder Edmund Blum advertised himself as the “Viennese Maupassant.” Róbert Orbán points out that it is not known whether Joyce came across any of his books (2010).

The aforementioned information on Márton Blum and his family represent what is known of those who may well have been the real-life yet “nameless” relatives from Szombathely of the fictitious Leopold Bloom living in the Dublin of *Ulysses*. Between 4 and 6 July 1944, four thousand two hundred and twenty-eight Jews were deported by the Hungarian authorities from Szombathely to Auschwitz. There were some survivors, but the Jews of Szombathely were to be largely erased from the local community. The mechanics of their elimination from the community were simple and efficient. The ghetto was set up in the town centre on 8 May 1944, following the German occupation of Szombathely: the deportation of the Jews started on 3 July 1944. Only ten percent of them survived the Holocaust (Balázs and Katona 2005, 12).

Conclusion

Neither Walter Benjamin nor James Joyce lived to witness the Holocaust directly. Benjamin committed suicide at Portbou to avoid deportation from Spain to a Nazi concentration camp. Coincidentally, Joyce's fictional character, Leopold Bloom's father, Rudolf Virág, had also committed suicide, taking a drug overdose in June 1886 in the Queen's Hotel, Ennis, County Clare, in the west of Ireland. Both Benjamin and Virág had been Jewish migrants, one escaping from Nazi terror, the other from anti-Semitic intimidation in Eastern Europe. Anti-Semitism was a cancer eating away at civil discourse in society during their lifetimes. Apropos the memorialized sentiment of Benjamin's final moments cited at the beginning of this essay, Leopold Bloom's imaginings are a compelling example of Benjamin's proposed historical model. Joyce gave this anonymous wandering Jewish cosmopolitan character a history that was located in a chosen place and moment. There has been wide speculation on Joyce's choice of the surname Bloom. While there were many ways to regard it, the many owners of Thom's Directories from 1904 will surely attest to Joyce's punctiliousness in correctly representing actual places, people, and events. It is impossible to know now whether Joyce was aware of the examples of Blum histories that I have outlined above, but it is safe to say that he always described his characters carefully and in correspondence with figures from real life. In *Ulysses*, this is most obvious through the character of Stephen Dedalus as a reflection of Joyce himself, of Molly Bloom as an image of Joyce's partner, Nora Barnacle, and of Buck Mulligan as based on Joyce's one-time Dublin friend: the physician, poet, and Irish senator Oliver St. John Gogarty. Joyce certainly lived in a place and at a time when some of the personal details I have described could easily have been known to him. The larger question of his sense of the future hinges at least partly on our own hindsight. Did Joyce identify the seeds of the future Holocaust that his experience of the contemporary anti-Semitic atmosphere portended? Any answer to this question may ultimately prove hypothetical, but what remains certain is where Joyce's sympathies lay. The marginalized and anonymous progenitor of the character Leopold Bloom may never be discovered. But the conditions of the Blums of Szombathely about which we have historical information are representative of a particular era in a particular place. We also know their fate, which was to perish in the genocidal conflagration that we now call the Holocaust. Joyce's prescience in choosing to situate the family background of Leopold Bloom in that place and during that time is strongly indicative of his sensitivity to the historical process of popular anti-Semitism that he had personally witnessed. His literary decision regarding Bloom in *Ulysses* also indicates Joyce's rejection of the religious, nationalist, and racial ideas that underpinned anti-Semitic fervour and prejudice both in his own birthplace and in Joyce's adopted homeplace within the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

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“In a Sea of Wonders:” Eastern Europe and Transylvania in the Irish-Language Translation of *Dracula*

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Abstract. The publication of the Irish-language translation of *Dracula* in 1933 by Seán Ó Cuirrín was a landmark moment in the history of Irish-language letters. This article takes as its starting point the idea that language is a central theme in *Dracula*. However, the representation of Transylvania in the translation marked a departure from Bram Stoker’s original. A masterful translation, one of its most salient features is Ó Cuirrín’s complex use of the Irish language, particularly in relation to Eastern European language, character, and landscapes. The article examines Ó Cuirrín’s prose and will explore how his approaches to concrete and abstract elements of the novel affect plot, character, and narration. The first section explores how *Dracula* is treated by Ó Cuirrín in the Irish translation and how this impacts the Count’s persona and his identity as Transylvanian. Through Ó Cuirrín’s use of idiom, alliteration, and proverb, it will be shown how *Dracula*’s character is reimagined, creating a more nuanced narrative than the original. The second section shows how Ó Cuirrín translates Jonathan Harker’s point of view in relation to *Dracula*. It shows that, through the use of figurative language, Ó Cuirrín develops the gothic element to *Dracula*’s character. The article then examines Ó Cuirrín’s translations of Transylvanian landscapes and soundscapes. It will show how Ó Cuirrín’s translation matched Stoker’s original work to near perfection, but with additional poetic techniques, and how Ó Cuirrín created a soundscape of horror throughout the entirety of the translation.

Keywords: Seán Ó Cuirrín, Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, Irish-language translation, an Gúm, gothic, Transylvania

Dracula as Gaeilge

The publication in 1933 of the Irish-language translation of *Dracula* (Stoker 1897) by native Irish speaker Seán Ó Cuirrín (1894–1980) was a landmark moment in the history of Irish-language letters. Written under the auspices of *scéim aistriúcháin an Ghúim*,¹ the novel was translated by Ó Cuirrín as part of the translation scheme established by the government of the new Irish state after independence (Cronin 1993). It was from the Waterford Irish-speaking district, or *Gaeltacht*, that Seán Ó Cuirrín – translator, teacher, and writer – hailed. Ó Cuirrín translated Tolstoy’s 1872 short story “God Sees the Truth, But Waits” to “An deoruidheacht fhada” [The Long Exile] (Ó Cuirrín 1936) from the Russian “Bog pravdu vidit da ne skoro skazhet”; Washington Irving’s *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) to *Rip Bhan Bhuincil* (Ó Cuirrín 1936); as well as authoring short stories such as “Beirt Dhéiseach” [Two Natives of Waterford] (Ó Cuirrín 1936) and a satirical work, *Psaltair na Rinne* [The Psalter of Ring] (1938). In their catalogue of translations by An Gúm, Mag Shamhráin and Ó Faracháin (2003) detail other works translated during this period of intense activity. The translators were generally accomplished writers themselves: writers such as Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Seosamh Mac Grianna, and Seán Mac Maoláin translated works by Charles Kickham, Charles Dickens, William Carlton, Standish O’Grady, and Joseph Conrad amongst others (Uí Laighléis 2003).

The first Irish-language edition of *Dracula* was a bestseller and an instant success. That same success, and the achievements of other Irish-language translations, was a contributory factor not only to the development of modern Irish literature in the years that followed but also to the generations of Irish readers who were to come, to the legacy of translation in Irish-language literature and to the gothic mode in Irish-language literature and drama. The objective of the scheme was to provide world classics to the Irish-language reading public (Titley 1990, 67), speakers of a language that was once the *lingua franca* of Ireland but which had been in retreat to Irish-speaking districts over the preceding centuries and whose demise was hastened by the Great Famine (1845–1848). Yet the ultimate beneficiary of the Scheme was Irish-language literature (Ó Conchubhair 2011). One could claim, with justification, that the Irish translation of *Dracula* encapsulates a happy marriage between the experience of literature as that which “infiltrates and informs our lives” (Felski 2008, 5) to reading in Irish as a communal aesthetic experience.

Brilliant as the Irish translation is, Ó Cuirrín made significant changes to several features of *Dracula*. These changes mostly relate to plot. One of the most noteworthy examples of plot development in Bram Stoker’s original was his use of

1 *Scéim aistriúcháin an Ghúim* translates as *An Gúm* translation scheme. *An Gúm* refers to the Irish Government publishing company which published the scheme’s Irish-language translations. *An Gúm* has since been amalgamated into the state body with responsibility for the Irish language, *Foras na Gaeilge* [The Irish Language Body].

intertextuality. Stoker’s references to the Shakespearian dramas *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet* were omitted by Ó Cuirrín or else replaced with quotations from Irish-language literature of an earlier period (de Brún 2007). It is worth noting that translated texts are not always aligned to the lexical meaning of Stoker’s original text. In one case, for example, Stoker includes a tragic reference to the death of Ophelia, lying with “virgin crants and maiden strewments” (Stoker 1996, 132), a harbinger of what is to befall Lucy Westenra. This is replaced by Ó Cuirrín with a quotation from Brian Merriman’s eighteenth-century Irish-language poem “Cúirt an Mheán Oídhche” [“The Midnight Court”] (circa 1780) “ag súil trém chodladh le cogar óm chéile” (Stoker 1997, 135) [expecting, as I sleep, a whisper from my lover].² While both the English original and the Irish translation reference sleep and virginity, the Shakespearian reference in Stoker’s novel is imbued with a sense of Ophelia’s impending death. The Merriman quotation, however, is an overt allusion to female desire. Intertextual references such as this in the Stoker original contain layered literary allusions and function as plot indicators, but Lucy’s impending doom is lost in the rambunctiousness of Merriman’s line. The implications of Ó Cuirrín’s decision were a shift towards story “as events” (Chatman 1978) and a shift away from narrative discourse. In addition, the Socratic dialogues and the “céimeanna argóna” [constructions of argument] that comprise the dialogues in *Dracula* (de Brún 2007, 83), so beloved of Dracula and Van Helsing, largely go untranslated in Ó Cuirrín’s work (de Brún 2007). Another noteworthy feature of Stoker’s original is the myriad references to classical Greek and Roman mythology. Amongst the intertextual references in Stoker’s novel, for example, was Homer’s *The Odyssey* (de Brún 2009, 113). And although Meyer (1952, 78) notes that there was a process of “transmission” of sections of *The Odyssey* to Irish, it is noteworthy that the reference to this work from classical antiquity was not translated by Ó Cuirrín. As with the Shakespearian plays, references in the original to the underworld of the River of Lethe and Medusa’s snakes served to heighten the concept of Dracula’s castle as an underworld populated by the Undead (de Brún 2009).³ But Ó Cuirrín’s omission of those same classical allusions, while posing questions regarding the rationale for their absence, are counterbalanced by a unique approach to Dracula’s character as quintessential Irish-Transylvanian Count and to the idea of Transylvania itself. His 1933 Irish translation was followed by new editions in 1997 and in 2014, but the fundamentals of the original translation remained. As in the 1933 edition, aspects of character, description, and dialogue are subtly altered to an extent that reshapes the concepts of Transylvania and the foreignness in *Dracula*.

2 This translation and the following translations from Irish literature are my own throughout the article.

3 Kiberd (2006) refers to the “Undead,” whereas Haining and Tremayne (1997) refer to the “Undead.”

***Dracula* and Language**

Language is one of the central themes in *Dracula*, and different forms of the spoken and written word are discussed frequently, from “slang” (Stoker 1996, 58) to “analogy” (Stoker 1996, 269). It is a lens through which the translation can be examined, giving us as it does a multi-layered insight into the novel when read in conjunction with the gothic mode. “The sea of wonders” (Stoker 1996, 18) to which Jonathan refers in the early stages of the novel, an ambiguous statement which hints at his enchantment with as well as his terror of Dracula, is translated by Ó Cuirrín as “blinded,” “dallta” (Stoker 1997, 24). That notion of blindness, of not being able to believe one’s eyes, serves to emphasize the importance of listening and of sound in the novel as alternative means of sense perception. In addition, it is an indication of the centrality of dialects, accents, and second-language use. *Dracula* is a collection of multiple modalities and multiple perspectives. The only point of view that we do not encounter directly is that of Dracula himself. That increasing chaos and loss of language, and the novel’s plethora of languages half spoken and barely comprehended, is reminiscent of the Tower of Babel to which Stoker alludes (Stoker 1996, 310). The unreliability and the unpredictability of language increase as the novel progresses.

It is in the company of Dracula himself that we first bear witness to the inscrutability of language, particularly when the Transylvanian Count speaks English to Jonathan Harker in their initial meetings. In an entry from Mina’s journal, we read how she relates a story told to her by Van Helsing, where a port official describes, in his Cockney dialect rendered by Stoker through the official’s use of the slang word “bloomin” (Stoker 1996, 318), how Dracula speaks many languages and is a polyglot (Stoker 1996, 318). Language is the subject of Dracula and Jonathan’s first conversations in the novel, and language use is reinforced by Jonathan’s journey to the Castle and to his hearing many languages (6), or “ilteangacha” [many languages] in Ó Cuirrín’s translation (Stoker 1997, 7). Indeed, at a later stage in the novel, Dracula’s study of many languages is noted by Van Helsing when he says of the Count: “He study many tongues” (Stoker 1996, 321). The elusive nature of Dracula’s native language in Transylvania is supported here by indirect narration, where linguistic multiplicity is represented by layering of narrative accounts. In this way, the novel presents us not merely with an unreliable narrator but with the obfuscation of several unreliable narrators. These unreliable narrators highlight the gap between what Jonathan and Van Helsing call “facts” (Stoker 1996, 30) and the unfathomable experiences of the emotional turmoil they are going through.

At times, Ó Cuirrín’s translation renders *Dracula*, presented by Stoker as a tale of an international “criminal” (Stoker 1996, 342), as a more localized story of magic and mystery. For example, Ó Cuirrín refers to magic, “draíocht” (Stoker 1997, 42), where Stoker refers to “gloom” in the English original (Stoker 1996, 33). The ghost story is

underscored by Ó Cuirrín’s reference to the ghostly spirit, “spiorad ná píca” (Stoker 1997, 35), where Stoker makes no reference to that in the corresponding English passage. Similarly, in Count Dracula’s discussion of the history of Transylvania with Harker, Ó Cuirrín uses references to the transmission of folklore, “seanchas” (Stoker 1997, 37), where Stoker simply writes “conversation” (Stoker 1996, 28). Dracula cautions Jonathan about Transylvania in the following line from Stoker’s novel: “It is more dangerous than you think in this country” (Stoker 1996, 26). Ó Cuirrín replaces “country” with “dúiche” [native place] in the Irish translation (Stoker 1997, 33). That alteration from the national/international to the local is achieved in two ways, and notably in the parts of the novel where Jonathan and Dracula discuss what it means to be a foreigner in London or a “stranger” (Stoker 1996, 20) from Transylvania. Firstly, in his translation of concrete descriptions of Dracula, Ó Cuirrín renders him a friendlier figure than that in Stoker’s original and omits many of Dracula’s monologues about the genealogy and nobility of his Transylvanian line. Secondly, although Dracula is a foreign speaker of English in Stoker’s original, Ó Cuirrín’s Irish translation portrays the Count as a fluent speaker of Irish, entirely at ease with the language and using the same register as Jonathan Harker.

Count Dracula: Dialogue and Speech

Perhaps the most noteworthy change that was made by Ó Cuirrín in the Irish-language translation was that of Count Dracula’s character. Ó Cuirrín achieves this through manipulation of the Count’s dialogue and descriptions from Jonathan’s point of view of Dracula’s physical appearance. Through using various literary devices, techniques, and changes in register, Count Dracula’s character in the Irish translation is never quite as vicious or as cruel as in the original. The single most salient feature of Dracula’s dialogue with Jonathan Harker is that of language interference, where Dracula’s native language in Transylvania interferes with his use of English. This means that the Count speaks English using a more formal register (Biber 2009) than that used by Jonathan. That formal register in the English original, of course, is also indicative of the Count’s past as a Transylvanian noble, where he claims that he is “of an old family” (Stoker 1996, 23) and that “[w]e Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may be amongst the common dead” (Stoker 1996, 24). When Jonathan praises him for his English, the Count reminds him that he will be using Jonathan to practise his English in preparation for his trip to London. It is noteworthy that language is portrayed by Stoker as a subject for exploitation, in much the same way that Dracula intends to feed on Jonathan’s blood.

In contrast, Ó Cuirrín’s translation depicts Dracula as a fluent speaker of Irish, speaking in an informal register to Jonathan Harker. When the Count bemoans how his heart is “not attuned to mirth” (Stoker 1996, 24), the Irish translation depicts

Dracula as a fluent speaker of Irish, knowledgeable and skilful in his use of native speaker idioms and phraseology: “Tá an óige ar mo chúl agus an bás ar m’aghaidh; agus meidhir ná greann, ní taithíoch le mo chroí ach cumha ó shíorchaoineadh na marbh leis na blianta fiara fuara anuas” (Stoker 1997, 30). [Youth is behind me, and death is before me; and my heart has not experienced joyfulness nor humour but rather the homesickness of the constant crying of the dead for many cold long years now]. A further dichotomy between the English formal register and the Irish informal one can be seen in a stunning passage which highlights Ó Cuirrín’s fluency with the intricacies of Irish and of literary prose techniques. For example, whereas the English original describes his books as providing Dracula with many hours of pleasure (Stoker 1996, 20), Ó Cuirrín translates this to the more casual pastime, or “caitheamh aimsire” (Stoker 1997, 25). In translating Dracula’s statement that “to know her is to love her” (Stoker 1996, 20), Ó Cuirrín uses the phrase “ní hionúine go haitheantas” (Stoker 1997, 25) [it is not love until it is knowledge]. While the sentiment remains the same, what is striking about the passage is the use of the oppositional proverb structure, as described by Dundes and Mieder (1994), something that could only be used by a fluent and gifted native speaker in an informal register. Ironically, it is Dracula’s insistence on his identity as a foreigner, as a “stranger” (Stoker 1996, 20), that is belied in the Irish-language translation by the proliferation of what has been identified as an imperative-negative structure (Ajoke et al. 2015). Ó Cuirrín uses amplification in Dracula’s speech to express his concept of the foreigner, the emphasis on the negative “ní” echoing Mullan’s assertion that amplification is “often more like drama than narrative” (2006, 234). In addition to comprising parallelism, where the adjectives and nouns *suarach* [insignificant], *haithnidh* [acquaintance], *neamhshuim* [disinterest], and *neamhaitheantas* [unacquainted] are emphasized to rhetorical effect, this amplification reminds us that, in the words of Hebron, “our division of sound and grammar is artificial” (2004, 70). In addition to the altered meaning of the passage, the Irish-language construction uses the negative to express the positive, whereas the English language original is unitary in conveying a negative idea: “But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for” (Stoker 1996, 20); “Ach an coigríochach i dtír aineoil – ní suarach go dtí é; ní haithnidh d’éinne é, agus ní neamhshuim go neamhaitheantas” (Stoker 1997, 26) [But the stranger in a foreign land – you have not seen insignificant until you see him; nobody will recognize him; and you only understand disinterest until you understand what it is to be unknown].

Dracula employs the same oppositional Irish-language proverb structure when he describes the peasants of Transylvania as “ní hamadán meata go tuathánach é” (Stoker 1997, 28) [you haven’t met a fool until you have met a peasant] as a translation for “[b]ecause your peasant is at heart a coward and a fool!” (Stoker 1996, 22). Ó Cuirrín’s use of alliteration in Dracula’s monologues with Harker in the early chapters of the novel are an indication of a fluent speaker of Irish, and not just one who is, as Dracula states

in the original, “but a little way on the road I would travel” (Stoker 1996, 20). Dracula describes how “none there are who would not know me for a stranger” in London, a clear example of second-language interference, which Ó Cuirrín translates as “lom láithreach” (Stoker 1997, 26) [baldly, at once] to express immediacy of recognition. Similarly, Ó Cuirrín uses the phrase “beatha ná béasa” (Stoker 1997, 27) to express “our ways are not your ways” when Dracula compares Transylvania to England. This is a further exploration of Ó Cuirrín’s use of alliteration in Irish-language sayings and figures of speech, where alliteration is a feature of what Ajoke et al. (2015) describe as the semantic proverb. It is ironic, therefore, that their conversation, while rendered coherently in the Irish translation, is centred around books and fluency yet lacks fluency in the English original. In contrast, Dracula’s voice in the Irish translation indicates fluency and native speaker ease with complex constructions. This is a case where, as Mullan notes, “[f]iction may turn the speech of its characters into the language of its readers” (2006, 140). And while the English original is faithful in its rendition of Dracula as non-native speaker, the Irish translation achieves just the opposite: Dracula is as skilled a raconteur as any elderly native of the *Gaeltacht* in these passages. The glorious and noble past of the Transylvanian Count is rendered as a friendly old man seated beside the fire with his confidant. In Ó Cuirrín’s hands, the Count’s rendition of this “noble” past is augmented to a conversation between new acquaintances who might just become friends.

Dracula: Irish-Transylvanian Count

The passages in which Dracula is described in detail are perhaps amongst the greatest achievements in the Irish translation. Some of these passages describe Dracula as “our old fox” (Stoker 1996, 292), translated as “seanmhadra rua” [old red fox] (Stoker 1997, 270). Others relate to Jonathan’s physical description of Dracula as he sits by the fire, watched nervously by his new guest. These concise passages feature flashes of comic writing not evident in the English original and highlight what Mullan refers to in his discussion of translation and prose writing, when “the business of translation is sometimes inadvertently comic” (2006, 138). And yet, despite the humorous tenor of the piece, there are undertones to these descriptions which function as a precursor to the plot. This stands in contrast to Ó Cuirrín’s omissions, as noted above, of classical and Shakespearian references. As is the case throughout the novel, Ó Cuirrín uses figurative language to describe the unusual features of the Transylvanian Count. Many of the similes and metaphors used allude to the gothic architecture of Dracula’s castle. Having described Dracula’s mouth as a loving mouth, “g[h]ob grámhar” (Stoker 1997, 61), in contrast with the oxymoron “soft, smooth diabolical smile” (Stoker 1996, 49), Ó Cuirrín relies on three different techniques to describe the Count: alliteration, simile, and metaphor. In the space of

an eight-clause paragraph, Ó Cuirrín uses six double alliterations, amongst them, “cumasach cromógach” [powerful and hook-nosed], “mursanta míthrócaireach” [tyrannous and merciless] (Stoker 1997, 22), “mílítheacht mhíchuibheasach” [pallid and unseemly], and “rinn róghéar” [tips that were too sharp] (Stoker 1997, 23). This compares with Stoker’s “strong” and “aqualine” face (Stoker 1996, 17), his “extraordinary pallor,” his “fixed and rather cruel-looking” countenance, and the tops of his ears as “extremely pointed.” In addition to the lack of qualifiers such as “rather,” the overall effect of alliteration in the Irish-language passage is one of onomatopoeia, achieved through Ó Cuirrín’s use of Irish-language dentals. Fear and tension, then, are realized in Ó Cuirrín’s translation not merely through word choice and alliteration but also by way of phonology. The grandeur of an arched doorway in the gothic style is alluded to in the employment of “stuadhórais” [arched doorway] (Stoker 1997, 22) to describe Dracula’s nose, where Stoker uses the word “arched” as an adjective (Stoker 1996, 17), thereby emphasizing a central motif. The image of the arched doorway is significant when Jonathan realizes that he is trapped in Dracula’s castle.

In this way, Ó Cuirrín’s translation connects the reader to the gothic mode and to the plight in which Jonathan finds himself. The metaphor used by Ó Cuirrín in describing Dracula’s lips as having the redness of a rose, “deirge an róis” (Stoker 1997, 23), comprises a poetic register in a prose passage. In addition, it has echoes of *amour courtois* poetry in Irish, where the features of the poet’s love object were often compared to that of a rose. In this passage, however, Ó Cuirrín does not employ comparison; rather, he imbues Dracula with the beauty and vigour of youth through metaphor. Both these examples can be compared with the literal descriptions of Dracula in the English original, with little use of figurative language. In addition, the translation contains a pretext to Dracula and Jonathan’s discussion of the history of the area and of Dracula’s family’s role in “the stirring times, when the Austrian and the Hungarian came up in hordes” (Stoker 1996, 21).

Mirroring is a technique used by Stoker in the narrative construction and in the recurring ideas of the novel to reflect the intersubjectivity of experience. Rita Felski comments how G. H. Mead’s view of intersubjectivity, where the formation of the self involves all sorts of “messy entanglements” (Felski 2008, 32), implies that “No hard-and-fast line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others” (Felski 2008, 32). The importance of newspapers and magazines in *Dracula*, as sources of “facts” (Stoker 1996, 30), reflects the extent to which a variety of forms of media and technology are harnessed by Stoker to narrate the story. Yet the epistolary narrative which is so prevalent in *Dracula* is, as Chatman notes, an “unmediated narrative text” and one where “secondary mediation is always possible” (Chatman 1978, 171). It serves Dracula in his private library and Jonathan Harker and his friends in their pursuit of Dracula. Similarly, while the mirror does not reflect Dracula’s image to Jonathan, he can see himself clearly in it, and it functions as one of the

means by which Dracula both hides and reveals himself. It is, in turn, the means by which Jonathan Harker reveals the materiality of his own physical self. The ever-increasing self-doubts that Jonathan harbours confirm the idea of Transylvania as physical place and mental state. It is also, of course, one of the markers of the gothic novel, as Goss notes, where the “gothic novel can be read as a fragmented fable of identity” (2006, 79). Transylvania, then, does not represent a binary between a place and a mentality but becomes an interchangeable state of mind reflecting the characters’ moods and fears back to themselves.

The Transylvanian Landscape

Ó Cuirrín’s translation approach to Count Dracula amounts to what Jääskeläinen describes as a local strategy of translation (1999), where the text points towards a local anti-hero who is not immediately identifiable as Transylvanian. In contrast, his treatment of the Transylvanian landscape and the soundscape of terror aligns very closely with that of Stoker, in keeping with what Newmark terms *synonymy in translation* (1988). Ó Cuirrín’s translation heightens the affective impact of landscape through the employment of a variety of techniques. Kiberd notes how the act of reading is “to enter a sort of exile from the world around us” (2005, 1). One could say that Jonathan has started his exile in Transylvania through the act of searching it out. The first indication of a journey to Transylvania as a trip to a place of anxiety and deep confusion is given in the opening section of the novel. This occurs when Jonathan realizes, during his sojourn to the British Library, that no maps exist of Dracula’s Castle, which lies somewhere “in the extreme east of the country” (Stoker 1996, 1). Ó Cuirrín transliterates this statement. As in the Stoker original, the narrative in the Irish translation traces how Dracula’s connections to the notion of Transylvania as a definitive place become ever more tenuous, to the extent that he is described late in the novel as coming from the “wolf country” (Stoker 1996, 324). Transylvania is “the very place where he have been alive” (Stoker 1996, 319), Van Helsing claims in broken English. This compares to Dracula’s statement of identity at the outset of the novel, when he claims that “Transylvania is not England” (Stoker 1996, 27), again translated literally by Ó Cuirrín. The shock of who and what Dracula is resonates with Trilling’s assertion (1965) regarding modern literature as the stuff of violence and destruction that threatens the foundations of civilization. Transylvania is the *alma mater* for that destruction, the castle in the mountains with its history of battles fought and won, appearing to offer a historical and class legitimacy not enjoyed by the ordinary citizens of London. The changing splendours of Transylvania and the oscillation between notions of beauty and beast are pronounced and constant. Indeed, the image of the mountain as essential to the gothic imagination is one that is replicated in both original and translation. As in

other Irish-language gothic literature, the mountain wilderness replaces the castle as the primary site of the gothic. The Carpathian Mountains are both celebrated and feared: on the one hand, a country “full of beauty of every kind” (Stoker 1996, 2), on the other, the towering Carpathian mountains with their “endless perspective of jagged rock and pointed crags” (Stoker 1996, 7). Of significance in Ó Cuirrín’s Irish translation, however, is that the mountain is also used in metaphorical terms to describe Judgement Day, “Lá an tSléibhe” [the day of the mountain] (Stoker 1997, 79). The significance of this in Ó Cuirrín’s translation is, of course, that the term appears in Mina’s journal. Unknown to her, Jonathan is trapped in the Carpathian Mountains as she writes her diary.

Transylvania is always present in *Dracula*, even when the location is elsewhere. The middle chapters of the novel, set mostly in England, are as much about what differentiates it from Transylvania as they are about England itself. It is Transylvania which is written as a place of beauty rather than England. It is Transylvania which contains mystery and intrigue, which has as much variety of weather and climate as London has its multitudes. Pathetic fallacy in *Dracula* is one of the most central components of the novel: the weather changes from light to dark, from bright to overcast as the coach approaches Dracula’s castle. Yet it is unclear whether the weather reflects the evil lurking in Transylvania, or whether the evil affects the weather.

In her analysis of surrealism in modern Irish prose literature, Máirín Nic Eoin (2006, 77) notes how akin it is to “ag taisteal gan mhapaí” [travelling without maps]. As it happens with many tropes and motifs throughout the novel, the opening scene in the British Library quoted above is reflected again when Jonathan finds himself in Dracula’s library on the other side of Europe. In the same way that no maps exist of Dracula’s locality in Transylvania, this early observation by Jonathan is the first in a series of insights into his own character. Despite the technological advances of phonographs, science, and writing, despite Harker and his circle being educated people, the novel suggests that they do not hear their own voices as much as they should. It is for this reason, perhaps, that McCormack suggests that Harker’s surname functions in the novel as a “cypher” for hearing (1991, 843).

It is in the passages describing the mountains of Transylvania and evoking pathetic fallacy that we best witness Ó Cuirrín’s exceptional talents as literary translator. Among the most beautifully written passages in the translation, the translator retains the lexical meaning of Stoker’s original while keeping the structure of the original almost entirely intact. The only addition is Ó Cuirrín’s predilection for alliteration, where “lofty steeps” are translated as “leaca lánarda” (Stoker 1996, 8). Connotations of English words are retained in their Irish form, and there is neither narrowing nor extension of the meaning of the words. The same mountain effects change, and Jonathan notices how it “seemed as if the mountain range had separated two atmospheres, and that now we had got into the thunderous one” (Stoker 1996, 7). It is from the same “beautiful range” that the sounds of howling wolves are heard

(Stoker 1996, 7), and it is through the same lonely pass that Jonathan reflects on the devastating famine that killed so many in the region.

Transylvania, then, can be read both literally and figuratively, as much a state of mind and a mirror in which we see the underbelly of human depravity as a physical landscape and Dracula’s home. The material comforts of the Castle, with its grand furniture and overwhelming opulence offer no recourse or relief to a distraught Jonathan. It dawns on him, as he sees the sun rising in the East, that the place in which he is residing has caused him to become a stranger to himself. The mirroring between Dracula and Jonathan is as evident in the Irish translation as in the English original. Dracula’s words that he, the Count, will be a “stranger in a strange land” (Stoker 1996, 20) reflect how Jonathan starts “at my own shadow and am full of all sorts of horrible imaginings” (Stoker 1996, 33). This, in turn, reflects his references in Stoker’s narrative to Hamlet’s predicament, left untranslated by Ó Cuirín (de Brún 2007): “Fiú mo scáil féin, baineann sí geit asam uaireanta agus tá mé ciaptha cráite ag smaointe dúra dorcha” (Stoker 1997, 42) [Even my own shadow, at times it frightens me, and I am tormented and harassed by dark, grim thoughts]. The absence of such speech in these passages is noteworthy. For example, speech is shown as concealing the truth, as when Jonathan realizes that the Count’s words belie his true intentions towards him and when he notices that “his words and looks did not seem to accord” (Stoker 1996, 24). When Jonathan Harker looks out of the castle window and is met with the shouts of the local Szgany, their muted laughter serves to emphasize his own isolation as a prisoner in Dracula’s Castle. Ironically, the sound of laughter is frequently treated by Ó Cuirín as an isolating experience. In the Irish translation, he compares the howling of wolves to the sweetness of the music of the fairies: “Ba bhinne ná an ceol sí an gáire sin” (Stoker 1997, 47) [Their music was sweeter than fairy music]. Through the character of Harker, Ó Cuirín includes a cultural reference in Irish folklore to both the wonder and the fear of the fairies.

Conclusion

Loss of plot in Ó Cuirín’s translation of *Dracula* was Irish language’s gain. Ó Cuirín’s creative flair for story frequently surpasses the Stoker original in terms of stylistic technique. The loss of intertextual layer and speech registers in the Irish translation is replaced by a masterly display of prose techniques, drawing as the translator does on amplification, alliteration, simile, proverb, and metaphor. Dracula’s character, and the idea of Transylvania as a state of mind rather than a place akin to the classical underworld that is so prominent in Stoker’s original, are enriched and re-imagined by the language of the Irish text. If adventure and the unknown were the common threads in much of the translated texts of the period of translation from 1926 to 2000, from *Wuthering Heights* to Dante’s *Inferno*, the choice of *Dracula* for translation was

an entirely appropriate one. Ó Cuirrín's achievement was to create an Irish-language gothic, and, while it contains similarities to McCormack's description of "the Irish gothic" (1991, 831), the translator retains the essence of what Chatman calls story as events (1978, 43), where "the basic stuff" of story, the *fabula* is retained (1978, 19). As shown here, close reading reveals a literature brimming with allusion and tripping over itself with figurative and idiomatic language.

Felski (2008, 8) cautions critics and readers of literature against trying "to force an equivalence of textual structures with social structure, to assert a necessary causality between literary forms and larger political effects." And yet it is hard not to agree with Declan Kiberd when he notes how the Great Famine in Ireland must have influenced the young Stoker in writing *Dracula* (2006, 378). *Dracula* begins with a trip to Transylvania: the novel ends, somewhat inexplicably, with a short account of a return trip by Jonathan and Mina with their young son. Perhaps this, more than any other account in the novel, is an indication of how, just as Transylvania held them in a vice-grip of terror during the reign of Dracula and the Undead, continues to hold power over their imaginations. Having fought Dracula "for the sake of humanity" (Stoker 1996, 319), the dichotomy between Transylvania and England is perhaps a false one: all this time, it was a battle not between two places but between different states of mind and opposing values. At the end of our journey with the Irish-language translation, we can indeed conclude that we have been enriched by Ó Cuirrín's prosodic brilliance. All along, *Dracula* was a novel as much about the inscrutability of language as it was about the gothic. Hidden in plain sight, *Dracula* challenges us to confront, as it did Ó Cuirrín, the gap between the concrete and the abstract, the material and the spiritual. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Irish translation of *Dracula* should take its place alongside this novel of "strange tongues, fierce-falling water, and the howling of wolves" (Stoker 1996, 345) to become a quintessentially Gaelic-Transylvanian text.

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“Like Ireland, Hungary Had Her Struggles for Freedom:” Cultural and Diplomatic Links between Interwar Ireland and Hungary

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Abstract. The interwar years in Ireland were marked by the widening of international relations following the newly independent Irish Free State’s entry to the League of Nations in 1923. This paper aims to provide insights into a lesser-known part of Irish diplomatic history, focusing on how, besides Geneva, Dublin also became significant as a meeting point with Central European small states from the mid-1920s. It will trace how the foundation of the Honorary Consulate of Hungary in Dublin demonstrated Irish interest in widening economic relations and furthering cultural connections with Central Europe, even if honorary consulates traditionally fulfilled primarily symbolic purposes. Based on so far unpublished archival materials and press records, this article will assess cultural and diplomatic links cultivated under the consulate of Hubert Briscoe, highlighting the significance of independence and Catholicism as a perceived connection between Irish and Hungarian national identities. Ultimately, this article argues that Irish images of East-Central Europe may add to our current understanding of Irish nationalism in the first decades of Irish independence.

Keywords: Ireland, Hungary, diplomatic history, cultural nationalism

Introduction

Before the Great War, many Irish nationalist intellectuals, revolutionaries, politicians, businessmen, and journalists had acquired personal experience regarding Habsburg Central Europe. Given the perceived similarity of circumstances, the pre-war perceptions of Irish commentators often influenced their reactions to the transformation of the political order and identities even after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. The complexity and controversial nature of Irish national identity in the early twentieth century has been noted in Irish

historiography (Boyce 1995, Garvin 2005, Hutchinson 1987). Language and religion were significant factors in defining national identities, but Irish cultural nationalists such as Douglas Hyde – Protestant Gaelic scholar, founder of the Gaelic League in 1893 and first President of Ireland – proposed “a mobile vision of the nation interacting with the wider world” (Hutchinson 1987, 483). Therefore, the Irish language heritage by no means excluded awareness of other nations fighting similar struggles for emancipation in the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.

The lack of extensive research on the link between Ireland and East-Central Europe may be explained by the absence of direct diplomatic links between Ireland and the small successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the mid-1970s. Due to the financial constraints on the Department of External Affairs (and after 1945 due to the emergence of the Cold War), Ireland and the successor states of Austria-Hungary did not establish full bilateral diplomatic relations until the second half of the twentieth century (with Austria in 1951, with Czechoslovakia in 1975, and with Hungary in 1976). Nevertheless, the lack of specific secondary sources does not mean a lack of awareness, interest, or contact: diplomatic records indicate the contrary. Irish businessmen and intellectuals were more than eager to get acquainted with the newly independent small states of Central Europe in the aftermath of the First World War. Some of them, like journalist-turned-businessman Hubert Briscoe, had an interest in Central/Eastern Europe that went beyond the war years. Others sought new opportunities that they hoped would benefit the emerging young Irish economy as well as their own private businesses.

After a short introduction about the formative years of the young Irish diplomatic service, the present article will provide an insight into the foundation and the main activities of the Hungarian Honorary Consulate in Dublin, outlining Irish cultural connections with Hungary, with special attention to the mutual interest and connections established through the Fourth World Scout Jamboree (1933), the Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour (1937), and the Thirty-Fourth Eucharistic Congress (1938).

The Irish Free State and the Wider World

After the establishment of the Irish Free State following the years of destruction during the War of Independence (1919–1921) and the subsequent Civil War (1922–1923), Irish politicians and diplomats hoped that the newly independent state would develop beneficial relationships with other small states in Europe. The Free State had to rely on a limited network of bilateral relations in the 1920s, and links with Central Europe were particularly restricted, reduced to honorary consulates and consulates in Dublin, not employing official diplomats but mostly businessmen who applied voluntarily to fill those positions. Although the young diplomatic

service still faced financial problems, primary evidence indicates that the existence of consular links with Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia should not be ignored.

From the mid-1920s, after the transitory period of what is labelled in historiography as an “administrative vacuum” (Nolan 2004, 21), Irish representatives were sent to great powers such as Germany and the United States of America, in addition to receiving the representatives of small nations like Austria, Hungary, or Czechoslovakia. Thus, even though the Irish diplomatic presence in Europe was quite small at the time, it was a fact that “the major Continental powers kept a consular and diplomatic presence in Dublin” (Keogh 1988, 24). In the early years of independence, the founders of the new state “sought to change not only the way the Irish interacted with the outside world, but also the way the rest of the world perceived the Irish” (Keown 2000, 42). That is to say, by drawing primarily on the Free State’s multiple identities, connections were established with Europe, the Irish diaspora across the globe, and also the Commonwealth.

Establishing an efficient foreign service was of key importance in order to convince the sceptics at the Department of Finance that the Department of External Affairs was worthy of being an independent department on its own. The existence of the Irish diplomatic service, therefore, was “more than a symbol of independence and sovereignty” (Keogh 1988, 19). Among others, the Department of External Affairs played a key role in establishing the status of the Free State both within the League of Nations and the British Commonwealth. The League of Nations, which the Irish joined in September 1923, provided the framework for Irish diplomats and shaped Irish foreign policy in the interwar era, both under the rule of Cumann na nGaedheal (1923–1932) and Fianna Fáil (after 1932). It is noteworthy that under both administrations Catholicism was a common ground that the Department and the independent Irish Free State wished to count on when establishing further contacts. Certainly, the enthusiasm of the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (1923–1946), Joseph P. Walshe, “for Catholic Europe” was a major contributing factor in this (Nolan 2004, 23).

The Honorary Consulate of Hungary in Ireland

Despite the fact that official diplomatic contact between Ireland and Hungary was established in the 1970s, Irish archival records indicate that the relationship dates back to the interwar period. As early as December 1923, the Hungarian Kingdom sought permission to nominate an honorary consul in Dublin, when the Hungarian representative in London enquired at the British Foreign Office if there were any objections to the appointment of a Hungarian consul in Dublin; there were none (National Archives 1923). Progress was made in 1925 when the Hungarian Charge d’Affaires in London, Jenő Nelky, checked with Irish High Commissioner James

McNeill if Dublin-born stockbroker Hubert Briscoe was suitable. The Hungarians expressed a preference for “a man who has no strong political affiliations, and for choice a businessman of good standing who would like to supplement a solid civic status with a little consular dignity,” and Briscoe was found to be just “the sort of man” the Charge d’Affaires wanted (National Archives 1925). Hungarian Governor Admiral Miklós Horthy appointed the well-known Dublin stockbroker (also holding the title of government broker) Honorary Royal Hungarian Consul in December 1925 (National Archives 1926).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Briscoe had revealed an ongoing interest in East-Central Europe, first as a Catholic journalist before the First World War and then, from the mid-1920s, as the Honorary Consul of Hungary in Ireland. His first trip to the southern parts of the Dual Monarchy took place in May 1904, when he was “privileged to join an organized party of literary folk who were bound for a few weeks” excursion to Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Irish Independent* 2 July 1904). His writings went beyond the format of travelogues, as illustrated by his article published in February 1908, eight months before Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. Briscoe had already sensed the gravity of the political and possibly military conflict in the Balkans, claiming that it had the potential to lead to further complications (*Irish Independent* 28 February 1908). Nevertheless, even after the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, he still adhered to his conviction that the Habsburgs “had done magnificent work” since Bosnia’s occupation in 1878. He saw the events of 1908 not as a sign of aggression by a great power, rather “a preliminary to the granting of a complete measure of autonomy to the Bosnian people,” similar to the idea of the Irish Home Rule (*Irish Independent* 14 October 1908). Briscoe underlined that “if ever any great Power has earned the right to sovereignty over a smaller nation, Austria-Hungary, by her enlightened policy and sympathetic rule, has surely vindicated her present claims in the case of Bosnia. Indeed the whole latter-day history of the province stands as a striking object lesson to the countries nearer home” (*Irish Independent* 14 October 1908).

After the establishment of the Hungarian Honorary Consulate in December 1925, the British connection remained significant throughout the interwar period even though the Irish administration (both under William T. Cosgrave and, after 1932, Éamon de Valera) placed considerable emphasis on the Irish Free State’s sovereignty. This was also illustrated by the interest Britain-based Hungarians (such as Baron Iván Rubido-Zichy, Hungarian representative in London) expressed about visiting Dublin (*Irish Independent* 10 August 1908).

Archival records indicate that while Briscoe appeared to have taken his duties seriously, the Irish Department for External Affairs (or its effective person in charge, Secretary Joseph P. Walshe) did not seem to have reciprocated Briscoe’s enthusiasm, resulting in a troublesome relationship between the Consulate and the Department at times. For instance, following the visit of a Hungarian delegation for the Inter-

Parliamentary Union in Dublin in July 1930, Briscoe expressed his disappointment with the Department for not having informed him about the arrival of Hungarian visitors in Dublin. The *Irish Independent's* representative highlighted a mutual interest between the Hungarians and the Irish, emphasizing nationalist politician Arthur Griffith's former “interest in the Hungarian policy, and the use he made of it in the early days of Sinn Féin” (*Irish Independent* 21 July 1930). Of course, the paper was referring to Griffith's *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904), possibly one of the most influential Irish studies of the political history of Hungary. Having grown disillusioned with the Home Rule movement and mainstream Irish nationalism, Griffith proposed “a middle way between parliamentarism and republicanism” in order to achieve Irish constitutional independence and economic self-sufficiency by non-violent, political means based on the model of a Dual Monarchy (Maye 1997, 97, Haglund and Korkut 2015, 49 and 55).

The *Irish Independent's* report was also significant due to the fact that Briscoe admitted to having learnt the news about the Hungarian delegation from the press and wished to officially protest that he had not been notified of the visit. Therefore, he asked Department of External Affairs Secretary Walshe if it was “the settled policy of [the] department that the Honorary Consul for Hungary should be ignored when Hungarians came to Dublin under government auspices, or on other kindred occasions. If so,” warned Briscoe, “it will be necessary for me to consider my position” (National Archives 1930a). Eventually, Briscoe accepted Walshe's suggestion to “have a little chat,” after which they were to let the matter rest (National Archives 1930b). Nonetheless, another confidential letter from Briscoe to Walshe three years later in 1933 signified that their agreement was not a lasting one. The Consul reminded the Secretary that he had “for a long time, been very dissatisfied with the recognition given to Hungary in this country” (National Archives 1933a). He emphasized that it was his duty to “see that the honour and prestige of Hungary was maintained, and that [he] should do everything that was possible in Ireland for the advancement of Hungarian interests,” stressing that in this he had “had no assistance” from the Department of External Affairs (National Archives 1933a). And although he received “much kindness” from other foreign representatives in Dublin, the Department had completely ignored his Consulate,

and Hungary [had] been left out in the cold on many occasions when she was entitled to be brought into at least the same prominence as other countries of perhaps less international importance. In the circumstances I fear that the only course left open for me is to recommend the Hungarian Government to abolish the Consulate in Dublin altogether, but before doing so I would like to know officially what is to be the future attitude of your Department towards it. (National Archives 1933a)

In Walshe's absence, Assistant Secretary John Joseph Hearne replied, and his "kind remarks" seemingly convinced Briscoe not to "proceed any further in the matter" (National Archives 1933a).

Irish-Hungarian Cultural Links during the Interwar Years

Due to his background in business and finance, Briscoe's priorities as Honorary Consul of Hungary lay with mapping out possible economic contacts between the two states. However, under his term, cultural relations were also fostered between Hungary and Ireland. These cultural events and meetings were covered widely in Irish newspapers as well. For instance, minor as it may seem, the Fourth World Scout Jamboree that was organized in Hungary in August 1933 (the first international gathering of the scouts took place in 1920) still offered a great opportunity for both the youth and the educational politicians of Ireland and Hungary to learn about each other's cultures and customs (and of altogether forty-six nations). The *Irish Independent* recognized Catholicism as the main link, highlighting the significance of religious events such as the High Mass. The overall importance of the event was also indicated by the fact that the Chief Scout of Hungary and the Jamboree Camp Chief was Pál Teleki, former prime minister (1920–21; 1939–41) and founder of the Christian National Party (*Irish Independent* 31 July 1933). Afterwards, the Commissioner of the Irish Free State Scouts, G. S. Childs, informed the Irish Department of External Affairs of the success of the Irish trip. The Hungarian papers, elaborated Childs, referred to the Irish boys as "'the pets of the camp', a tribute which speaks for itself" (National Archives 1933b). He emphasized that during his conversations with

prominent Hungarians, including Foreign Office officials, deputies, and newspaper men, I was pleased to find that they had a great sympathy with the Irish Free State, and wished our land prosperity and peace. They were of the opinion that Ireland and Hungary were in pre-war days working under similar conditions for the same end, and now that both countries control their own destinies, they were naturally anxious to learn as much about our country as possible. I feel that in their own small way the Irish Scouts materially helped to enhance the good name of our country at this great event. (National Archives 1933b)

In the words of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alfred Byrne, the Irish Scouts had enhanced the good name of their country in Hungary, and later a distinguished Hungarian diplomat informed him that the Scouts had been the finest ambassadors Ireland ever sent to Hungary (*Irish Press* 30 July 1937). Therefore, given that the

Irish Government did not appoint official representatives in interwar Hungary, the presence of Irish scouts in an international context should not be dismissed.

Furthermore, what started as a university exchange programme in 1936 between Irish and Hungarian students, turned eventually into an “Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour” with the participation of Briscoe and other distinguished Irish personalities. The watershed moment was John Vágó’s (representative of the National Union of Hungarian Students in Great Britain) arrival in Dublin to initiate a series of Irish-Hungarian tours. Vágó followed up the visit of Irish university students to Hungary in the summer of 1936 and the return visit to Ireland of Susan Kemeny (Budapest University) in December 1936 (*Irish Press* 22 February 1937). Kemeny, representative of the National Union of Hungarian Students in England, was engaged with a peace propaganda tour among the universities of Europe, including Queen’s University in Belfast. When she arrived in the Free State in December 1936, she took part in a broadcast from Radio Athlone and attended a concert arranged in her honour by Dublin students. The programme was entirely in Irish and Hungarian and was also attended by the Lord Mayor of Dublin (*Irish Independent* 11 December 1936). When Kemeny returned to Dublin in May 1937, she was invited to talk at Trinity College Dublin, where she gave a speech on 3 June and elaborated on how “like Ireland, Hungary had her struggles for freedom” (*Irish Press* 4 June 1937). She also attended a luncheon organized by the League of Nations Society of Ireland, where she introduced Hungary as “the last outpost of Christianity and defence of European civilisation in the East” (*Irish Press* 12 May 1937), a metaphor often used by Irish intellectuals, particularly Edward J. Coyne (*Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 1929, 1930, 1932) to describe the significance of Ignaz Seipel and Austrian Christian socialists. Kemeny emphasized the closeness of the Irish and Hungarian nations both “in thought and spirit”, with their history “filled with the same idea – the striving for independence and the love of freedom” (*Irish Press* 12 May 1937). In June 1937, she also addressed the Dublin Rotary Club, representing the Hungarian Congress Bureau, referring to Arthur Griffith, and the historical significance of self-sufficiency for Hungary as well as for Ireland (*Irish Press* 12 May and 29 June 1937).

The initiative for the Hungarian-Irish Friendship Tour was supported by Hubert Briscoe in addition to Tomás Ó Faoláin, editor of the *National Student*, independent politician and businessmen Frederick Maurice Summerfield, Lord Mayor of Dublin Alfred Byrne, and violinist and academic Walter Starkie. Starkie was professor of Spanish and lecturer in Italian literature at Trinity College as well as director of the Abbey Theatre, Ireland’s National Theatre. Based on his experiences in Central/Eastern Europe, Starkie wrote literary travelogues first published in 1929 under the title *Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary and Roumania* (Sagarra 2012). Starkie expressed admiration for Hungarian culture and music; he did not, however, draw any parallels with Ireland. The only reference to contemporary Ireland was when he mentioned that the owner of the Hotel English Queen (without

specifying the exact location) did not understand the distinction between being English or Irish as he had not met an Irishman before (Starkie 1933, 147). Starkie also noted that as far as the perception of the English was concerned, Lord Rothermere, who advocated the Hungarian case in the *Daily Mail*, was held in the highest esteem in Hungary, while in Ireland he and his newspaper were mostly criticized in relation to their support for the Hungarians. He argued that even the “hovels of the Gypsies” echoed from the cry “Lord Rothermere: éljen! Éljen! [Long Live]” (*Irish Independent* 3 October 1929). British newspaper magnate Lord Rothermere was known for his campaign in the British *Daily Mail*, launched on 27 June 1927 with an article entitled “Hungary’s Place under the Sun,” supporting the small state’s irredentist claims (Boyce 2011). He also founded the Hungarian Revisionist League, which Hungarian Prime Minister István Bethlen saw as the “wrong kind of revision,” meaning ethnic revision as opposed to the restoration of the historical integrity of St Stephen’s nation (Cartledge 2009, 124–125).

The significance of the Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour was also illustrated by Vágó’s statement that his interest in Ireland stemmed from the fact that “there was much in common between the two countries in their history of oppression,” referring to the impact of Arthur Griffith in Hungary (*Irish Press* 25 February and 30 March 1937). Hungarian sporting success proved to be the centre of common interest in the interview, together with the popularity of football in the country. The visits by the Hungarian football team to Ireland were quite frequent and well documented; in the late 1930s, the teams were often received by dignitaries such as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Éamon de Valera, the Lord Mayor of Dublin Alfred Byrne, and Honorary Consul of Hungary, Hubert Briscoe. Great significance was attributed to these matches since they added another dimension to the existing consular or cultural contact between Ireland and Central Europe (*Irish Independent* 7 December 1936).

Led by Briscoe, the Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour, which took place in the period of 10–31 July 1937, attracted attention both in Ireland and Hungary. The itinerary included Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Venice, Geneva, and Paris (*Irish Press* 25 February 1937). The party of sixty people also included Walter Starkie, Pádraig Ó Caoimh, and Professor J. T. Wigham (*Irish Press* 31 May 1937). Given its popularity, a second tour was planned for August 1938: the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alfred Byrne, spoke of his intentions to visit Hungary and participate in the Second Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour on 13 August as part of a sixteen-day trip, calling the first one a “remarkable success.” For the second Tour, the plan was to start in Cologne, Germany, reaching Budapest for St Stephen’s holiday on 20 August, then on the way back stopping in Vienna, Innsbruck, and Munich – interestingly, not making any references to the fact that Germany had been under Nazi rule since 1933. Briscoe was named the patron of the tour again, and enquiries were directed to the Honorary Secretary of the Second Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour, Suzanne Kemeny (*Connaught Telegraph* 2 April 1938).

Notwithstanding the generally positive feedback, Gertrude Gaffney of the *Irish Independent* was less enthusiastic about the tour. She was known for her zealously Catholic, pro-Franco reports on events during the Spanish Civil War, which tended to go off on a tangent (Maume 2012). In her article in the *Irish Independent*, she claimed that “the less you know about other countries and the less contacts you have with other peoples the more likely you are to remain at peace with them” (*Irish Independent* 5 March 1937). This was due to the fact that she had been disillusioned in her friendships with Central/Eastern Europeans, referring to them as always demanding more than what she could offer. Thus, while calling the plan for the friendship tour “an admirable idea,” what she objected to was “describing it as a reciprocal tour until the Hungarians in equal numbers, or very nearly as many at any rate, have arranged to come here, and I doubt if that will ever come to pass” (*Irish Independent* 5 March 1937). As an alternative, she suggested that efforts rather be put towards attracting American tourists to Ireland. Interestingly though, Gaffney did not seem to be aware of the fact that the whole idea behind the Irish-Hungarian Friendship Tour was initiated on the Hungarian side, following the aforementioned visits of Susan Kemeny to Dublin. Apart from Gaffney’s criticism, the general opinion of the Irish relationship with Central European small states, however small in scale, was overwhelmingly positive.

In order to increase the popularity of Hungarian culture in Ireland, several programmes were attributed to Hungarian classical and folk music on the programme of Radio Athlone. Trinity Professor Walter Starkie’s contribution was significant in this regard, given his documented interest in Hungarian music and culture in general – “A Hungarian Hour,” which aired in May 1937 and included comments from Susan Kemeny and Tomás Ó Faoláin (*Irish Press* 18 May 1937). However, it was Hubert Briscoe who managed to highlight the overarching significance of Hungarian culture and history for Ireland when he

welcomed the broadcast, because it [was to] give to the Irish people an opportunity of learning something about the country, which he had the privilege of representing. The history of Hungary, like that of Ireland, was one of trouble, and there was the same struggle for independence of language, ideas and culture. They in Ireland had much in common with Hungary and much to learn from her, and it was but natural that there should be mutual interests in the developments that had resulted from the pursuance of similar policies. (*Irish Press* 19 May 1937)

Undoubtedly, the Irish image of interwar Hungary had been shaped by several factors, including, most importantly, the Catholic perspective of the majority of commentators and the critical attitude to British policies regarding Ireland. In the late 1930s, it became more and more regular to have Hungarian voices heard in

Ireland – whether on the programme of Radio Éireann, on the pages of major Irish dailies, or in person at different scenes of Dublin social, intellectual, and religious life (*Irish Press* 28 September 1938). For instance, Suzanne Kemeny, who was, stressed the *Irish Independent*, “well known in Dublin,” spoke as part of a special broadcast from Radio Éireann about the Eucharistic Congress in Budapest (*Irish Independent* 27 May 1937).

The impact of Catholicism on Irish perceptions had not faded by any means by 1938, as illustrated by the strongly Catholic and conservative nationalist Constitution of 1937. Moreover, when the Thirty-Fourth Eucharistic Congress took place then in Budapest in May 1938, the event turned out to be more than simply symbolic for the Irish delegation, particularly in view of the fact that in 1932 the Eucharistic Congress was organized in Dublin with huge success for the newly elected Éamon de Valera, consolidating not only the power of Fianna Fáil but also the significance of Catholic nationalism in the Irish Free State.

Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII) served as papal legate in Budapest in 1938 and offered the admonition at the Hungarian Eucharistic Congress. Similar to the theme of many Catholic Irish writers at the time, he praised the strength of Hungarians defending the Christian civilization. In 1938, this could stand for opposition against Nazism or, even more so, communism (*Irish Press* 30 May 1938). The peculiarity of the Eucharistic Congress is indicated by the fact that it was organized only a few months after the Austrian Anschluss (March 1938) and before the Munich Agreement (September 1938) and the First Vienna Award (November 1938), all of which contributed to the total transformation of the political status quo in Central Europe.

The Hungarian Eucharistic Congress, held between 25 and 29 May 1938, was attended by, among others, an Irish delegation of 110 members, organized by the Irish Catholic Truth Society (*Irish Independent* 26 January 1938). “Hungary has close affinities with Ireland,” explained the organization: “it is Catholic through and through and, like Ireland, wrested its independence from the invader” (*Irish Press* 5 March 1938). Although the Irish delegation was small, it represented, claimed the Catholic Truth Society, “a gesture of brotherhood with the people of Hungary” (*Irish Press* 30 May 1938). The Irish Government was represented by An Tánaiste (Deputy Head of Government) Sean T. O’Kelly; Baron Zsigmond Perényi, Steward of the Holy Crown of St Stephen, was quoted as saying that “Hungarians felt warm sympathy with Ireland, because they had so many things in common,” for they had both kept the faith for centuries and had also suffered greatly for it, adding that the “Wild Geese” were among those who fought for the liberation of Buda from the Turks in 1686 (*Irish Press* 6 June 1938), pointing to the flight of Catholic Irish soldiers to Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Most importantly, the paper drew a comparison between Hungary’s mission in 1686 and that of 1919, when “Hungarians were again called upon to

protect Christian Europe from a peril even worse than the Turks – the Bolsheviks” (*Irish Press* 6 June 1938). Besides the Irish military presence, it is noteworthy that Catholic Irish students had also migrated to the Continent during the same period when the Penal Laws disempowered the Catholic and Dissenter population in Ireland (Power and Pilný 2014, 4).

The Special Correspondent of the *Irish Independent*, Gertrude Gaffney, was in Budapest for the duration of the whole event to report on the Eucharistic Congress. She pointed to the disappointment of the Hungarian organizers that no visitors were arriving from Germany or Austria, “both big Catholic populations” (*Irish Independent* 24 May 1938). A month before the Eucharistic Congress took place in Budapest, the aforementioned John Vágó, representative of the Universities’ Sub-Committee of the Congress, had visited the offices of the Irish Catholic Truth Society. Among others, Vágó discussed with an *Irish Press* reporter whether Hitler was to permit Austrian Catholics to attend the Eucharistic Congress, which was officially barred to German Catholics (*Irish Press* 5 April 1938). In her article, Gaffney quoted the Mayor of Budapest, Károly Szendy, speaking of the strong ties between Ireland and Hungary and of the similarity between Irish and Hungarian history (*Irish Independent* 27 May 1938). Moreover, Michael Nash, also writing for the *Irish Independent* a week prior to the event, had pointed to a number of issues that Ireland and Hungary were perceived to have in common. He directed the readers’ attention to the “grievances as well as sympathies” in relation to fighting for nationhood, emphasizing that both had “suffered severely from religious persecution, and both are still struggling, with increasing success, to maintain the heritage of their national traditions and language” (*Irish Independent* 14 May 1938). As far as post-Trianon Hungary was concerned, Nash pointed to the loss of border provinces and as a result the strength of irredentism in the everyday life of “truncated modern Hungary” (*Irish Independent* 14 May 1938), an image used frequently to characterize post-Partition Ulster as well, within the Irish context.

The Second World War and the Closure of the Consulate

On the eve of the Second World War, there appeared to be an ongoing interest in maintaining economic links between Ireland and Hungary, as illustrated by a letter addressed to the Irish Minister for External Affairs written in French by Lucien Delorme. In his request for a diplomatic post as Honorary Consul of Ireland in Budapest, Delorme highlighted that he had been resident in Ireland for three years and owned a perfume factory in Budapest: hence his interest in furthering links between Ireland and Hungary in Budapest (National Archives 1938a). In his reply, Walshe informed Delorme that it was not the practice of the Irish Government to appoint Honorary Consuls abroad (National Archives 1938b). Therefore, the

Department appeared to concentrate their efforts on developing diplomatic connections elsewhere. As Delorme applied at a time when trouble was brewing in East-Central Europe, not long before the Munich Agreement (30 September 1938) and the First Vienna Award (2 November 1938), the Department's response indicated that Central Europe may not have been the most favourable diplomatic or trading post for Ireland at the time. Nevertheless, despite the growing influence of the Axis powers on Hungary in the late 1930s, and even the Hungarian aggression towards her neighbouring small states, the outbreak of the Second World War did not result in any trouble regarding Irish-Hungarian relations. What is more, in December 1939, the Hungarian Consulate in Dublin was "raised to the status of Consulate-General, and Mr Hubert Briscoe, Honorary Consul, has been appointed Consul-General" (*Irish Press* 19 December 1939). The *Cork Examiner* added that Briscoe, being "a keen traveller," knew Hungary very well due to the fact that he had paid an annual visit to Hungary (*Cork Examiner* 6 January 1940). The British Government broke off relations with Hungary in April 1941; this, however, did not affect Irish-Hungarian links at this stage. In his letter to Walshe, dated 23 April 1941, Briscoe wrote: "I presume there is no need for me to do anything at this juncture" (National Archives 1941). It was only after the British declaration of war on Hungary on 7 December 1941 that Briscoe resigned from his post due to the irreconcilability of the declaration of war with his business interests in Britain. Communications were then carried through the Swedish Legation in London, who were in charge of Hungarian interests regarding Ireland (National Archives 1941). The position was not filled for almost half a century, and diplomatic connections were not established again until the 1970s.

Conclusion

This article has aimed to reveal a lesser-known aspect of Irish diplomatic and cultural history by providing an insight into how the foundation of the Honorary Consulate of Hungary in Dublin served to widen economic relations as well as further cultural connections between the Irish and Hungarian small states. Catholic Dublin stockbroker Hubert Briscoe filled the position of Honorary Consul of Hungary in Ireland between 1926 and 1941, and he became a key figure in promoting economic and cultural links between the two states, as the *Irish Times* had noted (29 December 1939). Interestingly, on the Irish side, even confidential archival records do not reveal much of the government's attitude towards these efforts, which remained symbolic throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, we have seen that many segments of Irish society, including businessmen, scholars, and public figures with cultural affiliations, expressed an ongoing interest in interwar Hungary. The Fourth World Scout Jamboree (1933), the Irish-Hungarian Friendship

Tour (1937), and the Thirty-Fourth Eucharistic Congress (1938) demonstrated that the enthusiasm and efforts of the Irish public and Hungarian cultural initiatives outweighed the lack of attention from the Irish government. This article argued that the links established between Hungary and Ireland under Briscoe’s term as Honorary Consul provided an additional dimension to Irish cultural nationalism during the first two decades of the Irish Free State, highlighting the persistence of the shared belief that “like Ireland, Hungary had her struggles for freedom.”

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“Uprooted:” Anton Chekhov’s Influence on Frank O’Connor

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Abstract. Thus far perhaps the most acclaimed Irish practitioner of the short story, Frank O’Connor, attributes a lasting influence to Russian author Anton Chekhov when he considers the direction that the modern Irish short story was to take in the twentieth century. In *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (1963), O’Connor emphasized two particular themes in Chekhov’s short fiction that influenced his own stories: on the one hand, a preoccupation with loneliness; on the other, a belief that venial sin, or the adoption of a false personality, was “far more destructive” than mortal sin itself. In other writings, he expressed an interest in narrative technique and structure as he found them in Chekhov’s stories. The article explores O’Connor’s “Uprooted” from his collection *Crab Apple Jelly* (1944), a story about displaced intellectuals. My reading illustrates how the Irish writer was not only adopting Chekhov’s themes but was also experimenting with Chekhov’s character types and narrative techniques, particularly as found in the Russian author’s story “The Lady with the Dog.” At the same time, O’Connor developed a distinctly individual technique of his own within the Irish realist/naturalist short story tradition, making a lasting impact on the art of the modern Irish short story. Unlike his displaced Irish characters in “Uprooted,” he prefers to remain faithful to this tradition.

Keywords: O’Connor, Chekhov, modernism, realism, naturalism, Irish short story

O’Connor and Chekhov

Frank O’Connor’s literary output is diverse and prolific, embracing several genres, but his major accomplishment lies in perfecting the art of the short story. Like the Irish modernist writers of his generation, O’Connor was greatly influenced by the Irish Revival, and, similar to George Moore, open to the French and Russian literary influences that had come into Ireland from abroad at the beginning of the twentieth century (Lennon 2011). Ever since W. B. Yeats’s praise for “O’Connor

[who] is doing for Ireland what Chekhov did for Russia” (qtd. in Barnes 2005, ix), it has become a commonplace to describe O’Connor as the Irish Chekhov. It is still worth revisiting the subject as the few critical writings on O’Connor that have been published since the author’s death do not analyse Chekhov’s influence in detail beyond a few scattered references. Recent critical voices have also begun to cast doubt on the significance of Chekhov for O’Connor. Although Heather Ingman, for instance, sees some similarities between the Russian and Irish authors in their focus on “dull provincial life,” in her eyes, O’Connor “neglect[s] Chekhov’s emphasis on mood and feeling, his impressionistic characterizations, his lyricism and openness” (Ingman 2009, 131). O’Connor himself gave good grounds for Ingman’s view when he protested against comparison with Chekhov in an interview for *The Paris Review*. The Russian writer was “inimitable, a person to read and admire and worship. But never, never, never to imitate” (Whittier 1958, 166). Even a writer as adept as Julian Barnes takes these words for granted, without paying due attention to the rest of the paragraph in which O’Connor praised Chekhov for his “extraordinary technical devices,” warning writers against following Katherine Mansfield’s example, who, “without those technical devices [...] fl[e]ll into a sort of rambling narrative” (Whittier 1958, 166). O’Connor’s short stories are anything but “rambling.” In the same *Paris Review* interview, O’Connor emphasized how Chekhov “had learned the art very, very early of maintaining interest, of creating a bony structure,” but that it was only in the later phase of his literary career that he put this technique into practice (Whittier 1958, 166). By concealing “the bony structure” of his stories in a similar way to Chekhov, O’Connor’s realist/naturalist stories display an affinity for early modernist techniques, rather than “a resistance to artistic experiment,” as Heather Ingman claims (2009, 131).

In the following, I examine some of the typical Chekhovian techniques in O’Connor’s “Uprooted,” one of the best stories from the short story collection *Crab Apple Jelly* (1944). I do so in order to demonstrate how the Irish author masterfully employs the technical devices he has borrowed from Chekhov, creating a “bony structure” of his own for the story in order to examine the Chekhovian “theme of the false personality” (O’Connor 1963, 88). It is important to note, however, that although O’Connor’s stories incorporate Russian literary influences from Chekhov and become examples of aesthetically patterned, well-crafted modern short stories, they still remain settled within the tradition of Irish realism. Indeed, Joe Cleary sees O’Connor and his contemporaries, Sean O’Faolain and Liam O’Flaherty, not simply as practitioners of realism but as developers of a distinctly Irish mode of naturalism that attempts to reflect the contemporary disillusionment with post-revolutionary Ireland from the 1920s (2007, 141). O’Connor’s “Uprooted” is indeed a complex story that meets the high demands of modernist aesthetics and subtly hints at O’Connor’s dissatisfaction with the Irish reality of De Valera’s Ireland through its disenchanting characters. Instead of employing naturalism as a form of social critique, however,

O’Connor adheres to Chekhov’s “faith in life,” in the magic of human existence and in the importance of individual responsibility and free will (O’Connor 1963, 98).

O’Connor first became acquainted with Turgenev’s and Chekhov’s works through Michael Corkery, another writer from Cork (Sherry 1990, 282). Published between 1916 and 1922, Constance Garnett’s translations also contributed to the popularity of Chekhov among modernist writers, with “the particular qualities of her renderings” helping to preserve the characteristic features of Chekhov’s style and “shap[ing] the development of the short story in English” (Hunter 2009, 38). O’Connor often returned to his volumes of Chekhov, as William Maxwell observes, the books being “[s]o lived with – turned down corner, turned down sides of the page, coffee stains, whiskey stains, and perhaps tears” (qtd. in Steinman 1996, 252).

Nevertheless, in his essays on Chekhov in *The Lonely Voice* and in *The Mirror in the Roadway*, O’Connor seems to be more interested in the Russian author’s ideas than his technique. In the chapter on Chekhov, “The Slave’s Son,” from *The Lonely Voice*, O’Connor observes a dual “obsession” in Chekhov’s stories with “human loneliness” and the “theme of false personality” or “venial sin as opposed to the mortal one” (1963, 85). Commenting on the “The Letter,” “The Duel,” and “The Bishop,” stories that explore the theme of the false personality, he offers the following account of Chekhov’s idea:

We are not damned for our mortal sins, which so often require courage and dignity, but by our venial sins, which we can more easily conceal from ourselves and commit a hundred times a day till we become as enslaved to them as we could be to alcohol and drugs. Because of them and our facile toleration of them we create a false personality for ourselves – a personality predicated on mortal sins we have refrained from committing, ignoring altogether our real personality which is created about the small, unrecognized sins of selfishness, bad temper, untruthfulness and disloyalty. (O’Connor, 1963, 87–88)

Interestingly, O’Connor does not mention, in this context, one of Chekhov’s early stories: “Uprooted.” This story was written in 1887 and translated by Garnett in *The Bishop and Other Stories* in 1919. The central character is a young Jew, a dreamer, who leaves his impoverished parents in hope of an education and wanders from one place to the next, even converting to the Greek Orthodox religion. Aleksandr Ivanitch assumes a false personality, which results in a divided conscience that prevents him from admitting to himself that he had been wrong in denying his roots. At times, he suffers from denying his Jewish faith and his background, but he always manages to reassure himself that he had made the right decision. It becomes clear from the story that he will always remain displaced, or “uprooted,” and will never settle down to finally reach his goal of becoming a village teacher. It is not only Chekhov’s title that

O'Connor borrows for his own story but also the character type of the young intellectual with a false personality. Yet instead of employing the subjective first-person narrative technique that Chekhov employs in "Uprooted" and that O'Connor preferred for his earlier stories, he studies the literary techniques and the "bony structure" of Chekhov's stories that were written later in life and upon which the Russian author's reputation as short story writer rests. Written in 1889, just a few years before the author's death, Chekhov's "The Lady with the Dog" serves as a perfect example.

"The Lady with the Dog"

"The Lady with the Dog" is a story which, according to O'Connor, "may well be the most beautiful short story in the world" (O'Connor 1963, 96–97). The structural and narrative techniques employed by Chekhov in the story were considered to be completely new when the story was written. Chekhov continues to explore the theme of a false personality in the story, but he goes beyond the description of venial sin as if "he were putting in a good word for the mortal sin, the sin that requires character and steadfastness of purpose" (O'Connor 1963, 95).

Gurov and his mistress, the lady with the dog, adulterers though they may be, cannot resolve the duality in their lives. According to O'Connor, "[s]he and her lover, [...] seem to lack the capacity for committing the one mortal sin that would justify them in the eyes of God," which would be to come out in the open with their secret affair and suffer "the consequences" (O'Connor 1963, 97). The third-person narrator probes the deeper layers of consciousness of his characters. He has an insight into Gurov's thoughts, which reveal that the latter finds the duality of his life intolerable: "everything that made the kernel of his life, was hidden from other people" (Chekhov 1917, 25). The adulterous lady Anna Sergeyevna travels to Moscow occasionally, and the lovers meet in secret, but their problem remains unresolved, and the story also remains inconclusive. "How could they be free from this intolerable bondage? 'How? How?' he asked, clutching his head. 'How?'" (Chekhov 1917, 28).

In the essay "The Russian Point of View," Virginia Woolf expresses her perplexity concerning this particular story: "What is the point of it, and why does he [Chekhov] make a story out of this?" She comes to the conclusion that Chekhov's stories are predominantly about the "soul" (Woolf 1948, 225). Woolf also draws attention to some of the technical features of Chekhov's texts. These include the same lack of "episodic interest" that O'Connor discovered and marvelled at in Turgenev's stories (O'Connor 1963, 48); the preoccupation with irrelevant details and their selection and arrangement; the inconclusiveness of the story. Woolf regards these features as the keys to the artistic effect that "The Lady with the Dog" and Chekhov's other stories achieve:

Nothing is solved, we feel; nothing is rightly held together. On the other hand, the method which at first seemed so casual, inconclusive, and occupied with trifles, now appears the result of an exquisitely original and fastidious taste, choosing boldly, arranging infallibly, and controlled by an honesty for which we can find no match save among the Russians themselves. (Woolf 1948, 225)

When O’Connor was lecturing at Harvard University and Northwestern University in America during the 1950s, Vladimir Nabokov was also instructing students on European and Russian Literature at Cornell University in upstate New York. In his published lecture on Chekhov and “The Lady with the Dog,” Nabokov highlights similar technical features characteristic of Chekhov’s stories to those identified by Woolf. Besides the “careful selection and careful distribution of minute but striking features,” he also mentions the inconclusiveness of the story and the constant references to irrelevant “trifles,” which “are all-important in giving the real atmosphere.” Furthermore, he emphasizes how the structure of “The Lady with the Dog” is based “on a system of waves, on the shades of this or that mood;” “the contrast of poetry and prose,” and the “natural” and “slightly subdued voice” of the narrator (Nabokov 2002, 262–263). This type of narrative technique produces what Adrian Hunter terms “interiority,” achieved by “the occlusion of an ‘objective’ third-person point of view, and the persistent infiltration of character interiority into the narrational discourse” (2009, 46).

The four main movements, or waves, of Chekhov’s story are determined by Gurov’s shifting mood and the atmosphere of the setting which alternates between the poetic and the prosaic. After they spend the night together in Anna Sergeyevna’s room, the detached narrator is careful to mention that the slightly bored Gurov cuts himself a slice of watermelon. This prosaic and trifle detail is contrasted with a poetic description of the beauty of the sea at dawn when together they sit on a bench in Yalta and gaze at the sea and listen to the sound of the waves:

The leaves did not stir on the trees, grasshoppers chirruped, and the monotonous hollow sound of the sea rising up from below, spoke of peace, of the eternal sleep awaiting us. Sitting beside a young woman who in the dawn seemed so lovely, soothed and spellbound in these magical surroundings – the sea, mountains, clouds, the open sky – Gurov thought how in reality everything is beautiful in this world when one reflects: everything except what we think or do ourselves when we forget our human dignity and the higher aims of our existence. (Chekhov 1917, 12)

Nabokov emphasizes that Chekhov makes no distinction between the prosaic “slice of watermelon” and the poetic “violet sea;” nor does he differentiate between

“the lofty and the base,” which are in harmonious balance (2002, 262). O’Connor employs similar techniques in the stories modelled upon Chekhovian themes.

“Uprooted”

Like Chekhov, O’Connor is also interested in the souls of his characters. The temptation of endowing his Irish characters with a “false personality” and experimenting with the Russian author’s techniques in his own short stories was one that O’Connor could not resist. *Crab Apple Jelly* (1944) is especially important in this context; it also marks a turning point in O’Connor’s career when the loneliness of his characters becomes a prominent theme (Peterson 1982, 64). This holds true for the stories in *The Common Chord* (1947), the Larry Delaney stories, and the tales of childhood written in the fifties, in which he also explores the themes of venial sin and false personality. “Uprooted,” from *Crab-Apple Jelly*, is of particular interest from this point of view. The theme of homecoming, the emotions described in the story, the narrative technique and structure not only evoke Chekhov but also Moore, particularly “Home Sickness” from Moore’s *The Untilled Field*. Thus, O’Connor manages to pay tribute in a single story to both Moore, who adapted techniques from Turgenev, and to Chekhov, reaffirming the existence of a distinct modern Irish short story tradition launched by Moore, the development of which was influenced by the works of Turgenev and Chekhov. O’Connor is thus claiming a place for his own stories within the modern Irish literary tradition and confirming the view that Russian literary influence was important in revitalizing the Irish tradition.

To describe the all-embracing theme of loneliness in his short stories, and the secondary theme of “false personality,” O’Connor had to express the soul of his Irish characters. The question was how to achieve this goal. For O’Connor, it seems, it was first important to find the raw material of the “theme” or the incident before turning it into a short story (Steinman 1992, 242). He jotted down ideas for his stories in his small notebook, or “theme-book.” They were brief, written in journalistic fashion. The maximum four sentences describing the theme focused on “what the story was – not what it was ‘about’” (Steinman 1992, 242). These brief “themes” served as the pillars in the “bony structure” of his stories. Although no brief description of the theme of “Uprooted” exists in the note-book, it can be summed up in a few words: the homecoming and displacement of two brothers who are “hunted down” by their own “false” natures. Ned Keating, a young teacher, feels displaced in the city; his brother Tom is a priest, unsuited by nature and temperament for the profession. In “Uprooted,” O’Connor’s theme of displacement is closely linked to the Chekhovian theme of venial sin which both brothers commit day by day through living lives that are alien to their temperaments and personalities. Ned Keating, for instance, is “exhausted” by teaching and “no longer knew why he had

come to the city” (O’Connor 2009, 274). All he knows is that the city and his dreams “had failed him” (O’Connor 2009, 273). He does not enjoy the humdrum routine or the bleakness of city life, and “his eyes were already beginning to lose their eagerness” (O’Connor 2009, 273). In an unobtrusive and casual manner, producing the effect of “interiority,” the narrator reveals that Ned’s ideals and dreams about his comfortable and contented life in the city are in conflict with his own nature:

He would continue to be submissive and draw his salary and wonder how much he could save and when he would be able to buy a little house to bring his girl into; a nice thing to think of on a spring morning; a house of his own and a wife in bed beside him. And his nature would continue to contract about him, every ideal, every generous impulse another mesh to draw his head down tighter to his knees till in ten years’ time it would tie him hand and foot. (O’Connor 2009, 274)

The opportunity for Ned to break away from the constraints that he has inflicted upon himself is offered at Easter, when his brother Tom proposes that they should go home to visit their parents during the “long weekend” (O’Connor 2009, 275). Tom’s booming voice, and “boisterous,” “irascible,” “humorous,” and friendly manner (O’Connor 2009, 275) are similar to their father’s and are contrasted to Ned’s stammering and shyness. But whereas Ned’s stubborn clinging to his former ideals results in “nervousness” (O’Connor 2009, 273), Tom’s sociability and open nature are in direct opposition with the self-control and submission demanded by the religious profession. The loneliness he has to endure leads to despair, which can only be relieved temporarily by alcohol: “They stopped at several pubs on the way and Tom ordered whiskeys” (O’Connor 2009, 275).

Just as in Chekhov’s stories, there is also little episodic interest in O’Connor’s “Uprooted” (O’Connor 1963, 48). The four different moods in the story (as in Chekhov’s “The Lady with the Dog”) correspond to the movements that sweep Ned from the city back to his native village; then to the village of Carriganassa across the bay and finally back to Dublin. Ned’s melancholy eventually gives way to expectation as he joins his brother on the car trip to the country. He begins to feel “expansive” and liberated rather than constrained and “hunted down” (O’Connor 2009, 290). But this feeling is disrupted by a disappointed feeling of estrangement caused by the familiarity of the unchanged surroundings in his parents’ house and the distanced view of his parents: “Nothing was changed in the tall, bare, whitewashed kitchen. The harness hung in the same place on the wall, the rosary on the same nail in the fireplace, by the stool where their mother usually sat; [...] all seemed as unchanging as the sea outside” (O’Connor 2009, 275).

However, on Easter Monday, their father, Tomas – a man vividly characterized through his coloured and vernacular speech – is intent upon taking them for a visit

to their uncle and cousins living across the bay in Carriganassa. As with Yalta for Gurov and his mistress in “The Lady with the Dog,” so the village holds the promise of fulfilment in O’Connor’s “Uprooted.” During the boat ride, once again there is the feeling of expectation and happiness: “Ned leaned back on his elbows against the side, rejoicing in it all” (O’Connor 2009, 279). There is a subtle historical reference to English-Irish conflicts of the past in the name of O’Connor’s village, evoking the disastrous Flight of the Earls in the early seventeenth century, following defeat at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, and subsequent plantations of English and Scottish settlers loyal to the Protestant English monarch. The self-exile of the Gaelic lords paved the way for a comprehensive English conquest of Ireland and changed the course of Irish history (McCarthy 2006, 29–30). Ned’s choice in the story is also self-enforced, affecting the rest of his life. Time seems to stand still in Carriganassa: there is an unchanging quality in the environment and its people, but, instead of seeing it as disheartening, it is uplifting for Ned. He makes a visit to his cousins and sees the rural surroundings in a new light: “Something timeless, patriarchal, and restful about it made Ned notice everything. It was as though he had never seen his mother’s house before” (O’Connor 2009, 283). When Tom suggests that his brother needs a wife to keep him away from the temptations of the city, Cait Deignan is mentioned as the right person. Tom’s manners and his words to Cait suggest that there was something between them in the past, a year before, when Tom was staying for a week at Carriganassa: “[h]ave you nothing to say to me Cait?’ he boomed, and Ned thought his voice was soft and clouded” (O’Connor 2009, 285).

When Ned first sees Cait, he is reminded of lines from Shelley’s “Prometheus Unbound” to indicate the promise of love she inspires in him and the liberation from his chains: “‘Child of Light, thy limbs are burning through the veil which seems to hide them,’ Ned found himself murmuring” (O’Connor 2009, 285). On their way back to the pub, Cait shares her shawl with Ned as they run down the hill in the rain and the wind: “Ned felt as if he had dropped out of Time’s pocket” (O’Connor 2009, 286). Like Chekhov, O’Connor alternates the descriptive poetic passages with the prosaic, but, instead of “suggest[ing] atmosphere by the most concise details of nature” as Chekhov does, nature is usually mirrored through the characters’ features and movements (Nabokov 2002, 257): “While he gazed at her face with the animal instinctiveness of its over-delicate features it seemed like a mirror in which he saw again the falling rain, the rocks and hills and angry sea” (O’Connor 2009, 287); or “Tomas burst in unexpected on them like a sea wind that scattered them before him” (O’Connor 2009, 288). This type of descriptive method illustrates that Cait and old Tomas are at one with their environment.

Looking back at Cait from the boat as they are leaving at dusk, Ned is overwhelmed by contradictory feelings: “[F]or a long time Ned continued to wave back to the black shawl that was lifted to him. An extraordinary feeling of exultation and loss enveloped him” (O’Connor 2009, 288). The next morning, when the brothers have

to leave, there is a conversation between them, which reveals that despite the joyous experience and the liberated feeling, despite exultation and the promise of love, Ned is not going to return to Carriganassa for Cait. Instead of choosing the redeeming alternative, he will accept the loss and return to the city and the dreams that have failed him.

In “Uprooted,” O’Connor is struggling with a dilemma concerning narrative technique in the story. The theme of loneliness, the choice of characters, the lack of episodic interest, the narrative interplay between “interiority” and “objectivity,” the alternating poetic and prosaic descriptions, and the inconclusiveness of the endings – which other modernists like Joyce, Woolf, Mansfield, and Bowen had employed in their own short stories – do not allow elements of traditional Irish story-telling to emerge. By employing Chekhov’s techniques, O’Connor is moving away from the subjective *seanchai*-type of Irish oral story-telling tradition which he had tried to preserve in earlier stories (Peterson 1982, 67). For O’Connor, to hear “the tone of a man speaking” (O’Connor 1963, 29) was always more important than the “slightly subdued” and detached voice of the narrator. In “Uprooted,” O’Connor’s dilemma is how to include and preserve the Anglo-Irish and Irish voices of provincial Western Ireland, which he had successfully rendered in his early story collections, *Guests of the Nation* (1931) or *Bones of Contention* (1936) (Dabrigeon-Garcier 2006). His solution is to sprinkle the Chekhovian text with the colourful vernacular speech of the boisterous Tomas, the father of the Keating brothers. Tomas is full of life and activity, in harmony with himself and his rural surroundings. He admits to his son that the whole idea of the trip to Carriganassa was for the purpose of drink and company: “You were right last night, Tom, my boy. My treasure, my son, you were right. ’Twas for the drink I came” (O’Connor 2009, 280). By nightfall, when it is time to take the boat back to the mainland, Tomas is completely drunk, but happy: ‘Twas the best day I ever had’ he said. ‘I got porter and I got whiskey and I got poteen. I did so, Tom, my calf. Ned, my brightness, I went to seven houses and in every house I got seven drinks and with every drink I got seven welcomes’” (O’Connor 2009, 288). Unlike Tomas, whose contentment stems from his rootedness in the provincial surroundings and his stable identity, his son Tom is miserable in his vocation as a priest. At dawn, when the two young men get ready to leave and take up the humdrum existence of their lives back in the city, Tom confesses his misery to Ned, admitting that “the trouble is in [him]self” (O’Connor 2009, 290). It is at this point that Ned realizes the similarity between himself and his brother:

It’s the loneliness of my job that kills you. Even to talk about it would be relief but there’s no one you can talk to. People come to you with their troubles but there’s no one you can go to with your own [...] Ned realized with infinite compassion that for years Tom had been living in the same state of suspicion and fear, a man being hunted down by his own nature; and that for years to

come he would continue to live in this way, and perhaps never be caught again as he was now. (O'Connor 2009, 290)

For Tom, who resembles old Tomas in temperament, the burden of a false personality is even heavier to bear than for Ned. But Ned's response closes all doors to any possible change: "We made our choice a long time ago. We can't go back on it now" (O'Connor 2009, 290). Thus, the dilemma of the brothers remains unresolved mainly because of their own ineffectual approach to their situation, and they will continue to escape from themselves, unable to reach their ideals. In this sense, O'Connor's Ned and Tom in "Uprooted" resemble the idealists and dreamers in Chekhov's prose; there is an element of Aleksandr Ivanitch from Chekhov's "Uprooted" in both brothers from O'Connor's story of the same title. As Nabokov pointed out, Chekhov's intellectuals live "in a haze of Utopian dreams; [...] sinking lower and lower in the mud of humdrum existence, [...] hopelessly inefficient in everything" (2002, 158). In the characters of Ned and Tom Keating, O'Connor manages to capture the same ineffectual types of intellectuals. By closing themselves off from the past, there is nothing for them to hope for in the future. Ned and Tom's predicament reflect the limited possibilities that young intellectuals in the Ireland of the 1940s had in their choice of careers and also the social expectations that drove them towards committing the venial sin of choosing life paths that result in adopting a false personality. But rather than holding post-revolutionary Irish society entirely responsible for the Keating brothers' plight, O'Connor's naturalist short stories also address the issue of individual responsibility. Ultimately, it is torpidity, pride, and the lack of faith in the possibility of change that prevent the characters from returning to their roots and finding their true selves. The romanticism of Carriganassa and Cait thus remain unreachable for Ned, like streaks of the rising sun on the sky compared to a children's book from the past:

A boy on a horse rose suddenly against the sky, a startling picture. Through the apple-green light over Carriganassa ran long streaks of crimson, so still they might have been enamelled. Magic, magic, magic! he saw it as in a picture-book with all its colours intolerably bright; something he had outgrown and could never return to, while the world he aspired to was as remote and intangible as it had seemed even in the despair of youth. (O'Connor 2009, 291)

Although there is revelation for Ned, there is no resurrection; he cannot capture the romance and magic that Carriganassa has offered to him and simply allows it to slip away. Nothing but memory will remain, a bitter reminder in the future of what might have been his.

Conclusion

Unlike Ned, who rejects romanticism and resigns himself to bleak reality, O’Connor does not completely surrender the magic of his artistic powers to a mere social critique of his times. Instead, “Uprooted” demonstrates that the realist/naturalist mode of the Irish short story is open to the literary experimentalism of Modernism, rather than severed from it. By embracing themes that had been important to Chekhov, O’Connor provides undercurrents to his story which place it not only within an Irish literary tradition of realist/naturalist mode of writing and Irish history but within a broader context of European literary Modernism. Much as O’Connor admires Chekhov’s themes and techniques, it is also clear that he does not wish to follow Ned Keating’s example in uprooting himself from an Irish tradition of storytelling and assuming a false personality for himself as a Modernist writer. Instead of leaving Carriganassa and joining the mainstream of Irish Modernist writers in their flight from Irish realism, O’Connor prefers to see himself as remaining faithful to an Irish literary tradition that is linked to an awareness of national identity and a distinctive Irish cultural and literary heritage but that is open to the literary experimentalism of the major aesthetic movements of his time.

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Ireland and the Balkans Conflict in Edna O'Brien's *The Little Red Chairs*

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Abstract. History has always been a major critical exploration point in Edna O'Brien's works. Notable for its realistic Irish specificity, her fiction interrogates problems of history, memory, and society with an audacious awareness. In her 2015 novel, *The Little Red Chairs*, O'Brien goes beyond the familiar Irish cultural context and creates a propitious alternative life-story for Radovan Karadžić, a Serbian war criminal from the Balkans conflict of the 1990s. Attending closely to the novel's factual-fictional narrative strategies and its visceral language, this essay explores how O'Brien combines stereotypical elements from the Irish contemporary reality with Eastern European sagas as well as history to then create a compelling humanitarian plotline. The novel has a particular rendering of natural elements that act as a mnemonic witness device. The essay also looks at how the landscape functions as a reflective tool, often acting as a separate "character" of the narrative.

Keywords: Ireland, Sarajevo, Karadžić, history, Edna O'Brien, Irish fiction

History in Literature

The French feminist literary critic Hélène Cixous argues that the more turbulent the historical context, the stronger is the relationship between history and works of literary fiction (Quéré 2008). This conjunction seems to be particularly apposite in the case of Ireland, where history and literature have been such close companions for so long. In 2010, Irish writer Julian Gough wrote in critical terms of this association between history and fiction, decrying Irish novelists as "a priestly caste, scribbling by candlelight, cut off from the electric current of the culture." The reason for this in Gough's view is that the majority of Irish novelists have had a "stubborn fixation with the past" (2010). Yet it is crucial to note that from the beginning of the twentieth century, Irish literary fiction adopted the task of conveying realities that often remained hidden in official, censored, Catholic Church-dominated narratives within the Irish Free State, later to become the Republic of Ireland. Fintan O'Toole

has written of how “Irish writers acquired a paradoxical power from their roles as truth-tellers,” paradoxical in the sense that they were creators of fiction (2001). Rather than Gough’s “stubborn fixation with the past,” O’Toole identifies a forward-looking tendency in modern Irish literature. History and literature have been deeply intertwined in Ireland because, as a country with a traumatic colonial past, Ireland has undergone a process of what Cixous terms “history-in-the-making” (Quéré 2008, 20). In contemporary Eastern Europe, social conditions can likewise be considered as those of “history-in-the-making.” In *Form and Instability: Eastern Europe, Literature and Postimperial Difference*, Anita Starosta observes how this region has perpetually been associated with special “anachronistic ways of thinking” and “as a derivative of Europe, [that] has an altogether distinct temporality” (2016, 3). Eastern European literature is strongly linked to its deeply disrupted history. Starosta argues that “writing about ‘Eastern Europe’ often entails deciphering a palimpsest of shifting borders and regional fault lines that mark its symbolic geography in order to settle its instability” (2016, 4).

Edna O’Brien’s 2015 novel, *The Little Red Chairs*, brings an Irish sense of Cixous’s “history-in-the-making” into dialogue with an Eastern European experience of the same phenomenon. History has always been a critical element in O’Brien’s novels. Her first work, *The Country Girls* (1960), was originally banned in the Republic of Ireland. Her language and the social issues that she tackled were considered too challenging to the official image of a pious Irish Catholic society during the 1950s, when a deeply traditional and conservative form of Catholicism was all-pervasive in the Republic. Of the abusive father in O’Brien’s novel, Declan Kiberd notes how “in a country which piously urged its young women to treat their father as a kind of god, it was subversive to depict scenes of parental violence as routine” (2018, 62). It took more than fifty years for O’Brien to receive official recognition from the Irish State. In 2015, she received a public apology from the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, for the treatment that she received in her native country through the banning of her books. The President described her as a “fearless truth teller” (Vulliamy 2015). Her writing career evinces unfailing creative energy. Her works span over various historical phases and literary trends. Nonetheless, they have always managed to maintain a capricious validity. At the core of her writing is the unstinting toil of addressing and recording the reality of the world she is living in. She is a “fearless truth teller” (Vulliamy 2015) of the Irish culture but also a writer who explores religion, immigration, sexuality, the situation of women, wars, and nationalistic concerns on a global level. O’Brien began writing in an age when, as critics Claire Bracken and Tara Harney-Mahajan (2017, 4) observe, it was hard to “identify any literary foremothers” in Ireland. At the same time, she has maintained a continuum into the contemporary landscape of the post-Celtic Tiger era, characterized by “intensive visibility” (Bracken and Harney-Mahajan 2017, 1) of women writers who challenge neoliberal ideas. *The Little Red Chairs* (2015) is part

of this innovative phase of contemporary Irish women's fiction. Although coming from an older generation, O'Brien's work can be listed alongside novels of younger writers like Eimear McBride, Sara Baume, or Anne Enright. They all question the political and cultural current of the present times while urging the need to imbue this current with greater solidarity towards the suffering of others. Edna O'Brien distinguishes between three separate periods in her writing career: the first "about myself and other women" and the second on "themes about my country, Ireland" (O'Shea 2016). She describes the recent third phase as "about the world, about the monstrous killing" (Wachtel 2016). In each phase, there is an implicit connection to homeland and to Irish culture. However, her two latest novels, *The Little Red Chairs* (2015) and *Girl* (2019), reach beyond Ireland to world historical events. *Girl* addresses the horror that the Boko Haram girls faced in Nigeria, while the protagonist of *The Little Red Chairs* is based on Radovan Karadžić, the Serbian war criminal from the Balkans conflict of the 1990s. By broadening the perspective to a global humanitarian one, O'Brien also enters into the histories of nations unfamiliar to her. This carries some of its own dangers, even if fiction has the paradoxical power to utter realities without being subject to tests of factual accuracy. Some critics claim that by focusing on micro-histories of other nations, O'Brien oversteps ethical boundaries and "is appropriating other people's stories" (Russell 2019). O'Brien has consciously ignored these objections and tackles her subjects with a great sense of responsibility, as she explained in one of her recent interviews: "the world is crying out for such stories to be told and I intend to explore them while there is a writing bone left in my body" (O'Hagan 2019).

Fiction and Fact in *The Little Red Chairs*

The Little Red Chairs is a novel of contemporary history based partly on events from recent Bosnian history, namely the Siege of Sarajevo at the end of the twentieth century. The male protagonist of the narrative is modelled on the Bosnian Serbian leader, Radovan Karadžić. The narrative is divided into three parts, separated by the different spatial and temporal coordinates and connected through the main heroine, Fidelma. The first part takes place in a remote village in the west of Ireland, the second in multicultural London, and the third in The Hague in The Netherlands. The novel explores the human condition through a vivid depiction of international political concerns and female experiences in global contexts. Mingled into these concerns are minor but crucial sub-plots, enriching the narrative with contemporary issues around women's rights, refugee problems, racism, rural living conditions, war, and victimhood.

The Siege of Sarajevo is considered the longest in modern history, during which half a million civilians struggled to survive (Bedford 2017). Bosnian Serb army

troops supported by the Serbian military besieged Sarajevo on 5 April 1992. The siege lasted for almost four years. Over a quarter of a million people were stuck in a city that was bombarded from all sides. The siege ended on the 29 February 1996, a total of 13,952 people having been killed (BBC Witness Programme 2016). One of the leaders of the Serbian troops was Radovan Karadžić. He managed to escape and hide from authorities for over thirteen years. During this time, he lived in various countries under several false names, including that of Dr Dragan David Dabic (Borger 2016). Using his training as a psychiatrist, he earned his living practising alternative medicine and became known as a “mystique healer” (Borger 2016). He was eventually caught while travelling on a bus towards Belgrade, after being closely watched and followed for several days beforehand by secret security forces. He was arrested in 2008 and held at The Hague. In 2016, he was pronounced guilty of several crimes, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, and rape. He was sentenced to forty years in prison (Rauch 2019).

Edna O’Brien conducted thorough research before writing *The Little Red Chairs*. She borrowed elements from Radovan’s real life and consulted with experts, including Edward Vulliamy, a British reporter who was in Sarajevo during the Siege and witnessed many of the horrors (Parker 2019). Vulliamy is also one of the few journalists who had the opportunity to interview Karadžić during his trial at The Hague. It was with his help that O’Brien had the opportunity to attend some of Karadžić’s trials at The Hague in person (Parker 2019). She admitted in an interview that the idea of the novel was born from a picture of the captured, long-bearded Karadzic seen in a newspaper: “I was writing about the metamorphosis from healer to killer [...] from power to the image of this healer who was taken as a ‘holy’ man from a bus” (Lang 2019).

In *The Little Red Chairs*, the character based on the real-life figure of Karadžić is a man named Dr Vlad Dragan, who escapes from Serbia to seek shelter in a small Irish mountain town called Cloonoila. The story mingles factual and fictitious details, combining first- and third-person narration. The grounding of the plot in historical reality is made evident from the very beginning. The title of the novel is the name of an artistic installation meant to commemorate the children killed during the Siege of Sarajevo in 1992 to which O’Brien refers to directly: “On the 6th of April 2012, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the start of the siege of Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb forces 11,541 chairs were laid out in rows along the eight hundred metres of the Sarajevo high street. [...] Six hundred and forty-three chairs represented the children” (O’Brien 2015, 2).

The epigraphs of the novel also mingle fact and fiction. One of the quotations is from Chilean writer Roberto Bolaño: “An individual is no match for history” (O’Brien 2015, 1). O’Brien augments her narrative with a quotation from Bolaño’s story *By Night in Chile* (Bolaño 2003) that centres on the struggle of an individual to witness and confess the horrors of modern Chilean history. O’Brien signals the vital

importance that literature plays in uttering individual stories that are often left out from the grand narratives of history. At the same time, she aligns the Bolaño reference with another quotation taken from a Serbian saga: “The wolf is entitled to the lamb” (O’Brien 2015, 1). The “lamb” refers to the innocent victims of the Serbian war, with the wolf referring to Vlad Dragan, called the “wolf-child.” Animalistic features are thus interwoven with the human, and, much like the landscape itself, the characters too resemble animals in the novel. O’Brien offers an alternative narrative of history, connecting Karadžić to Ireland as the hiding place of this criminal. The histories of Ireland and the Balkans are aligned, compared, and contrasted in the novel. As critic Dan O’Brien observes: “contemporary Ireland is implicated in the fratricidal violence of Eastern Europe” (2019, 195).

Landscape and Character in *The Little Red Chairs*

In 1984, American writer Philip Roth interviewed Edna O’Brien and described her writing as “prose like a piece of fine meshwork, a net of perfectly observed sensuous details” (Roth 1984). The opening lines of *The Little Red Chairs* (2015) reach out to all the senses, capturing the visual, auditory, and tactile elements of an Irish river: “The town takes its name from the river. The current, swift and dangerous, surges with a manic glee, chunks of wood and logs of ice borne along its trail. In the small sidings where water is trapped, stones, blue, black, purple, shine up out to the river bed” (O’Brien 2015, 3). The forest in her novel has its own mysterious affective language. It carries anthropomorphic characteristics of a monstrous kind. It is not some idyllic rural setting. While it resembles natural elements, it is a mystical place, a part of the world where reality is, in a way, suspended. It is as if this forest manipulates and controls its inhabitants, already suggesting through its fearsome wildness that it will be a place of dark, terrifying events. O’Brien maximizes the effects of the descriptive language by using short, focused, and precise sentences. There is a sustained paradox between the specific “understatements” of the characters in this narrative language and the visually detailed descriptions. The anticipated danger and supernatural character of the environment are accentuated by the fairytale-like style and reference to Irish folk legends: “Long afterwards there would be those who reported strange occurrences [...] The child of a gipsy family, who lived in a caravan by the sea, swore she saw the Pooka Man coming through the window at her, pointing a hatchet” (O’Brien 2015, 4). The “Pooka” is an old Irish word for a ghost.

The influence of Nature on inhabitants is strong in *The Little Red Chairs*. O’Brien often starts her narratives by providing the reader with a direct landscape depiction, a clear setting that at first acts as a character in itself, without any human presence. Then the focus slowly shifts to the people who live in a locality, but in an unusual

reversed manner: the animate world resembles the inanimate. People seem to be reflections and products of this setting, and the town itself “takes its name from the river” (O’Brien 2015, 3). Its inhabitants are myth-influenced, religious people with deep connections to the land.

After the almost poetic description of the wild, remote forces of Nature, the narrator extends the horizon to a contemporary historical one. The reader is never allowed to fully forget the exterior context, nor to be too flummoxed by the scintillating atmosphere of almost fairy-tale landscapes. O’Brien’s aesthetically seductive description of the locality is balanced out by the political, historical elements that introduce the human dimension into the mysterious and compelling landscape: “Had he ventured in further, the stranger would have seen the flags of several countries, an indication of how much cosmopolitan the place has become and in a bow of nostalgia there is old farm machinery, a combine harvester, a mill wheel and a replica of an Irish cottage, when the peasants lived in hovels and ate nettles to survive” (O’Brien 2015, 3). When the mysterious stranger arrives in the town, the first connection that comes up in the discussion is the similarity of the local Irish landscape to that of the Balkans:

He heard of the beautiful scenery of Montenegro, mountains that rivalled the Alps [...] Hewn into the rocks were monasteries without windows, where people came to pray in the same way that Irish people were known to pray. Celts, he was told, had lived in the gorges of the Dolomite Mountains and along the river Dina in the centuries before Christ and the link between Ireland and the Balkans was indisputable. (O’Brien 2015, 7–8)

Thus, in the first eight pages of the novel, the reader knows little of the characters but much about the environment: the natural forces that surround and guide the characters as they emerge in the narrative. Even the name of the stranger who enters this locality is not revealed until later. We learn more about his physical appearance than his past or history. He almost perfectly blends into the fantastic, bewildering remote western Irish landscape. After the detailed descriptions of the natural elements, the omniscient narrator gradually narrows the wide focalization, arriving at the main element, the stranger: “He stays by the water’s edge, apparently mesmerized by the river. Bearded in a long dark coat and white gloves, he stands on the narrow bridge” (O’Brien 2015, 8). This posture adds a feeling of anxiety to the narrative, not only in that the mysterious man with a “long, dark coat and white gloves” (O’Brien 2015, 8) appears as an uncanny element of the locality into which he enters but also through the anticipation of danger that O’Brien’s slow-motion method of narrative focalization generates.

Gothic elements feature strongly in the narrative. The stranger’s name, Dr Vlad Dragan, alludes to Bram Stoker’s famous gothic novel and its protagonist Vlad

Dracula. Like Dracula, Dragan also acts as a seducer, his physical beauty and charisma attracting local women, while his simple presence brings disturbance into the remote Irish village. At first, he is viewed with curiosity by the locals, who are all shocked to discover that his real nickname is the “Beast of Bosnia” (O’Brien 2015, 128). Fidelma – a woman with whom Vlad becomes romantically involved – declares that her relationship with him has brought “a terrible curse” to the village, and the child that she conceives by him is described as the “beast’s child” (O’Brien 2015, 142). The locals fear that this child could become “the wayward branch of a family tree that threatens the legitimacy of the national trunk” (O’Brien 2015, 293). Dragan escapes from Eastern Europe to hide and to spread his mysterious power. Stoker’s Dracula, the vampire, also leaves the safety of his homeland, which happens to be Transylvania in Eastern Europe, to spread his curse and look for new victims. Irish and Eastern European histories are thus connected in the novel not only through historical allusion but also through gothic myths.

The Irish landscape proves to be the perfect environment for a gothic villain. Its remoteness and beauty resemble the double-nature of Vlad himself. He is intelligent and mesmerizing yet, at the same time, carries a dark past, guilty of crimes against humanity. Cloonoila becomes a space devoid of civic morality: a wilderness where human-monster-animal mix in disturbing ways. The animal-human mingling is a constant element in the plot and a recurring motif in Edna O’Brien’s oeuvre. The narrative of the novel shifts from third to first person, mixing dreams, surrealistic images and vivid descriptions. After his mystic portrayal, “the stranger” enters the pub, where he engages in discussion with the locals. They all seem to be captivated by the newcomer, who eventually reveals his name as Dr Vladimir Dragan, a “healer and sex therapist” (O’Brien 2015, 9). Obviously, O’Brien chooses this name for its proximity to one of the false names mentioned above, under which the real-life Karadžić travelled after the Balkans War: Dr Dragan David Dabic. The figure claims to have been brought to Ireland by a woman that appeared in his dreams. Vlad gets into several discussions with the townspeople and shows great knowledge of history, religion, and culture. His worldview clearly exceeds the limited horizon of Cloonoila village. Reality and dream keep mixing as we have the social context of the pub, while topics jump from history to mythology and folk tales. When mentioning that he came to Ireland after having a weird dream of a woman, the barman is reminded of the Irish “aisling” (“dream”) poetic tradition: “one night in the monastery, there appeared to him, pale-faced and with tears streaming down her cheeks, a woman, saying *I am of Ireland*, entreating him to come here” (O’Brien 2015, 9). Adjectives and adverbs are not only tools for visual descriptions but are also elements of O’Brien’s forensic style. The syntax is built of long, complex sentences that, in order to flow, are augmented with anticipatory, vivid adjectives and adverbs. The reader is always kept a step ahead of the characters themselves, and the constant comments of the narrator maintain an atmosphere of suspicion.

The conversation in the pub is brief. The townspeople try to be welcoming, but Vlad mainly keeps silent and answers questions with short statements only. He tries to explain the origin of his nickname, Vuk,¹ doing so with “a tentative smile” (O’Brien 2015, 9). His name comes from a legend of a “woman who had lost several infants in succession, deciding to name her newborn Vuk, meaning wolf, because the witches who *ate* the babies would be too terrified to confront the wolf-child” (O’Brien 2015, 9). This animalistic element is present on every level: narrative, characters, and plot. It functions as a constant reminder of the contrast between appearances and realities in the story. The whole pub scene unfolds like a scene from a film because of its swift switch of focus from one character to the other, enriched with the account from a mystery tale of a stranger and his unknown past. The Irish characters appear only in flashes, “like members of a chorus stepping forward” (Sayers 2016). Dara, the barman, is very talkative; Mona is a widower who adores romance novels and who desperately hopes that the newcomer “will bring a bit of Romance into our lives” (O’Brien 2015, 13); Plodder policeman, Diarmuid the ex-schoolmaster; Dante “the town punk” (O’Brien 2015, 10), Ned, “who’d done time for growing marijuana in window boxes” (O’Brien 2015, 10); Desiree, “a strapping girl in her pink mini-dress bursting for news” (O’Brien 2015, 10). All members of the community are presented at the iconic place of gathering in Irish culture, the pub.

Messianic Disturbance in *The Little Red Chairs*

After the collapse of Ireland’s economy in 2008 following a ten-year period of unprecedented financial growth that was known as the Celtic Tiger era, Ireland has slowly started to regain its economic balance up to the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020. A deep rural-urban divide remains in the country despite all the changes that it has undergone during the late twentieth/early twenty-first century, even strengthened according to depictions in O’Brien’s novel. Small towns and villages have become more isolated than before, cut off from the primary centre of economic activity in the Dublin metropolitan area. This is what happens with Cloonoila in the post-Celtic Tiger era in which *The Little Red Chairs* is set: hotels are less frequented in a country where most people find themselves burdened with financial debt. The pub is mainly frequented only by local people, shops have closed down, and any newcomer brings excitement, when tourists from all parts had been commonplace before. At the same time, Cloonoila remains a religious community in which mythology and folk beliefs still retain some measure of influence. The most important criterion of acceptance into this community is still based on the Catholic faith and one’s connection with it. Vlad’s status is measured by the extent of his accommodation to

1 The father of the real-life counterpart to Vlad Dragan, Radovan Karadžić, was a cobbler who was also called Vuk.

the traditions of the Catholic faith in Ireland. In discussion with the local priest, he has to argue and defend his “profession” as a so-called “healer and sex-therapist” as well as the validity of his faith, it being Serbian Orthodox rather than Roman Catholic. The priest is uneasy with his claim to offer sexual healing, particularly since Vlad comes from a far-removed and hidden background: “The thing is – word has circulated that you intend to practice as a Sex Therapist and this is a Catholic country and chastity is our number one commandment” (O’Brien 2015, 25). It does not take too much convincing though for Father Damien to accept the newcomer, especially considering that he himself is interested in the mysterious new, modern, and “alternative” methods.

Among the other cosmopolitan citizens of the town from different backgrounds are Eastern European workers, who came to Ireland during the economic boom period of the Celtic Tiger in the early 2000s but who now struggle with integration. These characters are similarly portrayed in a panel-like description at their gathering space (the verandah), like the locals before at the pub. They all work at the local Castle, which runs as a hotel: “The kitchen staff have all gathered on the veranda, as they do most nights, for the smokers, the odd beer, to unwind. [...] They are a mixed group, Irish, Burmese, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Slovakian, Polish” (O’Brien 2015, 49). They all tell stories to each other about their lives and their cultures: fairy-tales, actual events, memories. This is what keeps this strange sub-community implicitly connected within this Irish context. Their Otherness in this Western European landscape is further strengthened by the broken English that they all use. Most of them have come with the hope of a better life: “In my small town they say Ireland good place, good wages. Homeless for one month when I arrive to Dublin. I go to one shelter and another and another, ask *Can I please spend night here*. (...) After two weeks I get job down in Limerick working with cows” (O’Brien 2015, 52). O’Brien provides a vivid and apt description here of current political, cultural, and social problems that operate under such false idolizations of the West. Nonetheless, the Ireland that is presented here is a very different one from that of the pre-Celtic Tiger of the twentieth century. Its ties to a patriarchal society and religion are still strong, but there are signs of a new type of community, less insular and more cross-cultural. Locating this diverse group within a local Castle, Edna O’Brien employs a gothic mirroring of Count Dracula’s Castle in its Eastern European setting in Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel back into the Ireland from which Stoker originated. However, the true “Count”, Dragan, the Eastern Dracula, does not live here, nor does he have any interaction in the novel with those fellow Eastern European countrymen who reside and work at the Castle. The lack of communication between these workers and Vlad strengthens the image of the latter as an embodiment of a non-real, mythical, gothic hero. Everything about Vlad – including his posture, his physical appearance, and his way of speaking – is almost unearthly and in sharp contrast with the portrayal of the migrant workers from similar regions. Dr Dragan carries elements of his real-life

counterparts, but he also strongly conforms to an old, Western tendentious stereotype of Eastern European inhabitants as evil and mysterious. This traditional stereotype has been most influential in literature through Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In *The Little Red Chairs* (2015), O'Brien maintains this stereotype by deliberately keeping Vlad apart from the other Eastern European characters.

Working at the peak of his ability, Vlad convinces everybody of his spiritual, "messianic" saviour traits. The false image will only be reversed towards the end of the novel when his blood-filled past and deeds are revealed. This strong contrast between his outward profile as a friendly healer and his hidden reality as a vicious killer highlights the profile of a psychopathic individual. It is truly frightening how these separate sides mingle throughout the narrative. He becomes amorously involved with one of the local women, a married woman called Fidelma. Her only wish is to conceive a child, living as she is in an unhappy marriage and having been through several miscarriages. Vlad refuses to help her at first and remains spiritual and distanced as a "healer" at the beginning until he breaks down and confesses to Fidelma: "I thought I could be the scientist and not the man, he said eventually [...] He put his arms around her then and said 'You are mine now, I can drown my eyes in your hair' [...] The stranger and she, like lovers now, as in a story or in a myth" (O'Brien 2015, 101). This is one of the only moments in the novel when he is portrayed as having genuine human emotions. Nonetheless, his sympathy and popularity grow steadily in the village. At a certain point, "his name is on everybody's lips, Dr Vlad this and Dr Vlad that. He has done wonders for people, women claiming to be rejuvenated just after two treatments" (O'Brien 2015, 75). To the reader, these controversial characteristics can have a dampening effect, elevating him into the position of a saviour. By giving a complex portrayal of this character, O'Brien puts the moral decision into the reader's hand to judge on the extent of evil and hope of redemption regarding Vlad. Lindsay Duguid (2015) argues that "O'Brien stands back from the narrative, allowing, collating the stories of her briefly described character without comment."

From this perspective, Vlad shares a lot in common with a character from one of O'Brien's previous works, Mich O'Kane from the novel *In the Forest* (2002). Like Vlad, his character is also based on a real-life counterpart, an Irishman named Brendan O'Donnell who murdered three people in a remote part of the west of Ireland in 1994 while the siege of Sarajevo entered its second year on the other side of Europe (*The Irish Times* 1996). Like Vlad, Mich O'Kane is also presented as both a monstrous individual and a victim of circumstances. Mich is a multi-named figure, his complex personality being reflected in the names he has been given: "The Kinderschreck. That's what the German man called him when he stole the gun. Before that he was Michen, after a saint, and then Mich, his mother's pet and then the Boy, when he went to the place, and then the Child, when Father Damien had him" (O'Brien 2002, 2). Mich was a child who had been ripped from

his childhood after his mother's death and raised by the priest, who paradoxically is also called Father Damien. He is also called "dog" by some of the villagers with the connotation of being inferior to the other people but also preceding the figure of Dr Vlad Dragan as the wolf in O'Brien's later novel from thirteen years after *In the Forest*. Mich is viewed as not fully human, more a part of the non-socialized animal world. This contrasts with Vlad in *The Little Red Chairs*, a man whose wolf-like character elevates him as strong and fearless among the villagers of Cloonoila. Yet Mich is proud of his animalistic nature, regarding himself as a son of the forest ("Caolite" in Irish) and the reincarnation of a fox. In O'Brien's portrayal of Mich's character in this light, we encounter not so much a gothic mirroring as an uncanny foresight. Mich is based upon the real-life killer Brendan O'Donnell, who ritually murdered a Catholic priest, a single woman, and her three-year-old son in a remote part of the west of Ireland. If Mich is the killer fox, Vlad is the killer wolf: the remote woodlands of rural Ireland and the Balkans territories are their hunting grounds.

At the end of *In the Forest*, the local doctor blames society for the fate that Mich O'Kane suffered: "The country itself was on trial, it had failed him, the system had failed him as from the age of ten he was shuttled from one institution to another, motherless, fatherless, never with them and never without them" (O'Brien 2002, 243–244). In the case of Vlad from *The Little Red Chairs*, society's blame is less evident as not much is revealed about Vlad's upbringing. He hints at a traumatic childhood, describing his wild, harsh, and almost insane father, who was a skilled hunter: "My father make me walk to where the wolf lies dead. Look in the eyes. Look at the flank. Now touch it. Then he made me lick the blood from my finger and he do the same" (O'Brien 2015, 94). Vlad also carries a deep resentment towards the so-called "enemy" that destroyed his culture and his people in the Balkans. After he is caught on a bus in Cloonoila (a fate similar to his real-life counterpart Karadžić), he is sent to The Hague. The last part of the novel portrays some brief snapshots of his trials, during which Vlad's spuriousness becomes evident. He does not see himself as a murderer but rather as someone acting under the laws of war: "It was only when he realized that his country and his people were about to be torn apart that he became a reluctant player. His corps never once neglected the laws of war, the legitimate customs of war" (O'Brien 2015, 263). This double vision in O'Brien's factual-fictional narratives, together with her complex visceral language, makes her writing distinctive in tone as well as authentic in rendering its topic. Her novels stretch and test the limits of moralistic understanding. The horrific events and details are revealed gradually. The landscape plays a vital role in this step-by-step structure, acting as an almost independent character of the plot. The narrative of *The Little Red Chairs* is mostly linear, interrupted with flashbacks into the past of the characters. The sense of hidden danger is thus strengthened by the anxiety created through the step-by-step hints about the protagonists' past and the torturous events that will be disclosed at the end. On the level of narrative

language, these hints manifest themselves through the changes between first- and third-person narrations. The third-person level of the text is where the narrator describes everyone in the context of “appearances,” where the level of normality resides. On the other hand, the interior first-person monologues and narratorial third-person comments are the arena where the fictional investigation of the chaotic workings of the mind and its desires come to the surface. What we are reading is, in fact, a mixture of a well-built realist world that crumbles underneath the hidden facets of violent animalistic compulsions when they come to the surface.

Conclusion

The link with history is a key feature in the works of Edna O’Brien. Her specific style mingles fact and fiction, often directing the attention to the inevitable interconnectedness of the two in literature. Despite the negative reception she has often received, her dissection of the hidden hypocrisies and traumas behind the official Irish landscape can be considered ground-breaking and extraordinarily brave. In her recent writings, she has turned the focus outwards, globalizing the Irish novel. She has been at the forefront of Irish women’s fiction of the past sixty years and continues to be a distinguished figure of the new, contemporary phase of Irish women’s writing.

By using Eastern European history as an inspiration in *The Little Red Chairs*, she tries to offer a new mode of engagement with the present. The novel’s visceral, detail-driven language shows that certain inequalities and traumas are commonly shared among nations and cultures like those of Ireland and the Balkan territories. The factual-fictional interweaving of rural Irish and Eastern European elements highlights some of the difficulties that such collision often carries. While certain characters, such as the Eastern European guest workers at the Castle, are portrayed as maintaining the reality of this “palimpsest”-type region, the protagonist carries a lot of fictional elements from the gothic tradition. Dr Vlad Dragan is both an embodiment of the real-life Serbian war criminal and a “descendant” of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). The similarities with the latter are undeniably preponderant. He conforms to the old, Western stereotype of the “distant” Eastern European as uncanny and evil. In the process, O’Brien’s novel creates a serendipitous narrative that stems from the Irish gothic, addresses issues of contemporary post-Celtic Tiger Ireland and the Balkans history while imbuing it all with the need for global humanitarian solidarity.

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