Presence Is No Island

Writings in Honour of William John Mc Cormack

A jelenlét nem sziget

Írások William John Mc Cormack tiszteletére

44 (119)

ÚJ SOROZAT

A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA
KÖNYVTÁRÁNAK KÖZLEMÉNYEI

Presence Is No Island

Writings in Honour of William John Mc Cormack

A jelenlét nem sziget

Írások William John Mc Cormack tiszteletére

Edited by / Szerkesztette
Győző Ferencz and Janina Vesztergom

A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárának Közleményei
Publicationes Bibliothecae Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae

44 (119)
Új sorozat

Presence Is No Island

Writings in Honour of William John Mc Cormack

A jelenlét nem sziget

Írások William John Mc Cormack tiszteletére

Budapest 2020

Typography and setting / Tipográfia és tördelés
Vas Viktória

ISBN 978-963-7451-66-9
ISSN 0133-8862
DOI 10.36820/MTAKIK.KOZL.2020.McCormack

Felelős kiadó:
az MTA Könyvtár és Információs Központ főigazgatója
Nyomta és kötötte az Alföldi Nyomda Zrt., Debrecen
Felelős vezető: György Géza vezérigazgató

Cover illustration: *Bill Mc Cormack* (2007), oil painting by Mia Westerhof, courtesy of the artist. / A borító Mia Westerhof: *Bill Mc Cormack* (2007) című olajfestményének felhasználásával készült a művész engedélyével.

NOTE

The title of this book is taken from a poem by Ágnes Nemes Nagy, 'The Earth Remembers' ('A Föld emlékei') in the translation of Hugh Maxton. *Between: Selected Poems of Ágnes Nemes Nagy*, trans. Hugh Maxton (Budapest: Corvina; Dublin: Dedalus, 1988), p. 72.
Nemes Nagy Ágnes, *Összegyűjtött versek* (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2016), 160. old.
The Editors

Contents

Through heaving heather, fallen stones
From the wrecked piles of burial cairns
As they fly in over the moors —
Racing about in cloud-shadow,
A stone-age figure far below
Wildly gesticulating as if
He sees, at last, a sign of life
Or damns them to hell-fires.

Derek Mahon: 'The Archaeologist'
For Hugh Maxton

I.

Bill Mc Cormack at the Széchenyi Academy of Letters and Arts in 2016.
Photo Gábor Valuska

Nagy Ágnes

‘Idegenben múlik az idegenség’[1]
Egy jelentős írlandisztikai gyűjtemény Magyarországon

William John Mc Cormackkel 2018 őszén Ferencz Győző révén találkoztam az MTA Könyvtárában. Mc Cormack úr, vagy ahogyan mindenki hívja: Bill megtestesítette számomra mindazt, amit addig az írekről gondoltam: szellemes humora, káprázatos műveltsége és kedélyének finom hullámzása azonnal elvarázsolt. Egykor vörösesszőke haja és szakálla már őszbe fordult, de az udvariaskodást mellőző eleven és kedves közvetlensége a kortalanság érzetét keltette a társaságában lévőkben.

Érkezésének fő oka az volt, hogy szerette volna folytatni korábban megkezdett donátori tevékenységét, és az évtizedek óta összegyűjtött, főként írlandisztikai vonatkozású gyűjteményét az MTA Könyvtárának kívánta ajándékozni. E történet néhány évvel korábbra nyúlik vissza. A 2013-ban elhunyt Seamus Heaney Nobel-díjas ír költő emlékére a Széchenyi Irodalmi és Művészeti Akadémia a költő halálának évfordulóján Írország Nagykövetségének támogatásával évről évre ünnepi megemlékezést tart; kiemelten is egy beszédet, ahol egy-egy neves alkotó idézi meg a Heaney alakját. 2016-ban William J. Mc Cormack írót, költőt, irodalomtörténészt kérték fel a Budapesten tartott esemény előadójának, aki a költőről szóló emlékbeszédének végén felajánlotta az MTA Könyvtárának a hosszú évek alatt gyűjtött könyvgyűjteményének azt a részét, melyet már nem kíván használni további kutatásaiban. A könyvtár szerencséjét az is megalapozta, hogy elképzelésével először Ferencz Győző barátjához fordult, érdeklődve, hogy gyűjteménye vajon melyik magyarországi könyvtár érdeklődésére tarthat számot. Ferencz Győző az MTA Könyvtárát javasolta, mint a

1 Hugh Maxton, ‘A protestáns múzeumban’, ford. Ferencz Győző, in *Whack fol the dah: Írások Takács Ferenc 65. születésnapjára*, szerk. Farkas Ákos, Simonkay Zsuzsanna és Vesztergom Janina (Budapest: ELTE BTK Angol-Amerikai Intézet Anglisztika Tanszék, 2013), 94. old.

témához kapcsolódó egyetlen olyan kutatókönyvtárat az országban, ahol a megfelelő olvasóréteg könnyen hozzáférhet a különleges gyűjteményhez.

Hogy e lépés és az abból következő események jelentőségét megfelelően értsük, érdemes szélesebb perspektívában tekinteni a magyarországi könyvtárak jelenkori helyzetére.

A közgyűjteményekbe kerülő könyvtári hagyatékok a huszonegyedik században — ahogy századokkal korábban is — kifogyhatatlan forrásai és lehetőségei egy intézmény gyűjtőköri kiteljesedésének és folyamatos változásának. A felbecsülhetetlenül értékes író-, művész és tudóshagyatékok az MTA Könyvtárának mindenkor az alapjait képezték (ezek egy része a Kézirattárban, más részük pedig a Keleti Gyűjteményben található), de emellett egyes társaságok (például a Nemzeti Casino) könyvei is az intézmény megbecsült darabjai közé tartoznak.

Az MTA Könyvtár és Információs Központ olyan országos tudományos szakkönyvtár, melynek jelenlegi fő gyűjtőköre az ókortudomány, a klasszika-filológia, az irodalomtudomány, az általános nyelvészet, orientalisztika, valamint lehetőségeihez mérten gyűjti a tudománytörténet-, a bölcsész- és társadalomtudományok legfontosabb szakmunkáit, illetve a külföldi tudományos akadémiák és a hazai tudományos kutatóintézetek kiadványait is.

Dacára a jól körülhatárolható gyűjtőkörnek, napjainkban is igen széles spektrumban érkeznek felajánlások a könyvtár számára, melyeket a gyűjtőkör és a lehetőségek függvényében igyekszünk befogadni. Nagylelkű adományozóink és örököseik révén a közelmúltban például Arnóth József, Han Anna, Király Gyula, Korvin Gábor, Simonyi Károly, Anton Schindling, Friedrich Wilhelm Quandt könyvtárának darabjaival gazdagodott a könyvtár.

Sajnálatos és fájdalmas tény, hogy a felajánlott dokumentumegyüttesek sok esetben nem felelnek meg a könyvtárba kerülés követelményeinek: nem minden esetben illeszkednek az intézmény gyűjtőkörébe, duplumként jelentkeznek, vagy a könyvek állapota nem teszi lehetővé felvételüket. Az utóbbi esettől eltekintve a könyvtárak igyekeznek megszólítani egymást, hogy a gyűjtemények

elhelyezését biztosítani tudják, ugyanakkor szinte mindannyian helyhiánnyal küzdenek.

Valamennyi felajánlás kérdések hosszú sorát indítja el: milyen könyvtárral állunk szemben, mi benne az egyedi, hogyan tükrözi a gyűjtemény a létrehozója szellemiségét, milyen egyediséggel bírnak a dokumentumok (kötés, dedikáció stb.) mi az, ami ebből megőrzésre érdemes és legfőképpen: milyen erőforrások igénybevételével és milyen módon hasznosulhat az adott könyvtár és gyűjtemény a kutatói közösség és az olvasók számára.

Számos értékes hagyaték kallódott és kallódik el, mert különböző okok miatt nem találja meg helyét (például Lakatos István, Selye János könyvtárai). E gyűjtemények sokszor tragikusan rövid időn belül szétesnek vagy megsemmisülnek. Egy könyvtáros élete szüntelen izgalom és aggódás, hogy ne menjen el értékes dokumentumok mellett, és időben rátaláljon azokra a könyvekre, könyvtárakra és hagyatékokra, melyekkel a számára sok esetben ismeretlen kutatók, olvasók, diákok kutatását és munkáját megkönnyítheti és előrelendítheti. A könyvtár és a könyvtáros nem más, mint egy láthatatlan és alázatos kapocs, amely minden kétséget kizáróan reveláló olvasmányélményekhez és új tudományos eredményekhez vezet.

E kettősséget figyelembe véve óriási szerencse, amikor a felajánlás gyűjtőkörbe vág, a dokumentumok hibátlanok, egyediek vagy éppen egyáltalán nem találhatók meg magyarországi közgyűjteményekben. A nagylelkű donátor, William J. Mc Cormack könyvtárából származó kötetek révén az elmúlt évek során már mintegy 1370 tétellel gazdagodott az MTA Könyvtárának állománya (jelen írás megszületésekor is zajlik egy újabb könyvszállítmány feldolgozása).

Miért olyan fontos és jelentős számunkra ez a gyűjtemény?

William J. Mc Cormack neve nem ismeretlen Magyarországon. A kiváló irodalomtörténész, költő, író és műfordító (többek között Ady Endre, Nemes Nagy Ágnes és Weöres Sándor műveit ültette át angolra) többször járt Magyarországon, ahol hosszabb időszakokat is töltött, és élénken érdeklődött a magyar irodalom iránt.

Az 1947-ben Dublinban született alkotó a dublini Trinity College-ban szerzett diplomát 1971-ben, majd a New University of

Ulsteren PhD-fokozatot 1974-ben. Írország mellett tanított Angliában és az Amerikai Egyesült Államok egyetemein is. 2001-es visszavonulását követően jelenleg is Írországban, Wicklow megyében él és dolgozik. Hugh Maxton írói néven több verses- és prózakötet szerzője, William J. Mc Cormack néven pedig szintén fontos könyvek alkotója. Az általa szerkesztett antológiák, szöveg- és forráskiadások ugyancsak jelentősek.

E kiváló alkotó és tudós még középiskolás korában kezdett könyveket gyűjteni. Özvegy édesanyja egy unokatestvérét kérte meg, hogy készítsen a fia számára egy nagy, fehérre festett könyvespolcot. Mikor William J. Mc Cormack az egyetemi évei közepén elköltözött, az óriási polc már nagyjából megtelt. Nem volt rest, és kedves könyvszekrényét átcipeltette a városon keresztül — Dublin északi oldalára — új diáklakásába is, melyet akkoriban David Dickson (jövendőbeli) történésszel és Derek Mahon költővel osztott meg. A könyvespolc további sorsa ugyan ismeretlen, de a könyvek továbbra is tulajdonosukkal maradtak.

A ma mintegy 5000 kötetesre rúgó gyűjtemény döntően praktikus okokból gyarapszik: William J. Mc Cormack elsősorban azért vásárol könyveket, mert úgy véli, azokat használni is fogja. A régi-, értékes könyvek beszerzésének vágya nem jellemző rá. Ennek ellenére az általa ajándékozott kötetek között több különlegesség is található. Ezek egyike például a *The Arrow* című folyóirat figyelemreméltó szórványa 1939-ből, vagy a *The Shanachie* ma már ritkaságnak számító két kötete 1906–07-ből. Utóbbi egykor Eric Robertson Dodds tulajdonában állt. Az ír klasszika-filológus (akinek 2002-ben magyarul is megjelent *A görögség és az irracionalitás* című munkája) a század elején Yeats barátja volt.

A beérkezett gyűjteményben nemcsak saját részre vásárolt köteteket találunk, de mások könyvtárának egy-egy darabjait is, akik (ismerve a donátor szándékát) a jó cél érdekében különböző dokumentumokat juttattak el számára. Ezek közé tartozik például a Trinity College professzora, a főként a tizenhatodik századi ír történelemmel foglalkozó Ciaran Brady amerikai történelmi folyóiratokból álló kisebb gyűjteménye, Carla Kingnek az ír paraszti társadalmakkal kapcsolatos könyvei vagy éppen a Patrick Wallace (az Ír Nemzeti Múzeum emeritus igazgatója) által önzetlenül adományozott különféle anyagok.

Az évtizedek óta tudósi alapossággal válogatott gyűjteményének magját azonban mégis az ír történelemről írt tanulmányok adják: Írország története, földrajza, társadalma, vallási megoszlása, az itt élő felekezetek és az egyház története, illetve gazdaságtörténet egyaránt megtalálható benne. Nagyon sok szakmunka foglalkozik az írországi éhínséggel, az ír felkelésekkel (az 1916-os húsvéti felkelés ezek közül is kiemelkedik) valamint az ír hősökkel. Jelentős súllyal vannak jelen az alábbi témák is: forradalmak, ír függetlenség, külpolitika, ír missziók, IRA, ír sajtó, politikus életrajzok, parlamentarizmus, pártok, kisebbségek, az észak-ír kérdés körül fellángolt viták, az ír történeti források, az ír nemzetközi kapcsolatok (például a franciákkal) és az angol gyarmatosítás.

A könyvszállítmány jelentős részét képezi az írországi angol nyelvű irodalom. Kiemelten jelen van William Butler Yeats (műveinek gyűjteményes kiadásaival és egyes műveivel), Lady Gregory köre és a Yeats életéről, irodalmi kapcsolatairól és szerelmeiről szóló munkák. Nem feledkezhetünk meg J.M. Synge, Sheridan Le Fanu, a püspök-filozófus George Berkeley és John Hewitt műveiről sem (utóbbiról William J. Mc Cormack könyvet is írt), valamint kevésbé szignifikánsan felbukkannak Jonathan Swift, Seamus Heaney, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Moore és több más anglo-ír vagy ír gyökerű brit író, költő és néhány kortárs kötetei is. Ebben a tárgykörben a dokumentumok jelentősebb részét az ír irodalomtörténet, versek, drámák, emlékiratok, útleírások és színháztörténet teszi ki, bár kisebb mértékben az ír képzőművészet is felbukkan.

Sok elméleti művel is találkozhatunk, például politikaelmélet, nacionalizmus, fasizmus, erőszak elmélete, konzervativizmus, radikalizmus, európai eszmetörténet, brit filozófia, Edmund Burke, René Girard, Joseph de Maistre, Carl Schmitt, Maurice Barres stb. témában, és néhány irodalomelméleti szakmunka is akad.

Az ajándékozó szépirodalmi alkotásai is felbukkannak az adományozott könyvek között, például a Hugh Maxton néven megjelent művek, emellett néhány irodalomtörténeti monográfiája, egyes tanulmányait tartalmazó kötetek, előadások szövegei és folyóiratcikk különlenyomatai is megtalálhatók a kollekcióban.

A folyóiratok száma sem elhanyagolható: William J. Mc Cormack eddig 29 folyóiratcím gyarapításában segédkezett.

A nyelvi megoszlás elsöprő többségben angol, noha akad francia és néhány német, illetve kelta ír (gael) nyelvű is.[2]

Megjelenését tekintve (és a feldolgozás jelenlegi stádiumában) a legkorábbi kötetek a tizenkilencedik század első harmadából származnak, de ennél is izgalmasabb, hogy a legfrissebb könyvek az elmúlt évek termései. Ezek közé tartozik például az Elizabethanne Boran szerkesztésében megjelent *Book Collecting in Ireland and Britain, 1650–1850* című munka, vagy Andrew Norman Wilson *Charles Darwin: Victorian mythmaker* című, lapszéli jegyzetekkel is ellátott kötete. A példák hosszan sorolhatók, és aki a könyvtár katalógusában rákeres a William J. Mc Cormack által ajándékozott kötetekre, hosszú időre belemerülhet a fantasztikus gyűjtemény színes és izgalmas darabjainak böngészésébe. E lista nemcsak az irlandisztika iránt érdeklődők kurrens könyvek iránti igényeit elégítheti ki, de rávilágít az adományozó széleskörű és elmélyült érdeklődésére is.

Az MTA Könyvtára kiemelt figyelemmel kezeli William J. Mc Cormack könyvadományát, akinek az ajándékozással kettős célja van: egyrészt szeretné segíteni és ösztönözni az irlandisztikai tanulmányok folytatását Magyarországon, másrészt tökéletes állapotban megőrzött és hozzáférhető, nyomtatott könyvek útján akarja tovább örökíteni a humanizmus eszméjét az érdeklődő és nyitott olvasóközönség számára.

Megtesszük, ami tőlünk telik, hogy ezt a remek gyűjteményt (és benne szimbolikusan magát a gyűjtőt is) gonddal és felelősséggel megőrizzük.

Seamus Heaney apropóján kezdve és az ő soraival búcsúzva:

> Telt az életem. Ott voltam
> A helyemen, és a hely bennem.[3]

Kötetünk William J. Mc Cormack író, költő, irodalomtörténész és műfordító életműve iránti tiszteletünk és könyvtárunk köszönetének szerény megnyilvánulása.

2 A kollekció mélyebb feltérképezésében itt szeretném megköszönni Nagypál László segítségét.

3 Seamus Heaney, 'Füvészkönyv', in *Élőlánc*, ford. Gerevich András (Budapest: FISZ-Jelenkor, 2016), 47. old.

Ágnes Nagy

'Strangeness Abates Strangeness'[1]
A Significant Irish Studies Collection in Hungary

The first time I met William John Mc Cormack was in the autumn of 2018. We were introduced by Győző Ferencz, in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA). Mr Mc Cormack, or Bill, as everyone calls him, embodied for me everything I have ever thought of the Irish: his wit and humour, his spectacular erudition and mercurial spirit are enchanting. His hair and beard, originally reddish blond, have turned grey, but his lively and charming informality inspired an impression of youthfulness in those present.

The main reason of his visit was to continue his earlier work as a donor: he wished to present to the MTA Library a gift of his collection of books, mostly relating to Irish studies, accumulated over several decades. The story goes back to some years earlier. Honouring the memory of Seamus Heaney, Nobel laureate, who died in 2013, the Széchenyi Academy of Literature and Arts (an academy associated with yet independent from MTA, established in 1992 to make restitution for excluding prominent members of the community of literature and arts from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for forty-three years during state socialism) holds an annual commemoration on the day of Heaney's death. The event is supported by the Embassy of Ireland, Budapest, and the focus of the event is the Heaney Memorial Lecture, in which a notable author invokes Heaney's legacy. In 2016, Széchenyi Academy invited author, critic and literary historian William J. Mc Cormack to give the Budapest lecture and, at the conclusion of his speech, Bill offered the MTA Library the part of his book collection, gathered over many years, which he was planning to use no longer in his own work. The library's luck was further confirmed by Bill first approaching his friend, Győző Ferencz, asking him which Hungarian library might

1 Hugh Maxton, 'At the Protestant Museum', in *At the Protestant Museum* (Mountrath, Portlaoise: The Dolmen Press, 1986), p. 41.

be interested in receiving his collection. Győző Ferencz suggested the MTA Library as the single most accessible research library with a relevant profile, where the target readership could benefit most readily from this special collection.

In order to recognize the significance of this step, and the events following from it, let me offer a more extensive perspective on the current situation of Hungarian libraries.

The acquisition of libraries from estates provides an inexhaustible source and unlimited possibilities for the continued modification and expansion of the profile of public collections in the twenty-first century, as in earlier times. Invaluable literary, fine art and science bequests have long formed the basis of the MTA Library (some are held in the Department of Manuscripts & Rare Books, others in the Oriental Collection), but books received from various societies (such as the National Casino) are also among the cherished pieces of the collection.

The Library and Information Centre of MTA is a special national research library, currently focusing on ancient history, classical philology, literary studies, general linguistics, and oriental studies, also collecting, as much as possible within our means, the most important scholarly works of the history of science and of the humanities and social sciences, as well as the publications of Hungarian institutions of scholarly research and foreign academies of sciences.

In spite of our well-defined collection profile, there is a wide range of offerings the Library receives on a daily basis, and we attempt to accept them depending on the focus of our collection and on our possibilities. We have recently acquired several volumes from the libraries of such excellent scholars, both from Hungary and abroad, as József Arnóth, Anna Han, Gyula Király, Gábor Korvin, Károly Simonyi, Anton Schindling and Friedrich Wilhelm Quandt, through bequests from our generous donors or their heirs.

It is a sad and painful fact, however, that often the collections of documents offered for donation do not meet the criteria of library acquisition: they may not fit the collection profile, they may be duplicates, or the condition of the documents makes it impossible to

accept them. Apart from this last case, libraries seek to address one another to ensure appropriate holding for collections, although almost all libraries face a shortage of space.

Each offering sparks a long line of questions: what kind of library the donation is, what is unique about it, how it represents the spirit of its collector, what special qualities there might be about any individual document (binding, dedication, etc.), what is worth keeping from the collection and, most importantly: with what resources, and in what manner, may the library or collection be most useful for the research community and the readers.

Several valuable bequests have been lost because, for various reasons, they never found their appropriate place (for example, the libraries of eminent poet and translator István Lakatos and internationally renowned scientist János Selye). These collections fall apart, are even annihilated, within a tragically short period of time. The life of a librarian is constant worry and care, to make sure one does not pass over valuable documents and, instead, finds those books, libraries and bequests, in time, that will help and promote the work of research specialists, students and readers, who are often unknown to the librarian. The library, and librarians, function as an invisible and humble link that can lead to definitive epiphanic reading experiences and new results in scholarship.

Considering this dual nature of donations, it is a particularly serendipitous moment when a donation falls within the collection area of a library; the documents are pristine and special; and they cannot be found in any other public collection in the country. Through the generous donations of William J. Mc Cormack, the holding of the MTA Library grew by about two thousand items from his library over the past several years (and even as I write there are more books being processed from the latest delivery).

What is the special significance of this collection for us?

The name William J. Mc Cormack sounds familiar in this country. Bill is an excellent literary historian, poet and literary translator, who translated into English poems by Endre Ady, Ágnes Nemes Nagy and Sándor Weöres, among others, and has visited Hungary several

times, spending longer periods here and showing a keen interest in Hungarian literature.

Born in 1947 in Dublin, Mr Mc Cormack graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1971, and received his PhD from the New University of Ulster in 1974. He taught at universities in the United Kingdom and the USA, as well as in Ireland. Since his retirement in 2001, he has been living and working in County Wicklow in Ireland. Under the pseudonym Hugh Maxton he is the author of several volumes of poetry and prose fiction, and as William J. Mc Cormack he published further important works. He has also produced significant anthologies and critical editions.

This excellent writer and scholar started collecting books when still at secondary school. His widowed mother asked a cousin to build for her son a large bookcase, painted white. By the time Bill was at the middle of his university years and moved out, the enormous bookcase has practically filled up. He had his favourite bookcase hauled across town — to the North side of Dublin — to his new student accommodations, which he shared with (future) historian David Dickson and poet Derek Mahon. What happened to the bookcase is not recorded, but the books have remained with their owner.

The collection, which today consists of about five thousand volumes, is still growing, primarily due to practical reasons: William J. Mc Cormack buys books predominantly because he is planning to use them. Acquiring old or rare books is not a characteristic desire of his. Yet there are several items among those donated to the MTA Library that are rarities, including a few significant unbound issues of the magazine *The Arrow* from 1939, and two volumes of *The Ireland–American Review*, which by now are hard to find. The latter used to be the property of Eric Robertson Dodds, an Irish classical scholar. Dodds was Yeats's friend at the beginning of the twentieth century and his work *The Greeks and the Irrational* was published in Hungarian translation in 2002.

The collection as received contains not only works bought for personal use but also pieces from the collections of further donors who (aware of the intentions of Mr Mc Cormack) sent various documents to him, to further his goal. Among these we have acquired a smaller collection of American historical periodicals from Ciaran Brady,

Professor at Trinity College, specialising in sixteenth-century Irish history; books on Irish peasant culture from Carla King; and various materials generously donated by Patrick Wallace (Director Emeritus of the National Museum of Ireland).

The core of the collection, however, selected with scholarly care over numerous decades, consists of studies on Irish history: on the history, geography, society and religions of Ireland, as well as on ecclesiastical and economic history. Numerous works focus on the Great Famine, on Irish uprisings (with special attention to the Easter Rising of 1916), and on Irish heroes. The following topics are also represented in significant proportions: revolutions, Irish independence, foreign policy, Irish missions, the IRA, the Irish press, political biographies, parliamentarism, political parties, minorities, debates around the conflict in Northern Ireland, historical sources of Irish history, international relations (for example between Ireland and France) and English colonisation.

A significant portion of the book deliveries represent Anglo-Irish literature. Particularly numerous are the books concerning the oeuvre of William Butler Yeats (his collected works as well as individual pieces), Lady Gregory and her circle, and the life, literary connections and love relations of Yeats. J.M. Synge, Sheridan Le Fanu, the bishop and philosopher George Berkeley and John Hewitt are also extensively represented by their works (William J. Mc Cormack himself wrote a book about the latter), while there are also sporadic volumes by Jonathan Swift, Seamus Heaney, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Moore and several other Anglo-Irish authors or writers and poets of Irish descent, including some by contemporary authors. In this category, most of the documents are works about the literary history of Ireland, poems, plays, memories, travelogues and the history of the theatre, with a smaller number of books on Irish fine arts.

There are diverse works of theory in the collection, published on topics such as political theory, nationalism, fascism, theories of violence, conservatism, radicalism, the history of ideas in Europe, British philosophy, Edmund Burke, René Girard, Joseph de Maistre, Carl Schmitt, Maurice Barres etc., as well as some volumes of literary theory.

Literary works by our donor also feature among the books presented, for example books published under the name Hugh Maxton as well as a few of his monographs on literary history, volumes that contain various individual pieces, scripts of his lectures and offprints of his articles.

There is a considerable number of journals and magazines donated: William J. Mc Cormack has contributed to our collection 29 periodical titles, so far. The language distribution shows a predominance of English, although there are French, German and Irish (Gaeilge) publications as well.[2]

Considering their dates of publication (and the current phase of our processing of the collection), the earliest volumes date back to the first third of the nineteenth century and, what is even more exciting, the most recent books were produced in the last few years. The latter include works such as *Book Collecting in Ireland and Britain, 1650–1850*, edited by Elizabethanne Boran, and Andrew Norman Wilson's *Charles Darwin: Victorian Mythmaker*, a volume featuring marginalia. Examples could be continued at length, and anyone browsing the library catalogue for works donated by William J. Mc Cormack can immerse themselves in the endless details of the colourful and exciting pieces of this extraordinary collection. The list will satisfy not only the demands of those in search of current books on Irish studies but also reveals the width and depth of the interests of our donor.

The MTA Library devotes special attention to William J. Mc Cormack's donation of books. He had a double interest by offering his collection: he would like to promote Irish studies in Hungary as well as entrust the spirit of humanism, via a body of printed books preserved in perfect condition and made accessible, to an interested and open reading public.

It will be our pleasure and responsibility to protect this exquisite collection (and with it, symbolically, the collector himself) with as much care as we can muster.

2 I wish to thank my colleague László Nagypál for his in-depth mapping of the collection.

Closing with a reference to Seamus Heaney's works, as I began:

> I had my existence. I was there.
> Me in place and the place in me.[3]

This volume is a token of our respect and of the gratitude of our Library to the oeuvre of William J. Mc Cormack author, poet, literary historian and translator.

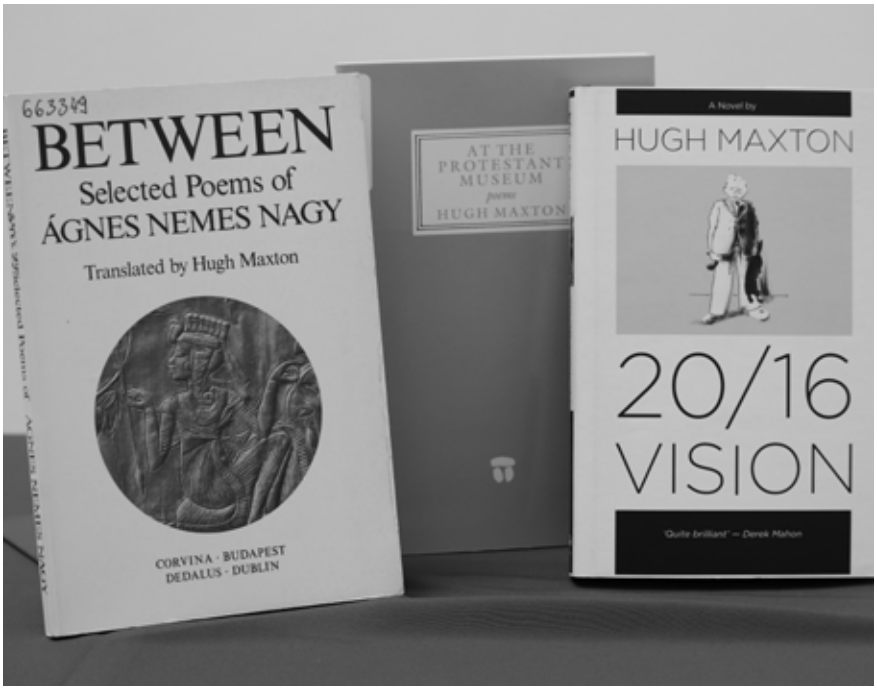
Translated by Judit Friedrich

3 Seamus Heaney, 'A Herbal', in *Human Chain* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 43.


THE GREAT IRISH POTATO FAMINE
'strong narrative skills and sound judgements make for a readable and reliable account'
Professor Cormac O Gráda, THE IRISH TIMES
The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)
John Mitchel
Book collecting in Ireland and Britain 1650–1850
ELIZABETHANNE BORAN editor

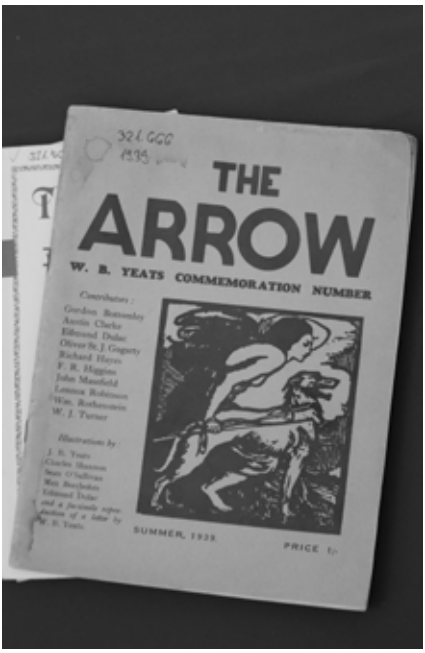

DUBLIN 1916 THE FRENCH CONNECTION
WJ Mc CORMACK


SAOTHAR 37
SAOTHAR 43
Iris an Chumainn le Stair Lucht Saothair na hÉireann
Journal of the Irish Labour History Society
2018

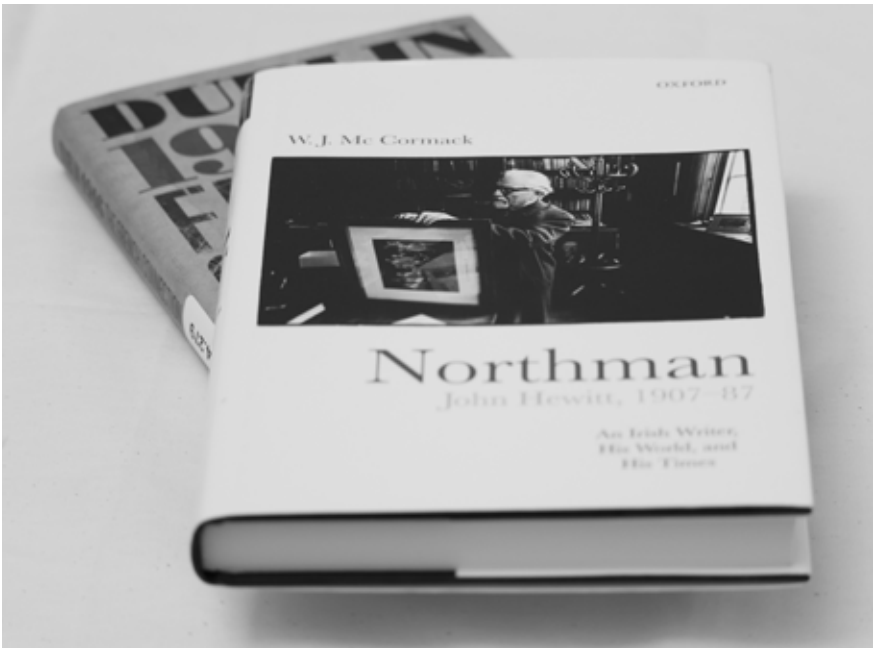

663349
BETWEEN
Selected Poems of
ÁGNES NEMES NAGY
Translated by Hugh Maxton
CORVINA - BUDAPEST
DEDALUS - DUBLIN
AT THE PROTESTANT MUSEUM
poems
HUGH MAXTON
A Novel by
HUGH MAXTON
20/16
VISION
'Quite brilliant' — Derek Mahon

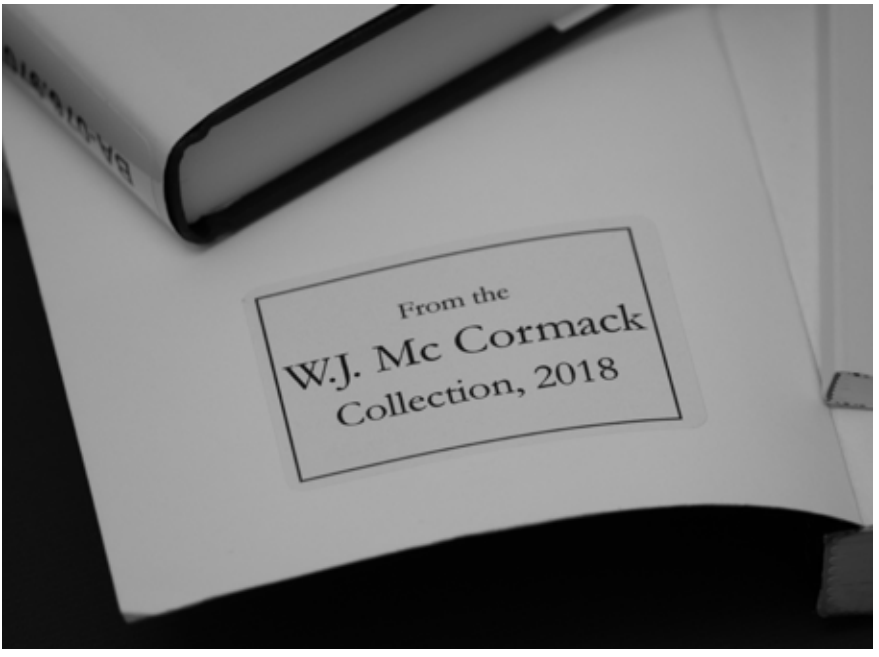

IRELAND
TO-DAY
IS THERE A PAPAL SOCIAL PROGRAMME?
COLLECTIVISM AND WORKERS' OWNERSHIP
SPAIN RE-EMERGES
BIGGER AND BETTER CENSORS
INCOME FOR ALL
ART • MUSIC • THEATRE • FILMS
BOOK REVIEWS


THE SHANACHIE
VOL ONE 1906
THE SHANACHIE


THE
ARROW
W. B. YEATS COMMEMORATION NUMBER
SUMMER, 1928.
PRICE 1/-


ENVOY
JAMES
JOYCE
DUBLIN


W. J. Mc Cormack
Northman
John Hewitt, 1907–87
An Irish Writer, His World, and His Times


From the
W.J. Mc Cormack
Collection, 2018

II.

Ciaran Brady

John P. Prendergast (1808–1893) and the Anglo-Irish Writing of Irish History

(i)

Despite the extravagant claims that have sometimes been made for it, perhaps the only remarkable feature of the so-called revolution in the study of history in Ireland which we associate with the institutional innovations of the 1930s and 1940s was that it arrived rather late.[1] For even a cursory comparative survey will reveal that what was being done in Ireland at that time had been anticipated in Germany by more than a century and that the German model for the development of history as an academic study had been followed elsewhere, in France, in England, Scotland and the United States for over fifty years.[2] In the case of historiographical development, as in other matters, Ireland, in short, presented a case of arrested development. But what has made this peculiar case of retardation more difficult to explain is the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the moves toward the organisation of academic history were beginning elsewhere, Ireland was already reasonably well-endowed with what can in retrospect be seen as the necessary preconditions for the emergence of professional and academic schools of historical research and writing.

1 *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938–1994*, ed. by Ciaran Brady (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), pp. 1–31.

2 Georg G. Iggers, 'The Professionalization of Historical Studies and the Guiding Assumptions of Modern Historical Thought', in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, ed. by Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 225–42; Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); G.P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edn (London: Longmans Green, 1952); Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

Scholars of the prehistory of professional history in early nineteenth-century Europe have in the main noted three constituent elements within the relevant public culture.[3] The first was the existence of a vibrant and widespread antiquarian culture (the product of an eighteenth-century inheritance) represented in a proliferation of local genealogical and archaeological societies. Second, there was a strong scholarly tradition of research and writing emanating largely from the classical, juristic and ecclesiastical schools in the universities. And thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, was the necessary presence of genres of philosophical and popular history-writing which claimed to be able to identify the current aspirations, anxieties and self-definitions of society as, for better or worse, the natural outcomes of a comprehensible and predictable historical process.

It was sources such as these which provided an essential foundation for academic history in Germany, France, England and the United States, where amateur historians and *litterateurs* worked steadily toward an accommodation with university scholars, on the basis of an agreed set of operating principles. In this process of convergence, the university scholars, far from ignoring or discounting their efforts, drew heavily on the findings of the amateur historians and antiquarians, frequently contributing to their paper-reading societies and their journals; and reciprocally the amateurs, many of whom were acquaintances or even former students of the scholars would increasingly cast their researches within the grander frameworks provided for them by the dons. And gradually the men of letters tacitly agreed to be bound

3 Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Rosemary Jann, 'From Amateur to Professional: The Case of the Oxbridge Historians', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.2 (1983), 122–47; Iggers, 'The Professionalization'; Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, *Leopold Von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Terry Nichols Clark, *Prophets and Patrons: The French Universities and the Emergence of the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); John Higham, Leonard Krieger and Felix Gilbert, *History: The Development of Historical Study in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

by the rules of good archival practice and accurate citation, or faced, as did Carlyle and Froude in England, steady marginalisation.[4]

It is against this background of such general and contemporaneous influences that the gradual departure of Ireland from the general movement toward the professionalization of history as an academic discipline acquires even greater significance. For in Ireland, as elsewhere, there existed a lively and thriving antiquarian culture which was expanding both at national and local level throughout the nineteenth century through the appearance of new archaeological, philological, text editing, genealogical and local historical societies.[5] At the same time the university sector showed potential. Trinity had its share of historical classicists and jurists to stand comparison with continental models; and after mid-century the new foundations at least offered the promise of further scholarly endeavour.[6] And in Ireland also popular and romantic history thrived.[7] In the early decades of the nineteenth century historical narrative became a frequent resort of those intent on comprehending and explaining the terrible convulsions with which the previous century had ended, and in defending and attacking the

4 Ian Hesketh, 'Diagnosing Froude's Disease: Boundary Work and the Discipline of History in Late-Victorian Britain', *History and Theory*, 47.3 (2008), 373–95.

5 Clare O'Halloran, *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, c. 1750–1800* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2004); Damien Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840–80* (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, 2000); Joseph Theodoor Leerssen, *Hidden Ireland, Public Sphere* (Galway: Arlen House, 2002); *George Petrie (1790–1866): The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past*, ed. by Peter Murray (Cork: Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, 2004); Michael Ryan, 'Sir William Wilde and Irish Antiquities', in *The Wilde Legacy*, ed. by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

6 R.B. Mc Dowell and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College, Dublin 1592–1952: An Academic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 410–13 and 458; Donal McCartney, *UCD: A National Idea: The History of University College, Dublin* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999); Colin Barr, 'The Failure of Newman's Catholic University of Ireland', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 55 (2001), 126–39.

7 Joseph Theodoor Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996); Patrick Rafroidi, *Irish Literature in English: The Romantic Period*, 2 vol. (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1980).

constitutional union which had succeeded them.[8] Succeeding and overlapping this trend was a distinctly Irish form of Romanticism which, inspired in part by Scott, produced a revival of interest in hitherto neglected phases of Irish history, notably the sixteenth century.[9]

But despite the manifest presence of these preconditions, the convergence toward a new academic historical discipline never occurred in nineteenth-century Ireland. And instead while popular histories such as Mitchel's *History of Ireland* and A.M. Sullivan's *Story of Ireland* proliferated in ever-increasing editions, supported by several lesser exercises in the genre, the university dons remained (with singular exceptions) silent and the local and amateur historians stayed stalwartly modest in their intellectual and interpretative ambitions, eschewing, like Charles Graves, founding editor of the *Journal of the Kilkenny Historical and Archaeological Society* any suggestion that they might

8 For a useful survey see Donal McCartney, 'The Writing of History in Ireland, 1800–30', *Irish Historical Studies*, 10.40 (1957), 347–62; and for valuable commentary Jaqueline Hill, 'The Intelligentsia and Irish Nationalism in the 1840s', *Studia Hibernica*, 20 (1980), 73–109; 'Politics and the Writing of History: The Impact of the 1690s and 1790s on Irish Historiography', in *Political Discourse in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. by D. George Boyce, Robert Eccleshall and Vincent Geoghegan (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 222–39 and 'The Language and Symbolism of Conquest in Ireland, c. 1790–1850', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 18 (2008), 165–86.

9 Norman Vance, 'Romanticism in Ireland, 1800–1837', in *Irish Literature Since 1800* (London: Longman, 2002), esp. pp. 58–64; Eve Patten, *Samuel Ferguson and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004); Claire Connolly, 'Irish Romanticism, 1800–1830', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, vol. 1, To 1890, ed. by Margaret Kelleher and Philip O'Leary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

emulate the work of the great Ranke.[10] Thus while elsewhere journals such as *The Academy* and the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* provided the foundation for the establishment of the *English Historical Review* and the *Journal of the Scottish Historical and Archaeological Society* was transformed into the *Scottish Historical Review*, the Kilkenny Journal evolved not into some Irish Historical Review but only into *the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*.[11]

The causes underlying this retardation and paralysis are both complex and manifold. They lie, of course, primarily in the general political, cultural and constitutional tensions of Ireland under the Union which were the cause of similarly abortive developments and other aspects of nineteenth-century Irish history; and in this regard the chronically divided and impoverished state of the Irish university sector was of particular importance.[12] But at the core of the problem there lay the challenge which was presented to the writing of Irish history by an essential characteristic of the new historiography that was developing elsewhere in Europe: that is its central preoccupation with the rise of the nation state.

10 For an early perception of the opening of this gulf see the anonymous article on 'Irish history' in *The Nation* (5 August 1875), pp. 793–94; for modern commentary see R.F. Foster, 'The Story of Ireland', in *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland* (London: Allen Lane, 2001) and 'Anglo-Irish Literature, Gaelic Nationalism and Irish politics in the 1890s', in *Ireland After the Union: Proceedings of the Second Joint Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy, London 1986*, ed. by Eunan O'Halpin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 61–82; Graham Davis, 'Making History: John Mitchel and the Great Famine', in *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion*, ed. by Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 98–115; Graves's demurral is in Graves to unknown recipient, in Graves Papers, Royal Irish Academy.

11 On the evolution of the *Scottish Historical Review* see editorial note to 1.1 (October 1903) and in general *The Manufacture of Scottish history*, ed. by Ian Donnachie and Christopher A. Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992).

12 Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780–1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); *A New History of Ireland: Volume V: Ireland Under the Union, I: 1801–1870*, ed. by W.E. Vaughan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 186–87, 199, 235–36 , 396–98; Ciaran Brady, 'Arrested Development: Competing Histories and the Formation of the Irish Historical Profession, 1801–1938', in *Overlapping National Histories*, ed. by Tibor Frank and Frank Hadler (London, forthcoming).

Though the research and writing within the converging historiography of the nineteenth century covered a very broad range of topics, including the rise of towns, the collapse of feudal lordships, the decline of the papacy and of the Holy Roman Empire, diplomatic and military histories, etc., the overarching interpretative framework, of which such studies were all subsets, was that of the origins, struggles for existence and the consolidation of the nation-state.[13] In the main, this was a nationalist consensus of a distinctly conservative kind. The current embodiment of the nation state, whether it be Prussia, the Second Empire, the American republic or the constitutional monarchy of Victorian Britain, was recognised as the natural outcome of an historical process, and any further developments were expected to emerge gradually and without convulsion from the present political organisation (though future international convulsion and war were in most cases recognised as likely and even welcome).[14] But it was not exclusively so. In several regions in central and eastern Europe scholarly historiography became an important vehicle for the expression of criticism of and resistance to the prevailing political authority; and even in western states, such as France and Spain, academic history-writing could also serve as a means of constructing an alternative sense of national identity[15]. But in Ireland, while the ideological and polemical uses of history flourished,

13 Chapters 2 and 3 of Georg G. Iggers, Q. Edward Wang and Supriya Mukherjee, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (Harlow: Pearson Longmann, 2008); Chapters 2–4 of Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955).

14 Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition in Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); Peter Lambert, 'Paving the "Peculiar Path": German Nationalism and Historiography since Ranke', in *Imagining Nations*, ed. by Geoffrey Cubitt (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998); Linda Orr, *Jules Michelet: Nature, History and Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976) and *Headless Histories: Nineteenth-Century French Historiography of the Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

15 For an excellent introductory survey see the several essays in the forum 'Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe' produced in the *American Historical Review*, 97.4 (1992), 1011–1117; *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, ed. by Roland Sussex and John Christopher Eade (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1983).

no consensus, such as that which was being established in Europe and America, on the methods by which the practice of historical research and argument should be conducted actually emerged. And history-writing remained, as it had been at the start of the century: one among many organs of continuing political and ideological argument within the public sphere, and not an academic discipline in its own right.

The general conditions within which this deviation from a general pattern took place have already been indicated. But a clearer understanding of the character of this process and of its cultural and ideological significance is best derived from a closer examination of that small group of independent scholars whose intellectual and methodological preferences rendered them most sympathetic to the development of history as an independent scholarly discipline. And as a contribution to such a project, what follows is concerned with a critical analysis of one of the most significant and most neglected members of that select group.

(ii)

In the midst of this accelerating process of divergence there may appear to have been in retrospect only one figure possessed of sufficient authority, influence and talent to have fulfilled the saving role of an Irish Ranke. But William Edward Hartpole Lecky entertained no such ambitions.[16] Though his early *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* (1860) could be seen as a contribution to a moderately nationalist historical narrative, such indications were deceptive. Based upon widely available and familiar sources, the argumentative method of *Leaders* was far from original and was altogether consistent with the approach of a writer

16 Donal McCartney, *W.E.H. Lecky: Historian and Politician, 1838–1903* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1994); Benedikt Stuchtey, *W.E.H. Lecky (1838–1903): Historisches Denken und politisches Urteilen eines anglo-irischen Gelehrten.* (Goettingen; Zurich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) argues convincingly for the politically charged nature of Lecky's historical writing, and gives full details of Lecky's political writings and related activities; but Lecky's own direct role in encouraging history-writing in Ireland was both highly selective and intermittent.

who regarded himself primarily as a public moralist and man of letters for whom history-writing was a central but not exclusive means of expression. Despite the remarkable influence of his writing was to acquire over Irish political argument, moreover, Lecky, following the disappointing early reception of *Leaders*, preferred for the most part to remain distant from intellectual and scholarly life in Ireland. He was occasionally prepared of course to intervene in Irish political debate, sending letters to *The Times* denouncing the misuse of his histories, contributing finely judged pieces to collections of essays on the unionist side and latterly speaking (far from effectively) on Irish affairs in his brief and not altogether happy career as an M.P. But all of this Lecky preferred to do from the safety of his residence in Kensington. Though he paid frequent visits to Ireland in the cause of his own research, Lecky's direct contribution to the development of historical research and writing in Ireland itself was strictly limited. He never published an article in any of the local and antiquarian journals nor, once he settled in London, to any Irish-based journal. He did not even begin to make use of any manuscript or archival sources until the late 1870s when, in his determination to refute Froude's *English in Ireland*, he visited the Irish State paper office in pursuit of Froude's sources. Even then his archival research was conducted in a most gentlemanly fashion, Lecky having arranged in advance that the most likely sources be selected and presented for his attention by Sir Bernard Burke, and by J.P. Prendergast.[17] Lecky himself would have rejected any notion that he was the first Irish professional historian, or even a professional historian at all. Despite the fact that his reputation had been confirmed by his *History of England* he continued to see himself less as an historian than as a public intellectual for whom history-writing was only one of several modes of expression.[18] When the Regius chair of History at Oxford was offered him in 1893, he rejected the overture without compunction.

At the opposite pole to Lecky as a candidate for the first Irish professional historian was J.T. (later Sir John) Gilbert. Archivist, editor

17 Dublin, Trinity College, MS Lecky, 98, 134, 254 and 266 (Prendergast to Lecky, 16 July 1874, 27 January 1878, 2 June, September 1882).

18 Chapter 3 of Jeffrey Von Arx, *Progress and Pessimism: Religion, Politics and History in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1985).

of records, and local historian, the hugely industrious Gilbert displayed several of the features of the embryonic professional and fully deserves the credit paid to him in this regard.[19] But in some ways Gilbert was also deficient. Psychologically and socially insecure, he found himself marginalised among the scholars, notably through his vituperative attacks on the Rolls Officer, James Morrin, and his isolation within the community was steadily increased through illness, both physical and mental. More important was Gilbert's political and ideological nervousness. Acutely conscious of his position as a Catholic in a world predominantly Protestant, Gilbert was particularly wary of expressing overtly political opinions in any of his writings. His *History of Dublin*, organised on a street-by-street basis in a manner pioneered by the English antiquarian John Stowe was deliberately constructed to avoid the challenges of political conflict and historical interpretation.[20] His *History of the Viceroys of Ireland* tactfully ended at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and his works of most lasting significance — his *History of the Irish Confederation and the War in Ireland 1641[–9]* (7 vols, Dublin, 1882–91) and *A Jacobite Narrative of the War in Ireland, 1688–1691* (Dublin, 1892) were really editions of earlier contemporary histories supplied with copious but factual rather than interpretative editorial comment.[21]

Gilbert's interpretative caution and his increasing predilection for the editing of documents rather than the composition of historical narrative renders him in some ways symptomatic of the forces retarding the development of historical writing and interpretation in Ireland. But it is by contrast with both men that the career and writings of a third individual who went much further than either Gilbert or Lecky in anticipating the profile of the professional historian but who has

19 Greagóir' Ó Dúill, 'Sir John Gilbert and Archival Reform', *Dublin Historical Record*, 30.4 (1977), 136–42; *Sir John T. Gilbert 1829–1898: Historian, Archivist and Librarian*, ed. by Mary Clark, Yvonne Desmond, Nodlaig P. Hardimann (Dublin; Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1999).

20 Douglas Bennett, *The Streets of Dublin Revisited*, The Sir John T. Gilbert Commemorative Lecture (Dublin: Dublin City Public Libraries, 2003).

21 J.T. Gilbert, *History of the Viceroys of Ireland; with Notices of the Castle of Dublin and Its Chief Occupants in Former Times* (Dublin: Dalcassian Publishing Company, 1865) and *History of the Irish Confederation and the War in Ireland, 1641–1649*, 7 vol. (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1882–91).

remained largely neglected by intellectual and cultural historians of the nineteenth century acquires especial significance. This was John P. Prendergast Esq.[22]

Born in Dublin in 1808 Prendergast enrolled at Trinity College Dublin in 1824 and graduated B.A. in 1828.[23] He then took up law at King's Inns and after a formative period in France, and a year's apprenticeship in London was called to the bar in 1830, making a further addition to several generations of Prendergast barristers.[24] The Prendergasts' circumstances were comfortable though not opulent. Prendergast was born and spent his youth in the family's fashionable residence in 38 Dawson Street. On his marriage in 1839 to Caroline Ensor[25] he took up residence in Hume Street, and lived there before settling down in middle age in a newly built villa at 127 Strand Rd, Sandymount. As land agent to Lord Clifden, a position which he inherited from his father in the mid-1830s, Prendergast would have been in receipt of a small though lucrative percentage of the large estate's total rental and of his own right he appears to have had a shared interest in several parcels of land in Mohill Co Leitrim. In addition upon his marriage, he acquired some modest interests in residential property in

22 There has been very little notice of Prendergast since his death, but see Francis Finnegan, 'John Patrick Prendergast', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 38.150 (1949), 218–29 and the perceptive comments of T.C. Barnard in his 'Irish Images of Cromwell', in *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell*, ed. by R.C. Richardson (Manchester, UK; New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 192–96.

23 Trinity College's records at this date do not give an indication of the subjects taken by undergraduates taking the degree B.A.

24 Prendergast's father Francis was a trained barrister who succeeded in 1795 to the post of Deputy Register in the Court of Chancery in place of one Thomas Prendergast (possibly a uncle or cousin). See *First Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Duties, Salaries, and Emoluments of the Several Officers and Ministers of Justice in all Temporal and Ecclesiastical Courts in Ireland [as to the court of Chancery]* (London, 1817), app. 22–23, pp. 228–34.

25 Caroline Ensor was daughter of George Ensor of Loughgall, a substantial landowner, free thinker and author of many tracts on philosophical, political and moral issues. For Prendergast's admiring but measured assessment of his father-in-law see his 'Some Notice of the Life of J.P. Prendergast', Dublin, King's Inn Library, MS Prendergast, pp. 63–66, hereafter cited as 'Prendergast 'Memoir', and MS Lecky, 266 (Prendergast to Lecky, 1 September 1882).

Dublin.[26] But despite the opportunities, Prendergast never showed any great interest in extensive property speculation and development. In terms of religious affiliation Prendergast was a member of the Church of Ireland. But in practice his attitude toward religion was distinctly cool. His surviving correspondence gives no indication that he was a regular attendee at religious service, and though he counted both Catholics and Protestants among his friends, he maintained both in his public and private writing a consistent disdain for religious intolerance and sectarian bigotry of all kinds.[27]

In terms of research and publication Prendergast came relatively late to history. Though he records that he had begun to undertake serious research in the state archives in Dublin Castle in 1848, his earliest identifiable writings in the discipline began to appear only in the early 1850s when he was in his mid-forties.[28] But once he had taken to the subject Prendergast rapidly became prolific. Like Gilbert and unlike Lecky he was a frequent contributor to the amateur and local journals, most frequently the *Journal of the Kilkenny Historical and Archaeological Society*.[29] Like Gilbert also he was an inveterate editor and

26 Prendergast's financial and propriertal circumstances can be glimpsed at several points in the records of the Registry of Deeds. For his marriage settlement see under 1839, 7.238; 1850, 8.48–51 and 1864, 25.105–12.

27 Prendergast may have been the 'Mr Pointdergast' encountered by Alexis de Tocqueville at Kilkenny in 1835 who expressed a strong dislike of the Catholic clergy 'to a high degree a domineering body'. See *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland, July–August 1835*, ed. and trans. by Emmet Larkin (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1990), pp. 71–74. Prendergast's derogatory comments on the Catholic clergy in his article on 'The English Parliament and the Irish Nation', *The Nation* (20 August 1870), p. 7 provoked some hostile reaction from Catholic protests in subsequent issues. See *The Nation* (27 August 1870), p. 14 and (3 September 1870), p. 11. He remained unrepentant; see his 'A Lecture on Catholic Ireland' (vi + 64pp, Dublin: s.n, 1886).

28 Anticipating what was to be the subject of most intense research interest Prendergast's earliest signed publication is an article 'On the Projected Plantation of Ormond by King Charles I', *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* (from 1856 the *Journal of the Kilkenny Historical and Archaeological Society*), 1.3 (1851), 390–409 and 529.

29 Prendergast's considerable body of publications in Irish journals are listed in detail in *Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation: Article in Irish Periodicals: Persons*, s.v, ed. by Richard J. Hayes (Boston, MS: Hall, 1970).

calendarer of manuscripts, being responsible jointly with C.W. Russell for the first major survey of the Irish materials in the Bodleian Library and for the complete five volume *Calendar of State Papers, James I*.[30] Like Lecky and unlike Gilbert he also produced book-length monographs, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* and *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution,* both of which were published in London.[31] And, unlike either, Prendergast was a founding honorary member and an early contributor to that forerunner of the *English Historical Review*, the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*.[32] Finally, unlike Gilbert altogether, and in a manner notably different from Lecky in its belligerence and its persistence, Prendergast was intensely engaged with contemporary politics and regarded his historical research and writing as contributing to current political debate, almost invariably until the end of his public career on the side of an Irish nationalist cause.

Beginning with his nervous participation at his father's dinner-table conversations, Prendergast's interest in political debate was lifelong.[33] At around twenty he was in the gallery of the house of lords accompanying the redoubtable Bishop Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin during one of the great debates on Catholic emancipation.[34] He was in France in 1830 to witness the overthrow of the Bourbon regime,

30 *Calendar of the State Papers, Relating to Ireland, of the Reign of James I. 1603–1625; Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, and elsewhere*, 5 vol, ed. by C.W. Russell and John P. Prendergast under the Direction of the Master of the Rolls (London: Longman, 1872–80). It was originally envisaged that Prendergast should undertake the editorial work alone but Russell (then president of St Patrick's College, Maynooth) was added after some political pressure.

31 *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* was published by Longmans in 1865 and received several notices in British reviews; *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–90* was also published by Longmans in 1887 and received favourable notice (by Robert Dunlop) in *The Academy*.

32 Prendergast's contributions were 'Further Notes in the History of Sir Jerome Alexander', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2 (1873), 117–41 and 'Some Account of Sir Audley Mervyn his Majesty's Prime Sergeant and Speaker in the House of Commons in Ireland' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1874), 421–54.

33 MS Prendergast, n.p (prefatory letter to his 'Memoir', Prendergast to P.H. Bagenal, 26 October 1886).

34 MS Prendergast, 5.34 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 28 July 1880).

an event of which he heartily approved.[35] A friend of leading Young Irelanders in the 1840s, Prendergast took part in debates on the Famine crisis including that held in the Rotunda rooms in November 1847 which recommended the introduction of income and property taxes.[36] And he was present, though apparently in an entirely neutral role, at the inglorious stand of Smith O'Brien at Ballingarry in 1848.[37] A fervent supporter of land reform in the early 1850s, he wrote a pamphlet vigorously attacking the eviction policies of Lord Bantry which landed him in a law suit for defamation.[38] He was actively involved in the Tenant League and in the Independent Irish party, serving as a confidante and election agent of the Cork M.P. Vincent Scully. And it was in his capacity as Scully's counsellor that he travelled to Donegal to conduct a private investigation of the Derryveagh evictions in 1852, the scandalous details of which Scully later exposed.[39]

From its earliest appearance on the pages of the Kilkenny Historical and Archaeological Society's *Journal*, moreover, Prendergast's history-writing had, despite the neutral tone recommended by the journal's opening editorial statement,[40] advanced opinions and interpretations distinctly critical of the treatment of the Irish at the hands of English government and its agents. Early articles on the Ulster Creaghts, on the failed Caroline attempt at plantation in Ormond and on 'The Clearing of Kilkenny in 1654' castigated the English of

35 See his personal reminiscences of the revolution in 'The Paris Revolution and the Three Great Days of 1830', in *The Irish Times* (5 August 1890), p. 5.

36 MS Prendergast, 1.14 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 25 December 1881).

37 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 34–43.

38 J.P. Prendergast, *Letter to the Earl of Bantry: Or a Warning to English Purchasers of the Perils of the Irish Incumbered Estates Court* (Dublin: James McGlashan, 1854).

39 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 44–47; MS Prendergast, 1.11 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 1 December 1881). On Scully see Homer E. Socolofsky, *Landlord William Scully* (Lawrence: The Regens Press of Kansas, 1979); and on the events of Derryveagh which Prendergast played a leading role in discovering see W.E. Vaughan, *Sin, Sheep and Scotsmen: John Adair and the Derryveagh Evictions* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1983).

40 'General Rules of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society' *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, 1.1 (1849), 4.

the Elizabethan, Stuart and Cromwellian conquests.[41] But the most uncompromising and powerful statement of the brutal exploitation of Ireland by English governments and English adventurers was presented in Prendergast's *The Cromwellian Settlement* (1865) which, though ostensibly based on a scholarly presentation of hitherto undiscovered primary documents, presented from its opening pages to its close an unwavering condemnation of English policy in Ireland from the sixteenth century down to the present. Published to a rapturous reception by Irish nationalist opinion most notably expressed on several occasions in *The Nation*, *The Cromwellian Settlement* established its author's reputation as the foremost authority of Irish history from a nationalist side. There were calls for immediate reprints and for a popular edition (which in due course Prendergast produced) and for further contributions from this new defender of Irish independence. Prendergast duly responded. With a series of articles and letters in *The Nation*, the most important of which was a connected series of articles on 'Conquest Oppression' and 'Ireland's long agony' which, in what might be seen as an original contribution to the emergence of an Irish nationalist trope, presented a sequential account of Ireland's sufferings under '698 years of English rule'.[42]

But it was in his assumption of the role of defender of the Irish and the outrageous calumnies of James Anthony Froude in the early 1870s that Prendergast secured his position as Irish nationalism's foremost historical defender. Reviewing Froude's *English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (1872–74) on several occasions in both *The Nation* and

41 Prendergast, 'On the Projected'; 'The Ulster Creaghts' in *Proceedings and Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 3.2 (1854–55), 420–430 and 'The Clearing of Kilkenny, Anno 1654' in *Proceedings and Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 3.2 (1860), 326–44.

42 J.P. Prendergast, 'Conquest Oppression: The Irish in the 698th Year of the Rule of the English in Ireland, and in the Year of Our Lord 1869', *The Nation* (26 June, 3 and 10 July 1869), pp. 716–17, 732–33 and 747; 'Sir Phelim O'Neill and Charlemont Fort', *The Nation* (9, 16 and 23 April 1870), pp. 539–40, 536 and 571–72; 'English Parliament and the Irish Nation', *The Nation* (20 August 1870), p. 27; 'English Legislation and Irish Crime', *The Nation* (6 May 1871), pp. 422–23; 'Ireland's Long Agony but Certain Victory', *The Nation* (21 October 1871), pp. 422–23.

The Freeman's Journal Prendergast not only challenged the Englishman's uncritical assumptions, revealed his inaccuracies, his suppression of inconvenient evidence, he adduced voluminous additional documentary evidence countering Froude's dogmatic assertions.[43] He also left his readers in no doubt as to the malign contemporary purposes of Froude's work and of the response which necessarily required by every Irishman if this nefarious British design was to be averted. 'Let all Irishmen know that until they grow strong enough to be feared', Prendergast declared, 'and the English know nothing but fear, we shall be everlastingly insulted by these calumnies [...] There shall be no peace and no honour until this system of Union shall be pulled down'.[44] It was this apparent annihilation of Froude which confirmed Prendergast's standing as the foremost literary and scholarly defender of the Irish nation and led to his being memorialised in verse by T.D. Sullivan, *The Nation's* resident laureate at the close of 1872:

When Froude with bigot fury blind,
To strike at Ireland felt inclined,
He wrote a book to ease his mind
Crammed full of lies of every kind –
But though his venom thus was cast,
Old Ireland's answer followed fast,
Rung out as if with trumpet blast,
By gallant John P. Prendergast!

The Saxon's libels, low and base,
He flings back in his brazen face
And smites with truth as with a mace,
The slanderer of the Irish race.
So here's to John P. Prendergast,
Long may his strength and spirit last,
May pain and sorrow ne'er o'ercast
The life of John P. Prendergast!

43 For Prendergast's tireless attacks see *Freeman's Journal* (17 November and 10 December 1872), pp. 4, 16 and his seven-part review in *The Nation* (30 November, 7, 14, 21 and 28 December 1872), pp. 772–73, 788–89, 804–05, 820–21, 835–36; (11 and 18 January 1873), pp. 26–27 and 42–43.

44 J.P. Prendergast, *The Nation* (11 January 1873), p. 27.

> And grateful Ireland owns today,
> She knows and feels, as well she may,
> No ribald pen her fame can slay,
> While John P.P. stands in the way.
> So here's to John P. Prendergast,
> Who strikes for Ireland hard and fast –
> Come friends, as with a trumpet blast,
> Hurrah for John P. Prendergast![45]

Prendergast's reputation flourished in this vein for some years yet. Further contributions in *The Nation* in the later 1870s and a second enlarged edition of *The Cromwellian Settlement* continued to elaborate of his central theme of the wrongs done to Ireland by England since the first conquest of the twelfth century.[46] He also declared his opinions on contemporary developments. He was strongly in agreement with the aims of Gladstone's first land act and, concerned that it had not gone far enough, was an advocate of further agrarian reform; and he was an early and vocal supporter of Isaac Butt and the movement for Home Rule and deeply critical of the suspension of Habeas Corpus.[47] Concerned by the recurrence of agricultural depression in the late 1870s, moreover, Prendergast was in favour of further land legislation and gave a cautious welcome to Gladstone's second land act in August 1881.[48]

Yet, within a few short years, this fearless defender of the Irish nation against British aggression had undergone an apparently radical change of attitude, and by the mid-1880s was assuming the attitudes of a violent and implacable proponent of coercion and an opponent of any further legislative reform either in regard to land or to Home Rule. His contributions to *The Nation* ceased. His private correspondence after 1881 is replete with expressions of disgust over the cynicism of Parnell, the vulgarity of the Irish Party, the bloody-thirsty greed of the Land Leaguers, and the evil of Michael Davitt.[49] And he spent much

45 In *The Nation* (14 December 1872), p. 803.
46 See the notice in *The Nation* (1 September 1875), p. 86.
47 Prendergast, 'The Coercion Code', *The Nation* (24 April 1875), p. 7.
48 MS Prendergast, 1.4, 2.16 and 2.18 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 16 April, 7 and 16 August 1881).
49 See inter alia, MS Lecky, 254 (Prendergast to Lecky, 2 June 1882).

of his time encouraging younger unionists such as P.H. Bagenal and Richard Bagwell in their efforts to mount a landlord opposition to further agrarian reform.[50]

In his opposition to Parnellism and the Land League Prendergast was of course typical of the majority of scholars and men of letters on both sides of the Irish Sea.[51] But a number of features make Prendergast's version of this general *trahison des clercs* of particular interest. One of these is the fact that, despite his privately expressed disillusion, he did not abandon his mode of history-writing but continued to pursue the themes he had initiated in his nationalist, anti-English days. It is true that, on one occasion, and to Lecky only, he expressed regret that *The Cromwellian Settlement* had given succour to the Land League, but on the same occasion he also confided to Lecky that his fervent wish that Froude would once again write about Ireland in order that Prendergast himself might again come forward as the champion of Ireland.[52] In fact Prendergast never repudiated *The Cromwellian Settlement.* In 1875 he permitted a third edition of the book to be published by McGlashan and Gill in Dublin, and apart from his demurral before Lecky, nowhere else in his extensive private correspondence did he show any sign of regret. The title page of his last book, *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–1690* (1887) proudly announces Prendergast as the author of the famous nationalist historical text. And more importantly the book itself reiterates Prendergast's argument that the seventeenth-century plantations, and the Cromwellian clearances in particular were incomplete preliminaries to the repressive regime of the penal laws which, in yet another reinforcement of the tropology of the Irish nationalist

50 Prendergast's advice is scattered throughout his correspondence with Bagenal in MS Prendergast but especially in vol. 1–3.

51 Tom Dunne, '*La Trahison des Clercs:* British Intellectuals and the First Home-Rule Crisis', *Irish Historical Studies* 23.90 (1982), 134–73; Richard A. Cosgrove, *The Rule of Law: Albert Venn Dicey, Victorian Jurist* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 115–36.

52 'If you could only stir up Froude to attack, I believe that neither my own life nor the lives of my friends could prevent me from attacking him and the English in return.' MS Lecky, 400 (Prendergast to Lecky, 20 July 1886).

historical tradition, Prendergast declares was intended to reduce the Irish people to the status of 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'.[53]

It is the apparent contradiction of this nationalist hero now turned implacable unionist who continued none the less to remain faithful to his original interpretation of Irish history that suggests that there was all along something paradoxical in Prendergast's approach which was not only misunderstood by his erstwhile admirers but was also obscured from the historian himself. And it is this which renders Prendergast, far more than the politically quietist Gilbert and the aristocratically aloof Lecky, deeply symptomatic of the disabling contradictions inherent in a scholarly approach to Irish history-writing in the later nineteenth century, and so far more urgently in need of further examination.

(iii)

The sources of Prendergast's engagement with history as a form of study and a medium of expression are several and, at different times he gave different but hardly incompatible accounts of his late flowering as an historian. On one occasion, for example, he told an enquirer that his historical interest was first sparked by the appearance of the two Irish volumes of the handsome set of State Papers for the Reign of Henry VIII produced by the British Rolls Office in the 1830s.[54] The details recorded and the personalities revealed in these fully reproduced state papers, he recalled, presented a far more complex and more persuasive view of the manner in which politics in Ireland was conducted in the early sixteenth century. The matter included in these volumes was indeed, as Prendergast claimed, impressive, revealing the local, personal and quite accidental forces influencing events left quite un-noticed by general histories. They also contained a great deal of information concerning the Ormond lordship of Kilkenny and Tipperary, an area in which for reasons

53 Prendergast, *Ireland*, p. 62. The phrase, originally from the Book of Joshua, had already been applied in regard to the presumed nefarious intent of the Penal Laws by several other political figures from Edmund Burke on.

54 MS Prendergast, 1.10 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 30 June 1881).

of his own descent Prendergast retained an intense interest.[55] There is no need to doubt this discovery as a possible source of inspiration. But these volumes appeared some fifteen years before Prendergast himself began to write on history; and it might also be observed that of all the periods which attracted Prendergast's attention as an historian early sixteenth-century Ireland was, oddly enough, the one which engaged him least.

A second explanation offered by Prendergast in the preface to *The Cromwellian Settlement* was that his interest was first piqued when at the behest of an unnamed and non-resident relative he began to look into the family history of the Prendergasts, and found there not only that the family had been involved with some of the most significant events in the course of Irish history since the twelfth century, but that their fortunes were particularly shaped by the tumultuous and revolutionary events of the 1650s.[56] Again, despite its somewhat contrived appearance, there are few grounds for questioning this explanation as a partial truth. Prendergast was proud of his Anglo-Norman heritage and his private papers include two fat volumes containing his notes and comments on the family's genealogy.[57] But they remained unpublished; and, despite ample opportunity to do so, Prendergast himself never published on his immediate family's history. The evidence contained in these materials, moreover, does not suggest that the branch of the family from which he was descended suffered significantly from the wars and upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century. They appear instead to have evaded transplantation; for they were comfortably ensconced as minor landowners and

55 *State Papers Published Under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth*, 11 vol. (London: His Majesty's Commission for State Paper, 1830–52). Vol. 2 and 3 (1834) are devoted to Irish material.

56 Prendergast, *The Cromwellian*, pp. xvi–xx

57 MS Prendergast, 'Parentalia,' vol. i (1860); vol. ii (1875).

estate agents in the area around Clonmel in the early eighteenth century who had long since conformed to the established church.[58]

It was only, in fact, in the middle of the eighteenth century that real woe was visited on John P. Prendergast's direct forbears. In 1752 as a result of an allegation that as a protestant who had married a Catholic who had failed to convert he lost the right to vote, Prendergast's great-grandfather, Thomas, challenged his accuser to a duel and was mortally wounded.[59] In consequence of his early death Thomas Prendergast's family were ruined and forced to Tipperary from Dublin. Though this great rupture weighed heavily on J.P. Prendergast's mind, the actual extent of the family's calamity was moderate. Other branches of the family had already been settled in Dublin where they had prospered as lawyers and law officers[60]. It was through this connection that Prendergast's grandfather himself developed a prosperous career as an attorney and further rebuilt the family's fortunes through judicious

58 In an appendix to her *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century: or the Irish massacres of 1641*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1884), p. 397, Mary Hickson, a figure who was engaged in much controversy with Prendergast, printed a letter from the Lord Protector Cromwell to the Lords of the Irish Council directing that the proposed transplantation of one 'John Prendergast' be deferred. Though the record in the Irish State Paper Office was subsequently destroyed, there is no reason to question its veracity; nor the possibility that John P. Prendergast who had scoured the records in this archive had seen this letter with its implication, embarrassing for this scourge of the Cromwellian regime, that his ancestor may have been given exemption for some reason. (I am grateful to Prof. Nicholas Canny for directing my attention to this source.) See also inter alia, 'Parentalia', vol. i, items 74–85, which contain copies of several Tipperary Prendergast wills.

59 The only account of these events is in Prendergast's own memoir, pp. 26–27 and in *The Cromwellian*, pp. xviii–xx, but no corroborative evidence is to be found in the 'Parentalia'. The effects of the tragedy on the family's fortunes for at the age of twenty-five Prendergast's father had already secured the lucrative position in Chancery most probably through the influence of a close relation. There is probably no reason to doubt the actual occurrence of the duel and its attendant circumstances, but its consequences appear to have been contained and partially compensated for by family connection.

60 Copies of obituaries of Sir Thomas Prendergast (d. 1760) the most distinguished member of the Dublin family, from the *London Chronicle, Slater's Dublin Gazetteer* and *The Dublin Gazette* are contained in 'Parentalia', vol. i, item 88, pp. 558–59.

marriage and a fortunate appointment as Deputy Registrar in the court of Chancery and as land agent for the earls of Clifden.[61]

It is in the light of far from traumatic impact of this eighteenth-century crisis that a third of the explanation proffered by Prendergast for the development of his historical interest acquires greater significance. While practicing on the Leinster circuit in the early 1840s a number of cases on marriage portions and inheritance prompted his interest in the actual effects of the penal legislation as displayed in case law.[62] A notebook surviving among Prendergast's papers dated 1844 gives clear evidence of this interest. Crammed with summaries of cases derived in the main from Howard's *Popery Cases* shows that Prendergast was particularly interested in the way in which parties sought to exploit the existing legislation at some time to subvert its intent, sometimes to exploit it to the full and sometimes to use it for purposes quite other from which it had originally been intended.[63] His marginal comments reveal his indignation with the cruel and unjust intent of the laws, but also a sense of admiration at the way in which real human beings had put this nefarious system to their own uses. A taste for irony mingled with respect for the resourcefulness of those operating within the system is evident in these marginalia which is to be characteristic of the later historian.[64]

But it was also at this time, when pouring over the records of the eighteenth-century courts that Prendergast records he encountered, through the advice of a fellow barrister, another influence which above all he was to credit as inspiring him to undertake the writing of history. This was his reading of Augustine Thierry's *Histoire de la*

61 As Deputy Registrar in Chancery Francis Prendergast was in receipt of annual fees and perquisites in excess of £600 p.a; as agent for the earls of Clifden this income would have added a significant amount to this sum, but Prendergast in his 'Memoir' records that his father was prodigal.

62 MS Lecky, 134 (Prendergast to Lecky, 27 January 1878).

63 Gorges Edmund Howard, *Several Special Cases on the Laws Against the Further Growth of Popery in Ireland 1720–1733* (Dublin: Printed for Elizabeth Lynch, 1775).

64 Among the Prendergast papers in the King's Inn Library is a volume entitled 'Mss by John Patrick Prendergast on Howard's Popery cases', dated 2 December 1844. Indications of Prendergast's ironic readings of Howard's commentary can be seen on pp. 20, 23, 33 and 48.

conquete l'Angleterre par les Normands, whose second edition of 1830 in the original French remains in Prendergast's papers in King's Inn.[65] The attraction of Thierry to advanced literary and cultural circles in Ireland in the 1830s and 1840s has been noted before.[66] The first translation of his *Histoire de la conquete* had been produced by an Irishman, Charles Claude Hamilton as early as 1825[67] and several of his contributions from *Le Censeur Europeen* and other studies collected in his *Dix ans d'etudes historiques* (Paris 1835), notably his essays on 'Chants Irlandais' and on 'Sur l'esprit national des Irlandais' exercised a broad influence over the literary generation of the 1830s and 1840s, especially over those soon to be associated with Young Ireland. Thomas Davis was a great admirer, and John Mitchel was said to have kept Thierry's *Norman Conquest* on his shelves beside a manual on the uses of artillery.[68] The Young Irelander's attraction to Thierry has frequently been put down to his strongly romantic celebration of Irish stories and songs, especially the songs. 'Inspired by the muse of independence', Thierry had written, 'these songs resound still in the villages and on the shores of the lakes, accompanied by the sound of the harp [...] They are the recorded sorrows of Ireland and the crimes of its oppressors'.[69] Thierry's imagined Ireland was far from a reality. But his vision, it

65 First published in French in 1825, Thierry's *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre pas les Normands* went through eleven editions until 1867; the most significant alterations and additions are noted in Rulon Nephi Smithson, *Augustin Thierry: Social and Political Consciousness in the Evolution of an Historical Method* (Geneva: Droz, 1972).

66 Chapter 7 of Richard P. Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988); Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), pp. 46, 86 and 121.

67 Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, 3 vol, trans. by C.C. Hamilton (London: Printed for Geo. B. Whittaker, 1825); This edition was, however, rare; and it is likely that, as with Prendergast, most Irish readers of Thierry read him in the original before a second and better circulated English translation appeared in 1841.

68 Brown, *The Politics*, p. 86.

69 Augustine Thierry, 'Sur l'esprit national des Irlandais', in *Dix ans d'études historiques* (Bruxelles: Louis Hauman, 1835), pp. 116–17.

has been said, fired the ambitions of men like Davis and Duffy who were determined to make it so through their own poems and songs.[70]

This was in some part true. But Thierry was no mere sentimentalist lamenting the world we have lost.[71] His *Norman Conquest* was a richly researched and powerfully argued historical exercise based upon a mastery of a broad range of printed primary materials in several languages. It contained, moreover, a substantial concluding section devoted to Irish history since the twelfth century which, in rehearsing the sufferings of the Irish people at the hands of successive invasions of English would-be conquerors, concluded that despite all their oppressions, the independent spirit of the natives had not yet been fully extinguished. But Irish history featured only marginally in a large work whose principal purpose in studying the Normans was to condemn all conquerors as unprincipled adventurers who knew nothing other than to destroy and exploit, and to celebrate in contrast their victims, who survived despite all of their oppressions.[72] On the face of it, therefore, it might seem that this 'épopée des vaincus'[73] had little consolation on offer to Young Ireland, for most of them, like Davis and Mitchel (and Prendergast) were the descendants of one or another wave of conquerors, while conversely the memorialisation of the resilience of Anglo-Saxonism was now an article of faith among

70 Davis contributed two essays on Thierry to *The Nation* on 26 November and 3 December 1842; *Songs of the Nation*, an anthology of songs and ballads compiled by Davis and Charles Gavan Duffy and first published in Dublin in 1843 reveals a strong indebtedness to Thierry's notions of the expressions of an Irish spirit.

71 Among several studies of Thierry's ideological purposes and historical method see, K.J. Carroll, *Some Aspects of the Historical Thought of Augustin Thierry (1795–1856)* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1951); Stanley Mellon, *The Political Uses of History: A Study of Historians in the French Restoration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958); Smithson, *Augustin*; Lionel Gossman, 'Augustin Thierry and Liberal Historiography', in *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1990).

72 Section IV, most easily consulted in English in the two-volume Everyman edition of Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. by J.A. Price (London: J.M. Dent & Company, 1907), pp. 341–68.

73 The phrase — loosely 'apotheosis of the defeated' — is that of Thierry's early biographer, Ferdinand Valentin, quoted in Smithson, *Augustin*, p. 104.

the British cultural and political elite.[74] But looked at more closely there were other underlying elements within Thierry's theory of conquest, which, supplied his *Norman Conquest* and its surrounding polemical essays with far greater interest to the historically minded among the Irish generation of the 1840s, Prendergast included, than might have at first seemed evident.

For all his rhetoric about the brutality of the conquerors and the nobility of the conquered Thierry was realistic enough to recognise that conquest, domination and dispossession were frequent and recurrent events in human history, to be deplored , perhaps, but never to be denied.[75] For the historian, therefore, the interesting questions lay not in the event of conquest, for this could be explained through the dreary facts of greed, force and opportunity, but in what processes had been set in train in the years after the initial act of conquest had been accomplished. In raising this question there was an important comparative project at work in Thierry's book which was occasionally made explicit in allusions and off-hand comments which occurred throughout the text, and in the concluding sections of the book that dealt with the differing fate of the Norman conquest in England, Wales and Ireland, and was elaborated on in his contemporary political polemics. For in studying the Normans in England and elsewhere Thierry was also considering the Franks in France, and in particular the effect of their conquest upon the subsequent course of French history.[76] Conceived

74 Reginald Horsman, 'The Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxinism in Great Britain before 1850', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37.3 (1976), 387–410; H.A. Mac Dougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo–Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House Publishers, 1982); Claire Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: 1990); L.P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (New York: New York University Press, 1968).

75 In this Thierry's thinking is close to that of his contemporary, Benjamin Constant, whose *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation dans leurs rapports avec la civilisation européenne* (Paris: Le Normand, 1814) makes a similar argument, but it is also present in Thierry's own early work, *Des Nations et de leur rapports mutuels* (Paris: Delaunay, 1817). See Gossman, 'Augustin Thierry', pp. 96–132.

76 See in particular his *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* (Paris: Ponthieu et Compagnie, 1827), which was elaborated on in the more liberal atmosphere of the constitutional monarchy in his *Consideration sur l'histoire de France* (Paris: s.n, 1840).

within the repressive and defeatist environment of Restoration France, *The Norman Conquest* was deliberately intended as a reply to the central contentions asserted by the defenders of the re-established old regime which were that the revolution initiated in 1789 had been from start to finish a catastrophe, that the appalling repressions, wars and dictatorships that had ensued had been in inherent in the revolutionary movement from the beginning, and that the initial leaders of that movement had been either cynical manipulators of an innocent people, or the innocent dupes of such cynical manipulators, or, as was more likely, a combination of both. This denigration of the revolutionary movement as a whole was something which Thierry, in company with a significant number of other defenders of the 1789 revolution such as Benjamin Constant, Paul-Louis Courier and Jules Michelet (with all of whom Prendergast was familiar) was determined to reject. And of crucial importance in this resurrection of the ideals of 1789 was the defence of a key concept which had given so much force and unity to that movement: the idea of the third estate.[77]

'Quest que ce le tiers etat?' In the darker times of the early nineteenth century Thierry's answer was necessarily a good deal more complex than that of the Abbé Sieyes. Sociologically it was by and large the same: the third estate was made up of the solid gentry, the professional and commercial middle classes who were located in a place of independence midway between the idle exploitative and unproductive aristocracy and the benighted, oppressed and powerless peasant and labouring classes. But as an historical phenomenon the origin and character of the third estate was considerably more interesting. It represented in a very specific sense the essential and defining characteristic of French history in the days since the Frankish conquest.[78]

77 Mellon, *The Political*; Geoffrey Cubitt, 'The Political Uses of Seventeenth-Century English History in Bourbon Restoration France', *The Historical Journal* 50.1 (2007), 73–95.

78 First introduced in his *Des Nations* and developed in several essays in *Dix ans*, Thierry's theory of the third estate as an historical movement was most fully elaborated in his 'Essai sur l'historie de la formation et des progrès du tiers état' which first appeared in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 14.4 (1846), 521–48, 722–44. For commentary see Gossman, 'Augustin Thierry', pp. 90–132.

The imposition of government by force, the seizure of control over land and the establishment of the grounds for legitimising this seizure represented only the first phases of a genuine conquest. The real test of a conquest came next when the conquerors faced the challenge of how to consolidate, defend and build upon the accident of military success by establishing a process of legitimation, a code and a set of practices and institutions which could sustain the gains of conquest long after the shock of the primal event of military victory and defeat had passed. Thierry, like Marx, had no illusions about the ideological origins and purposes of legal systems: the law was there to defend and extend the interests of the conqueror.[79] But in practical terms, in terms, that is, short of the complete annihilation of the subject people and their replacement by a large tenant and labouring force from among the conquerors' own people (something which conquerors sometimes contemplated but rarely attained) it necessarily followed that any legal system imposed by the conquerors must be possessed of an internal suppleness sufficient to retain its effectiveness amidst the unceasing, unanticipated and unpredictable complexes of intercourse between the descendants of the conquerors and the descendants of the conquered which would inevitably occur in the centuries to come. In particular it followed that the conqueror's law of property, regulating how realty and personalty was to be acquired, leased, sold, bequeathed, inherited and obtained in marriage settlements was capable of adapting to the challenges thrown up by unexpected and unavoidable political, social and economic change.[80]

No legal system, Thierry readily conceded, had ever proven to be completely adept to such challenge. Some had been more, and some had been less adaptable than others. The processes of adaptation, moreover, were neither uniform, incrementalist nor progressive, and history was filled with attempts of subsequent generations of conquerors either to concede to the conquered, or to roll back on those concessions when the opportunity arose. The Normans, for example,

79 See for example his comments on the Norman's exploitation of Saxon law in *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, Everyman, vol. 1, ed. and trans. by J.A. Price (London: J.M. Dent & Company, 1907), pp. 247–48, 310–14. The theme is more fully elaborated in his *Lettres*.

80 Thierry, *History of the Conquest*, Section V, vol ii, pp. 369–404; 'Sur l'histoire de la constitution anglaise', in *Dix ans*, Chapter xi.

had by the very weakness of their grasp on rule in England proved remarkably adaptable. The common law which evolved in England in the later middle ages proved to be a remarkably supple instrument of social regulation, even if in the seventeenth century the Stuarts had attempted in their own form of counter-revolution to be rid of it. The Franks had been stronger, their original conquest more complete and their system, consequently not so adaptable or predictable. Indeed, it was in the history of their attempts to escape from the unintended consequences of the system they had imposed that the third estate had emerged (first in the villages and towns of rural France and finally at national level in the eighteenth century) as an agency for mediating between the conquerors and the conquered and bringing both within an agreed system of equitable, effective and enduring law as represented in the constitution of 1791.[81] It was here, in the examination of such undulating currents that the true purpose and true value of historical research and interpretation lay. All history was not the history of ideas, nor was it simply the history of class conflict. It was the history of the attempts to develop or subsequently to overthrow a common ideology based on law which would transcend the profound and destructive conflicts arising from the recurrent accident of conquest.[82]

The propagandist intent of Thierry's history is evident. Here was a determined effort to rehabilitate the French Revolution in its early phases by revealing the profound historical forces underlying the actions of the representatives of the third estate in the constituent and legislative assemblies of 1789–91. But Thierry's conquest theory of history also presented a remarkably attractive analogue for Irish reformers with an acute historical sense of their own, not least one informed as was Prendergast's by the particular origins and historical experiences of his descendants. For Prendergast, proud descendant of an ancient Anglo-Norman family whose genealogy he had traced in intricate detail, Thierry's contention that the measure of the success

81 This is the central theme of Thierry's 'Essai'.

82 From his earliest days as a student of Sismondi and Saint-Simon, Thierry recognised the importance of a comparative approach to the historical development of different societies as a means of discovering patterns rather than adducing reductive laws. See Thierry, *Des Nations*; the concluding sections of *History* are a sustained exercise in the comparison of the different destinies of the Normans in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

of a conquest was the degree to which the conquerors had succeeded in reaching an accommodation with the conquered was a ringing endorsement of the Anglo-Irish. Though their success had not been total, and Gaelic Ulster remained outside any such accommodation, almost everywhere else, and especially in Leinster and Munster the great Anglo-Irish houses of Fitzgerald and Butler had not only developed an effective *modus vivendi* with their native Irish neighbours, they had succeeded in establishing and retaining political authority and leadership in these regions.[83]

There was, moreover, a further and more pertinent feature through which the Anglo-Irish conformed to Thierry's model. Pioneers of the first of several waves of English conquest, the Anglo-Normans had served a crucial liaison function mediating between the natives and new conquerors, seeking to extend and to adapt the original accommodations they had reached to the particular conditions applying at the time. In this their role corresponded to that of the historical third estate in France as the engineers of a truly stable and just society through the amelioration of the worst consequences of conquest and exploitation. As with the third estate, of course, their success in this operation was far from perfect. And not infrequently they found themselves in direct conflict with the source of renewed movements of conquest, England itself. But the course of Irish history from the twelfth century on is a record of their repeated attempts to fulfil this specific historical role, whether it be in the days of Henry VIII, in the crisis times of the 1640s, under the Restoration, most particularly in the halcyon days of the late eighteenth-century parliament which Prendergast identified as the Irish version of 1789, and even in the darker conditions addressed by Young Ireland and the Independent Irish Party. As the differing historical and genealogical origins of the leaderships of these various movements made clear, this Irish third estate, no more than its French prototype, was not constituted of one particular ethnic group. But its formations and reformations were none the less determined by the same fundamental

83 Thierry, *History of the Conquest*, Sec. IV; Prendergast, *The Cromwellian*, 'Preface', *passim*. Prendergast's 'Barony of Idrone' presents a sustained case study in this process of conquest, accommodation and adaptation. See 'The Plantation of the Barony of Idrone, in the County of Carlow', *Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Historical and Archaeological Society*, 2.2 (1859), 400–28, 3.1 (1860), 20–44, 69–80, 144–64, 171–88 and 196–208.

operating mechanism: that is assimilation through family extension, miscegenation, marriage and sex.[84]

The centrality of miscegenation to the processes of historical change was a major theme in Thierry's history, though his emphasis on its intrinsic difficulties and its regular breakdown in the French case has sometimes given rise to the misapprehension that he regarded race as being the truly determining force in history. His position was in fact more subtle: beginning with a recognition of the power and intractability of racial characteristics, Thierry regarded the progress or otherwise of a civilisation as measurable by the extent to which such forces were overcome.[85] It was only in particular cases, and Ireland in Thierry's view was one of these, where the conquest had been so brutal and so sustained that the conquered people were compelled to cleave to residual racial characteristics as a desperate means of retaining some sense of independence. In regard to Ireland Prendergast's position, like that of Davis and the other Young Irelanders, was more optimistic. What the waves of conquering settlers needed, Prendergast observed, in addition to the land and services which accrued from the conquest, was the satisfaction of their natural urges through the company of women. But, given the relative scarcity of women attending upon the conquerors, they necessarily turned for relief to the natives and sexual unions, whether legitimately recognised or not, were the immediate, normal and perpetual outcome of this natural appetite. Like the Romantics — Germans such as Herder and Schlegel, and French such as Rousseau, Constant, Courier and Thierry himself — who rebelled against the Cartesian claim that 'the mind knew no sex', Prendergast similarly believed that historians, of whatever ideological hue, had

84 Prendergast's public formulation of this case in *The Cromwellian*, pp. xxv–lx is further reiterated in his private correspondence, see MS Prendergast, 1.1 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 9 December 1878) and MS Lecky, 492, 507 and 546 (Prendergast to Lecky, 12 December 1887, 5 March 1888, 11 May 1889).

85 A detailed critical analysis of Thierry's understanding of the role of racial characteristics in history is supplied in Martin Seliger, 'Augustin Thierry (1795–1856): Race-Thinking during the Restoration', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19 (1958), 273–82.

conducted themselves in a similarly lop-sided and artificial manner; that sex never entered into the considerations of politics.[86]

In his public writing he made his claim with conventional and obligatory caution but in his unpublished writing and private correspondence he was unflinchingly candid: 'whenever I first look at a woman I first undress her in my mind's eye, and then I dress her again in my three favourite black things, my three favourite white things and my three favourite red things'.[87] This remarkable predilectional confession, however, was not, it should be observed, an isolated yearning extracted from the private papers of a lonely old man in search of solitary relief. It is rather to be found in his autobiographical sketch which, at his behest, was put in typescript for posthumous publication and was repeated on several occasions in his correspondence which he also was preparing for publication.[88] Prendergast's autobiography is, in fact, replete with erotic anecdote and allusion. It is there, for example, that readers learn of the goings on of Mrs Augusta Magann, who, bereft of the company of her husband, took instead to the young man who looked after the hounds whom she termed her dog boy and who she was in the habit of summoning to her bed chamber in a manner similar to that with which he whistled the hounds.[89] It is here, too that we learn of the unfortunate Camilla Brady, Lady Blatchford of Mountkennedy, who was disgraced and humiliated when her husband returned home unexpectedly to find her in bed with their near neighbour, Mr La Touche of Greystones.[90] There, too that we learn (was it true?) of the customs of the Leinster circuit where 'the Daphnetic mores prevailed' and where in certain houses the warding room was set aside equipped with young women to whom the barristers might retire 'to conduct their magnum opus'

86 Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2004); Mira Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity: Self, Culture, and Society* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

87 Prendergast, 'Memoir', p. 64.

88 MS Prendergast, 1.6 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 12 June 1881) and for a particularly lubricious elaboration of the theme MS Prendergast, 4.31 (9–11 February 1888).

89 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 1–6.

90 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp 12–13.

before returning to the table.[91] There also that Prendergast expresses his disappointment at the destruction of the passionate love letters of Jacinthe, mistress of the first earl of Charlemont by the wife of the present earl.[92]

It would be easy to dismiss these erotic preoccupations merely as a mild psychological aberration. At the time of his autobiographical composition Prendergast was in his seventies, a widower, living in his big house in Strand Road. But it is also far too easy to condescend. His correspondence reveals Prendergast as enjoying an immensely active social life, with a wide circle of friends, being regularly entertained to lunches and dinners about the town; and far from living alone: his brother Frank lodged with him, he regularly entertained guests, and he had a warm relationship with his housekeeper, Mrs Gibney.[93] Instead there are reasons to suggest that something more deliberate can be seen in Prendergast's determination to uncover and to take account of the hidden workings of human passion. His conduct in regard to Lord Charlemont's love letters is in this regard illustrative. On several occasions he used his position as the Charlemont librarian to draw attention to the existence of this material, loaning them out to Lecky, Bagenal and others in the hope that dissemination of their content might ensure their preservation. In this he was unsuccessful, but he was genuinely dismayed by their destruction which he regarded as a major injury to an understanding of eighteenth-century Irish life.[94]

This instance aside, Prendergast's erotic gossip as a whole is most properly seen as a sub-set of his general preoccupation with anecdote

91 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 8, 20 and 81–84.

92 Prendergast, 'Memoir', n.p (prefatory letter, Prendergast to Bagenal, 26 October 1886); also MS Prendergast 1.35 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 9 May 1882).

93 Prendergast's correspondence gives a rich account of his social activities and his active physical life, revealing among other things his frequent perambulations across Dublin city: as late as 1890 the octogenarian was writing to *The Irish Times* recommending improvements in the city's pavements which he so frequently traversed. *The Irish Times* (19 July 1890), p. 8.

94 MS Prendergast, 1.72, 1.81 and 1.83 (Prendergast to Bagenal 31 August, 19 and 22 September 1882). See also Prendergast to Bagenal, 8 July 1888, where Prendergast reveals the insight underlying all of these preoccupations: 'men and women are only actors on a pretty transitory stage but while we live our thoughts and our passions are the elements of life'.

with which both his autobiography and his surviving correspondence abound. The test of a good barrister, Prendergast fondly recalled in his memoir, was his ability to tell a good story.[95] Regarded by those unsympathetic to the profession as no more than an occasion for self-indulgent garrulity, barristers' enthusiasm for anecdote served (and continues to serve) purposes at several levels. Like jokes, anecdotes are no doubt a form of play, a re-enactment of case history in controlled and leisurely circumstances; and the rhetorical skills required in holding a table in rapt attention are similarly a form of training for the real tests of advocacy. But more important than any of these, the rehearsal of these discrete stories of individual human experience or conduct revealing in one way or another the crooked timber of humanity supplies a powerful validation of the entire *raison d'etre* of barristers-at-law. For it is the essential role of barristers to adjust the rules of an ancient, unyielding and inevitably obsolescent system to the multifarious realities of human behaviour at different times and places which can never be anticipated by precept, and only apprehended by story. What was true for the barristers in action, however, applied with equal force to the historians in reflection, especially to one like Prendergast who came to history directly from the bar. Like case-histories and law digests, anecdotes, by definition reports of what was at once the exceptional and unexpected but also the recognisably human, were the recurring unavoidable proofs that history was not constituted by epochs of conquest and resettlement alone; but by the innumerable, unpredictable and arbitrary acts of human needs and human weaknesses which occurred in between.

It is in this light of his understanding of the nature of historical dynamics and its implications for historical study that the body of Prendergast's work is best approached. Much of it concerns continuity, such as his essays on the history of Rostrevor and Ross Castle, his book-length local historical study of the barony of Idrone, which he himself claimed was an epitome of Irish history from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, and the series of family histories included in his *Ireland from the Restoration to Revolution*.[96] But more commonly he was concerned with

95 On the importance of good conversation see Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 6, 10, 20 and a concluding section of 'The Leinster circuit', pp. 83–87.

96 See, for example, his extended account of the Brennans in *Ireland*, Part II, Chapters I–II.

the disruptions, with the waves of conquest and re-settlement which were such a defining feature of Irish history, with the rebellion of 1641, with the imposition of the Penal Laws which Prendergast continued to the end to regard as a further attempt at a renewed English conquest, and, of course, with the so-called Cromwellian settlement.

Indignant in its tone, polemical and unwaveringly critical of the English government in all its aspects, Prendergast's *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* is an unrestrained protest against injustice and repression. But it is also, to adapt Hayden White's taxonomy of the nineteenth-century historical imagination, in several respects a comedy, or more specifically a comic satire.[97] The comedy is in part stylistic: Prendergast writes throughout with a Swiftian irony noting, for example, how the pious and judicious clergymen of the republic in frequently consulting with God, invariably got the result they wanted or how the Cromwellian officers 'when they first arrived vented their calumnies (according to the national custom) on Irish physicians' or how the desolation they wreaked 'was, as usual, only preparatory to the improvement of Ireland'.[98] But there are structural aspects to the comedy also, as Prendergast details the confusion and incompetence of the Cromwellians striving to fit the realities of Ireland's land divisions into their procrustean surveys, and how the officers cheated the soldiers and were in turned cheated by the adventurers who were in turn abandoned by the English parliament. It is in this mocking and satirical spirit also that Prendergast adds a lengthy conclusion to his book summarising the effect of the failed Cromwellian settlement as leaving Ireland 'haunted by three burdensome beasts that troubled the comfort of the English': the wolf, the priest and the Tory, the latter 'exhibiting man, like a solitary hyena who could neither be domesticated nor extirpated'.[99] Here is the Puritan nightmare arising unbidden from the realities of a botched and hypocritical settlement.

97 Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), especially pp. 8–11. The mode of comic satire White suggests applies to 'historians who perceive behind or within the welter of events [...] an on-going structure of relationships or an eternal return of the same within the different' (p. 11).

98 Prendergast, *The Cromwellian*, pp. 52, 110, 139, 148, 169 and 173.

99 Prendergast, *The Cromwellian*, pp. 168–202.

There is an even more fundamental sense, moreover, in which the book conforms to White's tropological analysis. Its organising trope was, as White has suggested is the hallmark of all comic-satirical histories, synecdoche, that is the selection of a part or aspect of a process as being representative of the whole. For in Prendergast's eyes, the Cromwellian settlement was merely one (though a very significant one) of the several English attempts to conquer Ireland. It was, to be sure, one which was even less successful in its ambitions and more calamitous in its consequences than any of the others. But still it was one which was, like all the rest, had been endured and coped with by those suffering underneath, and which had gradually had its worst effects reduced by the same combination of natural recurring impulses and reasonable procedures which was regularly achieved through the mediating practice of law. Thus, in being representative of all conquests, the botched Cromwellian experiment was also representative of the phases which followed after: that is the emergence of an intermediate social group patiently mediating between the insufficient conquerors and the undefeated conquered by means of law: in France, the Third Estate, and in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish.[100]

It is in this light that the mocking biblical allusion with which Prendergast closes his book should be read. Citing Leviticus, Prendergast likens the exiled Irish of the seventeenth century to the Jews. Like the Jews, the Irish were 'to be scattered among all people from one end of the earth unto to the other' carrying with them into foreign lands their enduring hostility and entering the armies of the enemies of their country'.[101] It is not hard to see that in invoking the providentialism inherent in biblical allusion, Prendergast was making an oblique but disturbing contemporary reference. Like Mitchel and like Froude, Prendergast was aware of the potential consequences for England of the vast migration to the United States prompted by the Famine (his own son Francis was himself an emigrant).[102] But whereas Mitchel celebrated it and Froude feared it, Prendergast remained composed. For while Mitchel and Froude regarded the Famine as calamity of unprecedented magnitude which had set in train powerfully

100 This is the central theme of the long survey of Irish history given in the preface and introduction to *The Cromwellian*, pp. vii–lx.

101 Prendergast, *The Cromwellian*, p. 202.

102 Prendergast, 'Memoir', p. 66.

hostile international forces working against Britain and its traditional mores and values, to Prendergast it was just one more botched English settlement whose worst effects would have to be suffered, but after which a new movement for reform would eventually emerge from within Ireland itself, the leadership of which would be, as it always had been, a new generation of the Anglo-Irish. In regard to this internally driven recovery, Prendergast had already done his bit — in his attacks on Lord Bantry and other absentee landlords, his investigations at Derryveagh, his service for the Independent Irish party, his frequent contributions to the *Nation*, in writing *The Cromwellian Settlement* and of course in his decimation of Froude.

This was a deeply deceptive estimation; but it was also one which was profoundly revealing not only of Prendergast's political values, but of the kind of history he had sought to write. Prendergast's extraordinary misjudgement of the significance of the Famine is evident in all his surviving private correspondence. Though he had acted as a land agent in Counties Meath and Dublin throughout the period of its worst effects and for years thereafter, the Famine is hardly mentioned in Prendergast's racy autobiography, so full of other incident, anecdote and detail. Indeed in his references to his experiences as a land-agent in general both in his memoir and in his private correspondence he is surprisingly evasive and vague: remarkably in that quite unbuttoned string of reminiscences, he has little to say of the main events of his career as a land agent save to note that he had to oversee one eviction only, and that Lord Clifden's tenants all loved him.[103] Concerning his reasons for abandoning the post which his family had held for generations, he has nothing to say, even the precise date of his resignation remains unclear. In regard to his own understanding of the causes and consequences of the Famine itself, however, he occasionally gives clear indications that he subscribed to the classical liberal account: that while the neglect and absenteeism of the landlords was deplorable, the suspension of free trade would have been impossible, and that in the end the clearing away of large numbers of the unproductive peasantry had at last released the true potential of the Irish economy.[104]

103 Prendergast, 'Memoir', pp. 58–60.

104 MS Prendergast, 1.116, 1.117 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 6 and 8 December 1882).

Rooted in an ideology that maintained him and his class at the centre of Irish politics and culture, it was this profound underestimation of the consequences of the Famine that underlay the great cognitive shock which Prendergast, in company with many of his peers, was to experience in the last decade of his life. Over the 1880s, as the ramifications of Gladstone's second land act began to be made plain in subsequent legislation, in the operations of land courts, in the increasing indebtedness of the landlords and above all in unremitting illegal agitation of the Land League, Prendergast's private political views turned sharply against further reform. Yet while he became indirectly engaged with the activities of landlord defence offering advice to Philip Bagenal of the Property Defence Association, he continued in his own historical work to reassert the centrality of the Anglo-Irish third estate. *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution* which he had been working on since the late 1870s was deliberately conceived as a sequel to *The Cromwellian Settlement* and offered not a consecutive narrative, but a series of family histories each recounting the successes and failures of those seeking survival in the post-conquest world. Its preface contained a plea that this latest manifestation of the Anglo-Irish intermediate group, the small and middle rank landlords who had established their position not by conquest but through 'thrift' and who alone were able to supply 'the connecting link between the two races on the soil of Ireland' should not be swept from Ireland.[105] Until close to his death he continued to work on a study of that great critical event in the history of the Anglo-Irish, the 1662 Act of Settlement. And in the book-length biography of Charles Haliday that he actually completed in the early 1880s as an introduction to the latter's *Scandanavian Kingdom of Dublin*, Prendergast portrayed Haliday as a successful merchant but also a man of discernment and taste who, having made his money, devoted himself to a life of civic responsibility, public service and culturally engaged scholarship — the very epitome of the evolving but unchanging character of the Irish third estate.[106] Prendergast's sketch of Haliday was, as he admitted, intentionally drawn as a kind of oblique

105 Prendergast, *Ireland*, pp. viii–ix.

106 Charles Haliday, *The Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, ed. by J.P. Prendergast (Dublin: A. Thom, 1882), pp. i–cxxiii.

self-portrait of Prendergast himself.[107] On its appearance, however, the book failed putting Prendergast to considerable expense; and ever since it has been Haliday's medieval study rather Prendergast's sketch of the ideal type of nineteenth-century liberal historian that has commanded the interest of scholars.[108]

In the years immediately following the completion of this work other events further contributed to the steady darkening of Prendergast's nineteenth-century world. Prendergast had always regarded Parnell as a charlatan, an ambitious adventurer irresponsibly willing to sacrifice his role as the latest leader of the third estate for any opportunity of personal gain. He had looked forward enthusiastically for Parnell's destruction at the hands of *The Times*. But when it occurred, the manner of Parnell's ruin was worse than any for which he would have wished. For Parnell's fall not only gave power in Ireland to the Healy's, the Sextons and the Sullivans, the claque of arriviste adventurers whose social origins he deplored but whose cynical exploitation and abuse of the law he loathed even more. It also brought them to power on a wave of hypocritical moral indignation which was at once unnatural and yet sanctioned by one of the most self-interested and unyielding forces in Irish history, the Roman Catholic Church.[109]

By the eve of his death in 1893, therefore, the two opposing co-ordinates which together had supplied the framework of Prendergast's political and cultural world — acceptance of the natural impulses of humanity (conquest and sex) and confidence in the capacity of legal due process to cope with their worst consequences — had been wholly undermined. But Prendergast persisted, railing from his study under the shadow of Sandymount's Martello tower, against the revolutionaries who had subverted law, and the Rome rulers who were imposing an unreal and hypocritical morality in its place, and yet continuing to cling to his deeply held but increasingly unrepresentative convictions

107 He identifies himself to Bagenal as 'Your Haliday'. MS Prendergast, n.p (prefatory letter, Prendergast to Bagenal, 26 October 1886).

108 See Breandán Ó Ríordáin's introduction to the Irish University Press reprint of *The Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), pp. iii–ix.

109 MS Prendergast, 4.34, 4.53 (Prendergast to Bagenal, 11 February and 20 April 1890).

concerning the course of Irish history and hoping in vain that Froude might again give him the opportunity to act as the nation's defender — a victim of, but in his own way also a contributor to, the ideological and moral paralysis which, within a decade, Joyce would be setting in aspic.

Jean-Paul Pittion

From Germany to Ireland

An Investigation Into the Journey of Two Unrecorded Copies of Incunabula, With an Exploration of the History of Early Irish Franciscan Libraries

The two survivors discussed here are unrecorded copies of incunabula editions of Antoninus Florentinus's *Confessionale* [add.] Johannes Chrysostomus: *Sermo de poenitentia* printed about 1484 (ISTC No.: ia00812000) and of Jacobus de Voragine's *Tractatus super libros sancti Augustini* dating probably from around 1480 (ISTC No.: ij00203000). They were found bound together in that order in an early sixteenth-century binding, in a volume rescued from the library of All Hallows College at Dumcondra, Dublin, Ireland in 2011.

All Hallows College was founded by the Reverend John Hand, in 1842 for the training of missionary priests. During the first decades of its existence, the College faced financial and organisational difficulties. Eventually in 1891, the Irish Episcopacy handed over its running to the Dublin Vincentian Congregation of the Mission.[1] The College continued to train seminarians until it became a linked college of the recently founded Dublin City University in 2002, offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses. When All Hallows was finally closed in 2014, the books still in the College Library were mostly acquired over the past few decades. The incunabula volume was found, all but forgotten in an archive room of the College, together with a number of copies of other early-printed editions, survivors of a collection sold some thirty years previously.

1 On the early history of the College, see Kevin Condon, The Missionary College of All Hallows 1842–1891 (Dublin: All Hallows College, 1986).

The History of the Volume in the Library

Hardly any document exists on the beginnings and early history of the library of the College, but the volume is known to have been among its books, in or shortly after 1856. That year, fourteen years after the foundation of the College, a manuscript catalogue of the library was compiled. The catalogue is in three separate sections. The first is entitled 'The Catalogue of the Books in the library of the very Revd. Dr Yore V.G. Presented to the College of All Hallows. 1856.' The second section is entitled 'The Catalogue of the Books in the Library of the College of All Hallows. 1856'. Together these two lists cover the majority of the library holdings at that date. Once the first two sections were completed, the compiler started a 'supplemental list' to enter 'further additions'. Eventually it reached some 3500 entries when it stopped being in 1868, judging by the date of the latest entry. Curiously, it is in that third section that we find entered as 'Anthoninus black letter', the volume of incunabula. After 1868 it becomes impossible to follow the history of the volume in the library, as former shelf lists and index cards had long been thrown away.

In 1990 the College authorities decided to modernise the library and sold a significant portion of the books to an Irish antiquarian bookseller. He obviously selected the books from the library that corresponded to his commercial interests. When contacted, more than two decades later, the bookshop had no surviving record of the purchases made then, but presumably these were early-printed books and books of Irish interest, its specialised field. A number of late nineteenth- or twentieth-century editions of religious works not selected in 1990 were stored in the college to allow for the modernisation of the library reading room and were later disposed of.

Nothing from the earlier collections catalogued in 1856 apparently remained on the College site, when in 2011 the College Librarian Helen Bradley was investigating a leak in one of the upstairs archives rooms, and came across a late fifteenth-century manuscript Book of Hours, mutilated, stored with a number of early-printed books and nineteenth-century books in the Irish language, altogether some one hundred and fifty volumes. To prevent them from water damage, she had them removed and locked in a room of her office. There, as

part of a project to investigate the historic archives of the library, she examined the volumes.[2] Among them was the Antoninus Florentinus and Jacobus de Voragine incunabula volume. Other rare editions, to mention only two, included a copy of one of the famous five 'Testina' editions of *Tutte le Opere di Nicolò Machiavell* (dated 1550 on the title-page, but published in the early seventeenth-century), and one of Fr Francis Molloy's *Lucerna Fidelium*, printed in Rome in 1676 with an Irish font designed and cut especially for it. It has been impossible to discover when the books were selected and by whom, most probably a knowledgeable member of the past library or teaching staff, and why they were stored in the archives together with the nineteenth-century books in Irish, some in unusual provincial editions.

I was asked by Helen Bradley to short-list the early-printed editions and to further investigate their origin. It was obvious that the books came from one of the two collections, which made up the library holdings in 1856 and had been set aside for their interest and rarity. As we have seen, in 1856, the largest collection of books in the Library was listed in the second section of the Catalogue. The 1,226 titles listed in it represent the original collection assembled by the founder of the College, the Reverend John Hand (1806–1846). He acquired a number of books during the year that he spent in Rome and Paris to raise funds and to obtain papal approval for his project.[3] Some of the books in the collection are older, mostly French eighteenth-century editions, but it is obvious from their subject contents, that the Reverend Hand acquired them for the future use of seminarians, and not because of their bibliophilic interest.

By contrast, the books, 659 titles in total, given to the library by the Reverend William Yore in 1856 and listed in the first section of the Catalogue, included quite a number of early-printed works, among them editions dating from the sixteenth, seventeenth as well as from the

2 My thanks to Helen Bradley, Librarian, The John Hand Library, All Hallows College, for drawing my attention to her find, for making it possible to study the incunabula volume, and for permission to photograph it. My thanks also go to Nicolas Fève who took the photographs.

3 On Fr John Hand, see his notice in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography: From the Earliest Times to 2002*, 9 vol, ed. by James McGuire and James Quinn (Dublin; Royal Irish Academy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 and 2018).

eighteenth century.[4] A number of these were early humanist, scholarly editions of works of the Church Fathers in early collections of sermons and early works on Church history. The Reverend Yore also gave to All Hallows a number of rare works relating to the early history of Ireland.

Further evidence of the antiquarian and bibliophilic interests of the Reverend William Yore is provided by the fact that in 1856 also, he raffled a portion of his collection. As reported by the Dublin daily *The Freeman's Journal*, the raffle included 'many treasures of scarce and valuable works'.[5] According to the same source, the purpose of the raffle was to raise money for an 'Institute for the Deaf and Dumb' that the Reverend wished to create. A draw of some 1200 volumes took place on 7 April and the sale of tickets raised 1,578 pounds. Unfortunately, no list detailing the books selected for the raffle has survived and we have no way of finding out if the incunabula volume was amongst them and as often is the case on such occasions, was either not put in the raffle or left uncollected.

William Yore presented the books not selected for or left over from the raffle to the All Hallows College Library. The College was an obvious choice, as the Reverend Yore had ten years earlier been one of the executors of the Reverend Hand's will. It was this gift that led to the compilation of the Catalogue, which was completed on 12 December 1856, ten months after the raffle. Ecclesiastical zeal led the learned Reverend to sacrifice, in the words of *The Freeman's Journal*, 'a possession so dear to the feelings of every good priest', but he retained some pride in his collection, as he made sure that the books that came from him were identified by being listed separately under his name.

To come across two unrecorded copies of incunabula comes as a pleasant surprise to a book historian. Known copies of the two editions that make up the All Hallows volume are not particularly rare. On the other hand, the volume itself, how it came to be put together and how it found its way into an Irish collection raised unusual questions. Two potential ways presented themselves to trace the history of the volume: one, external, was to investigate contemporary sources likely to throw light on the availability of rare books such as our volume during the

4 On Fr William Yore, see his notice in the same *Dictionary*.
5 See the notice and the report in *The Freeman's Journal* (28 March and 7 April 1856).

period of the formation of William Yore's collection. The other was to see what material evidence a bibliographical examination of the volume and its contents could offer. We shall first turn to the external historical evidence.

Investigating the Antiquarian Book Market in Nineteenth-Century Ireland

To build a significant collection of 'scarce and valuable works' as William Yore did, takes time and requires patience, not to mention money. Above all, it requires regular access over a number of years to sources of collectable material. That William Yore was successful as a collector draws our attention to a little-known aspect of the history of Irish book-collecting, the role of public auctions in creating a local buoyant market in antiquarian books in nineteenth-century Ireland.

There had been bibliophiles in Ireland from as early as the seventeenth century when antiquarian interest switched from manuscript to early-printed books. Serious Irish collectors, however, usually purchased the books they coveted at the auction sales that were already regularly held in the Netherlands since the beginning of the century and increasingly frequently in London. A collection like the one assembled by the physician Edward Worth and bequeathed to Dr Stevens Hospital in Dublin in 1733 provides ample evidence of such purchases.[6]

The situation changed during the last decades of the eighteenth century and during the following decades of the nineteenth, when a strong trade in antiquarian books became established in Ireland. Several booksellers already offered early-printed works in their catalogues. These, however, would not have been able to satisfy the fashion for collecting antiquarian books that was a growing fashion among members of the clerical and professional class of educated city-dwellers, those that a Dublin literateur described at the time as 'scarcely better members of society than the collectors of old coins, china monsters and

6 See W.J. Mc Cormack, 'The Enigma of Worth: A Preliminary Essay', *The Edward Worth Library* (June 2005) https://edwardworthlibrary.ie.

autographs'[7]. This fashion of collecting antiquarian books was answered by a remarkable increase in the number of specialised auctions that became a regular event, particularly of the social Dublin scene.

Antiquarian book auctions increased as more and more private libraries came to be dispersed. Among them were libraries from the country residences of the Irish aristocracy and landed gentry. The selling-off of such libraries began long before the final demise of the Irish 'Big House' in the mid-twentieth century. Already, by the end of the eighteenth century, some important libraries were being sold by auction, including that of the Hon. Denis Daly, M.P. for Galway.[8] After the Act of Union of 1800, as power shifted to London and as owners of great houses and members of the Irish administrative and political elite moved to England, sales further increased. At the same time other different collections also came on the market. They belonged to an older generation of Catholic priests who, having studied and been ordained on the Continent, returned to Ireland and sometimes reached eminent positions in the Church. One such library sold in 1823 was that of John Troy OP, formerly prior of San Clemente in Rome, who became archbishop of Dublin in 1786.[9] Then, in the middle of the century, further collections earlier assembled by prominent Irish lawyers, physicians and academics further came under the hammer.

The auction catalogues of two major Dublin auctioneers, Charles Sharpe of Anglesea Street and Henry Lewis also of Anglesea Street, have survived. Most of the known Lewis catalogues date from later than the 1850s, but Sharpe's catalogues are of special interest as they cover the years 1820 up until 1851, a period when book auction activity was at its peak. A nearly uninterrupted series of his catalogues bound in yearly volumes, is kept in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, where they can be found listed as 'The late Charles Sharpe's

7 The anonymous piece entitled 'The Dublin book auctions and book buyers of yesterday', was published in the Dublin University Magazine, 71 (March 1858), pp. 280–86. My thanks to Bill Mc Cormack for identifying the writer as Patrick Kennedy, writer, folklorist, and bookseller (1801–1873).

8 Cf. T.U. Sadleir, 'An Eighteenth-century Irish Gentleman's library', *Book Collector*, 2 (1953), 173–76.

9 See the *Catalogue of the very choice and valuable library of the late Rev. Doctor Troy, Roman Catholic archbishop of Dublin* (Dublin: Charles Sharpe, 25 June 1823).

private collection of all his own sales of books, paintings, engravings... partly priced with MS notes'.[10]

There was hardly a year when Charles Sharpe did not hold at least one book auction every month. All the more important collections that he auctioned, particularly those belonging to members of the clergy, included some fifteenth-century books and a number of sixteenth-century editions. Sharpe or his cataloguers always separated books of older 'theology' (in Latin), from the more recent books of 'divinity' (in English or French), and always identified incunabula and post-incunabula as 'black letter'. Though the shorthand titles used can be sometimes problematic, a systematic search of all the relevant catalogues to 1851 of sales of private libraries has produced no likely candidate for the All Hallows College volume.

It has been rightly said that like genealogists, book historians should start from the present and progress backward in time. We now turn to the evidence that a bibliographical examination of the incunabula volume provides of its earlier history, before it had turned up in Ireland.

A Bibliographical Examination of the All Hallows Incunabula

Note: $= gathering signature(s)

1, *Jacobus de Voragine, Tractatus super libros Sancti Augustini, Köln, Bartholomaeus de Unkel, about 1480, 4° (ISTC No.: ij00203000)*

The copy has 28 leaves signed aa-bb^{8} (- $aa8), cc-dd^{6} ($–cc3 signed cc4)

The paper is identical to that of the copy in the library Trinity College Dublin described by Thomas K. Abbott's in his *Catalogue of Fifteenth-century Books in the Library of Trinity College ...*, Dublin,. Hodges & Figgis, 1905.

Five-line spaces and two-line spaces were left for initials that were then stencilled in red; the small capitals throughout the text have been scored across with red lines.¬s

10 My thanks again to William (Bill) Mc Cormack for pointing to the existence of this collection and to the Librarian of the Royal Irish Academy, Síobhan Fitzpatrick, for allowing me access to it. For an overview of the collection see the transcript of a lecture by Maire Kennedy given to the RIA in 2000, also available in the RIA Library (ref.: AP 2000/39).

The type (measured on $ aa2r°) has an apparent body-size of 103mm, and an apparent face-size of 100mm. The **M** is Haebler M7. The text occupies 27 lines measuring 140mm x 83mm. It is set as follows:

$aa1r°: "Incipit tractatus fratris Jacobi…"; $dd5v°: "Explicit tractatus f[rat]ris Jacobi… "; $dd6 is blank.

2, *Antoninus Florentinus, Confessionale. Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio [Add:] Johannes Chrysostomus, Sermo de poenitentia, Strasburg, Heinrich Knoblochtzer, not after 18-24 April 1484, 4° (ISTC No.: ia00812000).*

The copy has 26 leaves, signed ^{4}, a-o^{8} ($f4 signed e4), p^{10} ($p5 is signed).

The paper measures 200mm by 138mm with two varieties of watermarks centred between chain lines 40 mm apart. Though difficult to identify because of their positions, both belong to the most frequent group of simple Gothic P's with double down strokes, and a horizontal bar across the down strokes. One of them is very close to Briquet 8551.

Headings are set in type of an apparent body-size of 115mm, and an apparent face-size of 100mm ((measured on 4 lines on $p6r°). The type used for the text (measured on $a2v) has an apparent body-size of 94mm and an apparent face-size of 90mm. The **M** is Haebler M6 .

The large capitals measuring 3,8mm by 3,8mm show a variety of décor: **A** has a floral design; **Q** is foliated; **A**, **I** and **P** are foliated; **C** and S have a different foliated pattern; **O** is large sun; **D** is the figure of a bishop; **R** that of wolf or fox; another **D,** used once, shows a king at a table.

The large rubricated initials stop with the capital **D** on $d3 r°, but red strokes are drawn through the small capitals throughout the text; a large capital **Q** is supplied in stencil on signature $ a7 r°.

The page is composed of 32 lines, measuring 152mm x 92mm. It is set as follows:

$*1v°: "Incipiunt rubrice tractatus fratris Anthonini//ordinis…" $*4r°: "Expliciunt rubrice super tractatum de instru//ctione seu…"

$a1r°: "Opus Anthonini archiepi[scop]i florentini in// theologia illu[str] iatissimi + In q[uoque] utroq[ue] jure // expertissimi + De erudicione Confessorum // feliciter incipit + (at $l.5) Prologus + (at $l6) Defecerunt scrutantes scuti//nio ait psalmista..."

$p6r°: "Explicit summa co[n]fessionu[m] seu interroga/toriu[m] pro simplicibus confessoribus + Edi//tum ab archiep[iscop]o florentino + videlicet fra//tre Anthonino ordinis predicatorum. // Incipit sermo beati Johannis Crisos//tomi de penitentia +

$p9r°: "Explicit sermo beati Joannis // crisostomi de penitentia"+ [punctuation of four + in a rosette].

$p10 blank

Description of the Binding

The volume — dimensions 145 x 215mm, with a spine of 40mm approximately is bound in dark brown thick leather. It is in a poor state of conservation. The leather is partly torn off from the back cover and from the spine, exposing four raised double cords and the remains of one endband. Noticeable at the four corners and at the centre of the front and the back covers, are holes left by small rivets, where ornamental bosses were originally affixed. There are traces of two clasps with their catches on the upper cover. The word 'confessionale' in a near contemporary hand is inscribed on the volume fore-edge.

The leather is blind-tooled. A pattern of double fillets frames a rectangle at the centre. The rectangle is criss-crossed with double fillets, creating a pattern of lozenge-shaped compartments, stamped with rhombs and roundels, the rhombs with the motif of a lily and the roundels with the symbol of an evangelist and an inscription (see illustration 1).

Despite the poor state of the binding, by comparing the motifs and dimensions of the stamps with those of rubbings reproduced and listed in Ilse Schunke's *Einführung in die Einbandbestimmung* (München, 1974 coll. Studienblätter für Einbandtechnik und Gestaltung 5), and in the Berlin State Library *Einbanddatenbank* (*EBDB*), they can be identified as follows:

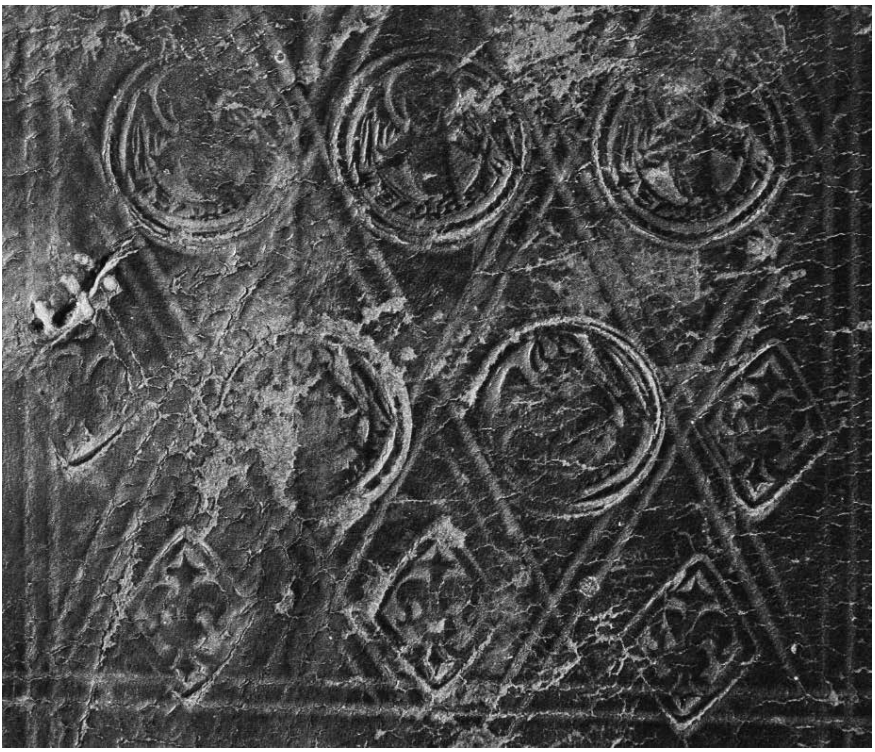


Illustration 1, Antoninus Florentinus, *Confessionale*; volume front binding, showing stamped rhombs and roundels

— roundel with evangelist symbol (15x15mm): Schunke, no 33, p. 97 (cf. *EBDB* s 004496)

— rhomb with lily motif (15x15mm): Schunke, no 91, p. 73 (cf. *EBDB* s 004469).

Ilse Schunke and the Berlin State Library database identify the tools used for the stamps as belonging to two different workshops, both from the Hanseatic town of Uelzen in Lower Saxony: the 'Krone' binder for the rhomb (EBDB w 000321) and the 'Johanneskloster' bindery (EBDB w 000268) for the roundel. However, on this binding, rhombs and roundels are identical in dimension and are so closely integrated into the overall design that they can only have been stamped together. Taking this into consideration as well as the use of the same rubricator for the texts, one can conclude that either the two binderies collaborated closely on this particular binding or, more probably, that at the time of

the making of the binding the two had merged. Furthermore, the same rubricator worked on the two copies. The inserted stencilled capitals are of identical design. For example, the small capital Q featured on the *Voragine* is identical in shape to the large capital Q featured on the *Anthoninus* (see illustration 2).

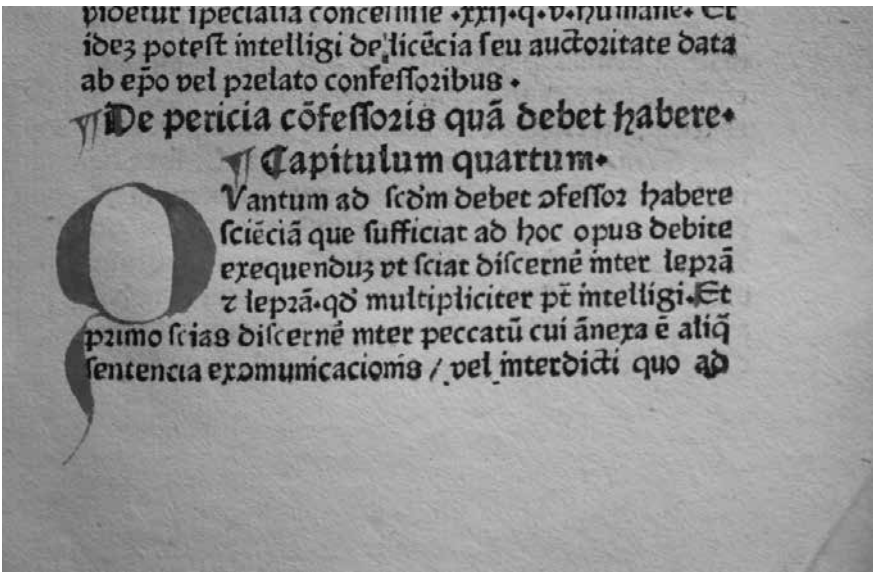

ideꝫ poteſt intelligi de licẽcia ſeu auctoritate data
ab epō vel prelato confeſſoribus ·
De pericia cõfeſſoris quã debet habere·
Capitulum quartum·
Vantum ad ſcm debet confeſſor habere
ſciẽciã que ſufficiat ad hoc opus debite
exequenduꝫ vt ſciat diſcerné inter lepꝛã
z lepꝛã·qd multipliciter pt intelligi·Et
primo ſcias diſcerné inter peccatũ cui ãnexa ẽ aliq̃
ſentencia excomunicacionis / vel interdicti quo ad

Illustration 2, Antoninus Florentinus, *Confessionale; Anthoninus*, large capital Q stencilled on $a7 r°

The Early History of the All Hallows College Volume

The volume thus began its life when two copies of editions printed in different workshops located in two different publishing centres, Strasburg and Köln, were bound together in Uelzen. There is nothing exceptional in the fact that the two editions were bound together in a different place to where they were originally issued. By 1484, the latest date for one of the copies, books circulated widely from one publishing centre to another. Booksellers, many of them from afar, could find a supply of new and older publications available for purchase at the regular book fairs held in Frankfurt.

Whether the volume was assembled in view of a future retail sale or as the result of an individual commission, everything points to

its destination having been clerical and to its first location having been the library of a monastic house. The genre of 'confessional literature' became increasingly in favour in the late medieval period. Furthermore, in libraries where books were intended to be used rather than displayed, they were commonly stored in piles, flat on their covers and inscriptions on fore-edges served as 'pressmarks' for easy access. The inscription, in large roman capitals on the fore-edge would have been made when it was added to an already existing monastic collection.[11] On the other hand, the lack of any mark of usage on the pages, which are as fresh as they were when it was bound, suggests that it travelled not for use during a journey, but for a direct delivery to a religious congregation.

During the pre-Reformation period, books moved across Europe, more often than not, with individuals who took them with them on their journey. This is especially true of members of the Friars Minor, one of the main branches of the Franciscan Order. The Friars placed high value on education and scholarship, and moved through an extensive network of friaries, already well-established throughout Europe in the thirteenth century.[12] The Friars thus developed quite a sophisticated system for the institutional acquisition and circulation of books, and Observant convents, in particular, soon assembled 'common libraries' from which members of the convents could borrow.[13]

11 On these and other aspects of early-modern libraries, see Jean-Paul Pittion, 'Auteur, Lecteurs, Lectures, Bibliothèques', in *Le Livre à la Renaissance: Introduction à la bibliographie historique et matérielle*, Nugæ Humanisticæ 15 (Turnhout: Brepols; Genève: Bibliothèque de Genève, 2013), pp. 233–50.

12 An indication of the friars' mobility is a brief of Pope Alexander VI of 1502, requiring Franciscans traveling to a new convent to bring with them a certified letter from their local Ordinary stating that they were free of heresy. See the text of Luke Wadding, 'Registrum', n° LXXXIII, in *Annales Minorum, Tomus octavus* (Romæ: Typis Petri Collinii, 1654), pp. 19–20.

13 Though the historical literature on the medieval and early-modern history of the Franciscan Order is vast, relatively few studies provide a detailed analysis of convent library holdings. Among these, for later periods, Bernard Cousin, 'Une bibliothèque de couvent à l'époque moderne: les livres des Franciscains de Sospel', in *Annales du Midi* 2.1 (1989), pp. 617–33 and Fabienne Henryot, *Livres et lecteurs dans les couvents mendicants: Lorraine, XVI^e^-XVIII^e^ siècles* (Genève: Droz, 2013). For earlier collections, see the instructive *Gli Incunaboli della Biblioteca Provinciale dei Frati Minori di Firenze*, ed. by Chiara Razzolini, Elisa di Renzo, Irene Zanella (Pisa: Pacini, 2012).

Given that the All Hallows volume reached Ireland and thereafter remained in the country, it is most likely that its destination was the library of one of a number of important Franciscan friaries. We shall now consider evidence from early records that might enable us to narrow down our search for the volume.

Investigating the History of Irish Franciscan Libraries After the Reformation

The development of Irish Franciscan libraries occurred in the late Middle Ages and the Reformation and post-Reformation period, a period when the 'Island of Saints and Scholars' knew few extended spells of relative political and religious peace.[14] The study of the Irish Franciscans during the period encounters a number of obstacles, notably the limited number of sources on foundations and their fragmentary nature. One of the richest sources for the Franciscan history in the medieval and early-modern periods is the contemporary classic *Annales Minorum* of Luke Wadding OFM (1588–1657) that appeared between 1628 and 1635.[15] The *Annales* are a documented

14 For a comprehensive history of the period, the standard reference works are *A New History of Ireland. Vol. 2, Medieval Ireland, 1169–1534*, ed. by F.X. Martin, F.J. Byrne, W.E. Vaughan, A. Cosgrove and J.R. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) and *A New History of Ireland. Vol. 3, Early modern Ireland, 1534–1691*, ed. by T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, F.J. Byrne, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

15 A full bibliographical description of the *Annales* is not yet available on the site of the Catalogue in progress of *Franciscan authors, 13th–18th century*. The first edition was published between 1628 and 1635. Second editions appeared next in seven volumes, *Annales Minorum in quibus Res omnes Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum…authore Fr. Luca Waddingo, Hiberno Menapiensis*, [vol. 1–5] (Lugduni, sumpt. Claudii Landry & Claudii Du Four) [vol. 6 & 7] (Claudii Prost, & I. Bapt. Devenet), 1647–48; and in eight volumes, *Annales Minorum in quibus Res omnes Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum…authore Fr. Luca Waddingo, Hiberno Menapiensis* (Romæ: Typis Petri Collinii, 1654). Its eighth volume is a *Registrum* printed separately. An abridged French translation was also published at the end of the century: *Annales des freres Mineurs composees en latin par le tres Reverend Pere Luc Wadinghes… abregees et traduites en francais…* (Toulouse: Chés Guillaume-Louis Colomiez; Jérôme Posuel, 1680–81). A new augmented edition of the Rome 1654 edition in eighteen volumes appeared in the eighteenth century, *Annales Minorum… ad annum MDLXI, Continuati a Josephio Maria de Anconai*, edition secunda locupletior et accuratior (Romæ: Typis Rochi Bernabò, 1732–35). It was republished, with corrections, in thirty-two volumes in Florence, by Quaracchi in 1931–64. Unless otherwise stated, quotations are from the 1654 Rome edition.

historical narrative of the orders of the Franciscan family, arranged by ecclesiastical provinces. They are 'monuments', in the old sense of the term, of the 'lives' of individual friars and of individual foundations since St Francis. Wadding added new factual details as he came across them during his writing, acknowledging it with such phrases as 'quod aliter diximus'. The *Annales* have a hagiographical and promotional dimension. Wadding's historical approach to factual information is disconcerting to a modern reader who might anachronistically expect a sequentially ordered narrative.[16] For more focused evidence, one must also turn to a number of sources discovered and edited in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Before we proceed with our investigation of these sources in our search for the All Hallows College Volume, it will be useful to give a brief review of the early history of Franciscan establishments in Ireland using information provided by rare manuscript sources, by Luke Wadding's *Annales* and historical material published and edited in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.[17]

According to a friar, Donatus Mooney writing in 1616–17 (see note 29), there were 57 friaries in existence in pre-Reformation Ireland. Many were victims of the suppression of monasteries by Henry VIII in April 1539.[18] Conventual lands and buildings were seized by Henry VIII, but large areas of Ireland were Gaelic-speaking and the Henrician Reformation only succeeded in suppressing religious houses in some

16 For an example of Luke Wadding's approach, see Míchéal Mac Craith, 'Wadding and the Irish tombs in St Pietro in Montorio', in *Luke Wadding, the Irish Franciscans, and Global Catholicism*, ed. by Matteo Binasco (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020). In a section of the *Annales* under annalistic year 1472, Wadding recorded the epitaphs of five cardinals and four Irish princes who died in Rome between 1608 and 1616, while ignoring the epitaph of the archbishop of Dublin who died in Rome in 1623.

17 We have also consulted the following works: The anonymous work entitled *An Historical Account of the Monastic Institutions, suppressed in Ireland, at the period of the 'Reformation'* (Dublin: s.n, 1825); John Stevens, *Monasticon Hibernicum: Or, The Monastical History of Ireland...* (A translation, with additions and alterations by Louis Augustine Alemand's *Histoire monastique d'Irlande* (Paris: s.n, 1690)); C.P. Meehan, *The Rise and Fall of the Irish Franciscan Monasteries, and Memoirs of the Irish Hierarchy in the Seventeenth Century, With Appendix containing numerous original documents* (Dublin: Duffy, 1872).

18 For the Henry VIII period, a standard study is *The Dissolution of the Religious Houses in Ireland during the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

provincial towns and in the Pale, that is the region around Dublin under Crown control.

During Elizabeth's reign, on the other hand, military expeditions into Ireland had far more devastating political and religious consequences.[19] Most if not all religious houses in the Irish-speaking areas also fell.[20] The Friars found hiding in some 'townlands' (traditional land divisions *baile fearainn*, in Gaelic) to continue to minister more or less clandestinely, to the Catholic inhabitants. Under James I, legal repression and suppression continue,[21] and to ensure the survival of the Irish province, Irish Franciscan colleges were created in continental Europe. We shall later pay a particular attention to the one founded in 1607 in Louvain, or Leuven in Dutch, by Florence Conroy OFM.[22] Later, the college of St Isidore was founded in Rome in 1625 and the College of the Immaculate Conception later in Prague in 1636.

In the Western provinces of Ireland, friars who had fled their convents when they were suppressed by James I, came under the protection of powerful Catholic lords who supported their return and the rebuilding of convents, which took place during the next reign of

19 See John McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland*, new edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). See also Nicholas P. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565–76* (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1976).

20 For one out of many examples, see Luke Wadding, *Annales*, vol. XV, p. 84: 'Cœnobium Learagabaile Fermanaich (Gaelic for Townhill, Fermanagh) anno 1588 ab hæreticis expelatus est… anno 1601 totium cœnobium periit incendio…'.

21 See Alan Ford, *The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590–1641* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1997).

22 On the role of Saint Anthony College in this regard, see Mícheál Mac Craith, '"Collegium S. Antonii Lovanii, quod Collegium est unicum remedium ad conservandam Provinciam" (Donnchadh Ó Maonaigh, 1617–18)', in *The Irish Franciscans 1534–1990*, ed. by Edel Bhreathnach and others (Dublin: Four Courts, 2009), pp. 233–59. See also Mary Ann Lyons, 'The role of St Anthony's College, Louvain in establishing the Irish Franciscan College network', in *The Irish Franciscans*, pp. 27–44.

Charles I.[23] However, dispersed as they had been without the possibility of a strict adherence to the Rule, the Observant friars found it difficult to return to normal convent life. A contestation arose among them over the issue of the supremacy of Anglo-Irish and Irish friars and they resented interference by provincial bishops.[24]

In 1631, there were 31 Observant convents represented at a meeting of the Council of the Province, but only 17, with one unnamed 'new' house, during the Irish Confederate Wars in 1647.[25] Most Irish friaries that remained in existence were dealt a devastating blow when Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary army invaded Ireland and crushed the Confederate armies during the Confederate Wars. The convents of Kilkenny[26] and of Youghal[27] were dispersed, and in 1649 those of Waterford and Wexford all but disappeared after the capture of these two towns that had sided with the Confederates. The Act for the Settlement of Ireland voted by the English Rump Parliament in 1652,

23 As a relevant example, the friary of Kinalehan (Cineál Fhéichín in Irish) in County Galway, destroyed in 1609, was restored thanks to the patronage of Ulick Burke, Earl of Clanricarde (1604–1658). See Keith Smith, 'The Inventory of the Franciscan Friary of Kinalehan (1698)', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 69 (2016), 207–14. We shall later discuss this inventory.

24 See a report, written in Italian, of a visitation from Rome dating from about 1534, entitled *Questions concerning Irish ecclesiastic affairs for resolution at Rome*, a document preserved in the Luke Wadding Collection of University College Dublin. The 'concilio' of Kilkenny of 1625 and the 'collegio' of Waterford of 1629 were reported to 'speak ill of the prelates' ('sparlano de prelate').

25 The numbers we give are those of the Superiors, named with their convent of origin, that were signatories of two documents relating to the contestation and sent to the Commissary-general of the *Natio Germano-Belgicæ* in which the Irish Province was included. They are kept in the Franciscan archives of Saint Trond, in present-day Belgium, and have been edited by Brendan Jennings in 'Sint-Truiden: Irish Franciscan Documents', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 24 (1961), 148–98.

26 Cf. Gerry O'Keefe, 'St Francis Abbey 1230–1630: A History and Archaeology of Kilkenny's Conventual Franciscans', *Old Kilkenny Review*, 68 (2016), 5–56.

27 According to the journal of a traveller, in 1681 only a few ruins remained of the friary. See Samuel Hayman, 'The Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Youghal: No. II', *Proceedings and Transactions of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 3.2 (1855), 326–36.

opened the way for the massive confiscation of Catholic owned land, including those of the Order.

Recovery began again under Charles II.[28] It continued during James II's reign, under the brief Irish Lord Lieutenancy of the second Earl of Clarendon. But it came to an abrupt end with William III's conquest of Ireland. The Irish Williamite Parliament adopted a series of laws to ensure the supremacy of the Protestant Church. The 'Bishop banishment Act' of 1692 (9 Will 3 c1) ordered all regulars to leave Ireland before the month of May the following year.

Before leaving for exile, the Council of the Franciscan Irish Province asked friaries to compile inventories of their possessions and to arrange for their sale or their safekeeping. The friars, foreseeing that the authorities would primarily be interested in seizing valuable silver, hastily arranged for sacred church vessels as well as vestments, to be handed over to devoted members of the local Catholic elites. Books other than those used for religious service were generally given away. As an example, the inventory of the friary of Kinalehan (Cineál Fhéichín in Gaelic), county Galway, lists only one book, a missal.[29]

Not all friars, however, went into exile. In 1731, the House of Lords set up the Commission of 'Enquiry into the State of Popery in Ireland'. According to its Report, there were at that time, 54 'friaries' in the country. However, the total number of only 154 friars given in the Report shows that during the first three decades of the 'silent century' of the Franciscan order in Ireland,[30] these 'friaries' were not convents in

28 According to a 1666 report 'De episcopo Hiberniæ' sent to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, 'plures ex Regularis cleris illud (i.e. Ireland) reudentes post restitutum regem' (document from the Luke Wadding Collection, see note 24).

29 The friary was destroyed in 1609, and restored under the patronage of Ulick Burke, Earl of Clanricarde (1604–1658). C.f. Keith Smith, 'The Inventory of the Franciscan Friary of Kinalehan (1698),' *Archivium Hibernicum*, 69 (2016), 207–14.

30 The phrase is Joseph Mahon's, in 'The Silent Century', in *The Irish Franciscans*, pp. 77–101.

any shape or form, but rather a group of a few friars housed in a local building which served as an oratory.[31]

This overview of the history of Irish Franciscan friaries provides the context within which we can try to follow the fate of some of their libraries from the post-Reformation to the late seventeenth century. For this period, three important manuscript sources are available: the *De Provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci* written by Donatus Mooney, Minister Provincial of the Irish Province, following his visitation to Ireland in 1617–18,[32] the *Brevis synopsis Provinciæ Hyberniæ* Fr[atr]*um Minorum* written in 1629 by the Vicar-Provincial Francis Matthews,[33] and a list of books discovered among other documents and now available in 'Papers Relating to Meelick Friary 1644–1731'.[34]

The earliest lists stops at year 1523, the latest date for the second one is 1676 and for the third one, 1692. The lists will serve as the basis for a search to find out if the All Hallows volume was among them. They also have the wider interest of providing a perspective on the chequered history of Franciscan libraries and of their survival over a long period of time.

The first and earliest list comes from the friary of Youghal in County Cork. This important house was one of the first of the Irish congregations to adopt the Observant reform in 1540. It survived the Henrician Reformation and the first rebellion that took place against the English in the 1570s, but was ravaged and partly destroyed during the Second Desmond Rebellion of 1583. It was re-erected in 1629.[35] A list of its collection offers a view of an important early Franciscan

31 On the *Enquiry*, see the introduction to 'Report on the State of Popery, Ireland, 1731', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 1 (1912), 10–27.

32 'Brussels MS. 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De Provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci', pres. by Brendan Jennings, *Analecta Hibernica*, 6 (1934), 12–138.

33 'Part II: Brevis Synopsis Provinciae Hiberniae FF. Minorum', pres. by Brendan Jennings, *Analecta Hibernica*, 6 (1934), 139–91.

34 Cathaldus Giblin, 'Papers Relating to Meelick Friary 1644–1731', *Collectanea Hibernica*, 16 (1973), 43–88.

35 '...aliquibus fratribus et occisis ab Anglicis hæreticis anno 1583 vacavit destructus (Conventus Yogholensis), donec anno 1627...in civitate erecta est residentia, instituto Bernrdino Medo, theologo et prædicatore...' Jennings, 'Part II: Brevis', p. 144.

collection as it existed in 1523, the date at which the recording of its contents ends. In his report of his later visitation of the friary in 1616–17, Donatus Mooney mentions 'some books ("aliqui") of some importance' among them a large Gradual[36], but it is not clear whether he was told about them or if they had actually returned from a place of hiding.[37]

The list contains 150 titles, some bound in composite volumes. It is divided chronologically into three sections, the first two compiled together, the third separately. In some parts, the titles in the list are in clusters, short sequences corresponding to a classification by broad categories, such as *sermones* in the first section, Canon Law works in the second, and homilies in the third. In format, therefore, the list comes closer to being a catalogue.[38]

The first section, up to 1491, shows the characteristic traits of similar libraries before the Reformation. It includes a Latin Bible[39], an edition of the *Fioretti* of St Francis in Latin,[40] editions of works of Thomas Aquinas, and some other, widely popular theological treatises,

36 'Sunt et aliqui libri e quorum numero est unum Graduale magnum integrum'. 'Brussels MS.3947', p. 73. The *Graduale* is n° 4 (b) in the Catalogue.

37 According to Donatus Mooney in the same report, at some time during the troubles of the previous century, sacred vessels from the friary were deposited for safekeeping in the Desmond *castellum* of Dronmana; this was also perhaps the case for the books of the library.

38 By comparison, a library such as that library of the Observant convent of Sospel in the hinterland, of Nice in France, founded in the late fifteenth century, shows that the growth of the libraries of later foundations only really took off in the seventeenth century, a period particularly unfavourable to the foundations existing in Ireland. The early Sospel books were not systematically classified until late in the century (c.f. Cousin, n. 12). The Youghal catalogue provides a snapshot of a library in the process of an early classification.

39 [Nicolaus de Lyra], '*Bibla Latina cum postilla* [sic]', probably one of the Anton Nuremberg editions in four parts, but bound in five volumes.

40 Entered in the catalogue as 'flores francisci in duobus locis'. On the history of the early editions of this text see Antonio Montefusco, 'The History as a Pendulum: The "Actus" and the "Fioretti"', *Franciscan Studies*, 71 (2013), 361–73.

including as expected, works by some of the Franciscan *auctoritates*. All these are works frequently found in late medieval religious libraries.[41]

The second section contains works added to the library between 1491 and 1520 (n° 79 to 101). It shows the further growth of its holdings as well as a diversification of the areas covered: a group of works, entered in a separate hand, consists of acquired editions of Canon Law sources, notably a 'Panorminatus in quinque voluminibus', i.e. the commentaries on the Decretals by the last of the great medieval canonist, Palorminato (Nicolas Tudeschis).[42] These works testify to the requirement of having to hand, means for the regulation of ecclesiastical conduct and of the relations between the community and the society around it. Another group of works, stated as 'formerly for the use of Maurice Halan', a friar, perhaps the 'lector' of the convent, looks like resources used in the training of novices. In this section we find a volume of the sermons of Jacob of Voragine but not the *Tractatus*, and also a copy of the *Antoninus* (n° 92 in the list). It is not, however, one of the five known incunabula editions of the *Confessionale* which have the added *Sermo* of Chrysostomus, as in the All Hallows volume.[43]

The third section (n° 101 to 150) includes a number of homilies and others works used for preaching and pastoral ministry. Five items are said to still be or to have been 'with' different fathers (e.g. 'in manu', 'fuerunt', 'fuit', 'erat pro') named in the list. This suggests that some friars engaged in pastoral work had not returned the volumes to the

41 Among them is a copy of Bonaventura on the *Sentences* of the Magister Sententiarum, Peter Lombard (probably in edition of 1491 by Koberger), at least two among the greatly influential works of Pope Gregory the Great, his 'Moralia [sive Expositio in Job] in duobus voluminis' of which there were six incunabula editions, three of them published in different issues in Basel in 1496. And a copy of an edition of his four books of *Dialogi* (published in at least five editions between 1494 and 1520, most probably one of later German editions). For details of editions mentioned here, see their full notices in the Incunabula Short Title Catalogue.

42 Either the earlier edition in four parts of 1485–86 by Anton Koberger, or more probably the later Milan edition of 1501 by Nicolas de Benedictis.

43 There were quite a few incunabula editions of the single *Confessionale* text. Maurice Hanlan could have acquired one of these or one of the five post-incunabula, for his own use before 1520.

common library. Some of them are stated to be in small format — nº 148 is a missal 'in parvo volumine' — which made it easier to carry them and if needs be, to conceal them on one's person. It is worth noting that the section includes a *Summa*, a concordance of some type, with explanations in German provided (nº 145). It is further evidence, albeit small, of the movement of books and friars and with them ideas, from Germany to Ireland during the pre-Reformation period.

The list from the library of the friary of Meelik, County Clare, contains 48 titles.[44] It is more a shorthand inventory than anything close to a catalogue. The list was obviously made in haste by a friar familiar with the books, as shown by the very succinct short-titles that he used. It includes a few early editions of Franciscan *auctoritates*, such as Pierre Tartaret's *In Philosophiam Scoti*,[45] but most of the books listed date from the latter part of the seventeenth century, including an *Introduttione della Vita Divota* of Francis of Sales[46] and a copy of the *Lucerna Fidelium*,[47] giving us, as far as we can safely determine, the date of 1676, beyond which no addition was made to the collection. These acquisitions were made during the post-1660 period. And by then Antoninus Florentinus's *Confessionale* had long ceased to be used by confessors. Unsurprisingly, no edition of it is featured in the list. On the other hand, the Meelik list is an example of how friary collections were preserved as well as they could be during difficult times, to be started again in more settled circumstances. It is a testimony of the determination of the members of the Order to maintain a library however unfavourable the times could be.

44 Meelik convent was a late foundation established in 1492 (*An Historical Account*, nº 45). The list of books is included in Giblin, pp. 43–88.

45 Juan de San Antonio's *Bibliotheca Universa Franciscana* cites a Paris 1512 edition, but the one listed is more probably the Venice edition, edited by a Franciscan father and found in other Franciscan libraries: *D. Petri Tartareti..., Lucidissima commentaria, siue (ut vocant) Reportata, in quattuor libros Sententiarum et Quodlibeta Joannis Duns Scoti... insignioribus annotationibus illustrata per R.P.F. Bonauenturam Manentum Brixianum...* (Venetiis: apud Evangelistam Denchinum, 1607).

46 The first tome often found separately, of *Le opere di S. Francesco di Sales, Vescouo, e principe di Geneua. Diuise in cinque tomi...* (Venetia: Appresso li Bertani, 1667). (Tomo I *Ristretto della sua vita. Introduttione alla vita diuota.*)

47 *Lucerna fidelium seu Fasciculus decerptus ab authoribus magis versatis qui tractarunt de Doctrina Christana... authore Fr. Francisco Molloy..., Hiberno Medensis...in Collegio Sancti Isodori de Urbe Primario professore et Lectore Jubilato* (Romæ: Typis Sacrae Congreg de propaganda fide, 1676.)

The third document is a list of the holdings of the library of the Franciscan friary of the Abbey of Kilconnell, county Galway, as it existed in 1692. Following the 'Bishops Law' of 1693, an inventory was made of the convent possessions.[48] The inventory lists 38 books, all stated to be of a folio size, and to have occupied shelving of seven to eight yards in the common library. They were to be sent for safekeeping to a gentleman by the name of Francis Blake.

Two aspects of the Kilconnell collection are of particular interest. Notable is a copy of Suarez's 'In præcepta Decalog Theologia doctor subtilis alius tomus in folio ejusdem auctoris', which can only be, given its in-folio format, the Antwerp edition of his *Opus Morale*.[49] Like other works in the list, such as a 'Theologia morals sanchez', it shows an interest in cases of moral conscience, which indicates the increasing role that the friars played in providing spiritual and confessional guidance to the local Catholic laity. The *Anthoninus* long gone out of favour, does not feature in the list.

Notable features of the books on the Kilconnell list are their recentness and the diversity of their place of printing. Among the titles that can be identified with precision, the list includes the first and only contemporary edition of the *Cambrensis Eversus*[50]and the earliest edition of the *conciones calamati* dating from 1656–58, probably purchased at a Frankfurt book fair.[51] The list is evidence that remote houses such as Kilconnell were able not only to retain some books even during Cromwell's campaign, but also, more significantly, to continue to acquire books around and after Charles II mounted the throne in 1660.

48 Brendan Jennings, 'The Chalices and Books of Kilconnell Abbey', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 21.1/2 (1944), 63–70.

49 *Opus morale in praecepta Decalogi R. P. Thomae Sánchez...* (Antverpiae: apud heredes M. Nuti et J. Meursium, 1614–22).

50 [John Lynch, bishop of Killala, pseud. Gratianus Lucius, Hibernus], *Cambrensis eversus, seu potius Historica fides in rebus hibernicis Giraldo Cambrensi abrogate: in quo plerasque justi historici dotes desiderari, plerosque naevos inesse ostendit Gratianus Lucius, Hibernus...*, s.l. (St Omer: s.n, 1662). The work is refutation of Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambrensis) and a defence of Irish history and culture.

51 *Stella concionatorum seu... Alexandri Calamati* ([Francofurti]: Impensis Joannis Godefridi Schônwetteri, biblopolae Francofurtensis; Moguntiae: apud Nicolaum Heyll, 1656[–58]).

This exploration of surviving Irish Franciscan lists of books has produced no trace of our All Hallows volume. It is still possible, of course, that new documents will be discovered in the often mined but not always systematically explored, continental European Franciscan collections or in the historical archives of the Papacy. Nevertheless, it is safe to conclude that the end of the seventeenth century was a turning point in the history of Franciscan libraries. A new period began when books that were an integral part of convent collections assembled and maintained as well as possible during two centuries, became isolated items that began individual journeys eventually ending by their acquisition by collectors in the nineteenth century.

Reconstructing the History of the All Hallows Volume, A Review of the Evidence

We can now attempt to reconstruct the stages of the journey of our volume. The first stage took place in Saxony in the late fifteenth century or at the beginning of the sixteenth, when the two editions were purchased, assembled and bound together in Uelzen, to be conveyed to a religious institution in Ireland. A Franciscan friary was most likely to have been its destination.

As regards its second stage, we shall now consider the crucial material evidence provided by the volume itself. The inscription on its fore-edge shows that it was carefully stored on shelves among a library of books. The ripping-off of metal ornaments and clasps from it is, by contrast, characteristic of the type of damage inflicted on books when libraries were ransacked by soldiery during the early-modern period. Soldiers who broke into a library were not interested in looting the books themselves, but in tearing from them anything in copper or silver that could easily be exchanged for ready cash.[52]

The violent expulsions of friars from their convents often meant the destruction of their possessions, but as the three lists analysed show, at least some of the books in their libraries survived until 1692. It should be noted also, that there is no evidence as regards Ireland,

52 Such was the lamentable case of the celebrated Corviniana destroyed in Buda after the Hungarian defeat by the Ottomans at the Battle of Mohács in 1526. On other similar destructions see Jean-Paul Pittion, *Le Livre*, pp. 253 ff.

that systematic search and seize raids for identifiable Catholic works, as those that were conducted for 'heretic books' in France or in Bavaria during some periods of the sixteenth century. In fact, cases are known where convent books were seized by powerful individuals for their own collections.[53] These early bibliophiles were primarily interested in early manuscript copies, including copies of religious works which they would also have used for their own devotion. It is most unlikely that they would have acquired, or seized, a damaged copy of the *Antoninus*, of which many copies were already available.[54]

The state of the All Hallows volume, therefore, is strong evidence that is the result of a deliberate mutilation suffered during a violent episode of ransacking by soldiery. One such episode comes to mind, which occurred when the city of Wexford fell to Cromwell's New Model Army during its military campaign against the Confederates. The ending of the siege was catastrophic for the city and for the long-established Wexford convent. The convent, already destroyed and left empty in 1583, had been rebuilt in 1629.[55] When the town fell in 1649, Cromwell's soldiery sacked it and much of the city was then burned. Seven Franciscans, among them Richard Synott, companion of Luke Wadding's novitiate, and some time Guardian of St Isidoro's, Rome, were killed by roundhead soldiers.

Franciscans had returned again to Wexford in the 1660s, only to be forced into exile in 1693. Nearly all the friars went into exile, but by 1733, three friars, all originally from Wexford, had returned. They were housed in a lodge that Ambrose O'Callaghan, OFM, Bishop of Ferns

53 The library of the important convent of Ross Errily, in the diocese of Tuam, founded c. 1460 was 'rifled by an [unnamed] Englishman' during Elizabeth I's reign in 1584. The library of the Franciscans of Kilkenny, was seized by John Bale, bishop of Ossory, when he expelled them in 1552.

54 One important collection of the period belonged to the powerful Earls of Kildare. Two lists dating respectively from between 1490 and 1523 and from 1531, have survived. The books featured in the earlier list are manuscripts as well as printed works, all in Latin mostly of a theological and devotional nature. It includes a manuscript of Antoninus Florentinus's *Tria volumina operis sancti Anthonii cum tabula*. See Aisling Byrne, 'The Earls of Kildare and their Books at the End of the Middle Ages', *The Library*, 14.2 (2013), 129–53.

55 '...ab Hæreticis anno 30 Elisabethæ Reginæ Angliæ..., vastatus et dirutus, vacavit donec anno 1615, sub Provencialu P. Donati Monei, un civitate erecta est residentia...' *Brevis*, p. 149.

since 1729, had built for himself in the town. The returned friars had studied on the Continent and brought some books with them, while other books were left in the lodge for their use by the bishop.[56] By 1773, they formed a congregation of seven friars in a now well-established new convent.

Books in the possession of the friars, already numbered 110, when in 1777, some 260 were added to them, from a bequest of a local parish priest by the name of John Wickham. The convent now had a properly constituted library and a catalogue of its books was started.[57] The collection then grew rapidly with the addition of number of other bequests, and reached a total of some 190. In 1798, a copy of *Encyclopedia Britannica* in eighteen volumes was purchased by the friars, a sign of their concern to keep the common library up-to-date.[58]

As it stood in 1777, the collection was composed of a majority of liturgical books and theological treatises from different places of printing, reflecting the study of the friars abroad: Some books in the list are marked 'f' for French and 'S' for Spanish. Contents include one of

56 In a 'Declaration' dating from 1733, the Bishop stated that the 'books' and 'appurtenances' in the lodge were to be reserved exclusively to the friars. At least some of these books, unfortunately not detailed, must have been left together with sacred vessels and vestments in 1692–93, for safekeeping with the local family whose help the Bishop acknowledges. See Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin, 'Documents Relating to Wexford Friary and Parish, 1733–98', *Collectanea Hibernica*, 8 (1965), 110–28.

57 The 'catalogue of the books belonging to the convent and in the common library' together with a list of the bequests which was added to an account book, are edited and analysed in detail by Ignatius Fennessy in 'Books Listed in Wexfod Friary Shortly before 1798', *Collectanea Hibernica*, 44/45 (2002/2003), 127–72. As edited, the catalogue is in six sections, the last five are those of the bequests.

58 This is the *Encyclopædia Britannica; or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature... Illustrated with near four hundred copperplates*, 18 vol. (Dublin: Printed by James Moore, 1791–98). See Frank A. Kafker and Jeff Loveland, 'The Publisher James Moore and His Dublin Edition of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica": A Notable Eighteenth-Century Irish Publication', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 26 (2011), 115–39. The work was purchased 'by the House' in a sale of October that year. There were five other buyers, all Reverend fathers from Wexford.

the six editions of the *Augustinus* of Cornelius Jansen, which includes the *De statu parvulorum* of the Irish Franciscan Florence Conroy,[59] and a number of French Jansenist and anti-Jansenist works including a copy of Irishman John Sinnich's *Saul ex-Rex*[60]. There is also a number of works of Franciscan interest by Alexander de Hales or the Scotist Mastrius. As expected from the Continental origins of the collection and the relative modernity of the books, the *Confessionale* is not featured among them.

On the other hand, besides the light it throws on the studies of Irish Franciscans and secular priests abroad, the 1777 list draws our attention to the role played by books owned by members of the secular clergy in the growth of religious libraries in the late eighteenth century. As noted earlier, some of these books also found their way onto the second-hand market in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is in this perspective that we shall finally consider the history of the Franciscan College library in Wexford during that last period for the light it may throw on the third stage of the journey of the All Hallows volume.

An important development occurred around 1826, when the Wexford College is reported to have received 'a large number of books'. The books were part of the rich library of the St Anthony's Franciscan college of Louvain, which was closed by the Batavian Republic in 1793. On that occasion, the books were transferred to the Irish Franciscan College of St Isidore in Rome.[61] Fearing their confiscation, the Irish Franciscan friar, Richard Francis Walsh, managed to select and acquire

59 First edition: *Cornelii Jansenii,... Augustinus... Ediderunt H. Calen et L. Froidmont. Accessit Tractatus de statu parvulorum sine baptismo decedentium ex hac vita juxta sensum B. Augustini, compositus a F. Florentino Conrio* (Lovanii: Typis Jacobi Zegeri, 1640).

60 John Sinnich, *Saul ex-Rex sive de Saule, israeliticae gentis protomonarcha, divinitus primum sublimato, ac deinde ob violatam religionem principatu vitaque exuto* (Lovanii: Typsis ac sumptibus Hieronymi Nempæi, 1662). John Sinnich was professor of theology in Louvain and was violently attacked by anti-Jansenist members of the Paris Irish College in Paris, for his defence of the *Augustinus*.

61 On the St Anthony collection, as it stands to-day, see Joseph MacMahon OFM & John McCafferty, 'The Wadding Library of Saint Isidore's College Rome, 1622–1700', *Archivium Franciscanum Historicum*, 106, (Ianuarius-Iunius 2013), 97–118.

some of its books then shipped to Ireland, to be housed in the new Franciscan College about to be erected in 1802. The College was selected by the Order the following year to receive and train Irish aspirants, after the loss of its continental colleges.

Fr Walsh appears to have settled into the friary of Wexford in 1807, and became its superior from 1815 to 1819. He was then appointed superior of St Isidore's in Rome from 1822 to 1826. Letters that he sent from Rome, speak of books being purchased and sent to Ireland. Unfortunately, he does not give any detail about them.[62] The Wexford consignment was kept for some time at the Customs House in Dublin because the friars could not pay the import duty. They were eventually released to the friars without payment.[63] Richard Walsh was re-appointed superior of Wexford in 1831. By 1833 he had managed to raise sufficient funds to build a spacious library for the college in order to house the large number of books then in possession of the college.

By a puzzling coincidence, the year 1833 was also when a large collection of early-printed books was put up for auction in Charles Sharpe's auctioneering rooms. All Sharpe book sales but one were of private libraries, though some that were clerical collections may have included volumes originally from Catholic or Protestant church vestries. This 1833 sale was an exception. It is specifically identified as that of an ecclesiastical institution. Its catalogue is entitled 'Catalogue of a splendid collection of books including the entire library of a monastery and that of a distinguished ecclesiastic which will be sold by auction by Charles Sharpe on Wednesday 16 Oct. 1833 and several following days, Sunday excepted'. The sale included some illuminated late medieval manuscripts, early Aldine editions and nearly two hundred incunabula or post-incunabula editions.

62 My sincere thanks go to Míchéal Mac Craith, historian of the Order and librarian of the Franciscan House of Killarney near Dublin, for the helpful guidance he provided to primary and secondary Franciscan sources. Needless to say, their interpretation and the conclusions I draw from the material that I have examined are entirely my own.

63 I am grateful to Fr Pat. Conlan, OFM, for the additional information he provided in a note communicated to me. A search of available Dublin Customs records and of petitions to the Chief Secretary's Office, in the Irish National Archives, regarding the release of the books has produced no result.

It is most unlikely that a collection of such size would have survived intact in an Irish monastery for centuries before it was put up for auction and it is our view that these books from — we stress — both a 'monastery' and 'a distinguished ecclesiastic' were the Louvain books. The sale catalogue does not that show any likely candidate for the All Hallows Volume. Though if it had originally been among them, it would not have been put into the sale given the state of its binding.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in 1833, a sale of books from collections that had been built in the Wexford college over the years, also took place during Richard Walsh's guardianship. There are various possible reasons: there may have been insufficient space to house them all in the new library; there may have been a desire to hold a more 'modern' collection for the training of the new aspirants and obviously, there was likely a need to raise funds. The theological *aggiornanento* that accompanied the rapid reconstruction of the Irish Catholic Church in the early nineteenth century, rendered older religious works, devotional or theological, increasingly obsolete. And by 1833, bibliomania had turned early-printed works from old fashioned curiosities into a fashionable commodity. The market this created offered unprecedented opportunities for raising funds, as witnessed by the Reverend Yore's later raffle.

Our investigations now come to an end. In conclusion, it is our contention that on the third stage of its journey, the All Hallows Volume of incunabula, mutilated as it was, was released for sale from one of the many-layered collections held by the Wexford Franciscan College, i.e. either from the collection transferred from the Louvain library or from individual collections donated by priests to the College as first took place in the late eighteenth century, or as a survivor rescued from the 1649 sacking of Wexford and later returned to the College.

Postscriptum

By an irony of fate in April 2014, as the College of All Hallows was conducting a final inventory of its rare books before closing, and as an antiquarian book dealer was engaged to value them, the incunabula volume was found to be missing. Alerted by Helen Bradley, detectives

from the Garda Síochána, the Irish police, came to investigate and the librarian immediately notified the international antiquarian book trade. The volume was later found to have been put up for sale, together with other stolen items, in a London auctioneering house. An arrest was subsequently made and the volume was returned into the custody of a Garda station where it was retained until the case came to court. In 2020, a man received a suspended sentence for the theft of the incunabula and of some antique prints.[64] The volume thus narrowly avoided disappearing once again from view, by being sold either 'legitimately' or surreptitiously. It is now safely kept in an Irish national collection.

64 See Fiona Ferguson, 'Security Man Who Stole Artwork from All Hallows Gets Suspended Sentence', *The Irish Times* (21 November 2019) https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/circuit-court/security-man-who-stole-artwork-from-all-hallows-gets-suspended-sentence-1.4091170.

Andrew Carpenter

Lustful Death and Loathsom Disease

Smallpox Poems in English from Ireland 1660–1800

It is surprising how many poetic elegies written in English in early modern Ireland mourn the passing of pets or tamed animals. Squirrels, blackbirds, larks, canaries, ortolans, loories, cats, dogs and even cows inspired elegiac verses as fulsome as those written for lords lieutenant, for beautiful young girls struck down in their prime, for faithful servants or, (as in the case of Goldsmith), for the death of a previously vibrant community. Expiring animals usually died of old age, though some were destined for the pot and others were accidentally shot by inexperienced hunters or intentionally tortured to death by cruel teenagers. As for the humans who expired, the cause of death could be a mysterious 'decline' or some unmentionable internal malady. But one very contagious — and often fatal — human disease, smallpox, was not only horribly visible on the skin of those suffering from it but indiscriminate in its choice of victim — from monarchs to housemaids. The disease was much feared throughout western Europe and its life-changing effects attracted considerable literary attention in England from its first appearance at the end of the sixteenth century. Thomas Spillman was probably the first to publish a poem on the disease in 1602, but Ben Jonson's memorable 'Epigram: To the small-pox' was also circulated: in that poem smallpox is described as 'envious and foul' and contemporary skin salves to sooth its sores are listed as 'Turner's oyl of talck' and 'Madam Baud-bee's bath'.[1] The most famous poem on the subject is Lady Mary Wortley Montague's vivid city eclogue,

1 Ben Jonson, 'Epigram XXXIV: An Epigram. To the Small-Pox', in *The New Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, ed. by Alastair Fowler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 144.

'The small-pox', which was widely read in manuscript from 1716 onwards and in print from 1745.[2]

In Ireland, poetic responses to smallpox varied. An early example is by an otherwise unknown poet who did not stint to describe its horrors: the victim was John Nelson, an eighteen-year-old student at Trinity College Dublin who died of the dreaded disease in 1671. Part of this poem reads:

Never than now did Death seem more a Hagg,[3]
  Who out of Envy has to him assign'd
Disease so loathsom, that we should not brag
  His Body was as spotless as his mind.
Thus have I seen a foaming Snail deface
A Thriving Plant, a leave a slimy Trace.

But sure 'tis rather Lust in Death, than Spite,
  That makes him, like to Ravishers, assault
Those most whose Graces temptingly invite,
  Force on, and after, half excuse the fault.
Base Ravisher! Unable to deface
The Inclosed Jewell, strok[4] the less priz'd Case.[5]

Since smallpox is now virtually unknown in Western Europe, we have little idea of how disgusting the disease is and how rapidly it destroys those afflicted with the worst strains. The image in this poem of the snail defacing a plant with its slime is strong enough for most of us, but the image of the second stanza — of death being driven by lust to ravish its victims — is horribly menacing; it is also revealing to see the rapist who has forced himself on his victim 'half-excuse the fault'; one thinks of the appalling ordeal that confronts a rape victim in today's courts in Ireland.

2 See David E. Shuttleton, *Smallpox and the Literary Imagination 1660–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For Lady Mary's poem see *Eighteenth Century Women Poets*, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 56–58.

3 An evil spirit: the word could refer to a man as well as to a woman.

4 i.e. struck; 'the 'jewel' was Nelson's mind, the 'case' his body.

5 *Verse in English from Tudor and Stuart Ireland*, ed. by Andrew Carpenter (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003), pp. 421–22.

The poem is a clever one, setting the spotless body and mind against that afflicted by the spots and pustules that mark the victim of this loathsome disease. It is also unusual in having as its subject a male sufferer: so many poems on this theme — like that of Lady Mary Wortley Montague — contrast the physical beauty of the young female victim before the disease with her appearance afterwards.

Among the volumes of verse circulating in early eighteenth-century Ireland, some of them printed in Dublin but many on the continent or in England[6] were translations of Claude Quillet's popular four-volume treatise *Callipaedia: Or the Art of Getting Beautiful Children*; the Dublin printings of Nicholas Rowe's poetic translation of this strange poem contain an extended passage warning parents to protect their children — particularly male children — from measles and smallpox.

> Besides, if for your Offspring you desire
> To keep his native Elegance entire,
> You must with speedy Remedies displace
> Those Foes that oft invade the Childish Race;
> Chiefly the *Measles* and *Small-Pox* beware,
> Those *Goths* and *Vandals* to the tender Fair,
> Which plant thick Ulcers, and young Beauty blight
> With pimpled Sores, ungrateful to the Sight.
> Strait for Relief to some *Machaon*[7] fly,
> Lest a foul Scar affect the sparkling Eye,
> Or Nose, or rosy Cheek, or dimpled Chin,
> Or roughen the smooth surface of the Skin.[8]

In social circles in both England and Ireland, smallpox and its effects were often noted and Swift, when living in London, but keeping in

6 See Mary Pollard, *Dublin's Trade in Books 1550–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), *passim* and Toby Barnard, *Brought to Book: Print in Ireland 1680–1784* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), pp. 15–46.

7 i.e. a doctor. In Homer's *Iliad*, Machaon was a highly-valued surgeon as well as a soldier.

8 Claude Quillet, *Callipaedia, or, the art of getting beautiful children in four books, translated from the original Latin of Claudius Quilletus*, vol. 3, 3rd edn (Dublin: s.n, 1728), p. 65. The poem's popularity could be linked to its advice on the sexual activities necessary to produce male children.

close contact with Ireland, mentioned the effects of smallpox often in his letters to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley.[9] A little later Swift's very conservative friend Patrick Delany went so far, in his eccentric account of the life of David, the Old Testament King of Israel, as to assert that the illness from which King David suffered was smallpox. Since the disease was unknown anywhere in the world until about the tenth century AD, Delany's ideas were gently ridiculed, though he defended them robustly in extensive footnotes to his extraordinary treatise.[10] Delany's friends quietly ignored his eccentric ideas.[11]

The interaction between England and Ireland shows again in poems commemorating a woman with strong Irish connections who died of smallpox in 1664. The Welsh poet Katherine Philips spent a prolific twelve months in Dublin shortly before her death. During her time in Dublin, Philips wrote important poems on the friendship she had with women in Ireland and translated Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée* into English at the prompting of the Earl of Orrery. She was in close contact with the vice-regal court of the Duke and Duchess of Ormond and with influential members of the ruling elite in the newly established Restoration administration.[12] The poetic coterie that Philips joined centred on Dublin Castle and was a consciously royalist one, aiming to reinvigorate standards of courtly behaviour and old-fashioned courtesy, as was being attempted by Philips's London friends such as Sir Charles Cotterell and by poets such as Abraham Cowley. The composition of verse in these circles was, as Marie-Louise Coolahan puts it, 'a social

9 Jonathan Swift, *Journal to Stella*, ed. by Abigail Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); the text contains eighteen references between pages 127 and 518.

10 Patrick Delany, *An Historical Account of the Life and Reign of David, King of Israel...*, vol. 3, 3rd edn (Dublin: s.n, 1743), p. 462. The footnotes are on pp. 462–67.

11 'I never mention to him the singularityes of Opinions in his Books...' (Swift to Alexander Pope, 23–31 March 1733), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift D.D.*, vol. 3, ed. by David Woolley (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999–2014), p. 615.

12 For a succinct and accurate account of Philips and the Dublin coterie, see Marie-Louise Coolahan, *Women, Writing and Language in Early Modern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 195–218, (p. 197).

and frequent activity'.[13] Philips's own coterie name was 'Orinda' and she has been known ever since as 'the matchless Orinda'.

Though many of the poems that members of the Dublin Castle coterie circulated among themselves were their own work, others, including some of Cowley's unpublished work, had been brought over from London. None of the material circulated in this carefully controlled manuscript medium in Dublin Castle was intended for the printing press or for public gaze. It was thus a matter of some disquiet to Philips and her aristocratic friends when Samuel Dancer, a bookseller recently arrived from London, obtained and published a selection of the poems circulating in the castle, including several of Cowley's unpublished pieces and three poems said to be by 'a Lady' — now known to be Katherine Philips. Only one copy of Dancer's *Poems by Several Persons* has survived, which suggests that the volume was suppressed almost as soon as it appeared.[14] Because it contains poems by Cowley, the book has sometimes been incorrectly catalogued as his work: in fact, his is only one of the poetic voices in the book.

Philips returned to London in July 1663 and died of smallpox less than a year later. One of the poets celebrating and commemorating her in the first authorized printing of her works in 1667 was the same Abraham Cowley. He contributed two of the commendatory poems that preface the poetic texts; the first stanza of his 'On the Death of Mrs Katherine Philips' reads:

13 Harold Love has shown how deeply the writing of poetry was embedded in court circles and high society in Restoration London. Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), *passim*.

14 Apart from the unique copy of *Poems by Several Persons* in the Folger Library, Washington DC, the only record of its publication is an announcement by Dancer in his printing of Jeremy Taylor's *A Discourse of Confirmation* (Dublin, 1663) that he was shortly to publish a book entitled *Poems by Several Persons of Quality and Refined Wits*.

Cruel Disease! ah could it not suffice
Thy old and constant spight to exercise
Against the gentlest and the fairest sex,
Which still thy Depredations most do vex?
Where still thy malice most of all
(Thy malice or thy lust) does on the fairest fall?
And in them most assault the fairest place,
The Throne of Empress Beauty, ev'n the Face?
There was enough of that here to asswage
(One would have thought) either thy Lust or Rage:
Was't not enough, when thou, Prophane Disease,
Didst on this glorious Temple seize,
Was't not enough, like a wild zealot there,
All the rich outward ornaments to tear,
Deface the Innocent Pride of beauteous Images?
Was't not enough thus rudely to defile,
But thou must quite destroy the goodly Pile?
And thy unbounded Sacrilege commit
On the inward Holyest Holy of her Wit?
Cruel Disease! there thou mistook'st thy power;
No Mine of Death can that Devour;[15]
On her Embalmed Name it will abide
An Everlasting Pyramide,
As high as Heaven the Top, as Earth the Basis wide.[16]

The writing of extensive verse elegies was a common enough feature of courtly or quasi-courtly coteries in England and in Ireland in the seventeenth century, and poets who had served their apprenticeship before the Restoration felt impelled to develop striking analogies and create memorably unusual metaphors. However, tastes change and the extraordinary images in this particular poem were severely criticized by Cowley's eighteenth-century editor, Bishop Richard Hurd (1720–1808) who was shocked by lines 18–19 where the poet is berating smallpox for the sacrilege of destroying 'the inward Holyest Holy' of Philips's wit; 'I wish' wrote Hurd, 'the poet had forborn this allusion'; elsewhere in the poem, Hurd wrote that he considered one of Cowley's images

15 These lines refer back to Orinda's 'wit' which death cannot undermine or destroy but which will live for ever, engraved on the 'pyramide'.

16 *Poems by the most deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips The matchless ORINDA...* (London: J.M. for H. Herringman, 1667), sig.f2r.

'quite out of season'.[17] The good bishop was only a few years ahead of Dr Johnson in considering Cowley's poetry — like that of John Donne — too 'metaphysical' for cultural comfort; indeed, in his preface to his selection of Cowley's work, Bishop Hurd had justified his editorial actions on the grounds that: 'But every thing he wrote, is either so good or so bad that, in all reason, a separation should be made; lest the latter, which, unhappily, is the greater part, should, in the end, stifle and overlay the former.'[18]

Since Cowley's use of the image of the 'lust' of smallpox predates by a few years the similar reference in the elegy on John Nelson, one may well be an echo of the other. But Cowley's idea that Orinda's embalmed name will endure on an everlasting pyramid as high as heaven and as wide as the earth does seem excessive. Modern taste has rehabilitated Donne and other metaphysicals but not — or at any rate, not yet — his fellow 'fantastick', Abraham Cowley.

Smallpox continued to return to the British Isles and to North America in waves throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — one of its many Irish victims was the harper Turlough O'Carolan who was blinded by the disease in about 1690 — and various attempts were made to provide a cure or an antidote for it. Twenty years into the eighteenth century, a violent debate took place in England and Ireland between those in favour of the newly fashionable practice of 'variolation' — which involved the introduction of a small amount of the serum of smallpox into the patient's body — and those bitterly opposed to it. The latter included medical men as well as theologians. It was Lady Mary Wortley Montague who, herself a sufferer from smallpox, had observed variolation in action in the Middle East where she was living with her diplomat husband, and had become determined to encourage the practice in England. She had her two children treated and, using her status and connections in society, became a fervent advocate for the use of variolation in England. Experiments were carried out on, among others, condemned prisoners in Newgate prison.

As variolation became more widely known and practiced, a ferocious pamphlet war ensued in North America, England and Ireland

17 *Select Works of Mr. A. Cowley. in Two Volumes* ed. by Richard Hurd, vol. 1 (Dublin: J. Exshaw and others, 1772), pp. 163, n. m and 164, n. n.

18 *Cowley*, p. vi.

and variolation — also known (mainly by its opponents) as 'ingressing', 'ingrafting', 'infusing' or 'transfusing' the smallpox — was widely condemned as an impertinent interference in God's plan for mankind as well as being dangerous for the individual patient. The defenders responded energetically with detailed printed accounts of the successful use of variolation in Boston and elsewhere in New England; the debate divided the medical world and senior representatives of the two sides came to blows in the street outside London's Gresham College in February 1721.[19] By that stage, pamphlets attacking and defending the practice had reached Ireland where the printer and bookseller, George Grierson issued a set of texts in favour of variolation. Grierson's volume also contained a letter from a Doctor Cuming addressed to himself and dated Dublin 19 May 1721. This letter, which further defended variolation, was, in turn, attacked by the anonymous author of *Remarks on Doctor Cum—ng's Letter to Mr. Grierson the Bookseller, concerning the manner of inoculating or ingraffing, or more properly, transfusing, or Infusing the Small-pox* (Dublin, 1722). This caustic and sarcastic pamphlet ends:

> If Mr. *Grierson* had been the Doctor's friend as much as he profess'd himself Mr. *Grierson*'s, he wou'd never have printed this Letter; and therefore, dear Doctor, if you will prevail on Mr. Grierson, in the next Edition of the Pamphlet, to leave out your Letter, I promise to contribute largely towards having your Picture prefix'd to the Title Page: And, in the mean time, God love your sweet Face, trouble us no more with your Writings.[20]

The 'angry debate and fierce contention'[21] about variolation continued for many years, and sixteen books or pamphlets concerning smallpox were published in eighteenth-century Dublin, at least one of them, by a

19 Pat Rogers, 'Dr John Arbuthnot and the Smallpox War of 1719', *Swift Studies*, 35 (2020), 9–44 (p. 11).

20 *Remarks on Doctor Cum—ng's Letter to Mr. Grierson the Bookseller concerning the manner of inoculating or ingraffing, or more properly, transfusing the Small-pox* (Dublin: s.n, 1722), p. 8.

21 Anon, 'A Reply to the Religious Scruples against inoculation the small-pox' in *A Collection of Pamphlets: containing the way and manner of inoculating the small-pox....* (Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, at the Two Bibles in Essex-street, 1722), pp. 34–45 (p. 34).

John Smyth, originating in Dublin.[22] The controversy was only resolved in the 1790s when Edward Jenner proved that vaccination with cowpox provided safe and effective protection against smallpox.

One of the those who caught smallpox in the countryside in eighteenth-century Ireland was Oliver Goldsmith. Like Dr Johnson, Goldsmith survived the attack but he used the disease to effect one of the transformations he wrote of in his early poem 'The Double Transformation: A Tale.' The poem tells of a pretty young wife who turns from her coquettish and immoral life back to her elderly husband after an attack of smallpox reduces her beauty. The poet picks up the story when the wife is at her most flirtatious and the marriage at its most fragile, the two partners seemingly destined to live separate lives.

> Now, to perplex the ravell'd nooze,[23]
> As each a different way pursues,
> While sullen or loquacious strife
> Promis'd to hold them on for life,
> That dire disease, whose ruthless power,
> Withers the beauty's transient flower:
> Lo! the small-pox, whose horrid glare,
> Levell'd its terrors at the fair;
> And, rifling ev'ry youthful grace,
> Left but the remnant of a face.[24] 10

Goldsmith does not mince his words: 'dire disease', 'ruthless power', 'horrid glare', terrors 'rifling ev'ry youthful grace' and, perhaps most telling of all, that wonderful last line: 'Left but the remnant of a face'. Somehow the phrase 'a face' seems much more desolate than 'her face' would have been. Smallpox was indeed a life-changing experience.

Unlike almost every other poem about smallpox that ends with a death, Goldsmith's story appears to have a happy ending. Once her looks are gone, the lady's 'country beaux and city cousins, lovers no more' 'flew off by dozens' and 'even the captain quit the field'. She turns over a new leaf, 'humility displaces pride', and the poem ends:

22 John Smyth, *The Safety of Inoculating the Small-pox or, a Successful Performance of that Operation* (Dublin: Printed by John Harding, 1723).

23 i.e. the noose of marriage.

24 *Poems by Oliver Goldsmith...* (Manchester: s.n, 1748), pp. 51–54 (pp. 53, 54).

No more presuming on her sway,
She learns good nature ev'ry day:
Serenely gay, and strict in duty,
Jack finds his wife a perfect beauty.

More common among poets was the need to mark the passing of the small-pox victim in elegiac verse, particularly as the death was, more often than not, of a young person. Here, for instance, is a poem by Olivia Elder, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister from Aghadowey near Coleraine. This poet is remarkable for the verse letters she wrote to her friends describing her daily activities on the small farm she ran with her father. The fullest of these verse letters — in which she describes herself trying to make time to write poetry between such tasks as making turf ricks, killing geese, boiling potatoes and cleaning the grate — is to her friend Mrs A.C.H.[25] The same friend lost her only daughter, a little girl of five years old, to 'a mortification on the small-pox' in April 1771. Olivia's poem on the occasion, after the usual expressions of envy that the dead girl is being allowed into paradise without having to live a full life, contains the affecting spectacle of the little girl's friends gathering round her corpse horrified at what they see.

Blest Babe, prescrib'd so short a date,
While others toil so long!
Allow'd so soon, oh envied fate!
To join the blissfull throng:

Years after years roll on, & see
Our painfull course not run;
While Heaven bestows the prize on thee,
E'er thine was well begun.

While all thy little mates survey
Thy corps with wild affright,

And Parents view thy ruin'd clay,
All anguisht at the sight.

25 *The Poems of Olivia Elder*, ed. by Andrew Carpenter (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2017), pp. 3–7.

In the manuscript fair copy of her poems, the author revised the penultimate line to replace 'ruin'd' with 'putrid' and so increase the disquieting effect of the stanza. The poem continues with a vision of the child's soul hovering over her parents:

Perhaps thy new freed soul looks back,
Or fondly ling'ring near,
Impatient longs their grief to check,
And stay their falling tear:

Mistaken grief! Methinks it crys,
Is this a source of woe,
That I ascend my native skys
And leave all ill below?

Have ye not tasted many a year
Of dreary pain and care?
And can ye wish your offspring dear,
The Bitter Cup to share?

O blind to fate! could you foresee
What evils were in store,
What snares, what woes, awaited me,
You'd weep my loss no more.

See vice, that fatall pestilence!
How few escape its bane;
Now safe from its dire influence,
I fear nor crimes nor pain.

Knowledge and truth, all dark before,
Now blaze upon my mind,
And endless glorys are in store,
For troubles left behind.

Be Joyfull then ye worthy pair,
To whom my birth I owe,
Or if ye mourn, bestow a tear
On those I leave below.[26]

26 *The Poems of Olivia*, pp. 79–80.

The idea that the little girl should be thankful to be spared from a life of vice may seem surprising to modern sensibilities but would have been less so to an eighteenth-century rural Irish Presbyterian for whom sin was believed to lurk around every corner. But Olivia's emphasis on dreary pain and care, on the bitter cup, evils, snares and woes, reflects a strain that runs through much of her poetry — that we are in an imperfect world from which death would be a release — even, it seems, death from smallpox. Whether the little girl really did find herself in paradise surrounded by blazing knowledge and truth remains an open question but Olivia admitted that she herself found life in the north of Ireland dreary and depressing — inducing in her visits from what she described as 'the vapoury queen'.

Variolation and other experimental procedures to deflect or mitigate smallpox continued throughout the eighteenth century — not always successfully. One of the Irish patients who died after variolation was commemorated by the poet and novelist Dorothea Du Bois. Dorothea herself lived an eventful life: she was born in Dublin but her father, the earl of Anglesea, declared that his marriage to her mother was bigamous and that she and her sister were therefore bastards; he threw the young Dorothea, her mother and her sister out of his Dublin house. For the rest of her life, Dorothea fought for justice, writing vivid accounts of the unkindness of her father and her half-brother, suing them in the law courts and confronting them in person. Her story is told in entertaining detail in her long poem 'A True Story'.[27]

Dorothea was a lively and inventive poet who is now known as one of the eighteenth century's most ardent and vocal feminists. However, when it came to variolation, she seems to have followed the standard line of those who objected to variolation on religious grounds. These grounds were that it was God's right to determine who was to live and who was to die and that variolation was an interference with God's plan. Considering how radical Dorothea Du Bois was elsewhere in her writing, her espousal of this conservative view is surprising. However, this is the position she took up in her poem 'On the Death of a Young Lady who was Inoculated for the Small-pox'.

27 For a selection from that poem, see *Verse in English from Eighteenth-century Ireland*, ed. by Andrew Carpenter (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), pp. 333–37. For the whole text, see [Dorothea Du Bois], *Poems on Several Occasions by a Lady* (Dublin: s.n, 1774), pp. 1–27.

Did you, to save poor *Sally*'s Beauty strive?
Have you destroy'd what might be still alive?
Where was a tender Mother's Fondness flown,
Or who'd inflict *Job*'s torment on their own?
Who wou'd presume to tempt the Lord on High,
Or his divine Authority defy?
Audacious mortals, see! how soon He can
Undo and frustrate the Attempts of Man.
Sweet *Sally* thanks thee, for thy unskill'd Pains,
Your's still be the Affliction, her's the Gains.
She like a Rose misplac'd by Nature, sprung
From a coarse Bramble, on a heap of Dung;
But to her kindred Heaven, she is gone,
Have you her Equal with you? no not one.

As if to rub salt in the wounds already inflicted on Sally's poor parents, Du Bois continues by stressing the girl's good nature and then proposes the unusual theory that though 'the heart' is quickly gained if the subject is beautiful to look at, 'sense' is needed to detect true charm.

Sally indeed, was lovely and discreet,
Mild in her temper, in her Nature sweet,
Innocently gay, civil yet sincere,
For *Sally* was, in short, above her Sphere.
Ah! was it then the mere effect of Pride?
And strove ye just to save a fair Outside?
Was not a Soul in such bright Robes array'd
Sufficiently attractive in the Maid?
Who wou'd the Mind's superior Beauties place
In Competition with a pretty Face?
And yet, where is the wise Mamma or wiser Father,
Who if they had the Choice, wou'd not much rather
Have their sweet darling Babe a perfect Beauty,
Than just remark'd for Piety and Duty?
The Sight attracted, quickly gains the Heart,
While Sense, but slowly does her Charms impart;

The poem ends on a note of almost unbearable self-satisfaction and smugness.

> But, Thanks to Heav'n! who has given me
> Sufficient Sense, to wait its wise Decree;
> No Vanity of mine, shall make me dare
> With its high Judgment e'er to interfere.
> But to my lov'd Creator, I will still
> Submit each Dictate of his Servant's Will.[28]

This piece of sentimental, overblown rhetoric may strike the modern reader as precisely the kind of verse against which Wordsworth and Coleridge were protesting in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

In a way, however, that is the point. Dorothea Du Bois's poem reflects a strain in the verse of late eighteenth-century Ireland which had passed its 'sell-by' date within a few years of its publication. A recent online resource has drawn attention to the enormous quantity of verse written by women in Ireland in the romantic period,[29] much of it better than the poem we have been looking at; but most poets of the era were more interested in politics and the developing sense of Irish national pride than in illness. At the same time, as medical science progressed, smallpox was losing its fascination and becoming less of an appropriate subject for poetry.

In the early modern period, however, the personification of an apparently random and potentially fatal illness could be poetically attractive, and the presentation of smallpox as a rapacious assailant was not entirely ridiculous if the victim was a woman. Equally, the idea that smallpox was visited on erring humans by an all-wise creator and that penance was a more appropriate reaction than inoculation belonged to a culture that, by 1800, was changing as, increasingly, the word of science became more powerful than that of ecclesiastical dogma. The apparently arbitrary nature of smallpox and the monstrous transformation of a healthy body into something loathsome had tested the poetic sensibilities of those striving to commemorate or elegize the

28 [Du Bois], pp. 44–47.

29 *Irish Women Poets of the Romantic Period* (Alexander Street Press) is an electronic database containing 80 volumes of verse by 50 women poets writing in Ireland between 1768 and 1842.

victim in early modern Ireland. A poem on a death of a pet or a tamed animal does not draw tears from the reader; but a poem on the death of a human from smallpox might well do so, and it certainly forces the reader to confront something unnatural and unpleasant: this is not a happy experience for poet or reader and both might choose to avoid it, if allowed to do so. This situation is well put in Nicholas Rowe's Dublin-printed translation of a passage from the *Callipaedia* as the poet's 'daring muse' falls silent when trying to describe what happens when smallpox strikes the beautiful youth, Daphnis.

> *Daphnis* was once the Beauty of the Plain,
> Till this Contagion seiz'd the lovely Swain:
> How he was courted! How the Idol grown
> Of the fair Sex, and Darling of his own!
> *Daphnis* the breast of each Beholder fir'd,
> *Daphnis* alone the longing Nymphs desir'd;
> But now they pity whom they once admir'd.
>
> But this is foreign to the Poet's Art,
> This pious Care is the Physician's Part:
> Who can endure my Rashness, or excuse
> The bold Presumption of my daring Muse![30]

End

30 Quillet, p. 65.

Conor Carville

Yeats, the 'Retour à l'ordre' and Fascist Aesthetics
Reading 'The Statues' in 2020

The 1920s and the 1930s saw, all over Europe, a turning away from the non-representational styles of visual art that had appeared in the early years of the century, together with a hardening of extreme political positions. This development is particularly clear in France, the centre of the modernist experiment in painting and sculpture, and has duly been given a French name: the *Retour à l'ordre*. The reference to 'order' here gives us a sense of a Thermidor, a period of reaction, and the aesthetics of the period certainly have that quality. In this they are responding to social and political developments, and in particular anxieties over national identity fomented by opportunist politicians, brought on by migration from the so-called East. In what follows I want to place Yeats's late visual aesthetics in *A Vision*, written mostly in France and Italy, in the context of the *Retour*, and to note their conformity and divergences from this broader context. I will finish by pointing to parallels between my findings and various moments in 'The Statues', a poem W.J. Mc Cormack singles out in *Blood Kindred* as one of Yeats's greatest.[1] I end on a note of caution, in that I argue that in order to throw light on today's political situation, with migration again being manipulated by populist demagogues, we need a close and nuanced account of the nature of the aesthetics of the 1930s, in the style of Mc Cormack's own work.

A Vision, Yeats's massive cyclic history of the years from 1000 BCE to 2100, was published in two versions, first in 1925 (henceforth *A Vision* A) and the second in 1937 (*A Vision* B). It can help orientate his attitudes towards aesthetics in the 1920s and 1930s, for he often draws parallels between the various gyres and phases that he sees unfold across time. The major events around which the account is organised are the birth of Christ and the expected advent of a new religious dispensation

1 W.J. Mc Cormack, *Blood Kindred: W.B. Yeats, the Life, the Death, the Politics* (London: Pimlico, 2005), p. 382.

roughly 2000 years later. This detailed history ends in 1927, however, shortly after the time of writing of the first version of the book, and Yeats then moves on to a prophetic account of the coming times. The twentieth century can thus be assigned to the final phases of the cycle, the period immediately before the birth of a new avatar, the 'rough beast' of 'The Second Coming', who will be arriving sometime round about, well, now.

Accordingly, Yeats's own lifetime parallels the century before the birth of Christ. Similarly, parallels can be drawn with the end of the first millennium AD, just before the dawning of the Christian civilization that marks the midpoint of the Christian religious era in Yeats's schema. There are two eras that shadow the early twentieth century then: (a) the period from about 300 BCE to 1 CE and (b) the period from 800 BCE to 1000 CE. Both of these epochs come immediately after a great aesthetic peak that, in Yeats's term, 'oscillates' between aspects of East and West, in the first case the art of the sculptor Phidias, with its combination of the Ionic and the Doric, in the latter case the Byzantine Pantokrator, with its poles of figuration and abstraction. In an important section of *A Vision* Yeats links these two moments explicitly in a moment I want to carefully attend to, in order to show how it is also a reflection on Yeats's own time:

> I think that I might discover an oscillation [...] like that between Doric and Ionic art, between the two principal characters of Byzantine art. Recent criticism distinguishes between Greco-Roman figures, their stern faces suggesting Greek wall-painting at Palmyra, Greco-Egyptian paintings upon the cases of mummies, where character delineations are exaggerated as in much work of our time, and that decoration that seems to undermine our self-control, and is, it seems, of Persian origin, and has for its appropriate symbol a vine whose tendrils climb everywhere and display among their leaves all those strange images of bird and beast, those forms that represent no creature eye has ever seen, yet are begotten one upon the other as if they were themselves living creatures. May I consider the domination of the first late *antithetical* and that of the second primary [...]?[2]

2 *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision (1925)*, ed. by Georg Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 192.

'Primary' and 'Antithetical' here refer to the two modes of religion, art and civilization that *A Vision* sees eternally pitted against each other, the Primary being monotheistic and democratic, the Antithetical being polytheistic and authoritarian. As Matthew Gibson comments, in the passage above Yeats argues 'that the non-representative character of Byzantine art was an Eastern, Persian impulse, seeing it as a "superhuman" primary, spiritual influence, which nevertheless combined with Greco-Roman form to create a new antithetical art in Byzantium 560 CE'.[3] Gibson makes this point in order to stress the major shift he rightly detects in *A Vision* B, where Yeats begins to downplay the influence of such a primary non-representational art associated with Persia. What I want to emphasize in this essay, however, is the way *A Vision* B, here and elsewhere, dwells instead on an Antithetical, representational, yet crucially, *still Eastern* artistic influence on Byzantine art. In order to do that I will tease out one particular aspect of the opposition between East and West in the passage above, that between the 'bird and beast' abstraction of Primary art, and the 'characterful' nature of the late Antithetical.

The images of bird and beast associated here with the East are referred to again in *A Vision*'s description of what Yeats calls 'the double mind' of early medieval Europe.[4] Given Yeats's own medievalism, his continuing (as we shall see) investment in the visual aesthetics of Rossetti and Morris and others, this is significant. Describing the tenth century, he writes:

> the spiritual life is [...] overflowing [...] yet this life [...] has little effect upon men's conduct, is perhaps a dream which passes beyond the reach of conscious mind but for some rare miracle or vision. I think of it as like that profound reverie of the somnambulist which may be accompanied by a sensuous dream — a romanesque stream perhaps of bird and beast images — and yet neither affect the dream nor be affected by it.[5]

3 Matthew Gibson, '"Timeless and Spaceless"? – Yeats's Search for Models of Interpretation in Post-Enlightenment Philosophy, Contemporary Anthropology and Art History and the Effects of These Theories on "The Completed Symbol", "The Soul in Judgement" and "The Great Year of the Ancients"', in *W.B. Yeats, Explications and Contexts*, ed. by Neil Mann, Matthew Gibson and Clair V. Nally (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2012), pp. 103–135 (p. 125).

4 W.B. Yeats, *A Vision* (London: Macmillan, 1937), p. 283.

5 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 283.

This double mind, this opposition between conscious mind and dream, with the two seemingly unintegrated, proceeding on separate tracks, is the earliest example in *A Vision* of what Yeats will call in the first version of the book, referring to the Modernism of Joyce and Eliot, 'that falling in two of the human mind which I have seen in certain works of art.'[6] One of these torn halves, in the early Medieval period, is the dream, exemplified by the Tree of Life imagery, the dizzying proliferation of fantastic birds and beasts in a Romanesque tapestry. It is typified above all by the disappearance of the human form. Later Yeats will say of the Romanesque that it is marked by 'the overflowing ornament where the human form has all but disappeared and where no bird or beast is copied from nature, where all is more Asiatic than Byzantium itself'.[7] The reference to 'copying' here is important: these birds and beasts have no source and are thus disseminated along the *Hodos Chameliontis* that Yeats thought was one of the afflictions of modernist literature. He likely also has Surrealist paintings in his sight at this point. All of this is, we should note, seen at this point in both versions of *A Vision*, as Asiatic and Primary.

We should also note here the association of Asia with a kind of excess that will eventually be confirmed in 'The Statues'. Yeats credits this Eastern influence with the initiation of Romance, but even as he does so he associates it with conflict between West and East. As he puts it: 'The Bishop saw a beauty [of a woman from Antioch] that would be sanctified, but the caliph that which was its own sanctity [...] it was this latter sanctity, come back from the first Crusade or up from Arabian Spain or half Asiatic Provence and Sicily, that created romance'.[8] This continuum between the mediaeval, the Christian and the art of the Caliphs is also found in Josef Strzygowski's *Origin of Christian Church Art*, which refers to a 'fusion of Iranian and Greek art which succeeded the displacement of the latter in late Roman times, and led gradually to the development of Byzantine art on the Mediterranean, of "Romanesque" in the West'.[9]

6 *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision*, p. 214.
7 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 287.
8 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 286.
9 Josef Strzygowski, *Origin of Christian Church Art* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 114.

Yeats was reading Strzygowski as he wrote and then later revised *A Vision*, and finding that the Austrian's radical theories of the history of Western Art chimed with his own sense of oscillation. Elsewhere Strzygowski is more strident in his sense of the nature of the transaction between cultures:

> The Hellenic, or better the Hellenistic, that survives, appears with Byzantium and then in the art of the Caliphs in a totally new disguise. As a consequence, the development cannot be described as a gradual expansion and a final all-dominant position, but that its penetration into the Orient encountered its limits in an early phase and a reverse effect took place in so far, as Hellas and Rome step by step drew back and the Orient finally not only regained its own lands, but also conquered the territory of Hellas and Rome.[10]

Strzygowski argues here that the Hellenic is first exported to the East, reaches a limit, is transformed by contact with the other, and then potentially washes back, transformed to exert pressure in a new guise. Although in recent years he has been recognized as a pioneer in world art history, Strzygowski was not above lapsing into a discourse of decadence to describe this:

> I see the pure and perfumed psyche of Hellas from the beginning surrounded by legacy hunting enemies who outstretched their hands to embrace and finally to crush it. As long as this beautiful child is bursting with strength and growing up in happy oblivion in her own land, these lurking evils have no strength. They wait, and as soon as they seek Hellas in their own land, they gain first influence, then power, and finally victory. The tenacious nature of the Orient cannot be overcome; it appears in the image of the eternal Jew.[11]

This kind of thing is most definitely missing from Yeats. As Gibson points out Strzgyowsky was a convinced National Socialist.[12] An archaeologist, his work is clearly indebted to that strain of German

10 Strzygowski, pp. 315–17.
11 Strzygowski, pp. 315–17.
12 Gibson, p. 123.

prehistory, exemplified by Gustaf Kossinna, that was concerned to link a putative German race with the original Indo-European peoples that linguists had been postulating for over a century. One of the ways in which he does this is by seeing a link between North European decorative art and the art of what he would go on to call the Aryan East, i.e. Persia and India. Indeed this link becomes so strong that Stryzgowski eventually sees Eastern abstract influences on Western art as ultimately stemming from the North.

In an addition to the 1937 edition Yeats states dramatically 'that most philosophical of archaeologists Josef Strzygowski haunts my imagination'. A couple of sentences later there is a succinct summary of that which interests the poet: 'He finds amid the nomad Aryans of Northern Europe and Asia the source of all geometrical and non-representative art', and then finally his own deduction: 'I begin to wonder whether the non-representative art of our own time may not be but a first symptom of our return to the primary'.[13] Stryzgowski's is one version of a wider German account of art history, highly influential on modernist art, that sketched out an opposition between the contending forces of abstraction and figuration. The most well-known example of this argument is found in Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy,* a short book that had an immense impact on the London avant-garde of the early part of the twentieth century, in particular Ezra Pound, T.E. Hulme and Wyndham Lewis, all well-known to Yeats.[14] Worringer draws a distinction between the harsh climate and landscapes of the Northern Europe and the more forgiving climate of the Mediterranean to argue that the art of the North was a response to 'the fear of empty space', a desire to annexe and master space through a kind of apotropaic art involving stylized inscription and repetitive, abstract composition. By contrast, he argued, Southern European, 'Latin' art demonstrated empathy with its surroundings, and this was displayed in a naturalistic representation, and in particular an affinity with the human figure. For Strzygowski a similar binary structure obtains, with the same values, though the distinction is now drawn between figurative Roman Art and an art from further East. Ultimately, however, Strzygowski will assimilate East and North by pushing the

13 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 257.

14 Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*: A *Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (New York: International University Press, 1953).

origins of the Oriental style further and further until he locates it origins in the steppe nomads of central Asia, Kossinna's Indo-Germans. Yeats reacts to Strzygowski in a way which seems to recognise the debt to Worringer, for his opposition between Greek and Byzantine images of Christ is inflected in terms of force and control: the Greek image is mild and empathetic, the Byzantine one powerful and hierarchical.

Returning now to the passage from *A Vision* where Yeats contrasts Persian bird and Beast with Greco-Roman 'character', I want to pursue the latter pole. Yeats changes the phrase describing the 'exaggerated' realism of Roman sculpture from 'characteristic lines' in *A Vision* A to 'character delineations' in *A Vision* B, emphasizing that it is the idea of the expression of individuality that, in the new version, he is decrying. This then is the element of Byzantine art that stems from Greco-Roman Palmyra in Asia Minor, and Greco-Egyptian Fayum, i.e. from Hellenistic world rather than Classical Greece. If there is a repetition of the Ionic-Doric oscillation in Byzantine art, here, it is thus not between the original, Greek, Phidian art of proportion and Persian decoration, but between the latter and a new kind of 'characterful' realism. This must be why Yeats calls the latter 'late *antithetical*' rather than simply 'antithetical', in the way that the Persian is securely primary. In other words the Hellenistic is recognisably in decline from the hight point of the Phidian Classical, it is still antithetical, but well on the way to becoming Primary.

Yeats finds something similar in the 1930s. His aversion to character in art is expanded upon in *Autobiographies*, where it is associated above all with Augustus John, who is interested only in

> character, in the revolt from all that makes one man like another. The old art, if carried to its logical conclusion, would have led to the creation of one single type of man, one single type of woman; gathering up by a kind of deification a capacity for all energy and all passion, into a Krishna, a Christ, a Dionysus; and at all times a poetical painter, a Botticelli, a Rossetti, creates as his supreme achievement one type of face, known afterwards by his name.[15]

15 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III: Autobiographies*, ed. by William H. O'Donnell, Douglas N. Archibald, J. Fraser Cocks III and Gretchen L. Schwenker (New York: Scribner, 1999), p. 372.

And he goes on, quoting from Blake, to say that Johns's 'is a powerful but prosaic art, celebrating the "fall into division" not the "resurrection into unity"'. Yeats is even more explicitly dismissive of character in the controversial screed 'On the Boiler', where he writes of the work of Diana Murphy, a young artist associated with William Rothenstein, who he had recently commissioned to work with The Cuala Press:

> I delight in Diana Murphy's work with one reservation. Of recent years artists to clear their minds of what Rossetti called 'the soulless self-reflections of man's skill' depicted in commercial posters and on the covers of magazines, have exaggerated anatomical details. Miss Murphy's forms are deliberately thick and heavy, and I urge upon her the exclusion of all exaggerations, the return to the elegance of Puvis de Chavannes.[16]

It is immediately after this that we find the essay's famous exhortation to 'Greek proportion' as opposed to the 'multiform, vague, expressive, Asiatic sea', the latter phrase substantially repeated in 'The Statues'.

'On the Boiler''s appeal to Rossetti's sonnet 'Give Honour unto Luke Evangelist' is worth pausing on. St Luke was, after all, reputedly the painter of the first icon, the lost Hodegetria once displayed in the Monastery of the Pantokrator. The almost immediate addition of Puvis de Chavannes reinforces the backward glance to the Byzantism of the *fin de siècle*, but introduces the pale, stark classicism of the French painter, the structure of feeling that Yeats terms 'elegance', so moving away from the lurid intensity of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and some of this own earlier effusions. As Jennifer Shaw and others have pointed out, Chavannes produced an art that seemed tailor-made for political appropriation by both left and right. The restraint and ambiguity of his style lent itself to multiple, divergent readings.[17] It is the pared-down, rarefied, solid yet spectral quality of his compositions that supplies this polysemy. Indeed thinking of Chavannes, alongside some of the other images that Yeats approved of, such as T. Sturge Moore's cover for *Axel*, Norah McGuinness's illustrations for *Red Hanrahan and The Secret Rose*,

16 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume X: Later Articles and Reviews*, ed. by Colton Johnson (New York: Scribner, 2000), p. 37.

17 Jennifer Shaw, *Dream States: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism and the Fantasy of France* (New York: Yale University Press, 2002).

or Rickett's *Sphinx* and his *Danaides*, we can sketch the rudiments of Yeats's preferred visual aesthetic as one lying somehow at an age to both realism and abstraction. Its attributes would include: hard-edged figuration, minimal modelling, static gestures, neutral backgrounds, central compositions, the limitation of action to one or two planes, pale or monotone colouring.

Chavannes is a regular reference-point for Yeats, who groups him along with the Symbolists as one of the great myth- and mask-makers. After witnessing an 1896 performance of Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, Yeats wrote that he felt that

> [c]omedy, objectivity has displayed its growing power once more. I say 'after Stephane Mallarme, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of [Charles] Conder, what more is possible'. After us the Savage God.[18]

Critics often cite this passage in order to prove Jarry's avant-garde credentials, assuming that the Savage God here refers to the coming generation of Dadaists and Surrealists that would venerate him. But if we place it alongside *A Vision*, such an interpretation does not seem quite so secure. By associating the avant-garde with the objective Yeats here sees it, like Modernism, as Primary rather than Antithetical, comedic rather than tragic. In this sense the avant-gardes may not be the Savage God, rather they are what comes before the Savage God, a God that will be antithetical, tragic and hierarchical, like the art of a slightly earlier age that Yeats admires here, and yet much more extreme and despotic than that art.

Later Yeats links Chavannes with Ingres, and mentions the latter's Perseus, alongside Rossetti, Blake, Watts, Moreau, Calvert and Charles Ricketts. 'Administrators of tradition' he calls them who, though 'they seem to copy everything [...] in reality copy nothing.'[19] I have already pointed out the importance of the idea of copying in the

18 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III*, p. 266.
19 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III*, p. 404.

earlier passage on bird and beast. There it is used as a criticism, and associates the Asiatic with Modernism, with both seen as disseminatory, simulacral, copies with no origin. If such a force is to be employed in art it has to be ordered. Artists like Chavannes seem to 'copy everything' because their works evoke both the great works of the past, and are also predominantly representational. But they copy nothing because of the ideal (and hierarchical) order of they impose, an order centred above all on the proportions of the idealized human body. But this does not yet really account for Yeats's understanding of the power of this art. He is not advancing a psychology of art like Worringer, whereby a geometrical abstraction is a means of ordering and controlling the void of a terrifying, primal existential space. Rather the emphasis is on the gnostic recognition of an immutable truth by a privileged cabal.

It is in this that painters like Chavannes and Ingres differ from the Impressionists, who 'suddenly taught us to see and feel, as everybody that wills can see and feel'.[20] The Impressionists copy the quotidian experiences of perception and sensation, and by so doing copy not so much *everything* but *everyone*. In this respect 'it is not [...] any accident that their art has coincided everywhere with a new sympathy for crowds, for the poor and the unfortunate'.[21] The reference to 'teaching' the viewer as an element in Impressionism here is striking, and suggests Yeats's strong sense of art, or certain kinds of art, as appropriated by the political and ideological. He sees the 'sudden' immersiveness of the Impressionistic experience, the identification and dissemination of the flickering commons of perception, as a didactic act. And he is not happy about it. In this he recognises the explicit agenda of artists like Pissarro, for whom the celebration of perception and nature was allied to the dignification of labour in the fields. But at the same time there is no sense here of any distance between art and the social field. Impressionism, without the distinction of myth or tradition, simply is pure 'character', an immediate registration of what is manifest.

If Impressionism 'teaches' the crowd, schools the viewer in a democracy of the senses, copies everyone and is assimilable by all, the myth- and mask-makers have a different relationship with their audience. The art of Blake, Ingres and Chavannes is, it seems, esoteric, auratic,

20 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III*, p. 404.
21 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III*, p. 404.

directed not at the crowd, but at a select few. It is this that makes such painters, in an odd phrase, 'administrators of tradition'. 'Administrators' here suggests the self-effacing acolyte or adept, channelling a secret knowledge that passes through them, frictionlessly, lodging in their art, where it will be available for the select few able to see it. To see it or rather to copy it, for the most important element in this inheritance is the depiction of the idealized human body:

> When revelation comes athlete and sage are merged; the earliest sculptured image of Christ is copied from that of the Apotheosis of Alexander the Great; the tradition is founded which declares even to our own day that Christ alone was exactly six feet high, perfect physical man.[22]

This insistence on the perfectly proportioned body recalls Phidias and the importance of measurement as index of beauty. Tradition copies too then: Christ's body is imitated from Alexander's and presumably so on down to the Ingres *Perseus* and Chavannes's *Vision of the Antique*, where Phidias himself admires the bodies of a group of Attic youths. It is the desire to achieve, or maintain, the perfection recognized in the Classical bodies of the Tradition that instantiates myth in history. Rather than the unmediated and universal impact of Impressionism, tradition must be actively read by a little platoon. Hence while Impressionism, in its Enlightenment emphasis on the instant of individual perception, exalts the Primary masses, Classicism, in its strict adherence to Myth, is the source of true expression, the strenuous self-fashioning of the antithetical personality.

In this way *A Vision* tends to see modernism as essentially Primary and democratic. But some variants of this are more Antithetical than others, are what we might call Late Primary, in that they stage anticipatory aspects of the coming, opposing revelation. Hence the 'double mind' of the medieval is exemplified in the high Modernism of Yeats's literary contemporaries. Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, with its 'dream association of words and images', inherits the abstract 'sensuous dream' of the Persian-Romanesque bird and beast, and

22 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume X*, p. 273.

yet also revels equally in the empiricism of the everyday.[23] Here the necessary ordering of myth is inoperative, but not because it is lacking, as with the Impressionists. Instead, as with the medieval episteme, in such work 'myth and fact [...] have now fallen so far apart that man understands for the first time the rigidity of fact, and calls up, by that very recognition, myth [...] which now but gropes its way out of the mind's dark but will shortly pursue and terrify'.[24] It is here that we can discern the lineaments of the Savage God to come, in the proper dark of a myth not yet actualized. There is still too much of character, of the rigidity of fact, of research, the automatic and the mechanical. Yeats uses all these terms to excoriate his younger contemporaries. Myth is present in Joyce and others, but not in the proper form, it is all out of shape from top to toe, dislocated, present as a whirling storm of sparks rather than stern Babylonian starlight.

Elsewhere, in an unused draft of for the end of *A Vision* B, Yeats writes of '*Ulysses* and the *Waste Land* where character and detail however clearly seen lead the mind away into some undefined immensity'.[25] The phrase 'undefined immensity' now speaks directly to 'The Statues', and the 'Asiatic vague immensities' that must be 'put down' by the Antithetical art of Phidias. And in this way both Modernism and the Asiatic become Primary, whereas, as we have seen, earlier in *A Vision* the East and its abstraction of bird and beast was specified as Antithetical. How can we square this change, this contradiction, which is also played out in *A Vision* B as published? What justifies and enables it? As we shall see, one small but very important new distinction between the East and the Asiatic is central here.

In a key addition to *A Vision* B's 'Swan and Dove', Yeats writes that he is now interested in the 'East that has affected European civilisation, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Egypt'.[26] Looking at the examples of the ancient art that *A Vision* admires, we can see a certain consistency to Yeats's identification of these three places. As I argue below, the Egyptian art he refers to here is not the Hellenistic sculpture of Alexandria, but much earlier dynastic sculpture, and the references

23 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 4.
24 *A Critical Edition of Yeats's A Vision*, p. 212.
25 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 467.
26 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 257.

to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia refer to what Strzygowski calls the Semitic, rather than the Graeco-Roman. It is by clarifying these specific references that Yeats begins to now associate the East with human, and therefore antithetical power rather than, as he does in the earlier passage, the Primary. As Gibson points out, in the revised text, by the 'East' Yeats now means 'human power [...] stretched to its utmost', represented in sculpture endowed with 'attributes of royalty'.[27] By contrast North and West are 'superhuman power', referring outside and beyond themselves to a unitary, transcendent God. In this way, *A Vision* B separates the East from the Asiatic, the latter now referring to something much wider, and not geographical in essence but rather aesthetic. In summary: East and the Eastern influence refers to a despotic, antithetical figurative art of human power; Asiatic refers to a primary, non-representational art of superhuman power. Further, it is worth noting that 'Asiatic' is a term with very specific resonances in the 1930s. It is, for example, the word that Heidegger uses in when he writes of the threat posed to Europe by the Asiatic.[28] It is generally agreed that here Heidegger is referring to Bolshevik Russia, and my suggestion is that Yeats is doing the same. More than that, Yeats's coupling of Asiatic with the word 'horde' in the prose drafts for the poem inflects the term both with connotations of the nomads of the Steppe, and a more general racist discourse of invasion.[29] If this is conceded then the first verse of 'The Statues' tallies with the new position of *A Vision* B: at the start of the poem Yeats has in his sights not the antithetical despotic East but the primary masses of the North. Indeed the rest of the poem will see the royal art of the East as a means of reasserting hierarchical tradition to counter both egalitarian demands and populist anxieties around cultural difference.

We can bring Yeats's aesthetics further into focus by tracing the way, in *A Vision* B, he is following Strzygowski on the explicitly 'didactic' art of 'Semitic' Mesopotamia. This is how Strzygowski describes it:

27 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 257.

28 Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 172.

29 Jon Stallworthy, *Vision and Revision in Yeats's 'Last Poems'* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 125–26.

> The idea of God among the Semites living under the empires in the great river valleys appears to have been directly inspired by the ruler's lust after power. The divine figure is furnished with all the attributes of the despot [...] It was no doubt in this cultural area that the great type of Christ Pantokrator developed from the Hellenistic figure of the judge.[30]

In *A Vision* B Yeats aligns himself with this description in some respects: 'From the Semitic East he [Strzygowski] derives all art which associates Christ with the attributes of royalty. It substitutes Christ Pantokrator for the bearded mild Hellenic Christ, makes the Church hierarchical and powerful'.[31] Yeats also draws directly on Stryzygowski's genealogy of the Pantokrator. As Strzygowski puts it, comparing Christ with Buddha:

> How different the type of Christ. The type prevalent even among ourselves to-day, that with beard and long smooth hair, is a Semitic creation. The Founder bears the physical characters of his race [...] The two Hellenistic unbearded types of Christ, the long-haired of Asia Minor and the short-haired of Alexandria, have been completely superseded in the West. [...] The Aryans, in fact, abandoned the Greek figure of the Founder in favour of the Semitic type of God personified as the Ruler. The true originators of this change were the Aramaeans, and they were closely followed by the Byzantine Court.[32]

It is clear from these quotations that Strzygowski sees the Pantokrator image, Christ as all-powerful, the Ruler, the hierarchical image that Yeats admires, as a product of Near Eastern, 'Semitic' aristocratic, autocratic culture. It is this that attracts Yeats, for it renders it, in his terms, Antithetical rather than Primary. By contrast, what Yeats calls the 'mild Hellenic Christ' from Graeco-Egypt or Asia Minor, is a Primary image, in that it is in Yeats's eyes democratic: Christ as common man.

30 Strzygowski, p. 161.
31 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 257.
32 Strzygowski, p. 162.

It is well attested that the sculptures of Christ in Alexandria departed from earlier neo-Attic versions by being more naturalistic. When Yeats associates the South with naturalism in *A Vision* B, this is what he is referring to, a humanistic mode of representation that he abhors.[33] But for Yeats the non-representational art of the North is not the antidote to this, in the way it is for Strzygowski. And so he goes looking for something else, something closer to his notion of myth, tradition and the ideal form of the body.

By human power Yeats means force, and more specifically despotic, violent, hierarchical political power. In 'Swan and Dove' he uses the image of what he calls 'the Gainsborough face' to capture what he sees as a visual correlative of antithetical thought, and links it with the idea of power.[34] Then, in a strange leap, Yeats links such portraiture with Egyptian sculpture, but this is emphatically not that of Hellenistic-period Egypt, whether the astonishingly realist portraits from Fayum, or the young, short-haired, beardless Christ that dominated Christian representation of Jesus in the fourth century. Rather it is the bust of Nefertiti discovered at Amarna in 1912, dating from the mid second millennia BC. It is, in other words aristocratic distance that is emphasized, at the expense of realist intimacy. If this is *human* power it is not humanist. It cannot be embodied in the mild and naturalistic forms of fourth-century Alexandrian sculpture. Rather, as Yeats puts it, it engenders as art that is hierarchical and powerful. Aside from the Pantokrator, the closest we may have to an image is the statue of the Assyrian god Nabu inspiring Sturge Moore's cover for *Axel*. The figure is stark and stylized, impassive, remote, clearly delineated. Although from a much earlier period, it comes from exactly the same geographical area — Mesopotamia and Asia Minor — as the Aramean sculpture Strzygowski saw informing Byzantine art, and shares with this 'Semitic' art its stern, hieratic style.

Most of what I have teased out here from the second version of *A Vision* is immediately applicable to 'The Statues'.[35] The 'Asiatic vague immensities' of line 12 can now be seen, I hope, to refer not to the East

33 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 257.
34 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 297.
35 W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London: Everyman, 1994), p. 384.

but the North. Phidias's statues 'lack character' and are thus unlike the art of Yeats's own time that is, as he puts it in *A Vision*, individualized, all 'face and head'.[36] By contrast to the latter, the dreams and looking glasses of line 16 call to mind the Gainsborough faces of the antithetical women who have intermittently supplied and recognised the ideal body in art, and so contributed to the maintenance of tradition through their own self-fashioning.

It is the third stanza of 'The Statues' that I want to finish by looking at. Here the copying of tradition seems to have gone awry. As mentioned earlier Yeats saw the very earliest image of Christ, a kind of perfectly proportioned, Phidian Christ, as based on, stemming from, images of Alexander.[37] This divinization of Alexander was itself sponsored by a Pythagorean canon that associated physical perfection, kingship and divinity. Yeats's immediate source is Eugénie Sellars Strong's *Apotheosis and Afterlife*.[38] Thus Yeats relies here on a version of the standard theory of the imperial origins of certain images of Christ as regnant, rather than Strzygowski's Semitic speculations. Even so, whether inflected by Alexander or a Mesopotamian God, the association of the new Christ-image with power and form is clear.

In stanza three of 'The Statues', however, Yeats suggests an entirely different art-historical trajectory for the image, a kind of counter-movement or swinging back of the pendulum towards formlessness. In Gandahar, on the current Pakistani-Afghanistan border, Buddhist sculptures exhibiting Greek forms and techniques were discovered in the early nineteenth century. Some writers attempted to recruit this work to a philhellenic narrative, arguing that it proved the superiority of Western form.[39] But for Yeats in 'The Statues' this is clearly not the case: it is the Asiatic that is dominant, reducing the Imperial Alexandrian to Buddhist enervation. Once again, the crucial influence seems to have come from Stryzgowski, who writes of the Byzantine image of Christ:

36 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 276.

37 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 273.

38 Eugénie Sellars Strong, *Apotheosis and Afterlife: Three Lectures on Certain Phases of Art and Religion in the Roman Empire* (London: Constable, 1915), pp. 280–81.

39 Michael Falser, 'The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara – a "Storia ideologica", or: How a Discourse Makes a Global History of Art', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 13 (December 2015).

> Compare with it the type of Buddha seated cross-legged and sunk in inward meditation. In India Buddha is never depicted with the ruler's attributes; he is never enthroned, nor does he wear the severe aspect of the judge holding the Law in his hand.[40]

In stanza three Yeats also recalls the simulacral bird and beast imagery of the medieval period. Buddha is 'a fat dreamer of the Middle Ages' because, as in Romanesque art, he participates only in an endless play without origin, infinite copying: 'mirror upon mirror mirrored is all the show'. As in the double minds of the Middle Ages and modernism, Buddha's dreaming parallels, without ever touching or informing, a disenchanted world of fact and matter, symbolised here by the desiccated, speculative Hamlet eating flies. The stanza thus performs a transformation of the poem's key images of dream, mirror, gendered gaze and self-making. Instead of a vision of a perfectly proportioned form being realized in the mirror, and then embodied, Grimalkin — a crone — prostates herself in oriental abasement before a nihilistic emptiness. The primary Asiatic is again triumphant, the endlessly ramifying, infinitely recurring, mirrored, decorative structures of the East inducing a kind of formlessness. The fact that this fat dreamer is linked elsewhere by Yeats to William Morris and his medievalism compounds this strange link between the Buddha and the Romanesque.[41] Though we might also mention Nietzsche here, and his conception of a hybrid, decadent, Western Buddhism.[42] It was the *emptiness* of Nirvana to which Nietzsche objected, and the repetition of the word here in stanza indicates Yeats's continued proximity to the German philosopher.

The opposite to all of this is the unity symbolised by the mirror of Phidias that gives women dreams and dreams their looking glass. While this phrase seems initially to repeat the simulacral quality of the Buddhist mirror upon mirror, the drift is fixed through the intervention of the erotic. In this respect we might note how, in the mid-1920s, British archaeologists were proposing that rituals of 'mouth-opening' were associated with the cult statues of Mesopotamia, such as that of

40 Strzygowski, pp. 161–62.

41 *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats, Volume III*, p. 132.

42 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Anchor, 1956), p. 154.

Nabu. According to Sidney Smith, writing in 1925, a statue would be actualized by smearing sweet, sour, or fragrant substances such as ghee, honey, or pine resin on its lips, so bringing it sensuously alive.[43] In this way such representations were not simply mimetic, but participated in the real, were themselves embodied agents. 'The Statues' opens by suggesting an eroticized version of such a ritual, and closes by exhorting us to climb once more to 'trace | the lineaments of a plummet-measure face.'

We can now return to the question of Yeats's relationship with the *Retour à l'ordre* and the larger question of the relationship of Yeats's aesthetics in *A Vision* with Fascism. One of the foremost partisans of the 1930s reaction against Modernism was Waldemar George, editor of the magazine *Formes*, in which he published several important articles that capture the essence of the aesthetics of the moment.[44] George was Fascist in his sympathies, and in 1931 went to Rome to have an audience with Mussolini, for whom he planned to found a cultural centre. The English-language editor of *Formes* was the Irish poet Thomas MacGreevy, a close friend of Yeats's wife, although he left his post in 1931 as the magazine moved decisively to the Right. [45]A copy of *Formes* survives in the Yeats library.[46] Yeats was thus likely aware of George, and of his aggressive promotion of classicising sculptors like Mailloil and others as bearers of the true Gallic tradition. But George thought of his movement as a 'neo-humanism', and celebrated what he saw as a French heritage of rationalism descending from Descartes and epitomized in the present by Cézanne. This would not have appealed to Yeats.

Josef Strzygowski also contributed to *Formes*. Indeed as Rémi Lebrusse has pointed out, his brand of aesthetic anthropology was profoundly influential amongst the artistic avant-garde of the interwar

43 Sidney Smith, 'The Babylonian Ritual for the Consecration and Induction of a Divine Statue', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1 (1925), 37–60.

44 Waldemar George, 'French School or École de Paris?', *Formes* 17 (September 1931) and 'Le Neo-humanisme', *L'Amour de L'Art*, 12 (1934).

45 Conor Carville, *Samuel Beckett and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 79–84.

46 Wayne K. Chapman, *The W.B. and George Yeats Library: A Short-Title Catalog* (Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2006), p. 47.

years, in France particularly.[47] The Austrian archaeologist was on the editorial board for Georges Bataille and Carl Einstein's *Documents*, for example. He also published in *Cahiers d'Art* and *L'Amour de l'Art*. His thinking about the origins of Western art seems to have answered to an anti-humanist desire for the uprooting of stable ideas of Europe and the European, a need to assail the institutions of Western culture. One particular attraction for the avant-garde was Strzygowski's implacable hatred of the Italian Renaissance, which he associated with an effete 'Southern' naturalism inferior to Nordic or Aryan abstraction. This was why George, despite sharing the pages of *Formes* with him, polemicized against Strzygowski's ideas. The Austrian's anti-humanism was too close to the nihilism of the modernists for comfort, and George's links with Italy precluded any critique of Renaissance humanism.

Yeats had no such problems with criticizing naturalistic, anthropomorphic art, Italian or otherwise. This basic stance is what he ultimately shares with Strzygowski and other German-language art historians. Yet, as we have seen Yeats too distinguishes himself from Stryzgowski's Nordic, Aryan art. In the second version of *A Vision* he separates the East from the Asiatic, associating the latter with a nomadic, barbaric abstraction akin to the one Strzygowski places centre-stage. By contrast Yeats's foregrounds the Eastern, understood as an imperial, despotic art derived from the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Dynastic Egypt. Once again he is influenced by Strzygowski here, but Yeats is taking what he needs, proceeding according to his own lights, and it is no coincidence that this art is associated with the same area as the Chaldean Oracles, so dear to western esotericism. This is the Eastern art that eventually melds with the Greek Phidian to create the Byzantine Pantokrator. By contrast it is a kind of vague Asiatic abstraction, in the guise of Buddha's 'mirror upon mirror', that dilutes the Phidian to produce the fat, formless sculptures of Gandahar.

The revisions to *A Vision* tracked here clearly bring out Yeats disagreements with what we now think of as High Modernism and the avant-gardes. All of the major changes we have been looking at bear on this issue to some degree. This might be the most obvious general way of understanding the new text's relationship with the historical moment of

47 Rémi Labrusse and John Goodman, 'Anthropological Delirium: Josef Strzygowski Confronts Alois Riegl', *Art in Translation*, 6 (2014), 59–75.

the *Retour à l'ordre*. The fragmentation of *The Waste Land* and the generic instability of *Ulysses*, the total abstractions of Lewis and Brancusi, are indicted in the same terms. The antinomy of pure abstraction on the one hand, and detailed, 'characterful' realism on the other, are seen by Yeats as two sides of the same coin. What they share, as Primary rather than Antithetical artforms, is their objective quality: the objectivity of an abstraction that precludes individual personality, the panoptic, democratic objectivity that indiscriminately records and examines every detail of fact. Yeats eye does not see the difference between these strategies, but only the simulacral form of copying they share. Their mutuality is well-captured in the anecdote he shares concerning the Roman sculptors who created exquisitely detailed likenesses of senator's heads and then 'screwed' these onto indistinguishably generic bodies 'as conventional as the metaphors in a leading article'.[48] This equation also allows him to group all the art he disliked, modernist or not, as democratic. It is this that accounts, for example, for the way *A Vision* A can group together high Modernist sculptors like Brancusi with classicizing, figurative sculptors of the *Retour* like those of Milles and Mestrovic (despite his warm words elsewhere for both the latter).

Yeats's aesthetics cannot be recruited easily to either the Fascism of Waldemar Georges, or the Nazism of Stryzgowski. While conceptual affinities and archival connections with both can be demonstrated, there also exist deep differences, stemming mostly, I suggest from the fact that Yeats's aesthetics are ultimately working with a notion of tradition that derives from esoteric teaching rather than from the disciplines of art history. The most obvious departure from both Fascist and Nazi aesthetics also turns on this esotericism. For Yeats is emphatically not concerned with an art that is addressed to the masses. Indeed it is the nature of an antithetical art that it is elitist. To call on Benjamin's famous chiasmus, while Yeats's politicizes his own aesthetic preferences, he is not interested in the broader aestheticization of politics, if by this we mean the neo-Classical spectacles of Speer, or the *Romanitas* of Mussolini. Despite the appeals to eugenics in 'On the Boiler', Yeats's address to 'breeding' is limited to the chosen few, to those 'lucky or well-born', and does not have a racial component.[49] Finally, although

48 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 277.
49 Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 37.

there is a shared 'irrational' component to Fascist, Nazi and Yeatsian aesthetics, where does this leave other aesthetic thinkers of the 1930s, like Beckett, Bataille, or Breton?

The largely figurative aesthetic of the *Retour à l'ordre* can provide some historical co-ordinates for an understanding of Yeats's late attitudes to visual culture and to modernism, and also point to the way the work he produced himself in the period escapes easy categorization. As with many other writers and artists of the period, Yeats is eager to distance himself from abstraction, while recognizing its achievement. In doing so he places the human form at the heart of his visual thinking. The manner in which he does this cannot be simply said to be classicizing in the style of Maillol and other lesser artists like Arno Becker, however. As we have seen, Yeats draws on his own esoteric curricula, as well as contemporary art history and archaeology to formulate an alternative, highly stylized image of the human as an ideal. In this he can be allied with a wider range of the artists of the *Retour*. To take just one example, Picasso's 1920s' pictures of strange bone-like creatures, or massive women, beside the sea activates Puvis de Chavannes's paintings of girls and women on beaches in his own way. Similarly in Germany the *Neue Sachlichkeit* painters turned to a kind of abstracted, schematic but broadly realist figuration as a means of social critique. In these works, and others of the period, the human form returns to art, but in a manner that reflects the historical passage through modernist abstraction. As with Chavannes's paintings, such images cannot be simply recruited to a reactionary position. They withdraw from us in the way that lesser propagandist images do not. And the figures in Yeats's own late plays, with their stiff gestures and masks, their remoteness and inscrutablity, their sense of undetermined allegorical import, partake of a similar withdrawal. Yeats's passage late aesthetics may be deeply stupid and obnoxious, but a rush to label them can obscure more than it reveals, which is a danger especially today, when his particular brand of extreme occultist politics, whatever we might eventually learn to call it, is more prevalent than it has been in years.

Fiona Macintosh

The Politics of the Irish *Odyssey*

> '*Epi ionopa ponton*. Ah, Dedalus! The Greeks! I must teach you. You must read them in the original. Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother. Come and look.'[1]

Gesturing both to Homer ('on the wine-dark sea') and to Xenophon ('The Sea! The Sea!'), with characteristic bombast, and appropriately standing atop the Martello Tower at Sandycove, the swaggering figure of Buck Mulligan exhorts his friend to learn to read Greek in the original language. But not reading the Greeks at first hand proves no handicap to Stephen, nor indeed was it for Joyce himself, who despite being a formidable linguist, reportedly had only little Greek.

As W.B. Stanford proclaimed in his magisterial study *The Ulysses Theme* in 1954:

> [...] no author in ancient or modern times has attempted to rival the comprehensiveness of Homer's account until the present century, when an Irish novelist and a Greek poet have produced two contemporary interpretations of the much enduring hero: James Joyce in his *Ulysses* (1922) and Nikos Kazantzakis in his *Odyssey* (1938).[2]

Joyce had managed, *pace* Mulligan and his ilk, to rival the 'comprehensiveness' of Homer without direct knowledge of the text. Mulligan's real-life counterpart, Oliver St John Gogarty had indeed benefited from a rigorous classical training at Trinity College Dublin (as did Oscar Wilde, J.M. Synge and Robert Gregory). But in adult life, for the seasoned poet/medical practitioner, knowledge of Greek in Ireland didn't necessarily yield huge artistic dividends. Whilst it

1 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 11.

2 W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1954), p. 211.

granted Gogarty an air of erudition, in practice it often only prompted invitations from non-classically trained contemporaries to produce English-language cribs that would satisfy the hunger of others for further knowledge of the ancients.

Both Gogarty and Gregory ably supplied Yeats with versions of Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone* respectively, when in the first decade of the twentieth century the Abbey Theatre directorate was planning to mount the Greek plays in a provocative bid to expose the philistinism of the British Censor.[3] The irony is that it was the non-classically trained Yeats, who went on to provide the definitive *Oedipus* version for the Abbey with the help of the great Victorian classical scholar Richard Jebb's edition and translation of Sophocles's tragedy. And some years later, it was Seamus Heaney, again with little Greek and with Jebb's assistance, who was to furnish the Abbey with an *Antigone* for the theatre's centenary celebrations in 2004 with his *Burial at Thebes*. Reading Greek 'in the original', in this sense, has never been a *sine qua non* for gaining access to the ancient texts, neither for Joyce and his contemporaries nor for any other generation in Ireland, when they have embarked on their own re-imaginings of things Greek.

However, for Joyce and his contemporaries, not knowing Greek prompted a deep desire not just to encounter the Greeks but also to engage seriously with others who had previously received them across the centuries. As Stanford points out in a footnote in his study:

> Professor Stanislaus Joyce has kindly informed me that his brother had studied the following writers on Ulysses: Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Fénelon, Tennyson, Phillips, D'Annuzio and Hauptmann, as well as Samuel Butler's *The Authoress of the Odyssey* and Victor Bérard's *Les Phéniciens et L'Odyssée*, and the translations by Butler and Cowper.[4]

3 Fiona Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994); 'An Oedipus for Our Times? Yeats's Version of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*', in *Performance, Iconography, Reception: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin*, ed. by Martin Revermann and Peter Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 524–47.

4 Stanford, *The Ulysses*, p. 276, n. 6.

Considerable work has been done on Joyce's reading of most of these authors —although David Damrosch has rightly pointed out recently that not enough has been done on Joyce's reading of Virgil. But there is one reader of Homer listed here who has received surprisingly short shrift in discussions of Joyce's *Ulysses*: namely, Fénelon, François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, whose *Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* (written around 1693–94, first published without the author's permission in 1699 and then posthumously in 1715) was the most popular novel throughout Europe in the long eighteenth century and the most printed French book in eighteenth-century Ireland.[5] Fénelon's novel, now almost forgotten, also significantly enjoyed a resurgence in popularity at the height of cultural Modernism in the early years of the twentieth century.

This chapter is not an attempt to indulge in *Quellenforschung* — the Joyce industry has amply furnished those hungry for such detail with handbooks to identify every line/every possible allusion. It is more concerned with recovering one of those forgotten mediating texts that have provided crucial access points to ancient texts, and have thereby shaped subsequent (re-)readings/reworkings. In many ways, it takes its cues from other scholars, notably Bill Mc Cormack, who has placed Irish literature within a broader European context that encompasses the history of the book, intellectual history and the history of scholarship. Fénelon's *Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* is one of many overlooked intertexts, which enjoyed enormous prominence in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. Unlike some of the other forgotten texts, it briefly caught the Modernist literary imagination, but was dropped from the nationalist histories of Irish literature that dominated most of the twentieth century.

Ireland and the *Odyssey*

It has often been averred that the founding Greek myth of modern Ireland is that of Oedipus — with its search for identity, its parricidal urges against its imperial oppressor, and its over-privileging of love for Mother Ireland. But for many reasons, the *Odyssey* may well provide a better foundation myth for the modern Irish state, not least through its parodic

5 Máire Kennedy, *French Books in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2001), p. 263.

re-figuration in Joyce's 1922 novel. In many ways, with its themes of exile, nostalgia and revenge, the *Odyssey* continues to dominate the Irish cultural landscape to this day. Witness particularly the 'lyricising'/'miniaturising' of Homer's *Odyssey* in, say, the arch and whimsical poem, 'A Siren' by the expatriate and notoriously adulterous Derek Mahon, and in his moving and apologetically masculinist 'Calypso';[6] or, say, in the feminist re-readings of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, notably in her collection *The Second Voyage* (1977).[7] But perhaps, the most extensive and consistent lyrical engagements with the *Odyssey* more recently have been in the beautifully crafted poetic renderings by Michael Longley (in, say, his 'Laertes' and his 'Anticlea' poems), which have enabled the poet to say things about himself that the raw material of his own life cannot yield publicly.[8]

One of Joyce's many sources for his novel was the translation of Homer's *Odyssey* by Samuel Butcher and Andrew Lang.[9] Augusta Gregory's translation of the redaction of tales about Cuchulain, *Cuchulain of Muiremne* (1902) made Irish saga sound remarkably Homeric.[10] For Butcher and Lang's translation of the *Odyssey*, as with the Lang, Leaf and Myers translation of the *Iliad*, bore striking similarities to Gregory's rendering of Celtic saga material.[11] However, these similarities between Homeric and Celtic saga material were not simply a result of a coalescence of voices at this time; they were underpinned by serious syncretic studies of both Homeric and Celtic mythologies by both classical and Celtic scholars from at least the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.[12]

6 Derek Mahon, *Harbour Lights* (Loughcrew: The Gallery Press, 2005), pp. 57–60.
7 Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, *Second Voyage: Poems* (Dublin: Gallery Press, 1977).
8 Michael Longley, *Gorse Fires* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991), pp. 33 and 35.
9 Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. by S.H. Butcher and Andrew Lang (London: Macmillan, 1879); Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. by Andrew Lang, Walter Lead and Ernest Myers (London: Macmillan, 1883).
10 Augusta Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster* (London: Putnam, 1902).
11 Macintosh, *Dying Acts*.
12 Notably by Henry D'Arbois de Jubainville. See Henry D'Arbois de Jubainville, *La civilisation des Celtes et de l'épopée homérique* (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Thorin et Fils, 1899). For comment see Macintosh, *Dying Acts*; Arabella Currie, 'Abjecton and the Irish-Greek Fir Bolg Aran Island Writing', in *Classics and Irish Politics, 1916–2016*, ed. by Isabelle Torrance and Donncha O'Rourke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

J.M. Synge spent time in Paris where he attended Arbois de Jubainville's celebrated lectures on Greek and Celtic Literature;[13] and his ethnographical account of his visits to the Aran Islands over a number of summers from 1898 onwards, which he eventually published in 1907, has many striking echoes of both Telemachus and Odysseus's wanderings to other worlds.[14] And Synge's observations of the customs of the Irish peasants, amongst whom he lives, provide striking parallels with the rituals of ancient Greece as he looks through the lens of an originally classically-trained ethnographer.[15] These interconnections continued to be explored throughout the twentieth century by such eminent classical scholars as George Thomson (on comparative oral poetics), George Huxley (on bards generally), J.V. Luce (on Homer and the Great Blasket Island), and lexically through the comparative philological studies in the 1960s by the classical scholar, Kevin O'Nolan, brother of the Irish novelist, Flann O'Brien.[16]

However, intimate acquaintance with Homer's *Odyssey* in Ireland predates both the comparative Celtic studies and Augusta Gregory's Homeric-sounding Cuchulain. Fénelon's *Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* (c. 1693–94) enjoyed significant status in Ireland throughout the eighteenth century.[17] Whilst important work has been done by Mc Cormack and others on the influence of French culture generally on Irish literary modernism — on Wilde, Yeats, Synge, George Moore, Somerville and Ross —, not much research has been undertaken on the earlier French landmark texts that exerted huge influence across Europe and especially in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth

13 For Paris, see Bill Mc Cormack, *Fool of the Family: A Life of J.M. Synge* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

14 J.M. Synge, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, ed. by Alan Price (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982).

15 Mary C. King, *The Drama of J.M. Synge* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985); Macintosh, *Dying Acts*.

16 See George Thomson, *Greek Lyric Metre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929); George Leonard Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969); J.V. Luce, 'Homeric Qualities in the Life and Literature of the Great Blasket Island', *Greece & Rome*, 16.2 (1969), 151–68; Kevin O'Nolan, 'Homer and Irish Heroic Narrative', *Classical Quarterly*, 19.1 (1969), 1–19.

17 Kennedy.

century. Mc Cormack was the first to spot the importance of Jean Barthélémy's erudite five-volume travel novel, *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788) to Maria Edgeworth in both *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Absentee* (1812).[18] One might even go so far as to suggest that Barthélémy's copious footnotes and his attention to historical detail made this travel novel no less a model than Walter Scott for Edgeworth in her development of the historical novel.

Fénelon's novel has received scant attention in an Irish context. Elmann (1977) is unusual in taking *Télémaque* seriously as a source for *Ulysses* not least, he reminds us, because Joyce had a copy of a 1910 French edition in his library at Trieste (now in the Harry Ransom Center, Texas). Melchiori (2004–05) notes the thematic parallels between Stephen/Bloom and Telemachus/Mentor and proposes Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* as a further intertext.[19] There is also an MA dissertation by Curran (2016) that explores the mentoring (not father/son) relationship in detail.[20] But the most recent study of Joyce and the Greeks by Culligan Flack (2020) returns to Stanford's footnote and makes Fénelon simply one of multiple sources used by Joyce.[21]

Stanford at least concedes that Fénelon was the first to put Telemachus centre stage in the story of Odysseus; and he recognizes that it is this refocusing that makes for a stronger bond between the Telemachus and Odysseus figures with which 'Joyce enriched the tradition significantly'.[22] It is the privileging of Telemachus over Odysseus — the *Telemachia* (*Odyssey*, books 1–4) but mostly for Fénelon, the imaginary events of Telemachus's wanderings between books 4 and 15 of the *Odyssey* over Odysseus's *nostos*/return (*Odyssey*, books 5–12) — that proves so crucial in the modern epic tradition. Ellmann (1977) notes that both novelists conflate the Telemachus and Odysseus figures

18 W.J. Mc Cormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tragedy and Betrayal* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994).

19 Giorgio Melchiori, 'Joyce and Eternity: From Dante to Vico', *Papers on Joyce*, 10–11 (2004–05), 171–85.

20 Robert Curran, 'Myth, Modernism and Mentorship: Examining François Fénelon's Influence on James Joyce' (unpublished master's thesis, Florida Atlantic University, 2016).

21 Leah Culligan Flack, *James Joyce and Classical Modernism* (Bloomsbury: London, 2020).

22 W.B. Stanford, *Ireland and the Classical Tradition* (Dublin: Figgis, 1976).

in their encounters with Calypso; and he also significantly points out that both novels consist of 18 chapters and stop short of providing any full reunion between father and son.[23]

It is important to give some background to Fénelon, whose protagonist Stanford dismisses as a 'lay figure for moralization'. Both Fénelon and his protagonist, however, are much more interesting and complex figures than Stanford implies. Ordained as a priest in 1675, Fénelon was made a spiritual guide for the 'new Catholics' (those who had been Huguenots) in Northern France.[24] In 1689 he became tutor to Louis XIV's grandson, duc de Bourgogne, for whom he wrote *Télémaque* in the longstanding tradition of *mirroirs des princes* to instruct the young prince in the principles of government. Charles Perrault's claim in *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1692) that the moderns had surpassed the ancients in all genres except epic may well have prompted Fénelon's attempt to write an epic for his time.

Fénelon's text functioned as a major culture-text across Europe well into the first part of the twentieth century — it permeated the cultural imaginary even for those who didn't know it at first hand.[25] In Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), the young boy is given *Robinson Crusoe* to read and as an adolescent the eponymous hero is prescribed Fénelon's text, for whom the lengthy account of Telemachus's sexual awakening, first on the island of Cyprus and then on Calypso's Isle, proved edifying. For Calypso's lush and heavily erotic grotto, Fénelon drew on both Ovid's description of Diana's grotto in *Metamorphoses* Book 3[26] and on Titian's gothic representation of it in his celebrated *Diana and Actaeon* painting (1556–59). He also drew on the rich seventeenth-century tradition of onstage operatic grottos, notably Gioacomo Torelli's designs in Venice for Sacrati and Nolfi's *Bellerofonte* (1642), which

23 Richard Ellmann, 'Joyce and Homer', *Critical Inquiry*, 3.3 (1977), 567–82 (p. 575).

24 Patrick Riley, 'Introduction' in Francois de Fénelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, ed. by Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xiii–xxviii, (p. xiii).

25 I adopt the term employed for Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* by Paul Davis. See Paul Davis, 'Literary history: Retelling *A Christmas Carol*: Text and Culture-Text', *The American Scholar*, 59.1 (1990), 109–15.

26 Francois de Fénelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, ed. by Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 157–60.

both Ovid's account and Titian's painting no doubt inspired.[27] The *ekphrastic* power of Fénelon's grotto, in turn, provided models for real-life grottos in eighteenth-century gardens, the most famous of which was in Sanspareil, the rock garden at Bayreuth built around 1745 for the Margravine of Bayreuth, Princess Wilhelmine of Prussia. The grotto contained an open-air theatre, where *tableaux vivants* based on *Télémaque* were performed.[28] Fénelon's text thus provided not just a window on antiquity but facilitated what ancient rhetoricians called *enargeia* — embodied spectatorship of antiquity.[29]

Another reason why his treatment of Telemachus's burgeoning sexuality lived so long in the European cultural imaginary was the fact that Fénelon's text was widely employed in pedagogical circles. Following its Irish edition of 1764, it was also accompanied by a Latin reader. Since the 1709 English Copyright Act did not apply in Ireland, the re-printing business had become a major industry.[30] Whilst it was illegal by 1739 to sell Irish reprints in England, it was not illegal to sell them in either Ireland or in the American colonies. *Télémaque* was, then, widely available in cheap reprints in Ireland throughout the century and was also read in its original language owing to the very high level of linguistic competence in French at the time. Following the Act of Union of 1800, which brought English Copyright law to Ireland for the first time, Europe's most popular novel continued to be widely read in translation, since translations were often treated as new works and so could easily be reprinted without permission (until the 1887 Berne Convention put a stop to this anomaly).

Fénelon's widely available text didn't simply appeal to Irish adolescent men; it had a clear impact on children's literature in general. It is often proclaimed that Joyce's 'principal' source was Charles Lamb's

27 Bruno Forment, 'Fénelon's Operatic Novel: Audiovisual Topoi in *Télémaque* and their Representation in Opera', in *Fénelon in the Enlightenment: Traditions, Adaptations, and Variations*, ed. by Christoph Schmitt-Maaß, Stefanie Stockhorst and Doohwan Ahn (Leiden: University of Leiden, 2014), pp. 365–76 (p. 368).

28 Forment, p. 365. on the imprint of Fénelon's grotto on Wagner's grotto in *Tannhaüser* (1845).

29 Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

30 I am indebted to Kennedy for the details in this paragraph.

Adventures of Ulysses (1808). However, a much keener contender here amongst children's literature might well be *The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy* (1918), by Padraic Colum, then Joyce's friend and shortly to become an extremely close friend, who is named in the Scylla and Charybdis episode in the National Library in Joyce's novel. For Colum's children's version, with its twenty-three-chapter first part devoted to Telemachus (compared with its second part of only seventeen chapters focused on Odysseus' wanderings and his revenge), shares Joyce's concern with Telemachus's rite of passage that provided the subject matter for Fénelon's novel as well.

Well into the beginning of the twentieth century, the centrality of Fénelon's text to the French education system persisted and no doubt made possible Louis Aragon's parodic, Dada-esque version, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1922). Furthermore, in that same year, which also saw Joyce's *Ulysses* finally in print, what is still deemed to be the authoritative edition of Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* edited by Albert Cahen (Paris, 1922) was published.

The Politics of Fénelon's *Télémaque*

Fénelon's text is worthy of attention on account of its politics — especially its reverence for the simplicity of the Greeks over the imperialist, luxurious and luxuriating Romans, a standard trope, which Irish literary nationalism was to deploy with dexterity at the end of the nineteenth century.[31] The novel's advocacy of world peace and religious and ethnic tolerance, and, above all, its advocacy of what Fénelon terms 'disinterested love of God', make the narrative noteworthy. Whilst some, like Stanford, have readily written the novel off as a 'pious' and rather tedious didactic tale, the political philosopher, Patrick Riley identifies *Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse*, together with Bossuet's *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scriptures* (1704), as the most important piece of political theory at the turn of the eighteenth century, which provides (*contra* Bossuet's defence of divine right monarchy) an attempt to combine republican virtues with monarchism.[32]

31 Macintosh, *Dying Acts*.
32 Riley, p. xvii.

On the side of the ancients in the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, Fénelon praised the noble simplicity of the Greeks in his *Lettre sur les occupations de l'Académie Francaise*: 'I love a hundred times better the poor Ithaca of Odysseus, than a city [imperial Rome] shining through so odious a magnificence.'[33] The Cretans are held up as models to emulate, as Mentor (Minerva/Athena in disguise and Télémaque's guide) points out:

> The great goods of the Cretans consist chiefly in health, strength, courage, the peace and union of families, the liberties of all citizens, the plenty of all necessary things, a contempt of superfluities, a habit of industry, and abhorrence of idleness; an emulation in virtue, submission to the laws, and reverence towards the just gods.[34]

But it is in the mythical places of Bétique and Salente that the Greek ideal is best exemplified.

By 1699 Fénelon, like Joyce much later and for very different reasons, found his works proscribed and one month later a copy of his novel was printed without his permission. Immediately the king saw it as an attack on himself, his war-mongering and his extravagance. In a letter to Father LeTellier (1710), Fénelon wrote: 'In these adventures I have put all the truths necessary to govern, and all the faults that one can find in sovereign power.'[35]

In Book 10 of his novel, the misrule of Idomeneo (former king of Crete, now king of Salente, whose rash vow forced him to commit filicide and, in turn, led to his exile) is clearly a cautionary tale for the French king and all European monarchs:

> If you have been abused hitherto, it is because you wanted to be deceived; and were afraid to meet with too much sincerity in your counsellors [...] You have exhausted your treasure [...] By aiming at appearing great and powerful, you have almost destroyed your

33 Riley, p. xvii.
34 Fénelon, p. 60.
35 Riley, p. xviii.

> real power and greatness. Lose no time then in repairing your faults; discontinue all your magnificent structures; renounce that affectation of pomp and grandeur which would ruin your city; permit your people to enjoy the benefits of peace [...].[36]

At the end of Book 17, when Salente is run by the now reformed philosopher king, Idomeneo, there is no longer a need for the state to impose its views on its neighbours. Instead Salente takes its place in what Mentor designates 'the universal republic':

> Do you think the gods must regard the whole world, which is the universal republic, with equal horror, should each nation, that is each family of the great commonwealth, think it had the undoubted right to make good its claims upon the neighbouring nations by violence.[37]

As a result of this perceived critique of the king, Fénelon's pension and tutorship were removed and he was sent into exile in the provinces. But with the death of the young duc in 1712, any hope of a different state vanished; and three years later, in 1715, Fénelon himself died.

Fénelon's political views, however heretical during the ancien regime, increasingly afforded him a new degree of popularity during the revolutionary period. One important reception of his novel was Mozart's/Varesco's Italian *opera seria* of sacrifice, *Idomeneo* (1781), taken indirectly from Book 5 of *Télémaque*. But it is, above all, Telemachus's stay on Calypso's island, from Book 6, which features regularly in the visual and performance arts in the last part of the century. Equally significant to Mozart's opera, but less well-known today, was the revolutionary *ballet d'action* by Pierre Gardel, *Télémaque dans l'île de Calypso* (1790), which is taken directly from Book 6 of the novel and which remained in the repertoire until 1826. Gardel had choreographed many of the Festivals of the Revolution, which had turned to ancient Greece as model not to reclaim antiquity but (as Fénelon had advocated) to replicate its perceived communality, simplicity and unaffected beauty.

36 Fénelon, p. 152.
37 Fénelon, p. 307.

At the same time as Fénelon's novel was being read for edification by young men in pedagogical contexts, on the stage it was providing models for revolutionary activity. In the run up to the Revolution, interrogatory Greek choruses had been increasingly re-instated in versions of ancient tragedy for decidedly republican reasons. In Gardel's danced dramatic version of *Télémaque*, the female chorus of dancers acquired agency that parallels, and perhaps even mirrors, the role played by women during the Revolution.

In the first part of the dance drama, the lithe and beguiling chorus of nymphs embody the island's all-pervasive atmosphere of sensuality and natural beauty that the young Telemachus finds impossible to resist. However, in the final act, they acquire a new terrifying power as they seek to foil Mentor's plot to make Telemachus flee the island. Armed with torches, and now dressed and twisting and turning like bacchantes, they proceed to set fire to Telemachus's boat. Gardel's female chorus is transmogrified from Greek idyllic womanhood to wild, vengeful maenads during the course of the action. Although Gardel clearly did not represent the full fervour and frenzied potential of the *carmagnole*, the Furies at the end of this staged version *of Télémaque* serve as a reminder of the power of dance both to unite and to unleash demonic energy. This may be very far from Gardel's source, where Telemachus finally rejects the nymph Eucharis (who remains a bacchante) once Mentor has re-instilled in him a sense of duty. But Fénelon's novel had significantly provided a vision of both the perils and the potentiality of unbridled sensuality in a way that guaranteed its longevity through countless reworkings.

Joyce's Ulysses

What, one may ask, has all this to do with Joyce's hilarious 'epic of the bourgeoisie'?[38] What Fénelon's novel shares with Joyce's *Ulysses* is the absence of a true hero — nominally the novel's hero is Telemachus, who is proud, generally poor in judgement unless the real hero, Mentor (Minerva/Athena in disguise), is by his side to remind him of his

38 Declan Kiberd, *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 12.

shortcomings and to guide him through his perilous travails, both physical and moral. In the end of the novel, Telemachus learns that his friend and 'mentor' is no surrogate 'father' figure, but in fact a woman/goddess (Minerva), or rather (not so unlike Joyce's Bloom) a manly woman/womanly man, who is divine in his/her disinterestedness. Minerva disappears (as in the *Odyssey*) leaving Telemachus and Ulysses to enjoy their reunion in Eumaeus's hut, which occurs beyond the ending of his novel (unlike in Joyce's novel, where the 'Brothel' scene occurs in Chapter 15). As we might also say of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and as Riley explains of Fénelon's novel, '[t]he real hero has already been resolved into pure Wisdom', and 'the nominal hero barely reaches Ithaca.'[39]

In Fénelon's terms, this 'pure Wisdom' clearly relates to 'disinterested love of God' — not love of god for what you can get in material return; nor indeed what you can get in spiritual return (viz. salvation); nor even the mixture of self-love and true love of god, but the pure love of god, which is truly disinterested and analogous to the ancient civic ideal, and a prefiguration of Rousseau's ideal of *sortir de soi* in order to *se perdre*/'to lose oneself' in a greater beyond. For Fénelon, even if the ancient Greeks' goal (the *polis*) was wrong, their motivation is right in marked comparison to Christians, whose goal (God) is right, but whose motivation (self) is wrong. According to the early French nineteenth-century critic, Sainte Beuve, Fénelon is '*si athénien et si chrétien, tout ensemble*'. We might adjust this slightly and say Bloom, Joyce's Mentor figure, in his capacity for 'disinterested love' is '*si athénien et si judeo/chrétien* [in Fénelon's terms], *tout ensemble*.'

As is regularly pointed out, the overly cerebral Stephen needs to learn how to function *in* the world, just as Telemachus must do in Fénelon's tale. Stephen has to learn, like Fénelon's anti-hero, that he is not superior, exceptional even, but can only truly contribute to society once he has discovered the communalities he shares with others. Joyce found in another of his sources, Victor Bérard's study *Les Phéniciens et L'Odyssée* (1902–03) connections between Phoenician trading routes and Odysseus's journeying; and the Phoenician links are made explicit in Fénelon's novel at the end of Book 1 and the start of Book 2, where Telemachus is piloted by a Phoenician crew and is then mistaken as a Phoenician. The Semitic roots of the Phoenicians are to have informed

39 Riley, p. xxi.

Joyce's Jewish Odysseus figure, Leopold Bloom.[40] There are constant reminders in the novel that anti-Semitism is rife in England (Haines, very early in the novel, proclaims 'I don't want to see my country fall into the hands of German jews [...]. That's our national problem, I'm afraid, just now'; [41] and the narrowly bigoted nationalism of the monocular citizen in Barney Kiernan's bar alerts the reader to the fact that Dublin is very much implicated in the wider European network of anti-Jewish prejudice that had been unleashed in the wake of the Dreyfus affair.

Both novels display clear abhorrence of xenophobia and a staunch rejection of imperialism and bellicosity. Mentor's words in Book 17 of Fénelon's novel couldn't be more urgent in a world of narrow nationalisms: 'Do you think the gods must regard the whole world, which is the universal republic, with equal horror, should each nation, that is each family of the great commonwealth, think it had the undoubted right to make good its claims upon the neighbouring nations by violence?'[42]

Afterword

Though a classicist who works primarily in the area of classical reception, there is no doubt that Bill Mc Cormack's example has left its imprint on my work. Classical Reception Studies demands work on both the diachronic and synchronic levels; it is of necessity cross-disciplinary in nature and resistant to both linguistic and geo-political boundaries; and it blends literary history with close textual analysis. Located at the intersection between the history of scholarship, history of ideas and literary/cultural history, in many ways the research I have been conducting over a number of years in Classics steers a course very much in the wake of Mc Cormack's own practice.

During an MA in English Literature in the academic year 1980–81, I had the privilege of taking Bill's option, 'Anglo-Irish Prose and Fiction from 1789–1914', in the Department of English at the University of Leeds. I had already been as student of his as a

40 Ellmann, p. 577.
41 Joyce, p. 27.
42 Fénelon, p. 307.

second-year undergraduate, when he had been tutor to me and two of my fellow students, who were also studying for the new, combined degree in English/Greek Civilisation. It was, then, thanks to Bill's tutelage, that I finally began to understand what reading literature could afford — it wasn't simply about narrow *explication de texte*/Leavis-ite close readings with moral *hauteur*. He took our tutorials for the eighteenth-century English literature compulsory course, and I remember early on in the term being asked to explain the difference between Jacobin and Jacobite. Despite being able to claim paternal descent from at least one heroic rebel who died at the Battle of Culloden in 1745, I am ashamed to say that I failed miserably. After that crushing episode, grappling with the multiple ways in which literature sought to respond to the societies in which it was produced became essential; and attending equally seriously to the other art works, alongside which the literary texts jostled in the marketplace, became no less important. Finally, Classics and English at last didn't seem like polar opposites — thanks to Mc Cormack, I now appreciated that at their best both disciplines were fundamentally area studies, even if most tutors of English literature at the time would have resisted such a view.

My choice of Mc Cormack's MA Anglo-Irish option was inevitable — and it proved transformative: we were encouraged to think of Irish literature not only in all its complex cultural and political contexts but to read its texts against the grain. Mc Cormack also acted as exacting supervisor of my MA dissertation on Joseph Conrad and some years later he was the unofficial (read 'unpaid'), but indefatigable and ever discerning, supervisor of the Irish side of my doctoral thesis in Classics at King's College, London. Our paths have crossed frequently ever since: I owe not only my success in finding a publisher for my first monograph to Bill; my first proper job was also entirely down to him after he persuaded me to apply, against all odds, for a lectureship at Goldsmiths in English after seven years' residence in Classics.

His unique blend of intellectual curiosity and unparalleled generosity of spirit has meant that I have continued to benefit far more from his example since I returned to Classics than he probably realizes. It is no doubt significant that it was from Bill, that longstanding fan of both Arthur Conan Doyle and Raymond Chandler, that I first learned of Ernst Bloch's luminous comparison between Sophocles's

Oedipus Tyrannus, with its retroactive plot, and the detective novel. According to Bloch's schema, Oedipus is the unwitting proto-detective of his own life. Even though Mc Cormack has rightly been strongly critical of Freudian/Lacanian Oedipal (over-)readings of texts, he will, I hope, forgive me for invoking this one parallel. Like Bloch's Oedipus, Mc Cormack is in many ways exemplary scholar/detective — not of his own life, but of those subterranean influences that inform the rich seam that constitutes literary history.

Dennis Tate

Encounters with James Joyce and Agnes Nemes Nagy

Franz Fühmann and Hugh Maxton/W.J. Mc Cormack

1.

Hugh Maxton's memoir *Waking* (1997) took on a new significance as I was preparing the ground for this paper, once I had reminded myself how much more it encompasses than the account of an 'Irish Protestant upbringing' that had attracted me to it in the first place.[1] Above all, it was its autobiographical framing that provided this timely stimulus. It is a work written, as its prefatory note tells us, in the second half of the 1980s but 'finally published in my own fiftieth year',[2] almost a decade later (thus also marking the centenary of his father's birth). It is also shaped by the recollection of two events spanning the period when it was written, events that suggest an intimate relationship between (W.J. Mc Cormack's) established expertise in Ireland's literary culture and (Hugh Maxton's) increasing familiarity with Hungary and its poets.

Waking begins with an account of the author's journey in January 1982, a few weeks before the centenary of James Joyce's birth, to Szombathely, the fictional Hungarian birthplace of Leopold Bloom's father Lipoti Virag in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). Maxton rapidly deflates his self-indulgent fantasy that the Dublin of 1904 is magically returning to life as he wanders the streets of Szombathely, but a significant connection in the author's mind is nevertheless revealed in the process.[3] The closing chapter muses on the changes that the

1 Hugh Maxton, *Waking: An Irish Protestant Upbringing* (Belfast: Lagan Press, 1997). This contribution respects the 'two lives' approach to the academic and creative identities of my old friend Bill Mc Cormack that he has adopted (see p. 212), by referencing either (Hugh) Maxton or (W.J.) Mc Cormack, in accordance with the stated authorship of each of his works mentioned below.

2 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 10.

3 Maxton, *Waking*, pp. 13–18.

political upheavals of 1989 will bring to Hungary's distinctive identity as 'a place of reconciliation because confrontation is still possible there' and shows Maxton at work in his more recent role as a translator or, to adopt the more precise German term, *Nachdichter*[4] of Hungarian poetry. While it may be surprising that there is no mention here of his intensive focus through the 1980s on the work of Ágnes Nemes Nagy, which culminated in the publication of his volume *Between* in 1988,[5] Maxton prefers to highlight his current preoccupation with the poetry of Endre Ady. His rendering of Ady's poem 'Farewell, Dame Success' — an emphatic rejection of everything that seductive diva represents — provides a resounding ending to the volume.[6] It is also noteworthy here that, tucked away in the body of the memoir, there are two important historical details relating to the manner in which Maxton has framed it. First, he recalls his vivid, if sketchy, recollection of press coverage of the suppression of Hungary's 1956 Uprising, seeing this as marking the moment when the author first became aware of external public events. Second, he describes his initial encounter with the work of James Joyce, discovered on the shelves of a Dublin bookshop in the early 1960s, recalling the way it created '[t]he thrilling sensation of discovery, the illumination of knowing that one's own town existed in fiction'.[7]

2.

It may look like an inordinately large and arbitrary step backwards from *Waking* to a memoir published in German a quarter of a century earlier by an author who was equally inspired by Joyce — without ever setting

4 The German term neatly encapsulates the idea that poems like this, emerging from close collaboration with native speakers (of Hungarian in this case), are both creative works in their own right and faithful renderings of the originals in as much of their complexity as the target language (English in this case) allows. In short: new poetry (*Dichtung*) in accord with (*nach*) the original (*Dichtung*), the author as *Nachdichter*. I am not aware of any comparably precise term in English for this demanding process.

5 Ágnes Nemes Nagy, *Between: Selected Poems of Ágnes Nemes Nagy*, trans. by Hugh Maxton (Budapest: Corvina; Dublin: Dedalus, 1988).

6 Maxton, *Waking*, pp. 212 (where a second poem of Ady's, 'Sorrow of Resurrection', is mentioned), 217 and 220–21.

7 Maxton, *Waking*, pp. 66–67 and 180.

foot in Ireland — while becoming a highly regarded German *Nachdichter* of Hungarian poetry, especially of Nemes Nagy, in a volume published almost simultaneously with Maxton's.[8] The aim of this article is to show why this unlikely point of cross-cultural comparison is also a deeply compelling one, in the light of the European sensibility that informs all of Mc Cormack/Maxton's writing, even if the early stages of Fühmann's odyssey were far more problematic.[9]

Franz Fühmann (1922–1984) is one of those Central European intellectuals with multiple competing identities generated and intensified by the era in which he lived, with all its violent political upheavals and rapidly shifting state boundaries. Son of German-speaking Roman Catholic parents from the kingdom of Bohemia, then an integral part of the crumbling Austro–Hungarian Empire, he was born in the border town of Rochlitz (Rokytnice), part of the newly created republic of Czechoslovakia — the militantly disaffected region darkly remembered in history as Sudeten Germany. Educated first by the Jesuits near Vienna then, in the years after Hitler's rise to power, in a local school alongside his heavily politicised German-speaking contemporaries, Fühmann welcomed the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and fought with the forces of the Third Reich in the Second World War. Re-education as a prisoner-of-war in Soviet captivity, as he began to come to terms with the newly created German Democratic Republic, willing to prostitute his creative talent in the service of his adopted homeland. Until, that is, the brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, in tandem with his engagement with the work of James Joyce and his discovery of Hungary's poets, contributed to a belated creative rethink. Given this extraordinary combination of identity upheavals and intellectual disorientation, it is scarcely surprising that this process was a tortuous one, marked by painful contradictions, until the time when, as a fifty-year old, he felt confident enough to mark his 'real entry into literature'

8 Ágnes Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch schauen: Gedichte* (Leipzig: Insel, 1986). The title is taken from the poem translated by Maxton as 'But to Watch' (Nemes Nagy, Between, pp. 56–57).

9 This article builds on my earlier research on Fühmann's literary relationship with Joyce. See Dennis Tate, 'Undercover Odyssey: The Reception of James Joyce in the Work of Franz Fühmann', *German Life and Letters*, 47.3 (July 1994), 302–12.

by writing his memoir *Zweiundzwanzig Tage oder die Hälfte des Lebens* (*Twenty-Two Days or Half a Lifetime*) (1973).[10]

Fühmann's point of departure was far from encouraging. He first referenced Joyce in 1954, in his capacity as the dutiful cultural secretary of the GDR's National Democratic Party (a sub-group within the one-party state, created to accommodate ex-Nazis like himself). The official view of Joyce had not changed since the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934, when Karl Radek infamously denounced *Ulysses* as 'a heap of dung, crawling with worms, photographed by a cinema apparatus through a microscope'.[11] It was probably only because of his status as a cultural functionary that Fühmann could even acknowledge having read it, and it became one of the many occasions during these years of ostensible partisan loyalty that his sensibility as an omnivorous reader of literature unwittingly generated a degree of inner conflict. The context could not have been more bizarrely inappropriate — a long essay on the recent wave of memoirs by Hitler's surviving generals entitled *Die Literatur der Kesselrings* [The Literature of the Kesselrings] (taking Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's self-exonerating volume as a typical example of the genre), in which he included a four-page comparison with *Ulysses*.[12] The point he was seeking to make, flagrantly disregarding all questions of contextual appropriateness, was that 'the Kesselrings' were in a position to act out the megalomaniac fantasies that Leopold Bloom briefly articulates in the 'Circe' chapter of Joyce's novel.[13] Only after an embarrassing sequence of wilful misinterpretations does Fühmann seemingly come to his senses and acknowledge that Bloom is, after all, a sympathetic and endearing human being and that his comparison has been totally inappropriate. In the light of what follows this can only

10 All translations from the original German are mine unless indicated otherwise. This retrospective acknowledgment of the personal significance of his memoir came in his interview of 1982 with Wilfried F. Schoeller, republished in Franz Fühmann, *Den Katzenartigen wollten wir verbrennen: Ein Lesebuch* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988), pp. 273–306, (p. 283).

11 Karl Radek, 'Contemporary World Literature and the Tasks of Proletarian Art', in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism*, ed. by H.G. Scott (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), pp. 73–182, (p. 153).

12 Franz Fühmann, *Die Literatur der Kesselrings* (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1954), pp. 49–53.

13 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Bodley Head, 1966), pp. 601–11.

be viewed as an unwittingly public illustration of the self-destructive consequences of a misguided attempt to fulfil an impossible cultural brief. Fortunately, it was not long before a less blinkered engagement with early twentieth-century modernism was having a visible impact on the quality of his creative writing. By 1957–58 he was depicting the psychological torment of the young German soldiers who are the protagonists of his partly autobiographical war-stories in what were, for the East German literature of the day, strikingly authentic subjective terms.[14]

But it was as a poet that Fühmann originally envisaged making his literary mark, and here too the same self-sabotaging effects of his early ambition to combine the roles of cultural functionary and creative writer were all too evident. In the present context it is his response to the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 that most strikingly exposes the folly of what he was trying to do. His poem 'The Demagogues', using overblown apocalyptic language, depicts a masked troupe of demagogues from the West infiltrating this unnamed country, seducing a gullible minority then causing the volcanic upheavals that threaten to destroy everything the new state has been trying to achieve. All of this dreamt up by a man who had not yet visited Hungary and who had once regarded Georg Lukács, acting education minister of the reformist regime, as his intellectual inspiration.[15] Once again, it was not long before Fühmann changed tack, even more radically this time, by deciding he had so disastrously compromised his poetic talents that he would never seek to publish his own poetry again. Looking back, he would quote Majakowski in acknowledging that he had 'stepped on the windpipe of his own song' once too often.[16]

Although he rarely wavered from this resolve in the years that followed (there was nothing written after 1958 included in the ruthless cull that made up the first part of the selection of original and translated

14 See, for example, 'Das Gottesgericht' and 'Kapitulation', both first published in 1957 and available in the first volume of Fühmann's *Selected Works, Erzählungen 1955–1975* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1977), pp. 49–71 and 73–99.

15 Franz Fühmann, 'Die Demagogen', in *Die Richtung der Märchen: Gedichte* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1962), pp. 155–59.

16 Interview with Wilfried F. Schoeller, in Fühmann, *Den Katzenartigen*, p. 279.

poetry published in 1978 as the second volume of his *Selected Works*),[17] an opportunity to develop his skills as a *Nachdichter* rapidly opened up an alternative way forward. He was asked to join a team of six East German poets commissioned to produce a first volume in German of the work of Attila József, whom the Hungarian authorities were eager to promote as a poet of international significance, two decades after the early death that brought an end to his turbulent relationship with the communist party of his day. This new experience of working in close collaboration with Hungarian native speakers, just after freeing himself from his role as cultural functionary, proved to be creatively liberating. The ten poems that he produced for this collective volume[18] contributed significantly to its success, both in the GDR and in Hungary. His version of József's 'Ode', the latter's major philosophical poem of 1933, was instrumental in establishing Fühmann's reputation in both countries in this new poetic genre. More than twenty years later the critic Antonia Pezold had no hesitation in using it as the basis for a detailed evaluation in German of József's original poem, because of its outstanding values:

> Not just content, message and external structure, but also the inner movement of the poem, rhythm and metaphors are sensitively rendered, on the basis of a deep understanding of József's poetry [...]. Here we have two poets communicating with one another, in the way Fühmann insists they should in his theoretical reflections on *Nachdichtung*, 'in the universal language of poetry'. This depth of communication has produced a lyric work of almost equal quality to the original.[19]

This success in turn brought a first invitation to visit Hungary, in December 1961, for the award of the Attila József Plaque, which also led to the consolidation of a first Hungarian literary friendship, with the author and translator Gábor Hajnal, who was to become a close friend

17 Franz Fühmann, *Gedichte und Nachdichtungen* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1978).

18 Attila József, *Gedichte* (Berlin: Volk und Welt; Budapest: Corvina, 1960).

19 Antonia Pezold, 'Attila Józsefs "Ode"', in *Weimarer Beiträge*, 30.2 (1984), 236–257, (p. 245). The quotation is taken from Franz Fühmann, *Twenty-Two Days or Half a Lifetime*, trans. by Leila Vennewitz (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), p. 162.

and a tireless advocate of Fühmann's work. And instead of fulfilling the expectation of the GDR's cultural hierarchy that he would defend the erection of the newly built Berlin Wall, he took the belated opportunity to gain a detailed impression of what had actually happened in Hungary in the late autumn of 1956.[20] It was Hajnal also who put Fühmann in touch with Paul Kárpáti, a Hungaro-German working at the Humboldt University in East Berlin, someone perfectly placed to provide the rough translations of the work of the many other Hungarian poets that Fühmann was to work on over the next twenty-three years, as well as being available for the detailed discussion of his proposed versions, that were crucial to his continued success in this field — while becoming a close friend.[21]

This breakthrough as a *Nachdichter* coincided closely with Fühmann's first serious step towards becoming the GDR author most determined to nurture James Joyce's legacy in his prose-writing and aspire towards producing original work of comparable quality. A first autobiographical novel, *Das Judenauto: Vierzehn Tage aus zwei Jahrzehnten* (*The Jew Car: Fourteen Days from Two Decades*),[22] appeared in 1962, albeit in a censored form that initially obscured its stylistic originality. His fourteen representative days covered the years between his childhood (late 1920s) and his arrival in the GDR in 1949, but it was in the chapters dealing with the German occupation of his home territory in Northern Czechoslovakia and with his experiences as a young soldier that his new ambition was most evident — describing these events from the fascist perspective of his first-person narrator in an ecstatic stream of consciousness, with none of the usual didactic commentary

20 Franz Fühmann, *Briefe aus der Werkstatt des Nachdichters/Műfordítói műhelylevelek 1961–1984*, ed. by Paul Kárpáti (Berlin: Engelsdorfer; Budapest: Argumentum, 2007), pp. 12–15.

21 Kárpáti also compiled the bilingual volume of Fühmann's letters to him over the years 1961–84, which also serves as an indispensable commentary on this body of work (see previous note).

22 First published in 1962, by Aufbau, Berlin. It was only in the third volume of his *Selected Works, Das Judenauto, Kabelkran und Blauer Peter, Zweiundzwanzig Tage oder Die Hälfte des Lebens* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1979) that Fühmann's original text was revealed. *The Jew Car*, the translation by Isabel Fargo Cole (London, New York & Calcutta: Seagull Books), which is referenced here, was first published in 2017.

on such aberrations.[23] It was because chapters like these reminded his publisher's reader too strongly of *Ulysses* that he took it upon himself to emasculate Fühmann's text.[24] In a later autobiographical reminiscence on his education at the hands of the Jesuits in an elite boarding-school near Vienna, where he records his terrifying initiation into the physical details of the hell-fire awaiting sinners, Fühmann also notes how vividly this all came back to him when he read Joyce's *Portrait of An Artist*, probably quite soon after completing *Fourteen Days*.[25] Moments like this doubtless gave him the confidence he needed to issue his challenging Open Letter of 1964 to the GDR's Minister of Culture, where he argued that East German authors generally would have to start appropriating their 'bourgeois' cultural heritage of authors like Kafka, Proust and Joyce if they wanted to create works of international significance.[26]

Fühmann's novella of 1965, *König Ödipus* [Oedipus Rex],[27] shows him attempting to put this aspiration into practice, echoing the structure of *Ulysses* in the way he places the wartime crisis of a German army-officer, serving in Greece, in the mythic context of Sophocles's play. His protagonist's involvement in a frontline production of the play paves the way for his belated acknowledgment of personal responsibility for the crimes of fascism. Although there is no comparison with Joyce in terms of scale or stylistic innovation, Fühmann manages in thematic terms at least identify a similarly appropriate mythic perspective for the illumination of the collective experience of his generation of German soldiers. For an author working within the ideological constraints of the GDR this feels like a significant movement forward into the mainstream of European modernism.

23 See especially the chapters 'Down the Mountains' (on the occupation of the Sudetenland in 1938, Fühmann, *The Jew*, pp. 49–64) and 'Muspilli' (on the 'officers' revolt of 20 July 1944, Fühmann, *The Jew*, pp. 137–55).

24 When Fühmann revealed this, twenty years later, he was quick to point out how totally inappropriate the comparison was. See his interview of 1982 with Wilfried F. Scholler in Fühmann, *Den Katzenartigen*, p. 288.

25 See his essay 'Den Katzenartigen wollten wir verbrennen' [We Wanted to Burn the Feline Boy] in Fühmann, *Den Katzenartigen*, pp. 137–45, (p. 142).

26 This was, significantly, the first essay included in Fühmann, *Essays, Gespräche, Aufsätze 1964–1981*, vol. 6 of his *Selected Works* (Hinstorff: Rostock, 1983), pp. 7–16, (p. 15).

27 Included in Fühmann's collection of stories *Erzählungen*, pp. 141–217.

Immediately after writing his open letter, in June 1964, Fühmann was back in Budapest to receive a second prize, the Order of Merit in Silver for the volume of poems of Endre Ady he had just completed in collaboration with his colleague Heinz Kahlau, again welcomed in Hungary as bringing a second leading representative of its earlier twentieth-century poetry to a German-speaking audience, even if Ady had proven less inspirational to Fühmann than József had.[28] More importantly, this further recognition had also given Fühmann the creative space he needed to work on a first independently chosen translation project, on the work of Miklós Radnóti, who as a Jewish victim of the Nazi death camps confronted Fühmann more closely with the consequences of his earlier life-choices. He read a selection of poems from this work-in-progress at the PEN Club in Budapest and the praise he garnered from colleagues like Hajnal gave him the confidence to complete his Radnóti volume (as well as sparking off a new wave of East German media interest in the poet and his life).[29]

After a crisis in the late 1960s provoked by his life-threatening alcoholism and his despair at the crushing of another Central European reform movement, the Prague Spring, Fühmann regained his momentum in the early 1970s, with two collections of stories that more explicitly indicated a Joycean inspiration, alongside a further volume of translations from the Hungarian. His prose volume *Der Jongleur im Kino* [The Juggler in the Cinema], focusing on his generation's experience of the Third Reich, highlighted 'epiphanies' which left their mark on his youthful protagonists.[30] The ironically titled collection *Bagatelle, rundum positiv* [Nothing Important, Broadly Positive] saw him highlighting moments of paralysis in the present-day GDR, seeking to make further connections with *Dubliners* for the edification of readers in a position

28 In his introduction to the volume of their correspondence, Kárpáti acknowledges that this had become something of a burden ('Fleißarbeit') to Fühmann. See Fühmann, *Briefe*, p. 26.

29 Endre Ady, *Gedichte*, intro. by László Bóka (Berlin: Volk und Welt; Budapest: Corvina, 1965); Miklós Radnóti, *Ansichtskarten* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1967). See Kárpáti's introduction to Fühmann, *Briefe*, p. 26.

30 Franz Fühmann, *Der Jongleur im Kino oder die Insel der Träume* (Rostock: Hinstorff, 1970), included in his *Erzählungen*, pp. 377–472.

to recognise the significance of what he was doing.[31] Fühmann's fourth publication as a *Nachdichter* of Hungarian poetry, written over the same period, was a selection of the work of Milán Füst, dramatic poems which Fühmann took great pleasure in 'performing' in his public readings.[32]

3·

This broad overview of Fühmann's steadily deepening creative engagement with James Joyce and the work of Hungary's poets allows us to move on to his key memoir *Twenty-Two Days or Half a Lifetime* and the striking pattern of parallels between it and Maxton's *Waking*, signalled in section 1 above. *Twenty-Two Days* also marks the fiftieth birthday of its author, whose three-week stay in Hungary under the auspices of the government-sponsored PEN collaborative translation programme took place in October–November 1971, just a couple of months before Fühmann reached that milestone. The second part of his title evokes Friedrich Hölderlin's poem 'Hälfte des Lebens' ('Half of Life')[33] — ironically, in the sense that Fühmann was under no illusions regarding his potential life-span, yet also appropriately, as a way of indicating his conviction that he was finally on the threshold of literary maturity, in a career blighted by his earlier creative compromises.

The form he had chosen dispensed with conventional considerations of main themes and narrative frameworks in favour of a seemingly spontaneous mix of travelogue, literary reflections and autobiographical fragments, but his text, like Maxton's, offered a clear focus on his ongoing work as a *Nachdichter* of Hungarian poetry and

31 Published first in Fühmann, *Erzählungen*, pp. 473–551, then as a separate West German collection under this title (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978). The much-delayed GDR edition of Joyce's work began with *Dubliner*, ed. by Joachim Krehayn (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1977), followed by *Ein Porträt des Künstlers als junger Mann*, ed. by Joachim Krehayn (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1979) and *Ulysses*, ed. by Wolfgang Wicht (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1980).

32 Milán Füst, *Herbstdüsternisse* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1971). Kárpáti provides an entertaining account of these readings in his introduction to Fühmann, *Briefe*, p. 28.

33 See 'Half of Life', in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. by Michael Hamburger (London: Anvil, 2004).

included a subtle acknowledgement of the connection in his mind between Hungary and Joyce's *Ulysses*. He had committed to a public reading from his new volume of the poems of Milán Füst and his latest versions of poems by Attila József, and comments regularly here on his creative tussles with the latter, notably 'Rebellierender Christus' ('Rebellious Christ') and 'Es tut sehr weh' ('It hurts deeply'). (There are many other references to his earlier work on other Hungarian poets and his new discoveries, notably a first spark of interest in the poetry of Ágnes Nemes Nagy.)[34] The Joyce reference comes in a single line — 'Thirteen Leopold Blooms: what a metamorphosis'[35] — but the build-up to it is what shows his familiarity with the text.

The particular theme he has in mind is Bloom's preoccupation with exotic bathing, which runs through the 'Lotus Eaters', 'Nausicaa' and 'Ithaca' chapters of *Ulysses*. After his purchase of perfumed soap at Sweny's Chemists, Bloom anticipates having a soak in one of Dublin's Turkish bathhouses before going to Dignam's funeral, allowing the chapter to end with his image of his pubic hair and penis floating in the bath like the 'languid floating flower' of the Lotus.[36] The fact that he managed to fit in a quick bath is only confirmed in the second of these chapters. Then in 'Ithaca', the revelation that Bloom is in other respects a 'waterlover' creates the momentum for the associative passage on the multiple sources of water all over the earth, then leads on to the clarification that he chose to visit the Turkish and Warm Baths in Leinster Street with its mosque-like façade that morning — even if researchers have subsequently noted that it had actually closed down before the date when the action of *Ulysses* takes place.[37]

In *Twenty-Two Days* Fühmann treats the same theme within the diary entry of 21 October 1971 focused on his narrator's visit to the Lukács Bath in Budapest.[38] Early on comes a general passage on the Hungarians' elemental relationship to water and the myth of the arrival of the seven Magyar chieftains on the Carpathian Basin just before

34 Franz Fühmann, *Twenty-Two Days*, p. 63. He says her poem 'Der Durst' [Thirst] has now 'become part of my private treasure-hoard'. It was one of the two he had time to translate for inclusion in his *Gedichte und Nachdichtungen* of 1978.

35 *Twenty-Two Days*, p. 74.

36 Joyce, *Ulysses*, p. 107.

37 Joyce, *Ulysses*, pp. 783–90.

38 Fühmann, *Twenty-Two Days*, pp. 66–76.

900 AD to create the state of Hungary. The narrative 'I' is the 'stranger' entering the exotic territory of the baths, which reminds him of the myth of the palace of Minos and its labyrinth (and involves a far more complex bathing and cleansing process than anything Bloom's Dublin had to offer). The Lotus blossom connection is made with the loincloths the bathers have to wear on their 'odyssey'. It is when the bathers' bibs are 'floating like lotus blossoms' on the surface of the water as they rest in a circle around one of the pools that he acknowledges viewing them as a group of Leopold Blooms.[39] It is a neat tribute to Joyce as one of his enduring literary inspirations.

Fühmann develops the theme further in his major essay of 1974 on the 'mythic element in literature', in which he chooses the last section of Molly Bloom's stream of consciousness in the 'Penelope' chapter as one of his three examples of literature with this depth of resonance. This level of public praise for Joyce's writing was pioneering in a GDR context, especially as he chose to focus on a fundamental issue almost totally ignored hitherto there, the nature of female sexuality.[40] In the years after publication of *Twenty-Two Days* he also added further to the steady flow of his translations of Hungarian poetry, with new contributions to a paperback volume of Attila József's work, another launched as a tribute to his old friend Gábor Hajnal, as well as the substantial choice of the best of his Hungarian *Nachdichtungen* included in the second volume of his *Selected Works*.[41]

4·

As we approach the 1980s, it needs to be mentioned in passing that this is also the decade when Maxton/Mc Cormack's interests both in *Nachdichtung* and the promotion of the work of James Joyce bring him into direct contact with Fühmann's adopted homeland of the GDR and its

39 Fühmann, *Twenty-Two Days*, pp. 74–75.

40 Fühmann, 'Das mythische Element in der Literatur', in *Essays*, pp. 82–141.

41 Attila József, *Attila József*, Poesiealbum 90 (Berlin: Neues Leben, 1975); Gábor Hajnal, *Walpurgisnacht: Gedichte*, ed. by Franz Fühmann (Leipzig: Reclam, 1978). The Hungarian section of his *Gedichte und Nachdichtungen* formed more than a third of the volume, providing translations from the work of eight different poets.

literature. A period of collaboration with me led to the publication of six poems by Johannes Bobrowski in Maxton's volume *Jubilee for Renegades*, while a conference in 1981 at the University of Halle-Wittenberg included not just a paper by Mc Cormack on the work of Joyce (focused on the story 'Eveline' from *Dubliners*) but also three others, by colleagues based in the GDR and West Germany, on the same author — possibly a unique event in terms of the degree of academic focus given to Joyce in a single publication in the GDR's lifetime.[42]

Meanwhile, the project that Fühmann hoped would fulfil his ambition to emulate Joyce's *Ulysses* foundered. He had begun work on what he always referred to as his 'Bergwerkroman' [Mining Novel] in 1974, but a combination of time-consuming simultaneous commitment to other creative plans, a growing number of political conflicts with the GDR's cultural authorities and his rapidly declining health after being stricken with cancer forced him to abandon it in 1982–83. It had started with a first descent into a copper-mine in Thuringia during one of the GDR's campaigns to have writers familiarise themselves with the world of industry, but the epiphany he experienced as he travelled underground convinced him that there was epic potential in the metaphor of the creative process as an excavation and refinement of the literary ore of past centuries. He embarked on the project still prepared to hope that he would emerge from this underground odyssey into a socialist society willing to embrace radical creative innovation, yet by the time he finally began to make headway he had become a bitterly disillusioned inner exile, forced to acknowledge that his vision of a dynamically evolving provincial community was in tatters. His proposed structure of the events of a significant year came to grief in the face of the widespread alienation and loss of purpose among the local people he got to know, signified by the impenetrable fog that regularly descended on them, reminiscent of the weather Homer's Odysseus experienced on his journey into Hades. All that remains of the mythic potential of his mining project is a fragmentary account of

42 Hugh Maxton, *Jubilee for Renegades: Poems 1976–1980* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1982), pp. 59–67; *Irland: Gesellschaft und Kultur*, vol. 3, ed. by Dorothea Siegmund-Schulze (Halle: Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1982). Apart from Mc Cormack's essay, pp. 252–64, there are contributions from the two editors of the GDR's edition of Joyce, Wolfgang Wicht and Joachim Krehayn, as well as from the West German researcher Rüdiger Hillgärtner.

his voyage of self-discovery, following the trail set in earlier accounts of underground exploration by Romantic authors such as Novalis, in his autobiographical *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and E.T.A. Hoffmann, in his *Bergwerke zu Falun* (*The Mines of Falun*). The contrast between this creative failure and Mc Cormack's simultaneous emergence as an academic expert on James Joyce, marked by the publication of his jointly edited volume of 1982, *James Joyce and Modern Literature*,[43] could hardly be more stark.

There is, however, a second and much more productive creative overlap during the early to middle 1980s when both authors, Fühmann and now Maxton rather than Mc Cormack, devoted their energies as *Nachdichter* to the work of Ágnes Nemes Nagy. For Fühmann, the task of producing a volume of her poetry in his own renditions became an irresistible imperative, ironically within weeks of him telling his poetic collaborator Kárpáti that the time had finally come to devote himself exclusively to the other major tasks he had committed to.[44] For Maxton, the work of Nemes Nagy was a first major challenge in his rapidly intensifying involvement with Hungary and its literature, working, like Fühmann before him, under the Hungarian PEN's collaborative translation programme.[45] The two volumes that emerged — *Dennoch schauen* (1986) and *Between* (1988) — are strikingly similar in many respects.

43 *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, ed. by W.J. Mc Cormack and Alistair Stead (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982). Mc Cormack's contribution to this volume includes his article 'Nightmares of History: James Joyce and the Phenomenon of Anglo-Irish Literature', pp. 77–107.

44 Fühmann's letter of 17 August 1981 in *Briefe*, pp. 168–70. Just a few months later (letters of 24 October and 24 November 1981, pp. 170–76), he is already immersed in his translation work, focused on a 'list of suggestions' from the author herself.

45 See the opening section of Hugh Maxton, 'The Poetry of Agnes Nemes Nagy: A Commentary', in Nemes Nagy, *Between*, pp. 79–91, (p. 79). He also began work on her poetry in 1981 and refers in passing to discussions with the author on points of interpretation. He was simultaneously reading Hungarian poetry much more widely. By 1983, as W.J. Mc Cormack, he had written an authoritative overview of the work of Hungary's major twentieth-century poets for a special Eastern European issue of the journal *The Crane Bag*. See W.J. Mc Cormack 'Poetry and Modern Hungary', *The Crane Bag*, 7.1 (1983), 34–40.

Each volume contains around fifty poems and they have more than half that number in common. These include a few examples of Nemes Nagy's early work from the war years and the Stalin era alongside a representative selection of her mature poems of the 1960s and 1970s, an ordering which places the 'Akhenaton' cycle, for which she is best known, at the heart of each volume. There would have been even more shared content, given that Fühmann also intended to translate some of Nemes Nagy's prose-poems in those final months of determined focus on *Dennoch schauen*, cut short by his death in July 1984.[46] *Dennoch schauen* has a slightly arbitrary dual-text dimension, placing the original Hungarian text of five of its chosen poems alongside Fühmann's translations, most interestingly perhaps for native speakers in the case of the three-line poem 'Ugyanaz'/'Ebendieser'/'The Same' (the adjunct to 'Egy távíróoszlopra'/'Auf einen Telegraphenmast'/'Telegraph Pole'), where Fühmann had not been fully satisfied with any of his four versions and Kárpáti opted to include all of them. (Maxton's neat English solution to Fühmann's dilemma — 'Telegraph poles, pinetrees that were. | Pineredemption to occur | in a punkwood otherworld' — is one of those rare moments when a comparative reading of the German and English translations gives one of them a clear-cut advantage.) One noticeable gap in the Fühmann volume is the detailed afterword he planned to write jointly with Kárpáti, despite the latter's best efforts to cobble together an editorial apparatus out of the fragmentary material at his disposal.[47] Maxton, on the other hand, is able to conclude his volume with a carefully composed and insightful thematic commentary.[48] Both volumes also include an essay by Nemes Nagy on the challenges she faced up to as a poet. In the Fühmann volume we have 'Büffellos' ('Without Buffaloes'), her wide-ranging account of the

46 Kárpáti did his best as posthumous editor to fill the remaining gaps, notably by providing his own highly competent translations of two prose-poems, 'Die Umgestaltung eines Bahnhofs' and 'Straßenproportionen' (Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch*, pp. 65–69). Maxton includes six prose-poems in Nemes Nagy, *Between* (pp. 62–67, 71–78).

47 Fühmann proposed the joint afterword in his letter of 28 August 1982 (*Briefe*, p. 194). In the published volume Kárpáti had to make do with Fühmann's fragmentary preface (p. 5), the text Fühmann wrote to accompany his 1982 radio broadcast of two of his translations (pp. 88–90), followed by his own shorter afterword (pp. 91–94).

48 Maxton, 'The Poetry', pp. 79–91.

damage inflicted by Aristotelian poetics on more than two millennia of artistic production, depriving it of the elemental, life-preserving function that art fulfilled in earlier periods of human creativity.[49] The Maxton volume has 'The Poet's Introduction', which takes as its point of departure the specific role of Hungarian poetry in preserving the identity of an existentially threatened nation. What unites the two essays is their author's conviction that the unprecedented new threats to human survival represented by escalating military destructiveness, nuclear weaponry and the climate crisis demand a new quality of poetic penetration into 'the no man's land of the nameless' beyond the current limits of human comprehension.[50]

Comparative evaluation of the distinctive achievements of each volume is of course impossible without first-hand knowledge of their common Hungarian source-material, a pre-condition which I am unable to satisfy. Differing translation strategies can be noted, reflecting each author's stylistic preferences as well as the respective limitations of each language, but any such observations can barely scratch the surface of analysis. Fühmann is more inclined to paraphrase where a literal equivalent reads awkwardly, as in the concluding lines of Nemes Nagy's 'Fák'/'Die Bäume'/'Trees', her programmatic statement of how we must all learn from closely observing natural objects, which Fühmann places first in his volume. His version reads – 'Erlernen muß man, was die Bäume | schweigend vollbringen Tag um Tag' — in contrast to Maxton's more accurate but less evocative — 'it is here we must learn the trees '| inexpressible deeds'.[51] In another of Fühmann's favourite poems, 'De nézni'/'Dennoch schauen', which he interprets as the author's defiant

49 Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch*, pp. 77–87, translation by Paul Kárpáti. An English translation by Mónika Hámori, entitled 'Without Buffaloes' is included in *Agnes Nemes Nagy on Poetry: A Hungarian Perspective*, ed. by Győző Ferencz (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 1998), pp 3–12.

50 Nemes Nagy, *Between*, pp. 7–14 (p. 9), translation into English by J.E. Sollosy.

51 Compare Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch*, p. 7 and *Between*, p. 58. Fühmann's concluding phrase means literally 'what the trees | silently accomplish day by day'. This point is amplified, with reference to Nemes Nagy's original phrase 'kimondhatatlan tetteit' by Stephan Krause (a Germanist who understands Hungarian) in his discussion of *Dennoch schauen* in the monograph *Topographien des Unvollendbaren: Franz Fühmanns intertextuelles Schreiben und das Bergwerk* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009), pp. 85–95, (p. 92).

response to an unspecified catastrophic event, it is tempting to suggest that he was inspired by the force of his opening conjunction 'dennoch' and the moral sense it can convey here of 'and yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary', compared to the more subdued 'but' that Maxton is almost obliged to use in his 'But to watch'.[52] Maxton, on the other hand, has a particularly keen ear for religious allusions, and includes a higher proportion of Nemes Nagy's reworkings of Christian themes in his collection. His version of 'Lázár'/'Lazarus' is a fine example, notably in his graphic metaphor of death being 'flayed off' Lazarus before his 'second birth' can occur — 'His death was flayed off him, like a gauze. | Because second-birth has just such harsh laws' — where Fühmann is obliged to indicate an impersonal agent of punishment and use the less evocative 'Rückkehr aus dem Grab' to mark his rebirth — 'Den Tod riß man wie Gaze von ihm ab, | denn grad so schwer ist Rückkehr aus dem Grab'.[53]

The complexity of Hungarian rhyme patterns represented a major barrier to *Nachdichtung* which both authors explicitly acknowledge. Maxton justifies his sacrifice of rigid reproduction of rhyme patterns 'in the higher cause of conveying the distinctive purity, humility and strength of [Nemes Nagy's] poetry'. He also points to the 'long English tradition of blank verse' as exemplified by Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth as illustrating 'the distinctive poetic quality of a deliberate avoidance of rhyme'.[54] Fühmann raises the same issue more pragmatically in discussion with Kárpáti regarding the choice of poems for their volume, when he asks Kárpáti to avoid proposing ones that are 'too difficult in formal terms'. He sees it as preferable to use assonance where necessary to avoid reproducing rhyme patterns that would 'cramp up' his German versions.[55] As a concluding illustration of the pleasure it gives to view these differing coping strategies complementing one another in practice it would be hard to better this stanza from 'Jegyzetek a félelemről'/'Notes on Fear'/'Aufzeichnungen von der Angst', in which the narrating 'I' takes some comfort from the barely comprehensible message her storm-battered envoys deliver to her:

52 Compare Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch*, pp. 62–63 and 89–90 and *Between*, pp. 56–57.

53 Compare Maxton, 'The Poetry', pp. 86–89 and 39 and Nemes Nagy, *Dennoch*, p. 36 [literally 'One ripped death off him like gauze, | for that's how hard return from the grave is'].

54 Maxton, 'The Poetry', pp. 81–82.

55 Fühmann's letter of 6 July 1982 in *Briefe*, p. 188.

Weathered like a traveller
so battered they are
these sweaty envoys
mumbling the lost lines
of their message made flesh:
their beauty launches – (through the slash
of the knife the knife that cut them
through the hand that bought and washed
the shop that sold them
through unbreachable mesh
of a cordon the heart's startled cries
and hands' hands-off clutch) –
their beauty launches the sizzling
thunderbolt into water, into my eyes.

Wie wen der Sturm packt Aug in Aug,
also zerfleddert und zerzaust,
Herolde, fiebernd, windzerspreitet,
stammeln sie ihrer leib-gekleid'ten
Verkündigung zerschlißnes Wort,
und ihre Schönheit schlägt mich noch
durchs Messer, das sie abgeschnitten,
durch die Hand, durch den Laden noch,
durchhauend der Millionen Schichten
nicht aufzuknotenden Kordon,
des Herzensalarm-Rasselton,
die Handbewegung jäh des Schirmens:
Schlägt, Blitz ins Wasser, da hinein,
schlägt zischend in die Augen mein.[56]

56 See Nemes Nagy, *Between*, pp. 21–22 and *Dennoch*, pp. 22–23. ['Like someone the storm attacks eye to eye, plundered and blasted to pieces, the herolds, feverish, dishevelled, stammer out the splintered word of their message made flesh, and its (their?) beauty strikes me still, through the knife that cut it to shreds, through the hand, still through the shop, cutting through the impenetrable cordon of a million layers, of the heart's alarmed rattle, the sudden movement of shielding: strikes me like a thunderbolt into water, sizzlingly strikes me in the eyes.'] Note particularly Fühmann's repeated use of compound verb-forms with the intensifying prefix 'zer-' (zerfleddert, zersaust, windzerspreitet, zerschlißn) both to achieve assonance and to stress the extreme conditions the herolds have to overcome.

Nemes Nagy, a distinguished *Nachdichterin* herself, was fond of quoting Rainer Maria Rilke to indicate the scale of the challenge this work involves: 'Wir stehn und stemmen uns an unsre Grenzen | Und reißen ein Unkenntliches herein'.[57] She would not have been disappointed by the creative ingenuity displayed by both of these authors in their sensitive attempts to capture the unnameable essence of her own poetry.

57 Although her translations are mainly from German sources, her linguistic range extends to French, Spanish and English. The quotation is from Rilke's poem 'O Leben, Leben, wunderliche Zeit', published posthumously in *Das Inselschiff*, vol. 11 (Leipzig: Insel, 1930). It is not well rendered by J.E. Sollosy in her translation of 'The Poet's Introduction' (Nemes Nagy, *Between*, p. 11). I would suggest: 'We stand and strain at our limits | And pull in something unnameable'.

Lázár Júlia

Között
Hugh Maxton Nemes Nagy-fordításairól

'A költészet legfőbb ellensége a szó' — írja Nemes Nagy Ágnes a *Negatív szobrok* című tanulmányában.[1] Majd folytatja: 'szüntelenül azt akarjuk mondani, amit nem tudunk'. A szó öröme és a szó elégtelensége hatványozottan igaz a műfordításra is. Ahogy a vers, a műfordítás is 'keskeny út a tudás és nem-tudás között', minden írás 'csatavesztés'.[2]

Írni tehát lehetetlen, fordítani végképp. Kiindulópontnak nem is rossz, illik a korai vershez és a Hugh Maxton fordításkötetében szereplő első darabhoz.

> Belátom, nincsen rá okom,
> de mégiscsak gondolkodom.
> S mert illik őt fitymálva néznem:
> esztelenül bízom az észben.[3]

Talán igaza van Hugh Maxtonnak, ahogy a szerzőre is hallgatva, esztelen bizakodással a mondanivalót igyekszik megragadni, és lemond a formáról:

> Yes, with no reason
> yet I reason.
> Though out of season
> unreasonably I trust it.[4]

1 Nemes Nagy Ágnes: 'Negatív szobrok', in *Az élők mértana*, 1. köt. (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2004), 10. és 11. old.
2 Nemes Nagy Ágnes, 'Tudjuk-e, hogy mit csinálunk', in *Az élők*, 35. és 34. old.
3 Nemes Nagy Ágnes versidézeteinek forrása: Nemes Nagy Ágnes, *Összegyűjtött versek* (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2016).
4 Hugh Maxton Nemes Nagy Ágnes-fordításainak forrása: *Between: Selected Poems of Ágnes Nemes Nagy*, ford. Hugh Maxton (Budapest: Corvina; Dublin: Dedalus, 1988).

A fordítás a magyar vers utolsó sorának játékosságára épít, az ott hangsúlyosan a végére hagyott 'ész', 'reason' köré rendezi az angol verset. Míg a magyarban az 'ész' szó egyszer szerepel, az angolban négy sorból háromban, de az utolsó előttiben is rárímel a 'season' szó, miközben az angol szöveg a magyar rímes, jambikus formáját nem tartja meg. Mit veszítünk és mit nyerünk? A magyar vers vállrándítós, szökellő hetykeségét az angol nyelvtörő szóismétlése idézi meg. A 'fitymál' ige nem lett volna visszaadható olyan angol igékkel, mint a *disregard* vagy a *belittle* (bár ez utóbbi meggondolandó), a jelentésében hordozza a fityeg-fityma jelentéskör minden bizonytalanságát és lendületét, nyilván ezért keresett a fordító valami egészen mást. Az 'out of season'-t mégis veszteségnek érzem. A (megfelelő) időre, kordivatra helyezi a hangsúlyt, míg a magyar ige inkább valami általános igazságra utal. A nő ne gondolkozzon. Sőt, az ember ne gondolkozzon — úgysincs birtokában semmilyen igazságnak. Filozófiai értelemben persze tekinthetjük ezt nyereségnek is, utalásnak arra, hogy különböző korok és eszmeáramlatok mindig változóan viszonyultak a témához.

Az 'unreasonably' és az 'esztelenül' kölcsönösen kifejezik a ráció ráción túli létjogosultságát, de a magyar 'esztelenül' még valamit sugall a csakazértisen kívül: a reményt.

Ugyanazt, amit a vers szökellő táncritmusa, amikor a 3–4. sorban négyes jambusról ötödfelesre vált: mintha a gondolkodó kihúzná magát, és dacosan szembeszegülne.

Tanulság, hogy nincs tanulság. A műfordító megtesz mindent, de a fordítás, ahogy az írás: csatavesztés. Amiből aztán újabb csata következik. Vagy 'rémálom':

> A cafatokban rothadó világból
> az értelem mocsári fénye lángol,
> a holttetem bomló fejére libben,
> és megmutatja fogsorát mezítlen —

Még mindig az értelemről, de ezúttal ellenkező előjellel, és több esélyt adva a bármikori fordítónak, mert egy ilyen erős képet mindig könnyebb átmenteni:

From a world in putrefaction
reason's marsh-light flares;
it flits on the crumbling skull
and bares a row of teeth.

A 2–3–4. sorban megjelenik a horrorisztikus vízió: a mocsári fény, a vicsorgó koponya. A 'cafatokra tépett' indulata kimarad a 'putrefaction' szóból, cserébe orrunkat facsarja a rothadás bűze. A képhez a magyar versben ismét jambus társul, de ezúttal a költő következetesen megnyújtja a hatodfeles jambusok sorvégeit, mintha egy-egy sorváltásnál libbenne az a láng. Mintha Eötvös Józsefet is megidézné: 'S ilyen legyen dalom: egy villám fénye'.[5]

Az angol katonásabb, inkább trochaikus lejtésű, aztán az utolsó sorban megugrik a hármas jambus, mintha kiemelkedne a rothadásból a vicsorgó koponya. Lám, az eszközök mások, a hatás mégis hasonló: elgondolkodunk, elborzadunk. Nem örülünk a fénynek, látni tanulunk. Nemes Nagy írja: 'A költészet (mint művészet) nem tiszta. De hát — attól tartok —, az ember sem az.'[6] Mintha a 'Napló'-ban ezt a gondolatot vinné végig, a következő darab a 'Bosszú', angolul 'Revenge'.

Ki nem tud bosszútállani,
de megbocsátani se, végképp —
az örökmécsként égeti
olthatatlan keserűségét.

Whoever cannot revenge
nor forgive all
unquenchable
will be his candle of gall.

Végtelenül egyszerű kép, kisimított gondolat. Ennek megfelelően gördül az angol változat első két sora. Aztán döccen egyet. Hugh Maxton nyersfordításokból dolgozott, talán így kerülte el a figyelmét, hogy itt az 'olthatatlan keserűség' és az 'örökmécs' egyensúlya, állandósága feszíti ki a verset. És oda is szögezi a sok hosszú magánhangzóval, főleg a sorvégi 'é'-kkel: végképp, mécsként égeti, keserűségét. A 'gall' jelentése:

5 Eötvös József, 'Én is szeretném', in *A karthausi/Versek/Drámák* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1973), 508. old.

6 Nemes Nagy, 'Negatív', 11. old.

epe, keserűség, rosszindulat. Rövid, elharapott szó. Azaz tökéletesen fedi az eredeti jelentést, mégis más képet, hangulatot fest. Szó szerint. Az angol vers epesárga, a magyar izzó vörös.

A ciklus utolsó darabjában, az 'Őszinteség'-ben ('Sincerity') is ott a szín, a 'nagy, szőke lovak' (big blonde horses). Nemes-Nagy angol nyelvű előszavában ugyan 'light-maned horses'. És ott az erőteljes ritmus, Arany 'Ágnes asszony'-áé, ahogyan azt Maxton a kötethez írott utószavában fel is fejti. A 'mossa, mossa', balladisztikus szóismétlését mégis fellazítja, két külön sorban helyezi el, de cserébe a másodikat erős helyzetbe hozza, az utolsó sor végére kalapálja. A 'spontán' Nemes Nagynál rárímel arra, amiről az egész vers szól: milyen jó lenne nem gondolkodni, nem önelemezni, nem fölszabdalni önmagunkat és a világot, hiszen az fáj. A 'free spirit' hangzásra szép, de egészen mást jelent.

I wince in self-revelation.
Happy is the free spirit.
I should have been a coachman
who just washes silently
the big blonde horses, washes.

Míg gonoszul elemzek én is, ráébredek, milyen nehéz egy jó költő látszólag könnyű (mert rövid?) verseit fordítani. Hiszen végtelenül tömörek, és végtelen asszociációs rétegeket nyitnak meg, mint Emily Dickinsonnál.

Egy árnyalattal hosszabb, de önálló, kerek és az előbbiekhez hasonlóan filozofikus vers a 'Szobrokat vittem'. Nemes Nagy tárgyai és lényei, fények, szobrok, madarak, lovak vissza-visszatérnek, az ő szívében 'boldogok a tárgyak'. Az első csatavesztések után Hugh Maxton bravúros megoldásokra talál. Szól a vers, felismerhető a hang. A névelő, prepozíció és a személyes névmás hiányától olyan szikár és meghökkentő lesz a vers, mint az eredeti. Szép, tiszta, kemény. Olyan 'ágneses'. És a végén ott a hangsúlyos 'I' (én), ami lehúzza, elsüllyeszti a hajót. Hiszen attól érdekes ez a vers, hogy megint fölvet egy filozófiai kérdést is (szobor-e az elsüllyedt szobor), és miközben nagyon konkrét képet, történést fest, az olvasó nyilván sejti, hogy a hajó, a szobor, az én: egy. Ha létezik, akkor a belső lélektengeren.

On board ship carried statues,
huge faces unrecognized.
On board ship carried statues
to stand on the island.
Between nose and ears
perfect right angles,
otherwise blank.
On board ship carried statues
and so I sank.

Hiába 'Lázár' ('Lazarus') a következő vers címe, itt sem (csak) a bibliai Lázárra gondolunk, sokkal inkább a szenvedő emberre.

Amint lassan felült, balválla-tájt
egy teljes élet minden izma fájt.
Halála úgy letépve, mint a géz.
Mert feltámadni éppolyan nehéz.

Round his left shoulder, as he got up slowly
every day's muscle gathered in agony.
His death was flayed off him, like gauze.
Because second-birth has just such harsh laws.

Pentameter, avagy drámai jambus. Érdekes módon, bár a két nyelv sajátosságaiból adódóan általában fordítva van, itt hosszabbak az angol sorok. A párrímet megtartja Maxton, többé-kevésbé működik is. Annak idején elcsodálkoztam, hogyan is képzelheti, hogy a Nemes Nagy Ágnesre olyan nagyon jellemző zeneiséget kiiktatja a versből, de ma már azt kívánom, bár ne tettem volna szóvá. Ágnes maga is ír erről, a prózájában és az angol nyelvű előszóban is: 'magyarul írni gályarabság', a magyar könnyen rímel, de szinte minden más (jellemzően nem rímekből építkező) nyelvre nehezen fordítható. Hugh Maxton, élve a költő felhatalmazásával, igyekezett rímelni, de nem mindenáron. Tudta, hogy csatát akkor nyerhet, ha nem tükröt tart, hanem újjáteremt. A rímek távolibbak, *berryman*esek. A vers is megszólal, csak az utolsó sornál akadok el, törik a nyelvem a hosszú szótagokba, nincs fölengedés, mint a magyarban: ti-tá-ti-tá-ti-tá. Talán éppen ez az iszonyú súly rajzolja élesebbé, húzza alá formailag is a verset.

'A visszajáró' ('Revenant') hasonlóan működik. A magyarban egy kivétellel párrímek, az angol jó érzékkel nem követi, de a vers legsúlyosabb, utolsó előtti szakaszában laza asszonáncokat megenged magának. Ugyanúgy nincs fölösleges szó, ahogy az eredetiben sem. Ahol kell, végtelenül tömör, ahol kell, szárnyal, gyönyörű:

> Then I shouldered through a space.
> And such birds, such space.
> Like a flaming garland's
> ruffled leaves, tearing, flaring
> they flew, muttering in swarms,
> riven by a pulse
> as if a heart split,
> flew into birdbits —
> That was the fire. That was the sky.

És a verszárlat. Pontos. A 'finger' (ujjal érintgetném) és a 'dodge' (az utcán húzódom) ige telitalálat, az 'alacsony léghuzat'-ból '[d]raughty' lesz, ami bőven elég, ugyanazt a huzatos létet veszi még szűkebbre.

> I leave. I'd finger
> the floorboard, if I could.
> Draughty. I dodge
> in the street. I am not.

A visszajáró, aki nincs, miközben tapinthatóan van. A műfordító, aki nem a költő, de mégis a hangján kell megszólalnia. Hugh Maxton, avagy eredeti nevén W.J. Mc Cormack maga is kitűnő költő, 1981-ben, a PEN Club felkérésére kezd a munkához (ekkor még csak az amerikai Bruce Berlind 1980-as válogatása létezik, George Szirtesé majd 2004-ben, Peter Zollmané 2007-ben jelenik meg), a program lényege, hogy társfordítók (Kőrösy Mária és Molnár Eszter) nyersfordításokkal segítenek, és a műfordító együttműködik a szerzővel. A válogatást (összesen ötven darab, ebből hat próza) Lengyel Balázs készítette. A könyv végül 1988-ban jelent meg, három évvel Nemes Nagy Ágnes halála előtt, a költő remek előszavával és a műfordító értő utószavával. Az utószóból kiderül, hogy a költőn és a társfordítókon kívül egyes angol szavak kiválasztásánál Maxton segítségére voltak magyar barátai.

Maxton az intellektuális szenvedélyt tartja a versek kulcsának. Ezzel szemben Nemes Nagy Ágnes az előszóban nagyon pontosan kifejti, hogy szerinte a költő mitől az érzelmek specialistája. Aztán persze azt is elmondja, miért lett az 'érzelem' a tizenkilencedik század után tabuszó, miért fél a költő a pátosztól, és hogyan kúszik vissza mégis, minden eszközön és rétegen keresztül a versbe az érzelem. Annak minden lakott és még meghódítatlan tartománya. A névtelen tartományt a tárgyak segítségével közelíti meg. A Kékgolyó utca szöglete (az utcabeli patkolókovácshoz érkező) szőke lovakkal, egy kavics, egy szobor, egy villamos kifejezhet szinte mindent, mégsem csupaszíthatjuk le a verset, és mondhatjuk, hogy az ábrázolt tárgy, a kifejezett érzelem, vagy a forma adja az erejét. Ez az erő az ismert részekből felfejthetetlen. Márpedig a műfordító — ha egészében elbűvöli is egy mű, sőt, életmű — kénytelen ízekre szedni, körbejárni, minden szögből megvizsgálni, és aztán a saját nyelvén úgy összerakni, hogy a forradások, szegecsek a végére belesimuljanak.

Az 'Egy távíróoszlopra' ('Telegraph Pole') egészen másként szól magyarul és angolul. Mindkettő remek vers. A magyar zengőbb, csupa zene, a rímektől, az olyan szavaktól, mint 'zúgott', 'fenyőfateste'. Az angol akár lehetne az ekkor már rég halott Sylvia Plath egyik alvadt vérdarab tömörségű utolsó verse is.

> That ago. That gone. This a knotted limb,
> mere allusion by a scar.
> And now it falls. Having fallen.
> Death of an otherworld.

De fölidézi Yeats egészen más típusú, több műfordítót erősen megdolgoztató versét is: 'knees | Were twisted like the old horn-trees'[7]. Szabó Lőrincnél 'görbe', Tandorinál 'bog', más fordítóknál 'göcs', 'gacs', 'csavart', 'marjult', Kosztolányinál 'vén tövis az ugaron'. A fa göcsörtjét, csavarodását kettő kivétellel mindenki megszemélyesíti magyarul. Ahogyan itt is, csak fordított irányban, a 'görcs a fában' Maxtonnál 'knotted limb' lesz. Az ember olyan, mint a fa, vagy a fa olyan, mint az ember? Mindegy is, Hugh Maxton jó érzékkel élesebbre rajzolja 'a

7 William Butler Yeats 'The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water' című versének szövege és fordítása, Szabó Lőrinc, Tandori Dezső, Mesterházi Mónika, Kiss Zsuzsa, G. István László, Lázár Júlia és Kosztolányi Dezső fordításában. *Nagyvilág*, 40.7–8 (1995), 545–48.

hasonlat terét'[8], világossá teszi, hogy a görcs a fában és az emberi sebhely ugyanaz, ahogy talán az evilág és másvilág is, csak a nézőpontunk változik. Minél több a veszteségünk, annál jobban közelítünk a 'között' állapotban az egyikből a másik felé. Persze, nem csak a kivágott fából faragott távíróoszlop hal meg újra, hanem az ember is, minden veszteséggel. A második világháború a fiatal költő alapélménye volt, a legjobb barátnője sosem jött vissza a lágerből. Ezzel és sok más 'nem szűnő tettel' a fordító tökéletesen tisztában van, az állati meleget adó másvilág állandó jelenlétét emeli ki a 'fenyőfatest' helyett 'az evergreen body' összetétellel. Miközben a 'once' (egyszer) szót ő is gondosan elhelyezi a két eredetileg adott helyen, hogy az egyensúly megmaradjon. Egyszer élünk, de többször halhatunk meg, azaz folyamatosan meghalunk. És ott a tárgy, ami ezt tisztán megmutatja.

És ott 'A látvány' ('The Spectacle'). A vers fókuszában, a 'kiélesedő képek' sűrűjében, 'ahol nincsenek térközök' ('where nothing of space can come between' — játszik rá Maxton a könyv címadó versére) áll a fa. Ezúttal nem fenyő, nem örökzöld, nem kétszeresen halott, hanem 'évszaktalan' ('seasonless') A tárgyak, a látvány a koponya belső falán: ott az egész világegyetem: 'amint jönnek és körbemennek | az ón, a kén, a madarak' ('as it circles | the tin, the sulphurous, the birds'). Elgondolkodtató, hogy a 'kén' az angolban miért lett 'kénes' vagy 'kénköves' — hogy pokolbélibb legyen a táj? Azt hiszem, Nemes Nagy tájának része lehet a pokol, de csak mint egy mozaikkocka a sokból, a gyűrt világegyetembe belefér. Ahogy a képek a fán élő lény koponyájába. A fa 'az égig ér', a lakója fölött zsúfolódnak 'zárva-termő' gyümölcsei. Az angol itt direktebb, ráerősít az iménti pokolképre: 'and I see its podded fruit | tighten'. Nagyon erős kép, üt a végén, de Nemes Nagy óvatosabb, a szürreális képet tudományos igényességgel rajzolja meg.

Tudom, mindent nem foghat át egy válogatás. De nagyon hiányzik nekem 'A lovak és az angyalok', a 'Három történet' valamelyike/mindegyike. De hát 'meglehetősen összezsúfolódtam' ('I have become overcrowded here') — mondja ő maga is 'A Föld emlékei'-ben. Egyike ez az utolsó évek bravúros prózáinak. Magától értetődő természetességgel jutunk el a Ráktérítőtől az Egyenlítőig, majd a tevekancáig: 'de van-e szebb, mondd, a tevekanca hosszúpillás szeménél?' Angolul ugyanilyen veretesen meghökkentő: 'is anything more beautiful than the long-lashed eyes of a camel mare?' Egyiptomi utazásának gyümölcse tehát

8 Nemes Nagy, 'A költői kép', *Az élők*, 97–98. old.

nem csak Ekhnaton, hanem egy újabb, kifejező 'tárgy'. Egyik verstani esszéjében a soroksári tevéről beszél, a két púpja: a szó öröme és a szó elégtelensége. És tobzódik a két púp között, akár Esterházy:

> Göndör barna hajam levágták, hosszú szőke hajamban nefelejcs, halványvörös hajam közepében a barát-pilis, rajta az a kis sipka, tonzurámon a kis kerek sipka, emlékszel? Az a kis... igen. Aztán gyapjas fekete hajam a nullásgéppel, ésatöbbi. Mennyi mindenem: hajam, térdem, halinám, tógám, selyemszoknyám, gipszkötésem.
>
> They cut my curly brown hair, they put forget-me-nots in my long blond hair, they tonsured my pale red hair, stuck a little round cap on my tonsure, don't you remember? The little round... yes. Then clippers, black hair, et cetera. My bits and pieces: hair, knees, buskin toga, skirt of silk, plaster cast.

A 'buskin' és a 'toga' között kimaradt a vessző, ami egyrészt nem baj, mert megállítja az olvasót, másrészt a 'buskin' idézi ugyan *koturnus* jelentésében a színházat, de nem idézi, mint a *halina*, a háborút. Dicséretes az utolsóelőtti mondat tömörsége, de a 'gyapjas' szó hiányzik, pedig mai időkben, a Black Lives Matter mozgalom újjáéledésének idején, különösen jól tudjuk, mekkora a különbség a fekete haj és a gyapjas fekete haj között. És miért fontos, hogy sokadik (elképzelt) életünkben gyapjas legyen a hajunk, füstös a képünk, sánta a lábunk.

Pedig Hugh Maxton pontosan tudja, miről van szó:

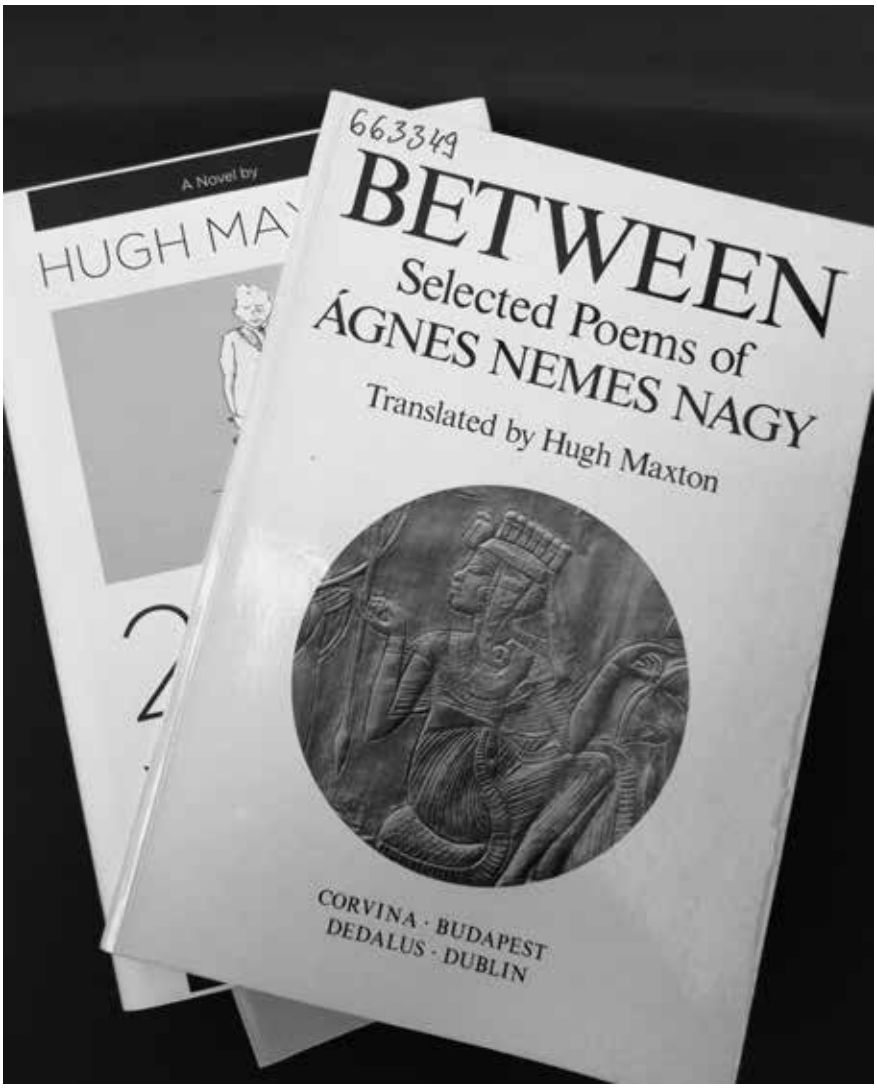
> A történelem itt véget ér.
> Egy hátrabukfenccel
> az elme hazaszáll
> pajtákhoz és padlásokhoz,
> fúrógépekhez
> és gazdasági épületekhez.

— írja a Protestáns Múzeumban című versében, Ferencz Győző kitűnő fordításában.[9]

9 Hugh Maxton, 'A Protestáns Múzeumban', ford. Ferencz Győző, *2000*, 25.7–8 (2013), 81–84.

Nagy valószínűséggel minden művész koponyáján belül ott vannak az összezsúfolódott képek. Életek és évszázadok. Színek, szagok, valós és virtuális érintések. Nagy dolog, amikor két költő belső világa átjárható lesz, és a közöttük létesülő kapcsolat — a műfordítás — mint egy üvegfal, bepillantást enged mindkettejük világába, sőt vele együtt abba a generációról generációra öröklődő kincsesládába, amit mások ridegen csak kultúrának neveznek.

Hadd adjak hát egy pótkulcsot a kincsesládához én is, egy személyes bekezdéssel: hadd mondjak köszönetet Billnek, amiért annak idején ennek az üvegfalnak a közelébe engedett, ahogyan aztán a szépséges 'szoborcsoporttá faragott' *Between* kötettel másokat is odacsalogatott. Épphogy kikerültem az egyetemről, tanítottam, és a saját első kötetemen dolgoztam (ami szintén 1988-ban látott napvilágot), tapasztalatlan voltam, lelkes és hívő. Hittem a szó erejében, és nagyon örültem, hogy 'segíthetek' Nemes Nagy Ágnes verseinek fordításában. Bill nagyvonalúan azt éreztette velem, hogy így van, miközben én voltam az, aki sokat tanult ezeken az átbeszélgetett délutánokon. Ahogyan annak idején a fiatal Ágnes sétált Szerb Antallal, úgy éltünk mi is teljes szívvel az irodalomban, minden találkozáskor. A mindenkori olvasónak sem kívánhatok jobbat: lakja be ezt a világot, élvezze Nemes Nagy Ágnes, a költő-műfordító Hugh Maxton, a tudós Bill Mc Cormack és a körülöttük felbukkanó szellemalakok társaságát.



Between: Selected Poems of Ágnes Nemes Nagy, trans. Hugh Maxton (Budapest: Corvina; Dublin: Dedalus, 1988).

Ferenc Takács and Bill Mc Cormack in 2017 at the reception celebrating Bill's 70th birthday in the Royal Irish Academy. Photo by courtesy of Ferenc Takács.

Ferenc Takács

Jonathan Swift and Milan Kundera
A Satirical Tradition

For some time, Jonathan Swift has been offered as 'our contemporary' with a frequency the effect of which is now verging on the monotonous, with the result that whenever one is tempted to call him so again, one is bound to sound as somebody stating the overpoweringly, if not depressively, obvious. Gone are the times of those Victorians for whose taste Swift was definitely and emphatically *not* a contemporary, Victorians who put *Gulliver's Travels* safely behind the *cordon sanitaire* of the children's book version of the first two voyages, and were likely to be very properly frightened off by Thackeray's notorious 'Don't', by this hysterical anathema on the 'horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous' moral of the Fourth Voyage, this monstrous outpouring of insane 'imprecations against mankind'.[1] In our century, Swift has been discovered, elevated to, and enshrined as a cultural prototype — a prototype of the Modern, or at least of a certain version of the Modern, and this time with approval and general endorsement. Papers, articles and books with some variation on the theme 'Swift and the Twentieth Century' have been the standard fare in Swiftian criticism for some time; influence, parallelism and affinity connects the Dean now with as various dignitaries of the Modernist canon as Joseph Conrad, Franz Kafka, James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, Wallace Stevens, Eugene Ionesco, and the list includes dignitaries of perhaps less lasting renown as, for instance, R.D. Laing.[2] Swift is now our contemporary as

1 See William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Four Georges: and English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century* (1851) (London: Smith Elder & Co, 1888), p. 406.

2 For Kafka, see (among countless others) Ernst Fische's paper read at the Prague Kafka Conference or Robert Martin Adams, 'Swift and Kafka', in *Strains of Discord* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 146–68; for Joyce, Hugh Kenner, *The Stoic Comedians: Flaubert, Joyce, and Beckett* (London: W.H. Allen, 1964), pp. 37–42; for Conrad, Yeats, Stevens, Ionesco and Laing, Claude Julien Rawson, *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader: Studies in Swift and our Time* (London: Routledge), pp. 60–152.

political and scientific prophet as well: Orwell's celebrated essay credits the 'Tory anarchist' author of the Fourth Voyage with predicting modern totalitarian politics with alarming accuracy,[3] while contemporary readers of the Third Voyage often conclude with seeing Swift as a Nostradamus predicting all the nastiness of modern science and technology, including the invention of nuclear weapons.[4]

Similarly, there have been critical attempts, working on a more immediately technical plane, to highlight certain large formal and generic changes in twentieth-century fiction with using Swift as a prototype prefiguring, as in Biblical exegesis, later literary fulfilments of formal strategy and structural procedure. Among these attempts, Sheldon Sacks's contribution stands out as perhaps the most interesting. *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, Sacks's 1964 book on Henry Fielding, contains an important first chapter ('Towards a Grammar of the Types of Fiction') where, in a general eighteenth-century context, a number of strategic distinctions are made between novels in the proper sense of the word, on the one hand, and other forms of longer fictional works, such as 'satires' and 'apologues', on the other. These latter forms exemplify those hidden codes, fictional, though distinctly *non-novelistic* ones, by the use of which eighteenth-century readers made sense of certain eighteenth-century works, including those of Jonathan Swift. Restating his definition of the 'apologue' with some important modifications in 1969, Sacks contended that it was this old, originally 'historical' category of the 'apologue' rather than that of the 'novel' that could account for the hidden code that is operative in the writing and reading of much twentieth-century Modernist work, including books we usually call *the novels* of Hermann Hesse, Albert Camus, William Golding, Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon.[5]

3 George Orwell, 'Politics vs Literature: An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*' (1946), in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (1968), vol. 4 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 241–61.

4 See, for instance, Michael Foot's 'Introduction' to *Gulliver's Travels* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 29.

5 Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), especially Chapter 1 ('Toward a Grammar of the Types of Fiction'), pp. 1–69; see also Sheldon Sacks, 'Golden Birds and Dying Generations', *Comparative Literary Studies* 6.3 (September 1969), 274–91 (pp. 276 ff.).

Whether we accept Sacks's formulation or opt for similar distinctions made to identify certain distinct fictional codes among those codes we loosely call novelistic and separate them from the code of the mainstream European novel in its nineteenth-century type,[6] the connection has been made: certain fictional forms, which predate the European novel and which we have always tended to assimilate into our idea of the mature European novel, however much these forms resisted our assimilatory zeal, are seen now as resurfacing in Modernist, or, with a view to some of Sacks's instances, in Postmodernist fiction. So Swift seems to be our contemporary in the narrower sense of fictional form and narrative technique as well.

Now, what I want to do in this paper — to consider a contemporary novelist such as the émigré Czech writer Milan Kundera as somehow being in the 'tradition' of Swiftian satire — is both an easy and, at the same time, bewilderingly difficult task. It is easy, as in our present-day Postmodernist climate, when everybody seems to be finding prototypes for his own post-bourgeois and post-humanistic novel in precisely those codes of narrative fiction that historically preceded, and were supplanted by, what for want of a better term I call here the mainstream European middle-class novel,[7] Kundera's fiction, with all its novelistic heterodoxies of omnipresent irony, satirical touch, public concern, intellectual engagement and formal daring, lends itself most obviously to a comparison with the kind of non-novelistic or pre-novelistic fictional method Swift's work embodies.

The source of the difficulty attending this task lies in precisely what makes it an easy one: the tempting obviousness of the idea, easily

6 Northrop Frye's 'Menippean satire' or 'anatomy' as the fourth of his major fictional types beside 'novel', 'romance' and 'confession' was, of course, a similar attempt of useful distinction; it was also generalized as a formal category and made to account for later, Modernist works, for instance, for certain aspects of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971) all throughout and, particularly, the section 'Specific Continuous Forms (Prose Fiction)', pp. 303–14.

7 For instance, Robert Coover, representative of Postmodernist 'fabulation' in contemporary American fiction, explained the significance of certain archaic narrative forms that predate the novel for his and his contemporaries' attempts to transcend the European fictional tradition of the middle-class novel and its formal realism. See my '"Cutting New Ground": An Interview with Robert Coover,' in *Americana and Hungarica*, ed. by Charlotte Kretzoi, (Budapest: Department of English, L. Eötvös University, 1989), pp. 133–43.

executed by noting a few instances of superficial parallelism and the general affinity of the two authors. To avoid these pitfalls, I will try to tread carefully and be as specific as possible in recording similarity, analogy and, in a few cases, direct influence.

One way of treading carefully here is to note that, in some figurative topography of culture and literature, the distance between Jonathan Swift and Milan Kundera is conspicuously less than the distance between Swift and, say, a contemporary American Postmodernist author as the discovery and the creative absorption of Swiftian satire was a comparatively late and relatively recent event in Eastern Europe. The first 'modernizing' phase of East-European literatures took place in the last decades of the eighteenth and in the first decades of the nineteenth century and creative response to what was going on elsewhere, that is, in the more 'advanced' cultures of the West was, on the whole, restricted to what was current novelty and the order of the day in German, French or English letters. Thus Czech, Polish, Hungarian and Russian literature responded, both in the forms of translation and imitation, to Richardson, Young and the Sterne of *A Sentimental Journey* as they embodied the current sentimentalist or pre-romantic climate while these literatures failed to take note of Swift, Fielding, Defoe and, generally speaking, the more unsentimental, rationalist and earthily comic authors of the earlier eighteenth century.

Their discovery came only later. First in the form which was a case of creative absorption only in very limited sense: by the end of the nineteenth century the academic study of literature, including foreign literatures, was in full industrial gear and that particular chunk of literary history we call Jonathan Swift was duly discovered, studied, ordered and written up as a matter of course, though without much excitement; this was the time in Hungary, for instance, when the first-ever note of any substance on Swift's work, Géza Kacziány's book appeared.[8]

The second phase was, however, more in the nature of a *literary* discovery: as East-European literatures entered a new phase of 'modernization' in the early years of the twentieth century, 'going modern' for a large number of East European writers involved their first-ever encounter with the work of Jonathan Swift, happily unaided

8 Géza Kacziány, *Swift Jonathan és kora* (Budapest: Eggenberger, 1901).

by any local tradition of academic enshrinement and domestication of Swift as a 'classic'. What ensued was wholesale creative misreading, started, in some instances, in the formative years of many East European writers. Concentrating now on Kundera's more immediate background, there is biographical evidence that important authors of modern Czech literature took a very personal and very fruitful interest in Jonathan Swift. Jaroslav Hašek, the author of *The Good Soldier Švejk* read Swift when he was a boy, Kafka's enigmatic allegories also have something to do with the author's readings in Swiftian satire, while Karel Čapek's work of concentrated intelligence, his fiction and drama of ideas and his interest in intellectual allegory also testifies to a distinctly Swiftian, or at least distinctly 'eighteenth-century' strain in modern Czech literature; this strain, quite in line with its historical prototype, is sometimes rationalistic and intellectual, sometimes earthy and carnivalesque, sometimes, as in Kundera's case, a wholly effective fusion of these two qualities.[9]

That this tradition is, for Kundera, vital and, also, that he is aware of its historical and typological connections with certain earlier, pre-novelistic narrative modes, was made interestingly clear in an interview Philip Roth made with the author on the publication of Kundera's novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* in 1980. Answering a question about living in France as an émigré writer, Kundera quickly digressed into discussing questions of narrative form and fictional tradition:

> I am enormously fond of French culture and I am greatly indebted to it. Especially to the older literature. Rabelais is dearest to me of all writers. And Diderot. I love his *Jacques le fataliste* as much as I do Laurence Sterne. Those were the greatest experimenters of all time in the form of the novel. And their experiments were, so to say, amusing, full of happiness and joy, which have by now vanished from French literature and without which everything in art loses its significance. Sterne and Diderot understood the novel as a *great game*. They discovered the *humor* of the novelistic form. When I hear learned arguments that

9 For the more consistently carnivalesque and 'Rabelaisian' variant we have, in earlier twentieth-century Czech fiction, Hašek, the author of *The Good Soldier Švejk*, and, among contemporaries, Bohumil Hrabal, some of whose stories are available in English translation in *Closely Watched Trains* (London: Penguin Books, 2017).

> the novel has exhausted its possibilities, I have precisely the opposite feeling: In the course of its history the novel *missed* many of its possibilities. For example, impulses for the development of the novel hidden in Sterne and Diderot have not been picked up by any successors.[10]

While strangely silent on Swift, the passage is particularly relevant to the kind of tradition Kundera's fiction belongs to inasmuch as the author here stresses at least two of those qualities in which pre-novelistic forms, including some of their eighteenth-century variants, differ from the later, mainstream European middle-class novel. Fiction in this code is an intellectual game that, far from concealing it, foregrounds its game-like quality; it is also, as a game should be, a source of pleasure and joy, quasi-erotic in character, where its doing is done and the product of its doing is read for precisely this pleasure and joy. In the choice between the heavy seriousness and ascetic repressiveness of mainstream European realism, on the one hand, and the quality of lightness, playful irresponsibility and carnivalesque *Lustprinzip* in those pre-novelistic codes that were, in the eighteenth century, still gloriously busy loosing the race for literary dominance, Kundera clearly opts for the latter one.

Which is, on the face of it, not quite the Swiftian option, though it is close enough to it. Exactly how close it is what I want to discuss now, and my natural starting point for this is Kundera's first novel entitled *The Joke* (1967).[11] Here this choice, or, rather, the dilemma inherent in this choice is very much present as a shaping factor, ultimately responsible for the novel whether in terms of meaning, technique or form. Within the framework of what is still a novelistic one, certain distinctly pre-novelistic and in some cases technically very Swiftian impulses wage a playful war for dominance or at least for supplementary status.

10 The quotation is from Philip Roth, 'Afterword: A Talk with the Author' in Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (original title: *Kniha smíchu a zapomnění*), trans. Michael Henry Heim (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 229–37 (p. 231). The interview first appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* (30 November 1980).

11 Milan Kundera, *The Joke* (original edition in Czech: *Žert* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1967)), trans. by Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

Completed in 1965, published, after years of delay, in the period of liberalization culminating in the Prague Spring of 1968, and quickly proscribed after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 21 August of the same year, *The Joke* engages many political issues of postwar Czechoslovak history which at the time of its writing were still largely taboo, and, therefore, has its perfectly legitimate attractions as a ruthlessly honest and realistically accurate exposure of life under Stalinist and post-Stalinist Communism in an East European 'people's democracy'.

At the same time, and perhaps more importantly so, it is a novel of ideas, a playfully philosophical inquiry into existential paradoxes. The four central characters of the novel, Ludvik, Jaroslav, Kostka and Helena, are defined in the novel by their attitude to, and identification with, certain ceremonial or ritualistic orderings of what otherwise would be a life utterly contingent and meaningless. These are forms of salvation and refuge as they offer, or seem to offer, all the utopian remedy for the human condition: the spectacle of a meaningful existence instead of a contingently absurd one, community instead of isolation, *Gemeinschaft* instead of mere *Gesellschaft*, 'unity of being' instead of drab fragmentation. These forms include, first, folklore, the ancient songs, customs and costumes of the Moravian countryside representing both a dream of Arcadia and some organic root and continuity of spiritual and mystical nationhood, and, secondly, religion, the community of believers and the reassuring faith in an ordered universe where everything unfolds according to some master plan of ultimately infinite good.

There is also a third form of ceremonial or ritualistic ordering, that, for some time and to some extent, both subsumes and supplants the two previous forms in the lives of the four characters: it is Communism with its promises of historical meaning, community, harmony, happiness and order. These promises were most ardently embraced by Ludvik Jahn, the protagonist of the novel, in an earlier phase of his life. A young student after the war, he made a total transfer of allegiances as he was able to see Communism both as an organic continuation of his wholehearted identification with the communal spirit of folklore and as the true faith, this time in History, that could replace what had been his bogus religion.

As a result, however, of what under normal circumstances would have been an innocent joke — Ludvik wrote a postcard to an attractive, though somewhat *doctrinaire* fellow student in which he declared optimism the opium of the people and hailed Leon Trotsky — he was expelled from both Party and university, forced to spend years in a work battalion of the Army and afterwards work as a coalminer before he was able to resume his studies and eventually re-enter what passed for middle-class normalcy in post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia.

His entirely absurd vicissitudes triggered off an internal process in Ludvik that was both psychological and intellectual. Coming up against the utter humourlessness of totalitarian power, he went through a cataclysmic — and very rude, because forced — awakening from these three forms of salvation and refuge and lost whatever inclination he had had for identifying with any form of ceremonial or ritualistic ordering of life.

However, his awakening seems to have been of a highly ambivalent character, as in the course of the story Ludvik will be able to immerse himself into one of these rituals, if only highly conditionally, in a spirit of controlled nostalgia. This happens in the closing scene of the novel where, in a garden restaurant, Ludvik consents to play the clarinet, after so many years of absence and abstention, in his friend Jaroslav's Moravian folk orchestra and admits to himself that he feels 'at home within these songs'[12] — a feeling, nevertheless, painfully and ironically undercut by the presence of a hostile and uncomprehending audience of local youngsters in the restaurant and Jaroslav's coronary, brought on by the frustrations and disappointments of the day.[13]

So Ludvik's attitude in the novel is very ambivalent. On the one hand, he constantly undercuts and debunks these ritualistic and ceremonial orderings his friends have chosen to live by: for him, there is no naive fidelity to the cause of Moravian folklore Jaroslav exhibits, neither does he have much time for Kostka's deeply communistic Christianity, and, of course, he sees Helena's staunch Communist position as yet another form of childish belief and false consolation. Ludvik's function in the novel is, then, to subvert illusion, relativize other people's 'systems'

12 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 265.
13 Kundera, *The Joke*, pp. 266–67.

which, in his state of total rationality, he sees as false ordering constructs, illusory systems of mere symbolism held by their believers in bad faith, in the *mauvaise foi* of Sartrean existentialism.

On the other hand, his relentless war on illusion and false consolation is a form of personal revenge on the world, or on humanity, that expelled him from the paradise of illusion and consolation. What he keeps on destroying is the very condition he is secretly longing for; his war is, then, a war waged against himself, a sterile fight, ultimately self-destructive. Behind his sense of humour, behind his acts of existentialist trickstery, there looms despair and unhappiness. To be beyond the capacity of self-delusion is to live in what his friend Kostka, who describes Ludvik, in a highly charged phrase, his 'adversary',[14] calls 'hell'.[15]

So Ludvik's paradoxical state, and the whole paradoxical case of order vs chaos, meaning vs insignificance turns out to be a variation on Swift's paradoxical carcass: the world of workaday self-delusion, the capacity of people for being well-deceived by those symbolic systems of order and meaning they choose to live by is, for Ludvik, the carcass of a woman he keeps flaying, while he has to conclude that when it is properly flayed its looks are much altered for the worse.[16]

There is, however, an area of stasis and harmony in *The Joke* which, while it is beyond any capacity for self-delusion whether in the form of folklore, religion or Communism, is definitely no hell, indeed, it is the very opposite of hell. It is embodied in Lucie, the girl Ludvik fell in love with while he was serving his stint in the work battalion. Simple, inarticulate

14 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 179.

15 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 204.

16 Cf. the relevant *loci* of 'A Digression concerning the Original, the Use, and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth', in Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, in *Major Works*, ed. by Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 145: '[...] in most corporeal beings, which have fallen under my cognizance, the outside hath been infinitely preferable to the in: whereof I have been farther convinced from some late experiments. Last week I saw a woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse. [...] a man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the sower and the dregs for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined point of felicity, called the possession of being well deceived; the serene peaceful state of being a fool among knaves.'

and touchingly provincial, she keeps bringing flowers to Ludvik as an answer to the letters he writes to her; she is arcadian innocence, totally uncorrupted by any of those higher systems of order other characters in the novel live by and from which Ludvik is in the process of his cataclysmic awakening. She is the true utopia of simplicity, life as perfectly, naturally and unreflectively identical with itself, transparent in its immediacy; she is not so much beyond history, religion, folklore and communism as this side of it all; her life is, as Ludvik calls it, a 'grey paradise' of ordinariness,[17] embodying an instinctive longing for 'a mute, preverbal stage of evolution when people communicated with a minimum of gestures, pointing at trees, laughing, touching one another…'.[18]

Ludvik, however, loses this paradise, or, quoting a line of verse to describe it, this 'festival of understanding',[19] and, now back to a semblance of normalcy in life, he goes on to wreak his personal revenge on humanity for his paradoxical state of rational insight and existential despair.

One of his most important weapons in this war is his body; Ludvik is the first in a long line of Kundera's males who use their bodies as metaphysical instruments and their sexuality as a means of philosophically charged interaction with the world and humanity in general. The all-pervading philosophical eroticism of Kundera's later work is already present in *The Joke*, indeed, its plot hinges on two sexual jokes of the practical variety: the original joke that led to Ludvik's downfall was part of an attempt at seduction, and Ludvik's plot for the day, the present time of the novel, is again a practical joke, the seduction of Helena as a form of revenge on Helena's husband, a particularly nasty specimen of Stalinist and, now, post-Stalinist officialdom.

Body and sexuality serve, then, as devices of debunking: they puncture illusion, they bring down what is part of the higher concerns of life; they effect what Jan Kott recently described, in a similarly Bakhtinian context, 'the bottom translation'.[20] The sexual act makes mockery of all the seriousness with which people hold on to their ideologies, myths and

17 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 61.
18 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 68.
19 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 64.
20 See his recent book, Jan Kott, *The Bottom Translation: Marlowe and Shakespeare and the Carnival Tradition* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1987).

symbols: when Helena, right in the middle of her sexual *tête-à-tête* with Ludvík, finds it necessary to justify herself and her existence by an appeal to her undaunted faith in Communism as the only true home of her youth, Stalin, gulag and show trials notwithstanding, Ludvík finds this totally absurd and remarks to himself: 'making so much of convictions in a situation where body, not mind, was the real issue is abnormal enough'.[21]

Body, at least in one of its guises, is the agent of joyous subversion for Kundera, a carnivalesque dissolvent of the false sense of 'at-homeness' people find in their higher myths they live by. In this, Kundera obviously makes use of the old dichotomy of body and soul (sometimes very explicitly as in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* where two sections of the book, 'Part Two' and 'Part Four', have the identical title of 'Soul and Body'[22]), and insofar as his body is of this carnivalesque variety, he seems to uphold the truth of the body against the falsity and artificiality, the constraining and repressive quality we associate with 'soul' and with its metaphorical extensions of spirit, myth, order, ideology and the like.

This body plays its role of subversion not necessarily in its sexual aspect: there is much in Kundera where certain other, normally unmentionable, bodily functions are called on to do the job. Wilted and rudely rejected by Ludvík, Helena chooses the high gesture of suicide toward the end of the day that is the story of *The Joke* only to experience the utter humiliation of the onrush of diarrhoea, brought on by her own unwitting mistake of swallowing a handful of laxatives instead of the more appropriately tragic barbiturates one resorts to on occasions like this. The cruelty of this absurdly contingent mistake, the practical joke of a chaotic universe, makes short shrift with her tragically elevated image of herself in the bathos of the outhouse of the local District Council offices.[23]

Here, and with similar scenes in Kundera's novels, the body in Kundera assumes another aspect that is definitely less joyous and carnivalesque than the ideal Rabelaisian (or Bakhtinian) variety. The ordinarily unmentionable natural processes of the body that function as subversive of these 'higher' systems of *mauvaise foi* illusion and self-

21 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 164.

22 Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (original title: *Nesnesitelná lehkost byti*), trans. by Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

23 Kundera, *The Joke*, pp. 250–53.

delusion, while they serve their subversionary purposes admirably well, are also oppressive and nauseating intrusions, bringing along a sense of revulsion and existential *Angst* with them. The overall effect here is rather less Rabelaisian than properly Swiftian: the dichotomy of body and soul is no longer a source of joy and mirth where 'body' keeps on poking relentless fun at the falsities and rigidities of 'soul', liberating humanity from its unnecessary repressions and sublimations; the dichotomy is also a very real dilemma, absurd as it should be resolvable and tragic as it is unresolvable, and as such constituting one of the constants of the human condition, if not, indeed, being the human condition *per se*. Body is all right as a wonderful means, or symbol, of carnivalesque subversion; but, Kundera seems to suggest, there is also something wrong with the body, just as in Swift's vision of the body, especially as expressed in his satirical poems on the female body, in *Strephon and Chloe*, *The Lady's Dressing-Room*, *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed*, *Cassinus and Peter*, etc., there is something deeply and perplexingly wrong with the body. In this connection it is well worth noting that the utopian area of stasis, harmony and 'at-homeness' in *The Joke* is Lucie, whose existence is as much divorced from sexuality and the body as it is from folklore, religion and Communism. In his preface to the 1982 edition of *The Joke*, Kundera asserts that the book is 'a love story' and 'a melancholy duet of the schism between body and soul';[24] his satire is as much a joyous satire of the body as a melancholy one *on* the body as a tragicomic absurdity that makes constant mockery of our uniquely human predicament while, as a forever implacable member of our dualism of body and soul, is very much an essential part of the same predicament.

It is a melancholy satire on the body in a number of different ways. One important, though local satirical target for Kundera is the attitude that refuses to admit that there *can* be something wrong with the body and treats body and sexuality in a facile and sanitized way. In Kundera's 1980 novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* this takes the form of a satire on liberated and uninhibited 'West-European' attitudes to body, sex and nudity. Jan, one of the characters in that matrix of enigmatic stories the novel is composed of, is an émigré Czech and therefore the representative of a richly sceptical and fatalistic 'East-European' sense of

24 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. xi.

life, contemplates the spectacle of a nudist beach and he has a sudden vision. He is

> overwhelmed by a strange feeling of affliction, and from the haze of that affliction came an even stranger thought: that the Jews filed into Hitler's gas chambers naked and en masse. He couldn't quite understand why that image kept coming back to him or what it was trying to tell him. Perhaps that the Jews had also been *on the other side of the border* and that nudity is the uniform of the other side. That nudity is a shroud.[25]

Body, then, can be beyond the border, where the first kind of laughter in this book about laughter, the one that is the symptom of sudden insight into the utter meaninglessness and contingency of life and universe, turns body, sexuality and nakedness into the obscenity of meaningless death, into a shroud that conceals some frightening truth about life as it covers the face of the dead. This is a possibility the false carnival of sexual liberation cannot even contemplate; it uses the body as just another myth of false consolation, it turns this agent of subversion into a system that itself needs subverting in Kundera's 'melancholy duet about the schism between body and soul.'

There is a similar shamelessly 'natural' attitude to the body and to its uses and functions embodied in the figure of Tereza's mother in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Kundera's next novel after *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. She is totally uninhibited about being naked, farting, urinating and defecating in public, and subjects her daughter to a relentless barrage of sneers whenever she detects unease, embarrassment and shame in Tereza's reactions to her behaviour. Years later, this experience still worries Tereza: her mother's openness in matters of the body stays with her as a traumatic memory as the only way she can remember her early life with Mother is that it was a kind of concentration-camp existence. She has a recurring dream about all this: it is a dream of naked women marching around the pool and being shot into the water one by one.[26]

25 Kundera, *The Book*, p. 226.
26 Kundera, *The Unbearable*, pp. 45–46 and 61.

Body and nakedness as helplessness, powerlessness, exposure and death; — all this finds its counterpart in Tomas, Tereza's husband. He is another version of Kundera's womanizers, he is in constant search of the female body, driven by a form of peculiarly intellectual compulsion, which Kundera explains in one of his usual discursive passages about his characters. He interprets Tomas's erotic compulsion as metaphorical of Tomas's profession as a surgeon: seduction for Tomas is surgery, the sexual act an operation, sex the opening up, the dissecting of the body of another human being. It is some madly destructive desire to *know*, to penetrate appearances and see the true essence of things. To see, in short, the woman flayed and to register how much for the worse her person is altered by flaying.[27]

And there is the final, frightening possibility when body and soul meet on the other side of the border that separates meaning and meaninglessness, and where their melancholy duet ends on a note of unmitigated despair. This possibility is presented, in a haunting image of rare satirical force, in the last, closing passage of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, where both body and soul — the source of carnivalesque liberation and the focus of all the higher aspirations of humanity — are irretrievably beyond that border, in a realm of total absurdity and final meaninglessness. We are on the nudist beach, with the émigré Jan and his local, West-European friends. As they are having a good time physically, they extol the virtues of liberation, arcadian innocence and nudity. In the course of this conversation

> a man with an extraordinary paunch began developing the theory that Western civilization was on its way out and we would soon be freed once and for all from the bonds of Judeo-Christian thought — statements Jan had heard ten, twenty, thirty, a hundred, five hundred, a thousand times before — and for the time being those few feet of beach felt like a university auditorium. On and on the man talked. The others listened with interest, their naked genitals staring dully, sadly, listlessly at the yellow sand.[28]

27 Kundera, *The Unbearable*, pp. 198–200.
28 Kundera, *The Book*, p. 228.

This, for an ending, compares rather well with the last image of Gulliver's Fourth Voyage: body and soul, irreconcilable adversaries in the human predicament, are finally joined in universal Nothingness.

There is also another aspect of this satire on the body where the implications are even more closely Swiftian: body seen under the aspect of Nothingness inevitably turns out to be some version of Swift's excremental vision as was expounded by Norman O. Brown in that brilliant, mad chapter of his *Life Against Death* in 1959.[29] In writing *The Joke*, Kundera raised the spectre of scatology in the scene of Helena in the outhouse of the District Council offices, but it was only after a rather long time that, apart from a few sporadic hints in his other novels, he took up the theme of scatology in any substantial way in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.

The theme is addressed in what is, in effect, a mock essay, a paradoxically and parodistically philosophical tract, strangely close to the grand eighteenth century manner of this kind of thing, as exemplified in, say, 'The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit.' This is the first five sections of 'The Grand March,' Part Six of the novel. It is a mock metaphysics or mock theology of excrement that substantiates its thesis — that 'shit is a more onerous theological problem than is evil'[30] — with various arguments and a number of illustrative anecdotes and fables. The latter include the story of the death of Stalin's son by suicide in a German POW camp. As it appears, the son of the great dictator was somewhat slovenly in his sanitary habits and, as he was billeted with British army officers in the camp, he had to put up with constant admonishments from his Allied fellow-prisoners as to the correct and gentlemanly use of the latrines. One day Yakov, as this was the name of the young Red Army lieutenant, just could not stand it any longer and hurled his body against the electric wire fence of the *lager*. Kundera contemplates this strange episode in the excremental history of mankind and, in the paradoxical topsyturvydom of the mock tract, declares excrement, normally the symbolic substance of meaninglessness, the one and only meaning it is worth living, and dying, for:

29 Norman Oliver Brown, 'The Excremental Vision' in *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 163–81.

30 Kundera, *The Unbearable*, p. 246.

> Stalin's son laid down his life for shit. But a death for shit is not a senseless death. The Germans who sacrificed their lives to expand their country's territory to the east, the Russians who died to extend their country's power to the west — yes, they died for something idiotic, and their deaths have no meaning or general validity. Amid the general idiocy of the war, the death of Stalin's son stands out as the sole metaphysical death.[31]

And this comes, needless to say, in a novel the author of which failed to mention Jonathan Swift among his eighteenth-century literary forebears in an interview that preceded the publication of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by a mere four years' time; and, what is more, in a novel the closing section of which focuses on Karenin, a dog whose life, conduct and death are playfully and ironically upheld as ideally human resolutions of all those existential paradoxes and dichotomies the lives of less ideally human beings are inevitably beset by.

In looking for a tradition that could accommodate Jonathan Swift and Milan Kundera, the last few instances I commented on seem to be more and more Swiftian in the strict technical sense as well. As a last probe, I will consider now the question whether these technical similarities of tone, procedure and device are too accidental and sporadic to put any weight on them or are systematic enough to warrant us to speak of a shared formal and technical tradition of satire as well.

Again, *The Joke* can serve as a good starting point. It is, with its skilfully streamlined features such as flashbacks into the characters' past, some monologue interior and a carefully executed point-of-view technique, your moderately ambitious mid-century novel, observing the usual decorum in consistency of character, psychological verisimilitude and the accuracy of circumstantial detail.

On the other hand, this properly novelistic code is occasionally switched to the other, non-novelistic one, to the code Sacks identified as operative in such subgenres among longer fictional forms as 'satires' and 'apologues'. A very interesting case of this code-switching, when the non-novelistic code is closely Swiftian in character is the narrative strategy employed in

31 Kundera, *The Unbearable*, p. 245.

describing the scene Ludvik witnesses in the building of the Municipal Council. It is a public ceremony, 'the welcoming of new citizens to life', as the official conducting the ceremony later explains to Ludvik.[32]

What happens in terms of narrative technique is that Ludvik, in a matter-of-fact interior monologue, relays his impressions of this thoroughly de-christianized and ideologically bowdlerized ceremony of baptism, for some time a state-approved and publicly encouraged practice everywhere behind the Iron Curtain, in the voice and manner of somebody who is totally unfamiliar with what he is witnessing and is in the dark as to what this whole incomprehensible mumbo jumbo is supposed to mean; all he does is recording what he sees and hears while he never interprets whatever he sees or hears for us.

Now this is, of course, code-switching, the temporary replacement of the novelistic code with the satirical one. Ludvik, living in the time and the place he does, must be assumed to be familiar with the ritual and reasonably cognizant of its 'point,' even if he rejects, as he does reject, this point as false and manipulative. Therefore, his total incomprehension of the scene is out of character (that is, it violates those assumptions we normally make about consistency in a personality *Gestalt* when we read fiction in the novelistic code), while the same incomprehension is wholly effective as a satirical device where, in the temporarily assumed new code, standards of novelistic consistency do not apply.

All this is of course very much like the satirical device commonly called 'Lemuel Gulliver', even in the specific point it is called on to make. Judged by novelistic standards of consistency concerning character, Gulliver, who is intelligent enough to navigate a ship safely across immense distances, cannot possibly *not* realize that the whole business of those high and low heels he is witnessing is a piece of symbolism, the admittedly unusual ritualistic husk of what is in substance the same political power game he is perfectly familiar with in his native England. Considered as a satirical device, however, Gulliver's whole function consists in the making of precisely this point by his incomprehension: politics is an empty ritualistic husk without any rationally conceivable substantive core. (This is Ludvik's point, too; as he expresses it later to the presiding official, who turns out to have been a schoolmate of his, there

32 Kundera, *The Joke*, pp. 144–50.

might be 'a more effective way of weaning people away from religious ceremonies, namely, giving them the option to reject all ceremony'.[33])

This code-switching is still rather infrequent and strictly occasional in the early Kundera; intellectual satire and philosophical irony is still largely a matter of content and tenor than that of form and technique. Later, however, instances of this switching and mixing codes become more and more numerous. His subsequent works, including *Life is Elsewhere*, this satirical novel on the modern myth of poetry and its offshoot in the peculiar totalitarian cult of poetry in the Stalinist culture of Eastern Europe,[34] contain an ever-growing number of fictional devices and narrative strategies which one is less and less prepared to associate with the code of the mainstream European novel. What the criticism of Modernist or Postmodernist fiction pinpoints as the metafictional and self-reflexive aspect of much contemporary fiction and what the literary historian happily recognizes in its eighteenth-century prefigurations in the work of Swift, Fielding and Sterne becomes more and more dominant in Kundera's fictional technique.

This culminates in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Kundera's technically most ambitious and most conspicuously unorthodox novel to date. Here, in this 'novel of variations',[35] writing is reflexively treated all throughout, and this is done to the accompaniment of a tune of resignation and scepticism which, while the book retains a quality of playfulness and lightness, question the very enterprise of writing Kundera is engaged in. The same sensuous pleasure in, and intellectual mistrust of, narrative combine into the structural idea of the book: the novel, which Kundera significantly calls a 'book', is constituted of a number of wildly unpredictable narrative starts and re-starts where potentially novelistic narratives begin only to eschew completion and end up as curiously enigmatic fables, in most cases totally unconnected with one another. (These include the stories of Mirek, of Karel and the two women, of the author, first with the girl codenamed R., then with his father, and of Jan and Edwige.) Considered in traditional novelistic terms, some of these thwarted fables are deliberately and artfully misplaced or

33 Kundera, *The Joke*, p. 149.

34 Milan Kundera, *Life is Elsewhere* (original title: *Život je jinde*), trans. by Peter Kussi (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

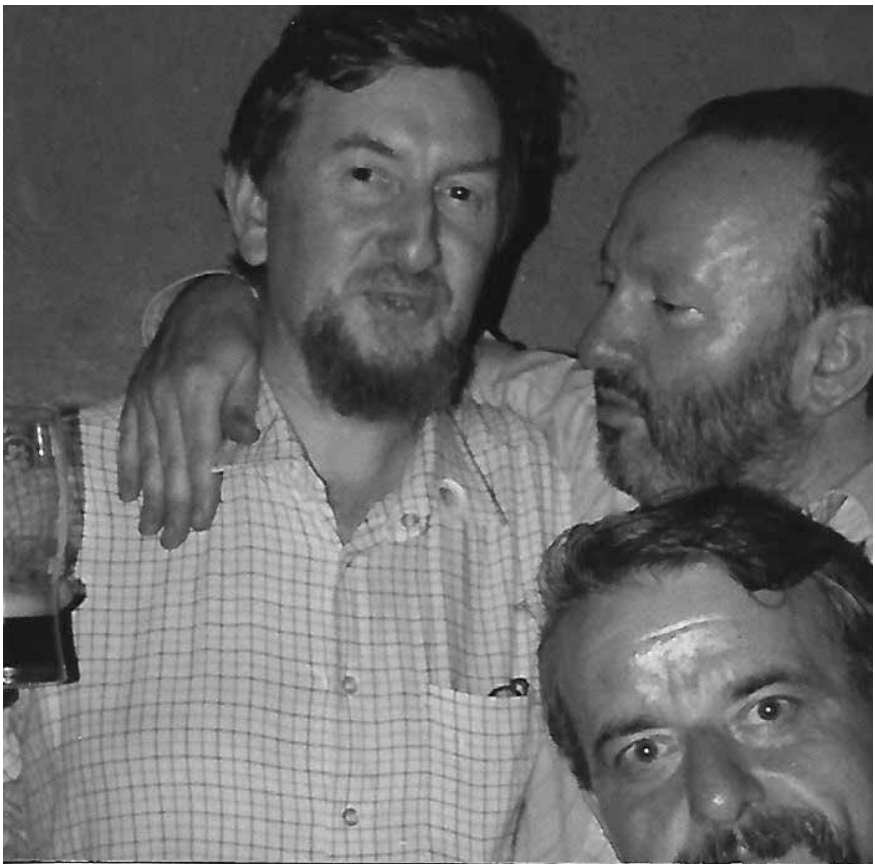
35 See Roth, pp. 229–37.

misproportioned; for instance, Tamina's story, which Kundera considers the central one in the novel, ends well before the ending of the book. They are also extremely heterogeneous in material as some of them are properly fictional while others include bits of autobiography, discursive reflection on various philosophical issues and straightforward political comment on postwar Czechoslovak history, on the 1968 Prague Spring and on its subsequent repression orchestrated by Party chief and President Gustav Husak.

In all this I am tempted to discover the final proof for a shared tradition in the formal and technical sense as well. The wilful convolutions, the misplacements and misproportions, the false starts and abrupt incompletions of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* recall Jonathan Swift's artfully disorderly ragbag, *A Tale of a Tub*. Indeed, Kundera's book seems to mirror, in some obverse fashion, Swift's work as it appears in the reading offered by advocates of the Hack theory: if *A Tale* is a satire on a certain kind of author and a certain kind of book, Kundera's novel is a similarly satirical, though somewhat more elegiac, meditation on Author, Writing and Book in the most general fashion.

If this analogy is granted, Milan Kundera, mock philosopher of illusion, literary trickster among rarefied ideas, political subversionist and satirist of the body, will make Jonathan Swift our contemporary in as yet another, and very apt, sense of this otherwise much abused term.

In *Acta Litteraria*, 33.1–4, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991 [issue appeared in 1994]), pp. 379–96.



Bill Mc Cormack, Derek Mahon and Ferenc Takács in the Dublin pub Doheny & Nesbitt, c. 1990. Photo by courtesy of Ferenc Takács

James Hamilton

Waking
An Irish Protestant Upbringing

Hugh Maxton's memoir *Waking: An Irish Protestant Upbringing* was published in 1997 by Lagan Press, Belfast. I first read it at the time of publication and regarded it as a very beautiful, perceptive, and often moving book. In the note on the text which prefaced the book a possible second volume was envisaged. I very much hope that this second book may yet come forth.

I propose to write a little about *Waking*, not as a literary critic, which it will be all too obvious that I am not, but as a friend of Bill Mc Cormack's and as an admirer of his work. I first met Bill when I was 17 years old and in my first year as a student in Trinity College Dublin and we have been friends for more than fifty years. What follows is intended as a brief personal reaction to the book which I have just had the pleasure of reading again twenty-three years after it was published. *Waking* is of course also the title of what is probably the best-known and certainly the most anthologised of Hugh Maxton's poems.

As this note is intended as a contribution to a *féilscríbhinn* (an Irish word which means roughly the same as the German *Festschrift*) planned to be published by the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Irish readers will forgive me if I explain briefly some matters with which every Irish person will be familiar. Many of my comments about the divisions and relationships in Ireland in the 1950s and later between Protestants and Catholics should be seen in that light and I apologise in advance for pointing out many things which to any Irish reader would be obvious or well-known.

With regard to the title of the memoir, in the English language as we speak it in Ireland the word 'waking', apart from its usual meanings of awakening from sleep, or being roused to action or activity or arousing or stirring up something, is also used to refer to the process

of mourning the dead and marking and celebrating the passage from life into death or, for believers, into the afterlife.

Irish funeral practices are very different from those of our neighbours in England and many other northern European nations. In former times in Ireland many excesses were associated with wakes. Some of these are described, for example, in the ballad 'Finnegan's Wake' from which Joyce took the title for his last work (leaving behind the apostrophe). Nowadays Irish funerals are for the most part much tamer affairs. But it is still the practice at many Irish funerals for the deceased to be laid out in an open coffin, often in his or her own house rather than in a funeral parlour, and for friends and neighbours to visit the house to view the body and to join the bereaved in reminiscing about the life and times of the departed over a cup of tea or a glass of whiskey. The funeral service and the burial are ceremonies attended by the whole community and, until the current interruption to normal practices caused by Covid 19, were generally not confined to a small number of the immediate family. In this writer's experience, at least in the countryside outside Dublin where the Protestant middle classes may have been less influenced by English practices, Protestant funerals in Ireland do not differ markedly from those of their Catholic neighbours.

The central and longest part of *Waking* is an account of the childhood and adolescence of the author. In referring to the book I shall use his pen-name Hugh Maxton rather than Bill Mc Cormack. His family and antecedents, his relatives and friends, the places where he lived and visited, his education, leisure activities both informal and organised, his intellectual and social development, his thoughts, ideas and activities — in short, everything that made him the person he was on the threshold of adult life — is set out in some detail, and as far as one can judge, with great honesty. Thus the book paints a full and convincing account of the experiences of one child and adolescent in the Ireland of the 1950s and the early 1960s.

The most significant event of Hugh Maxton's early life was the sudden and tragic death of his father when he was only thirteen years of age. He refers in his memoir to 'this disaster of my father's death

from which I would tread a bitter wine in lacerating abundance'.[1] His great distress was compounded by the decision 'explained to [him] in all its reasonableness'[2] that he was not to go to the funeral service or the burial. The long-term effect of his father's death is vividly recalled in his poem which is also entitled *Waking*.

This central autobiographical section of the book, which comprises ten of its twelve chapters, is framed by a 'Prelude' and the chapter entitled 'A Blurred Face' at the beginning and a chapter entitled 'On Arbour Hill' at the end.

The 'Prelude' appears to describe early impressions of infancy and is reminiscent of the opening of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Given the age of the author at the time of these early experiences there must be a question-mark over how and when these memories were formed.

'A Blurred Face' describes a visit to Szombathely in Hungary in 1982 (fifteen years or so after the conclusion of the events described in the central autobiographical part of *Waking*) to visit the place named in Joyce's *Ulysses* as the birthplace of Leopold Bloom's father. The chapter contains a philosophical meditation on the problems facing the writer of memoirs. The events of the day of the visit evoke complex and subtle reflections on numerous questions related to the act of remembering and writing a memoir, such as the nature of memory, its uncertainties and efficacy, the nature of and the relationship between imagination and reality, and how we know the past and the dead. Maxton describes the past as a time-space continuum, with the space missing, and suggests that knowledge is a very limited form of truth.

***

Waking has for its subtitle *An Irish Protestant Upbringing*. To the present-day eye this emphasis on the denominational nature of a child's upbringing may seem strange. How was a Protestant upbringing different from any other? Of course in many respects it wasn't, and daily life depended on wealth rather than religion. But at the time religion,

1 Hugh Maxton, *Waking: An Irish Protestant Upbringing* (Belfast: Lagan Press, 1997), p. 142.
2 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 186.

and more specifically one's denominational allegiance, was considered by many Irish people, perhaps even by most, as a central pillar of who and what we were, and there were certainly important differences in the approach to education and social practices. In the 1950s Protestants still had markedly fewer children than Protestants. Nowadays these social differences have largely disappeared.

In the 1950s Ireland, the south as much as the north, was a denominationally segregated country. Each 'side' had its own hospitals and schools. The two universities in Dublin were effectively segregated — Catholics in the diocese of Dublin were prohibited under pain of commission of a mortal sin from attending Trinity College Dublin. While there was no corresponding ban on Protestants attending University College Dublin, its strongly Catholic ethos made it an unattractive choice for many Protestants and only a small number of them chose to send their children there, often to study one of the subjects not taught in Trinity. At the same time, many northern Protestants went to Trinity, and indeed virtually all Church of Ireland clergymen studied in its associated School of Divinity. When in 1968 the Minister of Education, Donough O'Malley, announced his intention to merge Trinity and UCD his proclaimed purpose was to end what he described as the apartheid in education in the heart of Dublin.

Schools were in practice religiously segregated despite the right — on paper — of any child to attend any state-funded school without taking part in classes where religion was taught. In the Protestant national school which I attended the right of the one and only Roman Catholic pupil in the school to opt out of instruction in the Protestant faith was respected by sending her to sit on her own in the entrance porch during the religion class. The English and Irish reading books, which were standard textbooks used in all schools, frequently had sections dealing with religion, usually with a Catholic slant. In my school the pages dealing with religious topics were glued together by the teacher before they were distributed to the pupils lest our Protestant eyes be sullied by an image of the Blessed Virgin. St Patrick might be treated as an exception because he, of course, had really been a Protestant except he didn't know it at the time. But any suggestion to the contrary in the textbook, such as suggesting that he had been sent to Ireland by the Pope, and he would be glued up, too.

At that time Catholics were still enjoined by their clergy not under any circumstances to enter Protestant places of worship. When the first President of Ireland and founder of *Conradh na Gaelige*, Douglas Hyde, who was a Protestant, died, the members of the Irish Government stood outside the cathedral during his funeral, an act that was deeply resented my many Irish Protestants at the time. By the 1960s, however, things were beginning to change; in *Waking* Bill recounts that many Catholic neighbours turned up for his father's funeral and it was said that some had entered the church, or the church porch at least.[3] Change finally came with the adoption of the policy of ecumenism at the second Vatican Council held during the pontificate of Pope John XXIII.

Outside the church and the schoolroom, on social occasions which were attended by both Protestants and Catholics, co-religionists would often warn each other in a hushed voice that so-and-so was 'not one of ours'. This was largely intended to ensure that contentious topics of conversation would be avoided so as not to give offence. Religion and politics were taboo subjects in mixed company as is often still the case in Northern Ireland today. 'Whatever you say, say nothing' was alive and well in the south of Ireland in the 1950s.

Social events, and particularly those where people might meet partners of the opposite sex, were rigorously segregated. It was, of course, not admitted that there were any homosexuals in Ireland in those days except possibly in the theatre. This segregation along religious lines applied not only to the 'socials' (as dances were often called) which are so well described in *Waking* but also to youth clubs and organisations such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides — there were one or two religiously neutral scout troops but these were part of the Baden-Powell movement disapproved of by the Catholic church. The Boys Brigade of which the young Maxton was a member, and which is described in *Waking* was an exclusively Protestant organisation. Sporting activities for the young such as tennis and badminton were largely organised in the parishes on denominational lines. The GAA was in principle non-denominational but it played its games on Sundays and most Protestants were strict in their observance of the Sabbath. I am not aware of any Protestant schools where Gaelic football or hurling were played when I was a child although the secondary school I went to had a handball alley.

3 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 187.

These early examples of social distancing were largely a product of the infamous *Ne Temere* papal encyclical, which insisted that the children of what was in Ireland rather quaintly known as a 'mixed' marriage must be raised as Catholics, an edict which was universally resented by Irish Protestants and widely believed to contribute to the low rates of marriage among Protestants living in rural areas where co-religionists who might be suitable marriage partners were often thin on the ground. I refer to marriage because of the widespread pretence that pre-marital and extra-marital sex were not practised in Ireland at that time. As one well-known Irish member of parliament, Oliver J. Flanagan, once memorably stated, 'There was no sex in Ireland before television.'[4]

In *Waking*, however, Maxton has a somewhat different take on the reasons for the low marriage rate, at least insofar as concerned the Protestant hill farmers of South Wicklow:

> Late marriages were a major concern in the countryside. The Irish bachelor knew no denominational distinctions, and if there were few mixed marriages between Protestant and Catholic there was a perfect understanding between the spinster of one denomination and her sister-spinster of the other [...] A religion of infertility briefly flourished.[5]

***

Although not, I believe, written with that purpose, *Waking* is among other things an important social and historical document. There has often seemed to be a widespread popular perception in Ireland that the typical Protestant was wealthy and that there was no such thing as a poor Protestant. However, even in the heyday of the Protestant Ascendancy the landlord class must have constituted a relatively small minority of the Protestant population. For every wealthy Protestant landlord there was an army of Protestant tenant farmers, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, governesses and teachers, gardeners, shopkeepers,

4 Oliver Flanagan's famous statement was made on the Gay Byrne *The Late Late Show*. The matter of Flanagan's famous statement is discussed in Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (London: Profile Books, 2009), pp. 374–76.

5 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 117.

servants, policemen and artisans and tradesmen of every description — even, perhaps, a few poets, artists, musicians or philosophers. It is often overlooked that until well into the nineteenth century the urban population of Ireland, including many provincial towns, and not only in Ulster, was to a substantial extent Protestant and that even outside Ulster there were pockets of rural Ireland with substantial Protestant populations including south-west Cork and South Wicklow.

Waking serves as a reminder that there was and is more to Irish Protestantism than the Ascendancy. In the book Maxton refers to his family as coming from a network of 'unelevated' families 'held together by intermarriages and doubled affiliations. Just like the 'we are no petty peoples people.'[6] I remember well that my late mother, when she met a new Protestant acquaintance for the first time, would immediately embark on an enquiry as to that acquaintance's ancestors, cousins, aunts, uncles and relations by marriage and within about three minutes would be likely to make some announcement such as that the new acquaintance must be a third cousin once removed of her grandaunt Sue's stepfather. My mother's maiden name was Wheatly; it is a matter of some regret to me now that I never asked her to investigate any possible connection to Maxton's South Wicklow Wheatley relatives. The point I wish to emphasise, however, and which is well made in *Waking*, is that this network of unelevated Protestant families was very conscious of itself as a community and that its place was in Ireland.

Waking presents a vivid picture of the everyday life of the lower middle-class Dublin Protestant in the 1950s and early 1960s. It is a world which was very familiar to me, having been born into a very similar background on the north side of Dublin. Both my father, who left school at fourteen, and his father worked as collectors for an insurance company, and my great-grandfather was a harness-maker in Dublin. My mother came from a rural family largely working as shopkeepers, small farmers and policemen. She and her brother were educated in Colaiste Moibhi, an Irish-speaking college intended to provide a cohort of teachers who could teach Irish in the Protestant schools of the new State which came into being in 1922. As far as I know she was the first member of my family to attend a university. The upbringing in Kenilworth Park described in *Waking* is one I recognise as very similar to my own in Fairview, except

6 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 63.

that the strong Jewish presence in the area between the South Circular Road and Terenure was absent from Fairview in my lifetime, although there had been a Jewish presence there until at least the eighteenth century. There is still a Jewish graveyard on Fairview Strand (no longer in use) and I have been in houses on Philipsburg Avenue dating from the eighteenth century which still contained Jewish tabernacles.

As Maxton points out, his family's existence, though 'Protestant throughout', in its daily life, and the routine of the seasons, was indistinguishable from that of its neighbours. It is, however, interesting that as a child Maxton was aware of the religion of all his neighbours. As a child I could have made a list of pretty well every house in Fairview and Marino occupied by a Protestant family because these were the only houses not occupied by close friends where I was allowed by my parents to call during the Scouts Bob-a-Job week. Thirty years later, when my children were attending school, none of my children either knew or cared what religion their schoolmates belonged to. I am proud to have belonged to a generation which brought this about.

***

Waking also presents a strong picture of rural life in South Wicklow where the author spent much of his childhood with his mother's family in the house at Cronemore. From a social point of view it is interesting to see described a rural area where there is a substantial Protestant population of smallholders with only two local Protestants who could be considered gentry. The picture painted is of a population living on friendly terms alongside their Catholic neighbours and fully accords with everything I have ever heard from my own relations who lived mainly in the Midlands. But there was no fraternisation with the gentry either. My grandmother recalled being invited (along with the rest of the Church of Ireland parish) to the local Big House. When she learned that the guests were to be entertained in the servants' hall she indignantly declined to attend on the grounds that if she was good enough to be invited to the house she was good enough to be entertained in the drawing room. There is a strong streak of egalitarianism in Irish Protestantism. It was common among the less wealthy Protestants to believe that everyone is as good as, but no better than, anybody else, but this view may not have been universal among the Protestant or, indeed, the Catholic gentry.

***

It is important to emphasise that *Waking* is not a socio-economic textbook or a treatise on denominational differences in 1950s Dublin. I have emphasised these elements because the world of lower-middle class Protestant Dublin described in *Waking,* now largely disappeared, does not feature very much in Irish literature. But the main theme of the book is the description of the actual childhood and youth of the author, a real person growing up, and of his relations with his family and friends and his maturation and development. It is clear that he was nurtured in a loving family and his relationship with his parents and close relatives is sensitively described. His affection for his relatives in South Wicklow is apparent and a range of colourful characters is depicted with great humour. Throughout the book we meet a world of interesting and unusual people who are sharply observed and portrayed by the author. A particular highpoint for me was the tragic tale of the Rev. Fred Phillips, a Church of Ireland rector in County Wicklow.[7]

A significant part of the book is devoted to an account of Maxton's time in Wesley College, Dublin. On the whole Wesley appears to have been one of the more civilised schools in Dublin at that time. There is no evidence in *Waking* of the widespread and gratuitous physical violence which was frequently inflicted on children in many other schools in Dublin at that time, although there is a disturbing account of sexual abuse perpetrated openly in the classroom. Wesley was also one of the few co-educational schools in Dublin at the time. However, on Maxton's account, having managed, unlike other schools, to bring the two sexes together, it then seems to have expended a great deal of energy in trying to keep them apart.

Waking paints a picture of Ireland in the 1950s and early 1960s which brings that period back vividly to anyone who lived through it. There is much in the book which is atmospheric and likely to evoke a nostalgic reaction, particularly in persons of my age, Gur cake (which in the school I attended we used to call fly sandwiches), Taylor-Keith orangeade (curiously that unique Irish contribution to the world of soft drinks, red lemonade, does not feature in *Waking*), Dinky toys, Spangles. The latter were sweets highly prized by all twelve-year-olds largely one

7 Maxton, *Waking*, pp. 116–18.

suspects because they could be bought only in Northern Ireland. Then there was the bizarre livery of the vans of the equally bizarrely-named Swastika Laundry. These were bright red vans decorated with a black swastika inside a white circle. Perhaps this could happen only in a country which had experienced an emergency at the same time as most of Europe was going through the most genocidal war in human history. The sight of these laundry vans must have astonished the few foreign tourists who made it as far as Dublin in those days.

The picture painted by *Waking* is not all nostalgia, though. The young Maxton, like this present writer, dates his earliest memories of international politics to the time of the Suez invasion and the crushing of the Hungarian uprising by Soviet tanks. There is a hint that there are underlying sectarian tensions — the references to the Fethard-on-Sea boycott, for example. The trial of Nurse Cadden reminds us that 1950s Dublin was a city where the idea of women's rights was far in the future. Maxton gives an account of his visit to Santa with two South African Indian boys — the visit apparently caused a mild sensation. Dublin at the time was a very white place 'accustomed to the sight of Africans or Indians almost exclusively in the form of individual visiting dignitaries.'[8] Dublin in the rare old times was an inclusive and welcoming place, particularly if you were white, male, straight, Irish and Catholic.

A chapter in the book describes Maxton's childhood visits to Bangor in County Down. The sense of Northern Ireland as a place apart from the south is well conveyed — the ubiquitous war memorials, the parades by the Orangemen and the Royal Black Preceptory, the 'forbidding' police with pistols on their belts who 'turned their heads with a vigilant air which did not invite enquiries'.[9]

Maxton's picture of the endless stops at border posts and road blocks and the complicated documentation needed to travel across the border by car is one that is familiar to me from occasional visits to Northern Ireland during the 1950s. Travelling across the border by train is not mentioned in *Waking*, but it, too, could have its moments — I recall one trip where my ordinarily law-abiding relatives were

8 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 82.
9 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 93.

terrified that the customs officers would find and confiscate the clothes and household goods they had bought in Northern Ireland and were therefore, having forgotten to declare them, smugglers. Only my granny managed to keep her composure. She was always a good card player.

***

Waking ends with a chapter entitled 'On Arbour Hill', which is, perhaps the most difficult and complex in the book.

The chapter begins simply enough. Maxton looks back on his childhood from the perspective of 1988 when he is living with his wife Sheelagh and twelve-year-old son Simon on Arbour Hill. He recalls his period in Trinity College some years after he left school during which he wrote the poem 'Waking'. Reflecting that every history has one foot in the present he comments on the period which has elapsed since his childhood — the 'Indian summer' of the 60s, the 'explosions' of the 70s, and the economic winter which has now dawned in the 80s, bringing with it a resurgence of drunks, beggars, whores and drug addicts. Arbour Hill is both the location of Maxton's home and the site of a former British Army barracks, a prison which was then still in use, and the national memorial to the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising.

A dream involving a scene of violence at the house at Cronemore in South Wicklow where Maxton spent much time in his childhood prompts thoughts on the nature of political violence and the way we can be implicated in it. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of the anti-abortion protests under the banner of SPUC — the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. Maxton concludes that

> [t]he frenzy in Ireland over abortion is the equal and counter action of Provisional IRA activity. Not its antagonist but, in a shadow-drama, its protagonist. Elements in society who cannot bring themselves to confront the origins of violence and dissociate themselves identify a cause in which they can ostentatiously appear opposed to a gruesome and systemic practice. (But not the Provos' gruesome and systemic practice.) The right to life is concentrated on the unborn because others' right in this regard must be

> left without comment. SPUC is the national question in embryo, as the nation rushes in reverse through the stages of organic development, soon to be rid of the last vestiges, *tabula rasa* at last.[10]

The chapter concludes with further reflections on diverse subjects including political reform in Hungary, and the release of the Guildford Four ('There is a sudden swell of support for them now that they don't need it'[11]).

The book ends with Maxton's translation of one of Ady's poems from *Sorrow of Resurrection* on which he is working. Here it is. It is wonderful and deserves to be read aloud.

> Farewell, Dame Success
>
> So, I'm belittled! Let's see Mr. Big,
> Frankly, I blushed at the match of success
> And me. Now hang my psalter on the peg.
> Let the Nature-boys take over, bless them.
> And the beardless elder-statesmen poets,
> The so-sophisticates who know it.
> For I know not what has befallen me.
> Not price, but what value, victory?
> I had offered myself a hundred ways.
> Played virgin, played the field. It was a phase.
>
> Pot-boy, sometimes, to the metropublicans
> Or red rag to a hungry village bull;
> Can I earn name or crust in these ructions?
> Or chase grace, who is born grace-bountiful?
> Better fit myself into a worn coat
> To pause in lonely solitude and gloat,
> While Madame Success — hysterical bitch
> Fol-di-dols past, ogle eyed, waggling her flitch.
> And the churls who dog her? Some pleasure
> To join that choir. Thank you, no, I *never*.

10 Maxton, *Waking*, pp. 216–17.
11 Maxton, *Waking*, p. 219.

Bill Mc Cormack's parents c. 1943, in the offices of Roper Brothers, wholesale electrical suppliers, where they both worked.

Fergus O'Ferrall

Too Long a Sacrifice (Excerpt)[1]

The decade of commemoration, 1912–1922, has given rise to so many new publications that it is doubtful if many citizens have time to sort the wheat from the chaff among them. It is reasonable to suggest, however, that the two books here reviewed will survive as required reading for anyone wishing to explore the context of the Irish revolution which ended in Irish self-government in 1922. Literary historian W.J. Mc Cormack has written a highly original contextual study in order to understand better Irish nationalist thought through the life and work of Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887–1916) executed as a signatory of the Proclamation. Michael Laffan, whose career at UCD stretched from 1976 to 2010, and who was distinguished by his historical work on the Irish revolution, has been appropriately honoured by a collection of essays treating of many new perspectives written by leading and emerging historians.

Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordan, in introducing *Years of Turbulence*, note the late Peter Hart's call in 2002 to 're-conceptualise' the Irish revolution 'and to have all the myriad assumptions underlying its standard narratives interrogated'. Mc Cormack's widely referenced study of Joseph Mary Plunkett is centrally concerned to 'deconstruct' the 'hagiographical tradition of nationalist biography'. Before we reflect upon what this new scholarship has to offer by way of a new conceptualisation of the Irish revolution it is important to place Mc Cormack's literary historical work in the context of his characteristic approach since the 1980s. He writes at the end of 'a long prologue' to *Enigmas of Sacrifice*:

1 W. J. Mc Cormack, *Enigmas of Sacrifice: A Critique of Joseph M. Plunkett and the Dublin Insurrection of 1916*, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2016); Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordan, eds., *Years of Turbulence The Irish Revolution and Its Aftermath, In Honour of Michael Laffan*, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2015)

> Personally, I have been brought to realize that the bulk of my literary historical work since 1980 has concentrated not on any linear narrative nor on the towering monuments, but on the awkward corners and unexpected turns occurring in Irish cultural history. Perhaps, because one has to slow down to negotiate these hairpin bends and dangerous intersections, one sees more closely and thinks more deliberately into the terrain. Readers are not passive passengers, but may be required to consult the atlas and other travelling aids from time to time.

Readers indeed have to work hard (and perhaps to have read quite widely) when reading Mc Cormack both because of the quality of his interrogative mind and the range of his references: his angles of approach are often unexpected and he is willing to entertain long digressive explorations in seeking to explore contexts. Mc Cormack is an Irish bibliographer, biographer, literary historian, poet (under the name Hugh Maxton) and novelist as well as editor and critic. He has an extensive knowledge of European literature, with interests in French cultural nationalism, German fiction and Hungarian poetry as well as philosophy and of psychoanalysis. He is the author of more than fifteen monographs, one of which, *Dublin 1916: The French Connection* (Gill and Macmillan, 2012) relates to this latest work on Plunkett given his argument that French Catholic nationalism was more important in Irish nationalist ideology than the secular republicanism of the French Revolution.

Enigmas of Sacrifice is published in a series which focuses on the nexus of violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture. The series, published by Michigan State University Press, states that it furthers the agenda of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, an international association inspired by the work of René Girard of Stanford University, and which publishes the journal *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis and Culture*.

Therefore in approaching this book, the first critical study of the poet and insurrectionist, readers should not expect an easy read or a straightforward study of the short life of Joseph Mary Plunkett.

Mc Cormack organises the book in a fashion to explore the wider context of how this 'minor figure' 'can be located in a European movement of politico-literary reaction, nurtured on Catholicism and a mystical sense of *La patrie* or, across the channel, of pre-Reformation merrie England'. The Ireland that Mc Cormack investigates 'was suffused or permeated with sacrifice and debates about sacrifice' and the 'long prologue', entitled 'Crisis and Criticism' excavates the Christian debates or polemics about the meaning of Christ's sacrifice and how this theological idiom in an adulterated form entered, via Pearse and others, into Irish nationalist discourse, corrupting the more secular and republican thought of Theobald Wolfe Tone and Thomas Davis.

Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887–1916), poet and insurrectionist, had the most moneyed background of the leaders of Easter 1916, with the wealth deriving from property speculation and building by both the Plunkett and Cranny families. His brief life was marked by illness in the form of glandular tuberculosis. He was most probably dying in early 1916, having had an operation and attending at the GPO quite ill. He had an eccentric and nervous personality, formed in a family dominated by his mother's erratic, capricious and often violent character. He had a broken formal education and became something of an autodidact, being inquisitive across a very diverse range of subjects. For health and other reasons he was much travelled in Europe and lived in Algiers in 1911–12. He bought *The Irish Review* in June 1913 and used it to propagandise his version of nationalism, having joined the Irish Volunteers and later, in September 1914, the IRB. His amateur indulgence in military strategy and tactics led him — unlikely as it may appear — to become the chief military strategist in the planning of the insurrection. In March to June 1915 he was in Berlin and the USA seeking German and American support for the Rising — a surprisingly youthful envoy in the view of John Devoy, the key figure in Irish-American nationalism. Plunkett was executed after the Rising, famously marrying Grace Gifford on the night before his death — the youngest of the seven signatories of the Proclamation.

Mc Cormack provides a lengthy Chapter 1, 'Naming the Parts of a Life', that explores the 'profoundly dysfunctional household' of the Plunkett family and the erratic and brief career of Joseph Mary Plunkett. The Plunketts and the Cranny families (the poet's mother was a Cranny), as Mc Cormack puts it, were 'gliding upwards on warm currents of middle-class prosperity'. How 'the military strategist of the 1916 Dublin insurrection', Joseph Mary Plunkett, emerged from such an incompatible social background is indeed worthy of serious examination.

There is an important section in Chapter 1 on 'France and the Irish Logic of Sacrifice'. French Catholic intellectual influences are very evident in Catholic middle-class culture in early twentieth-century Ireland and were openly embraced in Plunkett's *The Irish Review*. Mc Cormack sees this journal as being of such importance that he provides in Appendix 2 a full twenty-page listing of its contents. The 'pronounced French influence in this premier journal of Irish cultural nationalism' is closely examined in *Enigmas of Sacrifice*. Mc Cormack writes: 'The particularly religiose form of nationalism that inspired the signatories [of the Proclamation] in 1916 inclined, almost vertiginously, to presume Ireland as being, in some essentialist and not merely descriptive way, Catholic.' This was an important breach with the Protestant tradition of Irish republicanism, with its role call of heroes — Tone, Emmet, Davis, Mitchel and others — as well as with concepts of republicanism as understood in political philosophy.

One could argue that the basis was laid by Plunkett and others for the 'Catholic theocracy' which practically obtained in the years after the Irish Free State was established. The Plunketts *père et fils* laid the emergent Irish polity at the feet of the pope (whom they deceived, as Mc Cormack recounts) in April 1916. The roles played by Plunkett's father and siblings subsequent to 1916 were, on balance, anti-democratic and reactionary as far as Irish political developments were concerned: opposition to the Treaty in 1922, opposition to parliamentary government in the Free State, endowing the IRA Army Council with sovereignty as the de jure government of Ireland in 1938, and the bombing campaign in Britain from 1939 and support for the pro-Nazi IRA. Toxic ideology with a marked Catholic nationalism of a very authoritarian stamp is in fact the end product of Plunkettite political ideology. It is important to have Mc Cormack's close scrutiny of the roots of such ideology in

this study of Plunkett. In understanding 1916 and all that follows, right-wing French nationalism, especially in its religious doctrine of sacrifice, cannot now be ignored as it was in past more simplistic interpretations.

Mc Cormack deals extensively with the 'forgery' — his word — of the famous 'Castle Document'. He provides in Appendix 3, 'The Forged Dublin Castle Document 1916', a close textual analysis of the surviving copies. It is clear that Plunkett was instrumental in the genesis of this document, circulated as a seeming government order for sweeping arrests of nationalist leaders. In *History Ireland*, Vol. 24, No. 2, March/April 2016, (and a subsequent number, Vol. 24, No. 4, July/August, for letter of Des White on the evidence concerning the document) there is an outline of the background to it and it is still subject to controversy as to the source of its content and the degree of deception its circulation involved. Eugene Smith, or Smyth, a telegrapher in Dublin Castle, may have supplied some authentic contingency plan which Plunkett altered to make it appear more extensive in scope and more urgent in implementation than was factual. Its circulation was intended to galvanise and motivate Irish Volunteers and nationalists generally for armed resistance.

Mc Cormack's book demands, but also repays, close attention because it deftly explores the mentalities of those who shaped events in early twentieth-century Ireland. There are many times when one is given pause for thought: Plunkett, for example, read Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1905) at least four times. Mrs Plunkett Dillon remarked that Plunkett 'liked the fantastic side of the story but as time went on there was no longer any need for fantasy; the reality was fantastic enough'. Readers will be impressed not only by Mc Cormack's scholarship but by his patience and persistence in analysing the scrappy and diverse writings which survive in Plunkett's papers and writings. His book is in some senses, as a result of this material, a number of 'largely discrete investigations' which are 'intended to illuminate a facet of the sacrifice enigma as it intermittently discloses itself through Joseph Mary Plunkett, antipolitical insurgent and religious poet'. Each 'discrete investigation' prompts new perspectives which challenge traditional views and approaches to this period.

In regard to *Years of Turbulence*, there is concern for new themes and approaches which currently engage historians of the Irish Revolution; these are, however, tackled in the single disciplinary framework of the historian rather than the multi-disciplinary approach of Mc Cormack. There is much to be said for wider disciplinary frameworks being considered by Irish historians. That said, there is in *Years of Turbulence*, twelve studies of the period which showcase new angles, revisit traditional assumptions or elaborate on some central issues in the historiography of the revolutionary period.

The collection opens with Eamon O'Flaherty's 'Michael Laffan: Portrait of a historian'. Laffan has made the revolutionary years particularly his own with major publications such as *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party 1916–1923* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and *Judging W.T. Cosgrave: The Foundation of the Irish State* (Royal Irish Academy, 2014) and many other related publications listed in Clara Cullen's select bibliography in this book. Laffan was often marked out as a revisionist in the polemical disputes in the 1980s and 1990s over how historians responded to the conflict in Northern Ireland from 1969 in their work, because of statements he made such as this in 1984:

> [the] claim in the 1916 proclamation that six times during the past three hundred years the Irish people had asserted in arms their right to national freedom was nonsense, but it was sacred nonsense. It, and the mentality which it represented, helped give Irishmen a distorted view of history.

In fact he is a highly professional historian true to his responsibilities to examine and re-examine evidence and he has the courage to write upon the basis of the evidence rather than to a pre-ordained agenda. Laffan's work reveals the limits of the revolutionary potential of Sinn Féin after 1916 in a revolution which, as O'Flaherty notes, 'few people wanted'. Laffan was at the forefront of the utilisation of newly available primary sources which is facilitating the 're-conceptualisation' of the period and many of his students in this collection now follow in his train.

In this regard we have examinations of suffragettes over the 1911 Census by William Murphy; the 1915 All-Ireland hurling championship by Paul Rouse and Ross O'Carroll; a study of Michael Keogh as 'recruiting sergeant for Casement's Irish Brigade' by Brian Maye; the internal divisions in the Irish Parliamentary Party after the Easter Rising by Conor Mulvagh; the scholarly and popular portrayal of Patrick Pearse from 1916 to 1927, by Shauna Gilligan; the role of GHQ in the War of Independence by Katie Lingard; violence against women in the same war by Marie Coleman; spies and informers by Anne Dolan; the Treaty, the Pact Election and the Civil War in Co Galway by Úna Newell; military service pensions by Diarmaid Ferriter; the career of Bulmer Hobson by Marnie Hay, and the case of Sean Lemass in the making of Irish revolutionary elites by Tom Garvin.

It is inevitable in such a wide range of probing studies that people will turn to these essays at different times and for different purposes. Tom Garvin's study of Lemass is particularly illuminating because of his subsequent career as a 'key modernising leader' in the 1950s and 1960s. Lemass, we learn, had 'political organisation and Parnellism in his blood'. He had a sceptical habit of mind and, according to Garvin,

> showed a marked ability all his life to change his mind when circumstances clearly demanded a rethink; in this his habits of mind differed from the fanatical and semi-religious political mentality that dominated the minds of so many young IRA men and Sinn Féiners of his era and later.

One might well reflect that it would have been healthier for Irish political development had there been more like Lemass, with his empiricist and scientific outlook, and fewer like Joseph Mary Plunkett, with his mystical right-wing Catholic nationalism.

Marnie Hay's essay 'From Rogue Revolutionary to Rogue Civil Servant: The Resurrection of Bulmer Hobson' expands and revises some of the material in a chapter in her monograph, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth-Century Ireland*, published in 2009. Bulmer Hobson (1883–1969), the Northern Quaker and nationalist propagandist, found himself 'disappeared' from the nationalist scene after his kidnap by the rebels on Good Friday 1916 because of his

opposition to the insurrection. He had evaded arrest and had not the advantage of having been 'out' in the insurrection. He managed 'to stage a quiet resurrection' as a civil servant and economic propagandist in the Irish Free State as deputy director of stamping in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. He believed that a strong economy in the Free State would lead to the eventual reunification of Ireland. Hay reminds us of some of Hobson's publications, such as his *A Book of Dublin* in 1929, which Fr Timothy Corcoran SJ, the editor of the *Catholic Bulletin*, described as 'manuals for the Ascendancy mind' that 'exuded in every page the drippings of deliquescent Protestantism'.

Corcoran also 'lambasted Hobson in gleeful purple prose' when, in 1932, Hobson edited *Saorstát Eireann Official Handbook*, a report on the achievements of the first ten years of the Free State. It was turning out that the Free State was a cold enough place for Protestants, even nationalist Protestants. Hobson drafted economic plans and sought in vain De Valera's support for them. Indeed his ideas were too advanced as he anticipated Keynesian ideas in an Irish context inimical to any coherent political or economic development planning until the late 1950s. Hobson's *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow*, which he published in 1968, re-publishes some of his economic writings from the 1930s. Hay concludes that 'always at the heart of his activism — and criticism — was an intense love of Ireland and a life-long commitment to improving his country culturally and economically'.

Mc Cormack in *Enigmas of Sacrifice* has an important discussion of Plunkett's criticism of the *Collected Poems of George Russell* in *The Irish Review* in February 1914. The key poem here is Russell's 'On Behalf of Some Irishmen not Followers of Tradition'. Russell is opposed to the cult or worship of the dead favoured by the nationalism of Plunkett and Pearse; Mc Cormack observes: 'Russell's mystical learning and his engagement in contemporary politics (not simply in October 1913, but more extensively through the Agricultural Co-Operative Movement) relies on a quite different understanding of how past and present engage.' Plunkett recognised that Russell's politics was 'dangerously antagonistic' to his emerging project, which employed the tropes of self-sacrifice, glorious bloodshed, 'the dead generations', which pursued armed insurrection blessed by the Catholic Church. We have suffered so much in Ireland from 'the necromancer's spell', to use Russell's

phrase, that reconceiving what actually occurred in the 'Irish Revolution' is not only a historian's duty but a vital service to Irish citizens who seek to develop a comprehensive, inclusive and democratic Republic. In Russell's words from 'On Behalf of Some Irishmen not Followers of Tradition':

> No blazoned banner we unfold -
> One charge alone we give to youth,
> Against the sceptred myth to hold
> The golden heresy of truth.

These books here reviewed are an important contribution to a more truthful account of the complexities and commitments of those who were involved in the revolutionary years prior to 1922. As John O'Donovan wrote decades prior to them: '*Beatha an staraí firinne*' (the historian's nourishment is truth).

In *Dublin Review of Books,* 84 (7 December 2016).

Thomas McCarthy

W.J. Mc Cormack: *Northman: John Hewitt, 1907–87*[1]

I wish I'd known in November 1982 what I know now, having read this extraordinary biographical study of John Hewitt by W.J. Mc Cormack (who is more widely known as the Dolmen Press poet, Hugh Maxton).

All those years ago, having listened to my poems at the launch of Younger Irish Poets, Hewitt put his hands on my shoulders and said: 'McCarthy, you are too soft-hearted.'

Ulster encourages the direct and uninvited word of censure.

In the pub later that evening I told Hewitt about the young British soldier I'd seen from the train at Portadown, playing with his bomb-disposal Labrador, soldier and dog rolling down a grassy embankment that was peppered with fallen sycamore leaves, the leaves like paprika scattered over soldier and dog.

'Only in Ulster,' said Hewitt sadly, thoughtfully, 'only in Ulster.'

Why, in Belfast, did the 1970s become the 1920s all over again, reaching an average of ten murders a week by the middle of the decade? It was a question that Hewitt, an active socialist and lifelong Labour Party supporter, spent a great deal of his waking hours trying to explain.

He belonged to Ulster, first and foremost, to the artisan, linen-weaving Radicals of the North; he loved art and despised grandeur.

His left-wing views and associations certainly cost him a job in Belfast arts administration in 1957, so that he had to make a career in Coventry; a distinguished and fruitful career as director of Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery where he championed contemporary British

1 W. J. Mc Cormack, *Northman: John Hewitt, 1907–87. An Irish Writer, His World, and His Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

artists like Barbara Hepworth. Battles he lost in Belfast he won in the regenerated and rising Labour-controlled Coventry of the 1960s.

In 'An Irishman in Coventry' he wrote: 'A full year since, I took this eager city, | the tolerance that laced its blatant roar, | its famous steeples and its web of girders, | as image of the state hope argued for [...].'

Mc Cormack paints a full picture of the poet's life here; Hewitt's intense attachment to the art of the Soviet satellite states, his socialist Internationalism and his Belfast and industrial North regionalism.

A great deal of the biographical detail here is gleaned from a private diary kept by Hewitt's wife, Roberta Black, and therein lies a great danger for a literary biographer; a danger that W.J. Mc Cormack is aware of: for the keeping of a diary by a spouse is an aggressive act, or, at best, an act of self-preservation.

The real biography of a writer is in the work; the work tells us everything we need to know. Compared to the work itself, all personal evidence is merely hearsay; and diarists, especially, are treacherous companions even in an ordinary life.

Hewitt might have allowed himself to be forgotten were it not for the enthusiasm of the younger, and more famous, John Montague. Montague negotiated a Collected Poems with MacGibbon and Kee in the late '60s and organised a crucial tour of Northern Ireland that may have re-attached Hewitt to the Belfast that had rejected him.

Blackstaff Press took control of his publishing life, and while Ulster disintegrated, the poet gathered strength. Hewitt's final Belfast years were, personally, very good, although there was a sense of the fading 'empire-Commonwealth' — 'Those happier decades we were dominant | but now that mastery has flaked away.'

Mc Cormack, with his dense, discursive style acting as a counter-balance to Roberta's diaries, has produced an important Ulster book one that every Southern politician might usefully read.

In *The Irish Examiner* (10 October 2015).

III.

Lucinda Thomson

Thoughts on W.J. Mc C.

Quixotic, brilliant, humorous, dogmatic, loyal, trenchant, stubborn, obscure (often very!)... this multitude of adjectives applicable to the enigma that is W.J. Mc Cormack/Bill/Hugh Maxton are what has made approaching this piece so very difficult. And that diversity of characteristics, that profusion of aspects of this troublesome personality are, of course, the essential richness, the kernel of it all. I struggled to distil, to define, to even reduce, this wayward figure into a neat series of summaries, until I realised the impossibility, the insult implied in what I was trying to do. So here I will, deeply inadequately, present a series of vignettes or images, often contradictory, yet all true to the perplexity and mischief of this, our most diligent and persistent national critic (I used the term 'critic' here both in the literary sense and also in the broader, argumentative, discursive and belligerent sense, the latter being the role that recent Ireland has so sorely needed).

Early 1993, a restaurant called Barnardos, now swept away, where they served food that was nostalgic even then. Three of us were dining: myself, my future husband and Bill. He ordered the steak tartar which came, splendidly, on a trolley full of the requisite ingredients, to be mixed at the table to the customer's specifications. The considerable amounts of alcohol already consumed hampered Bill not one whit, he devoted himself to this task, some of that, none of that, more tabasco but no, not the option of a glass of brandy. I was too close to the years of student poverty and the attendant anxiety of a lack of alcohol to allow this glass of brandy, poured and offered on this trolley of grand offerings, to be swept away so I liberated the glass as the trolley moved off. Perhaps consumption of that brandy explains our total lack of shock or concern later as Bill mounted the table to react fully, to the now silent and open-mouthed room and immobile waiters, to the news of our imminent marriage. He spoke with considerable passion and warmth. Such was the sheer force of his delivery and conviction that no one attempted to persuade him off his podium until all aspects of his

address had been thoroughly and comprehensively expounded upon. But perhaps it was not the brandy that led us to be unalarmed to see our friend declaiming from the middle of the table, perhaps it was our understanding that here was a man who, when he had something to say, he was damn well going to say it, regardless of the conventions of the situation or the sensibilities of those involved. We were merely aware that he had a statement to make and meant to make it as emphatically and clearly as possible; mounting the table was the logical way to do so. No one stirred, no one intervened and in due course, when he had completed his oration to his satisfaction, he descended voluntarily and the evening continued. The incident did not feel like a hiatus or interruption, merely an entertaining facet.

What did he say? I think that he was in favour of this forthcoming marriage.

(He did, however, possibly in the course of his declamation, promise me an epithalamion which has yet to be delivered.)

But he was to miss our wedding — possibly just as well as the trestle tables were not as substantial as those in the restaurant. He was to miss it because he was interviewing for the position of Chair of English in Maynooth University. The story of this process, his approval by the academic faculty and his being vetoed by the religious heads is not mine to tell but it was a hinge moment in his life. It drove him to England, and it was his final attempt to work in Ireland from within an academic institution. Instead it consolidated his natural position as something much more useful than a mere head of department — that of provocateur, of critic, of outsider, of representative of the intellectual, non-represented minorities.

His position as different, as an outsider, as a member of a minority is a consistent and formative theme in his development, both as a child and as a writer. It is a theme shot through with a certain loneliness but also an empowering one which has enabled him to stand slightly outside events, with a perspective acutely sharpened by distance.

Once, in Hungary, close to the Ukrainian border, in the village of Tarpa, having travelled all morning without explanation, drinking

Unicum, to visit a grave, he lamented to his bemused companion, 'I wish I had been born into a minority!'. He was reminded of the fact that as a member of the Church of Ireland, and as an intellectual one at that, he was a significantly small minority. 'Yes!' he exclaimed, 'But I'm not a Jew!'.

Effectively an only child, although he had older half-brothers, he was aware of himself as different as a member of the Church of Ireland. He was also drawn to the dwindling number of Jewish families in the area he lived, perplexed by their otherness, allured by the sense of history that surrounded them and by the unattainability of the first object of his affections, a Jewish girl named Zarva. This austere, Dublin existence was contrasted with the calm, steady but vital life of his grandparents and cousins in Wicklow; here he absorbed himself in country lanes, explorations of the farm, neighbours and experienced a sharpening of awareness of himself. His country existence, while calm and rooted in a tradition and lack of change or drama, seemed warmer and richer than the life he led in Dublin. Ostensibly quiet, it hummed with a subterranean, felt rather than heard, energy. Yet, here, again, he was the outsider looking in, the city boy on a visit.

The death of his father was a defining blow and he was left with his mother, a diligent and intelligent woman but of whom he said 'a mother who cares well but has no sense of loving has much to answer for'. This quiet statement is more devastating than any amount of vitriol and explicit criticism. In *Waking,* it is his father who emerges as the flesh and blood real person, despite his early demise, who returned from work with his bus ticket tucked into his wedding ring, providing Bill with the daily entertainment of extracting.

He is capable of pursuing lines of research over decades; Casement was already an interest in 1997 when he wrote *Waking: An Irish Protestant Upbringing.* Today he is still worrying over the contradictions and puzzles that Casement and his story pose. He commissioned the research which proved that the Casement diaries were probably NOT forged, stripping us of the anti-imperial crutch on which we had happily leaned for so long, that the British had concocted them in order to discredit him, to the discomfort of many who were unable to reconcile themselves with the notion that a patriot could also be homosexual. Not

content with demolishing this sacred cow, he has continued with his research, looping back over the generations to gain further insight into the enigma. His view of personality is a long historical one, stretching back into parents, grandparents, land transfers, deals done, medical events prior to birth; and his perseverance in following these threads is unflagging. Not only do we have to look far, far back to explain our writers and historians but history dances and reverberates clamorously today and he reminds us when we are inclined to forget. He insists emphatically on seeing the personal within a wider and historical framework.

His ability to cross-reference, art, psychology, history, law, medicine, literature, popular culture, linguistics, politics is equally staggering — from 'Questions for John Prine', to his absorption in the art world. He has always championed certain artists — Cecil King, Mary FitzGerald — and has been unfailingly generous, both to them and, through their works, to others. I have been a grateful beneficiary of an exquisite Cecil King, abstract (of course!) but challenging and compelling, not unlike many of Bill's own works.

He has never concerned himself with being accessible or relatable. His poetry is an incredibly rich profusion of puns, cross-references, allusions and complex metaphor. Contemporary singers, art, double meanings, historical figures, literary references, facts and fictions jostle and duck and dive to produce a sometimes vexatious but heady mix of stimulation. The charm of being easily understood does not appeal. This, after all, is the man who bamboozled the Parnell Spring Day in 1994 in Avondale with a presentation on the role of Sherlock Holmes as a gothic hero in the fall of Parnell. I was working with him at the time and, in the break, was set upon by confused attendees demanding to know what exactly he'd meant. Bill, meanwhile, had vanished to walk serenely in the gardens, leaving me to answer the unanswerable, probably chuckling at the perturbation he had created.

Which leads me to my next point; others in this volume will write more perceptively and with greater authority on W.J. Mc C.'s literary endeavours but it would be a shame were his humour and sense of mischief not referenced. He delights in the absurdities of the world. In *Waking*, he describes an incident, where his widowed mother decided

to grapple with the knotty issue of sex education by handing him a booklet entitled *How We Differ from Girls*: 'Somehow she muffed the sound intention of sorting out my inarticulate questions about sex by giving me a second book explaining how the Church of Ireland differed from Rome. For a time the two issues became intimately confused in my mind.' This manages to be simultaneously poignant and hilarious. Typically of Bill, he relishes that sweet spot where the absurd, the tragic, the exquisite and the momentous collide and he is able to articulate it all.

In the 80s, he was having a drink in a pub with an imminent and senior legal figure, talking of serious matters, politics, history etc., when a poet came into the pub. Bill kindly but firmly explained to the distinguished lawyer that it would be better if he left now as the conversation would be beyond him. The said lawyer has achieved many successes in his life but when I asked him for his view on Bill, this conversation, and the implication it carried, was his first anecdote.

Many families play a hypothetical game; 'What would we do if we won the lottery?', 'What animal would you be if you could be any animal?' etc. My family of straight-to-hell unbaptised pagans have their own take on this format. They play 'If you were going to be baptised, who would you pick as godparents?'. Bill features centrally in these debates as he is claimed and argued over — only one can have him. Seventeen years ago now he wrote 'Legend of the Lamp Room' for my son, which also doubles as a homage to the house, to the room in the basement where the lamps were kept, where the herons screeched outside and from which people were dispatched to bed with their own paraffin lamp.

> Years tripped over.
> The door tapped on the floor,
> Glass melted and froze
> In the nine-light windows,
> Vacant, rasping for more.
> [...]
> Herons clattered outside
> Dropping their pencil-cases
> From ignorant pride,

This might earn the recipient the desired godparent but then he also wrote a poem for my eldest, 'Herbal for Anna Hartnett', a gentle tribute, filled with flora and fauna, undershot of course with threads of danger and a sense of history. A poem of Bill's never does one thing which he has the possibility of doing six.

The youngest got no poem but commandeered Bill as 'my special friend' from an early age. Can one be an 'erratic fixture'? If so, that is what Bill has been in our household, very present for spells, then gone again but always in contact, always with something to say, always with a theory or thesis to be floated and tested, always challenging in the best way, always feisty.

It wasn't said of him, but of Justin Keating whom he knew and admired but it applies aptly to him. Justin was getting old and had suffered from bad health for years. His daughter was asked how he was, and she replied, smiling, 'Still angry!'. Bill thankfully enjoys good health but is still angry, still chasing up overlooked loose ends, still confronting and inciting, still rattling cages, still fomenting and postulating. Had he gone in for the Church, he would have been most troublesome. We are all the richer for that.

Geoffrey Hill

Postcard to William J. Mc Cormack

09.09.15.

Dear Bill,

Many thanks for the book of poems which reached me through the good offices of Jacqueline Baker. I'd have written sooner but have been unwell. Now that I have an address for you I'm compelled to confess that I dedicated *without permission* a poem to Hugh Maxton (it's on pages 924–25 of *Broken Hierarchies* (OUP). It's in part a response to your magnificent book on Yeats which has taught me more about the daemon in his mind and poetry than any other book I've read on him. I return to it again and again. You may recall that sometime in the late 70s you gave a copy of your Francis Stuart Festschrift. I'm interested to find that in *Blood Kindred* he figures more prominently than Pound or Synge. Yeats was not good for him as Rimbaud was not good for Verlaine, but Stuart was no Verlaine; more like Margot Ruddock.

You may have noticed that for the past five years I've been Prof. of Poetry at Oxford. It was an interesting experience but I'm now 83 and not sorry it's over.

Regards,

Geoffrey

Published by courtesy of Kenneth Haynes and The National Library of Ireland. Catalogue number: MS–50637–17.

Geoffrey Hill

To Hugh Maxton

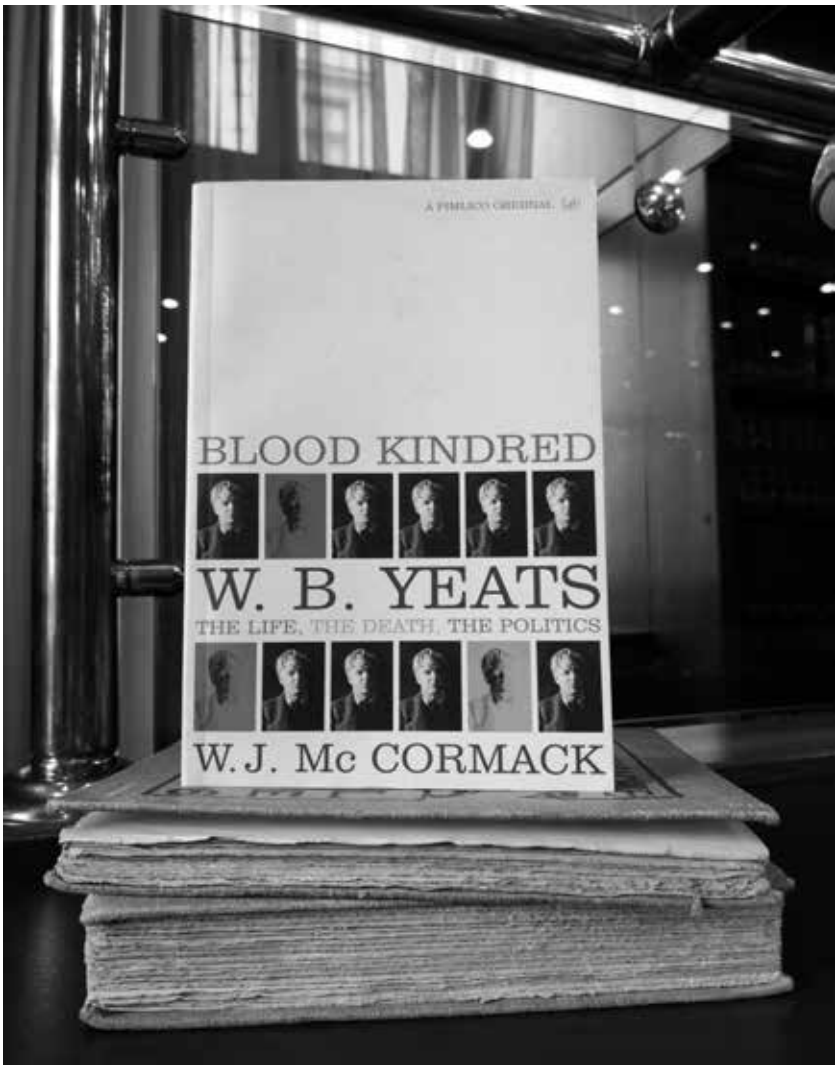
Purgatorial spirits: those who, Yeats says,
Dance to escape realities of flame
By denying they dream
(Not to give that much credence to his plays).

Courage by rite and rote: beyond question
Bring back citations, flags, and to their duty
Boy soldiers and caulked whisky-mystics. *Dirty*
People of no name redeem fame's bastion.

Brittle flâneur drops by at the Post Office,
Enscrolls himself – let me believe – who later,
Sidneian, gives away his cup of water.
Cuchulain farts blood from each orofice.

Say I invest things heavily in lieu.
Had I read you earlier I might have
Cast my words differently towards the grave.
Let stand these lurching paradigms to view.

Part 76 of 'Al Tempo de' Tremuoti', in Geoffrey Hill, *Broken Hierarchies: Poems 1952–2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 924–25.



W.J. Mc Cormack, *Blood Kindred: W.B. Yeats: The Life, the Death, the Politics* (London: Pimlico, 2005).

John Montague

Letter to William J. Mc Cormack
(Excerpt)

April 23 St Georges Day

Dear Hugh/Bill,

[...]

I received a very moving poem through the post, called 'Old Father' with a dedication: since I am now a grandfather I didn't mind the implication! And I liked the short lines of the poem and that it was written by someone who knew a little about farming — although I would spell them 'haggards'. Little does it matter, now that they don't exist.

I also liked 'not a fowl | Left to peck in its own dung.' I have always, always loved the mindlessness of hens. And 'Blacker than silage roll' gets the menace of modern farming.

Anyway, my apologies for my seeming discourtesy. [...]

I'll stop here, with greetings, and thanks for the poem. I hope I'm right this time —

Yours,

John Montague

[...]

Published by courtesy of William John Mc Cormack.

William John Mc Cormack, *Understanding Seamus Heaney: Between Bartók and Robert Lowell / Hogyan értsük Seamus Heaney-t: Bartók és Robert Lowell között,* bilingual edition, foreword by Győző Ferencz, Hungarian translation by Mónika Mesterházi (Budapest: Széchenyi Irodalmi és Művészeti Akadémia, 2020).

Hugh Maxton

Old Father

for John Montague, once again

The brood left him home
As it was, landscaped
With empty haggarts.

They flung dormered
Villas to the four corners,
Their garages ever pregnant.

Sons called one Sunday
A month all talking
Airports and fine art.

The odd wife did a turn
The second afternoon
In five, little baulking.

He rambled grand-children
At the end of a garden:
Zero remained constant.

Then fewer cattle, then none.
The hens laid off, not a fowl
Left to peck its own dung.

Neighbours thought delicate
But proud. Before Christmas
Someone drove to the gate:

Blacker than silage roll
Flockless the yard behind it
Echoes cancelled sound.

An old tractor seat
Propped him breathless
Beyond the turf basket.

With headlamps blunt
Against the kitchen walls,
A naked bulb shivered in its heat.

In Hugh Maxton, *Same Bridge Perhaps, and Other Fugitive Poems* (Dublin: Duras Press, 2013), pp. 52–53.

Published by courtesy of William John Mc Cormack.

Denis Donoghue

Email to William J. Mc Cormack
(Excerpt)

Sent: Sat, 26 Jan 2019

Subject: Pleasure

Dear Bill: Such a pleasure to hear from you. And with 'Jerusalem 1916', a wonderfully complete, definitive poem. The end-rhyme is perfection. [...] But we plan a summer trip to Dublin, and dearly hope to see you and Carla. Meanwhile I'm trying to finish a book that started out as THE CORRECTION OF TASTE (see T.S.E.'s early essay 'The Function of Criticism') but it has turned into a study of H.J.'s last novels. We'll see. Please keep in touch, Bill; even when I don't come into your dreams.

Love...Denis

Published by courtesy of William John Mc Cormack.

Hugh Maxton

Jerusalem 1916
für Elise

The look of Harold Triggs's trench cello when seen from the side is more or less normal apart for the lack of arching, but from the *front* or back it is rectangular, as an *ammunition* box would be. The neck is secured to the body with a normal mortise joint before being fixed to the button at the top of the back with a brass *bolt*. After that it is simple; the fingerboard slides into place on the neck and the top nut is added, as are the endpin holder, the tail piece, the bridge and the strings. When the instrument is to travel, the bolt that holds the neck in place is removed and the back slides out so that all the fittings can be placed within the box, including the *bow* in its special slot.

An officer of course
Not at the head of the force;
Playing in the background,
Captive by 21 September '18,
Not top brass, not top nut,
Known to Edmund Blunden.

Largely decreated
20 December 2018,
dedicated 18 January 2019

Published by courtesy of William John Mc Cormack.

Hugh Maxton

Virrasztás

Nemes Nagy Ágnesnek, 1922–1991

Errefelé
megyek el vagy kétszer egy héten.

A folyó nem széles, legalábbis most nem.
Az északi híd kétszer olyan hosszú.
Az arányt a vízállás határozza meg,
Évszaki szél, kobalt, messzi hógomoly.

esősodorta virágporfoltok a
vízfelszínen, visszatükrözött
imagizmus, zöld algaköpeny
az örvénylik, világló szem
csóvája a menedék árnyékban,
kiégett ürege beroskad

A Maros utcai őrsön kell jelentkeznem
Az idegenrendészeten, nem hittem, hogy van ilyen,
Ovidius jelentéseit olvasgatom fákról és sziklákról.

Egy hasonlat fordul be nagy garral a sarkon
A Várnegyed felé. Ez most valami más.

Vízmellék

A beszélgetés egy sötét
Liget szélén
Folytatódik,
Az egyik szó
Fölösleges.
Sárbaragadt nád
Pangó
Vízekben.

A megkopott szertartások megújulnak,
Az új szertartások elkopnak a használatban.

Minden végetér, kivéve a várakozást.
Egy kirakatban celofánba csomagolva
A történelemmé sárguló mesék.

Háznyi jégtáblák torlódtak fel a folyón valaha,
Fémhordák keltek át bőgve Németország szívébe,
A szívtelen Németország még zihálló tetemébe.
A forgalom saját tükörképébe fut bele,
Cirkálnak a biztonság remekei.

Ne igyál csizmából pezsgőt,
Átüt az izzadság. Létén túli inasunk
Hiába tanulta meg a saját kárán
Az egyetlen igaz poli-barbarizmust
A Képzelet Mi(ni)sztériumában.

Napló

A konfliktus első jele,
Hogy nyomtatás előtt
Bizonyos műveket
Kivesznek az
antológiából.

Ha így volt, hát így volt.
Az eltűnt ismerősök nem tűntek el.
A sorházak valamelyikében gubbasztva nézed,
Ahogy időről-időre közzéteszik fényképeiket
a bulvár szavazólapok harmadik oldalán.

Módosításokkal színleljük a változást.
A kiirthatatlanról kérdezel.
Az egész sziget feketébe borult.
Nem ilyen-olyan, hanem a tulajdonság
Nélküli tulajdonság koromsötétjébe.

Ha abba lehetne hagyni ezt,
A jelentések kiüresítését,
Ha mindent figyelembe lehetne venni.
De nem lehet, mert az üzlet
Az Édenkert Központban kezdődött.

Georgica

Armorum sonitum
toto Germania caelo.

Fekete háttérrel zöld kapribogyó,
Fekete járdán fehér,
Fekete papíron fekete,
Arányaikon múlik a jövő,
Nyomtalan kiigazítva írott tetteket.

Menekülés
Egyiptomba

Egy festő nyugszik
A folyóparti fűzfa
Gyökere alatt.

És néhány madarat
Újra lírai
Lángolásra hevít.

Tűrjük a fényt, a pokolba, a fekete bizonyos
Szögből anyagtalan ragyogásként tükröződik,
Olajos folyékonyság, vagy haladó locsogás,
Vastagon felhordott őshonos keselyűk,
Utógyilkos hibátlan bűnös szövege.

Semmi sem ég a menny tüzében.
Keresd a felhők között a végtelen
Jelen űrébe írt szavakat,
Mind azt jelenti, felhő, de mi tudjuk,
A föld kigőzölgései, formás nemlétező szőlőhéj.

A hőoszlop vörös fénnyel kúszik.
Szféra-közi kalap-köztársaság megsüvegeli
Önmagát. Talán találkozunk még kétszer
Valami feltételes bizonytalan feledésben.
Azt hiszem, élsz, azt hiszed, élek.

Párizs tanácsa

Hogy érezd az erőt
Feszítsd meg szabad
kezed
Az öntvényben.

Semmi sem ég az éjfél tüzében.
A könyv gerince behorpad
Atroposz hosszú ujja alatt,
Jéghártyát tapint, mert máshol
Szüntelen égitestek keringenek.

A sziget reszket a híd íve alatt,
Lanyha masszázsfürdő, a kiválasztottak
Luxusa, sajtósokkal megtelt autósszállók.
Különösen sűrített eposzod szeretem
A kis istentanonc monoteizmusáról.

Hidak siklanak a városba, mint síugrósáncok;
Tisztásra futnak ki, emberléptékű állomásokra.
A folyó messze elmarad a sötétben és az éppben.
De halad tovább a város belsejébe,
Majdnem eléri a hősi emlékművet.

A rosszfiúk megvédenek a még rosszabbaktól?
Ők az urak. Mint egy elharapott káromkodás,
Úgy kellenek az igék a nemlétező térbe, ahol a között
Lopakodik a kétes maradványok körül
Hurkokat hurkolva, öntvényből kifolyt viasz.

Semmi sem ég a márciusi tűzben,
Míg megállíthatatlan növekedés
Duzzasztja a ciklámént a télből

A tavaszba. Apró mozdulatlan források
Nem hajtanak virágot, hogy elhomályosítsák.

Avignon ... ártér ... csillámló
széles utak kis zsákutcák
és holtágak fenséges
hídszerkezetek pontonhidak
játék víz a földdel nyelv a
szavakkal

Halálod nem múlik, egyik gyászruha a másik után
Kopik el. Elárult a túlélés szégyene
Az útlevélben, visszahozta hiányodat.
Minden szolgálat titokban haragnövelő
Egyezség az itt és most között.

Buda ... Doubleford ... fekete vizek és tengerek egyesülnek

Mellékutakon járok, minden híd
A maga ívelt módján egyenesen vezet
A forradalmasított purgatóriumi körbe,
A lélek ily hatalmas köteléke észrevétlen
Marad, a görbe egyenes, az egyenetlen sík.

Ferencz Győző fordítása

Source of translation: 'Vigil' in Hugh Maxton, *Same Bridge Perhaps, and Other Fugitive Poems* (Dublin: Duras Press, 2013), pp. 44–48.

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

Postface

In the uneasy bed of Europe — made, unmade and hastily thrown together again, by the wars and opinions of a shocking century — we stumble over borders which were not here last time we looked, or someone has moved them. Up against the barbed wire flourish beds of nettles, that grow and are scythed and grow again; they argue, by stinging the adventurous, that separations are natural. There are many bridges as well, not without their perils.

This is Hugh Maxton's home ground, and he patrols these rough edges, alert. Whether in the Border counties of Ireland or sensing the aftermath of other empires, whether in the purlieus of a Monaghan lake or Wicklow or an Italian airport, or in the long history of families, he is a watcher. Like Kinsella's 'Nightwalker', the poem we owe so much to, his poems hunt out resistant realities. They mime a stroll, a pause, a sinking in of the view in all its contingency and secrecy. The wakeful viewer shows a scepticism that does not lead to impatience, that on occasion allows some compassion.

The home ground is only partly familiar: there are secrets, and traps. The poems tell us that some of the secrets have yielded, but where a riddle remains obstinate they reflect its unsolved presence. Some of the traps have been sprung; some are still waiting for their victim. There is a sense of time passing, not the kind that 'would have passed anyway' but the small deep personal segment of the huge flow of time and history.

To speak of a poetic territory, one voice is not enough; and here there are predominant notes, one of which is satiric. Satire and the absurd, especially absurdity of denial and oblivion, seek each other out. Murders in Monaghan, disappearances in Belfast, outrage in London, oppression in Eastern Europe, cannot be told in even-paced verse. An acidity is what is needed sometimes, to eat away at falsehood, and what's left looks gnarled and distorted like a tough rooted thorn-bush.

Is that its true shape? It is what we can see from where we stand and the poet's responsibility is to be true to that viewfinder. As he offers, 'Truth, al dente'. Real feeling in poetry has to include the feeling of loathing: he has claimed an inheritance from Swift before now, and here too he salutes Austin Clarke.

I am grateful also, though, for the variety of mood, for poems that are alive with the warmth of everyday life, or with pity or admiration or mere recognition of odd humanity, and for the movement between plainish prose, thorny oblique satire and poems that are unselfconsciously fluent. Poems that have found their best shape: form and rhythm still important though subordinated to what he needs to say. Packed tercets, fighting words, dire ambiguities, bracing verse. And then it relaxes: 'the road is in two minds | Beyond the reopened bridge | And the silver rain-water blinds.' And relaxes still more in the mostly prose-poem 'Platted Forms' with its lovely benign Gothic conclusion. The reopened bridge may not lead us straight to Paradise, but for as long as it stays open we must, like the poet, venture and find what lies on the other side.

In Hugh Maxton, *Same Bridge Perhaps, and Other Fugitive Poems* (Dublin: Duras Press, 2013), pp. 120–21.

IV.

William John Mc Cormack: Biography

While still at school, he wrote a versified summary of an Edgar Wallace novel. Literary publishing began with poems in *Icarus*, *The Kilkenny Magazine* and *Hayden Murphy's Broadsheet*. The scholarly career began with two short bibliographical pieces, the second of which — 'Francis Stuart: A Checklist and Commentary' (1971) — pushed him into more lasting trouble (he says) than any other publication.

Having worked for two years in the Dublin bookshop, Hodges and Figgis, the first slim collection, *Stones* (1970), appeared under the aegis of Allen Figgis, a sister company. His first publication (as editor) with the Dolmen Press was *A Festschrift for Francis Stuart on His Seventieth Birthday* (1972). Dolmen's founder, designer and presiding genius, Liam Miller, subsequently issued three of Maxton's collections, the first of these honoured as a Poetry Book Society Choice. Miller's death in 1987 seriously disrupted the writer's developing relationship with poetry publishing.

Before Mc Cormack graduated from Trinity College in 1971, he applied for admission as a graduate research student, a request refused on pseudo-technical terms and subsequently reversed. In the meantime, he applied for and won a temporary lectureship at Magee College in Derry, Northern Ireland. From this base he wrote a D. Phil dissertation on the fiction of Sheridan Le Fanu (supervised by Walter Allen) which appeared in revised form as *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (1980), the first of three monographs from Oxford University Press. His editor there, Jon Bell, urged him to follow up with a biography of J.M. Synge, but a stubborn author was determined to break into a newer genre, the history of concepts, *Ascendancy and Tradition* (1985), followed eventually in 2000 by *Fool of the Family: The Life of J.M. Synge*, commissioned by Hilary Laurie of Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Dissatisfaction with the biographical genre, especially as practised in Ireland, combined with unease about the treatment of national icons, led to the commissioning of forensic tests on the so-called 'black diaries' of Roger Casement. The Audrey Giles Laboratory published its report in 2002. By the time *Roger Casement in Death* was

published, Mc Cormack had retired home from Goldsmiths College, and was living just south of the Irish border.

Maxton's *Poems 1995–2005* reflect the transition through historical reflection and parable. He contributed 'Moregrove' to *Later On: The Monaghan Bombing Memorial Anthology* (2004). Taking its title from Tyndale's English *Pentateuch* (1530), the poem at once alienates and domesticates something of what Maxton had absorbed 'at the protestant museum' in Budapest or something of what he hoped to find under the shroud of Debrecen Communism, presenting it in the guise of a becalmed or capsized craft. The influence of the Ulster poet John Hewitt might be detected, whose biography was in progress at the time, also Robert Lowell, an earlier influence. But also — remembering Debrecen — the towering-lowering-louring figure of Milton. In 2012, eight years after Maxton's 'Moregrove', Mc Cormack contributed '"Lycidas" (1637) and Timely Reading: Some Observations on John Milton and *Histories of Ireland* (1633)' to a Festschrift in honour of Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, who followed him in 2017 in delivering the Seamus Heaney memorial lecture in Budapest. All adds up, as the debt-collector said.

No publisher or editor adequately succeeded Liam Miller. After initial success with the editors of anthologies, appearances thinned out. By 2013, the subtitle of his most recent collection read, 'and other fugitive poems'. The hermetic inclination flourished. To some extent, this development balanced changes on the other side of his brain, as Mc Cormack became increasingly disenchanted in the nonstop-popularism of an official 'decade of commemoration', as yet unexhausted. During 2016, Maxton concentrated on 'Elpis, or Hope: A Requiem Cantata for 1916', which he does not expect to see produced. A collected poems is under way entitled, *When You Give Your Word, Keep It*. The political centenary was marked with *Enigmas of Sacrifice: A Critique of Joseph M. Plunkett and the Dublin Insurrection of 1916*. A willing but demanding publicity agent objected to the use of 'critique'.

The donation of c. 1000 books to the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences — on-going — commemorates three Budapest close associates — Ágnes Nemes Nagy (1922–1991), Peter Doherty (1943–2009), and Miklós Vajda (1931–2017). That institution was chosen because it took an interest, unlike those closer to home.

William John Mc Cormack

Curriculum Vitae and Principal Publications

Personal details

Born in Dublin 15 September 1947, the only son of Charles Elliott Mc Cormack and Irene Mc Cormack (née King).

Educated at Wesley College Dublin (1959–1965), Trinity College (University of Dublin) (1967–1971), BA (1971), MA (1974), New University of Ulster, DPhil (1974).

Career History

2004–2010: Librarian-in-Charge, The Edward Worth Library, Dublin; from 2006, Keeper and Director of Research and Development.

2002: Retired from Goldsmiths College; stayed at Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, County Monaghan.

1996–1999: Appointed Head of the Department of English, Goldsmiths College.

1996: Member of the Advisory Board and Finance Sub-Committee of the Centre (now Institute) for English Studies (School of Advanced Study), University of London.

1996: Elected Professor of Literary History, Goldsmiths College.

1996–1999: Academic Adviser, John Hewitt Summer School, Antrim.

1995: Promoted Senior Lecturer in English, Goldsmiths College.

1994: Appointed Lecturer in English, Goldsmiths College, London.

1990–1992: Founding Director, Jonathan Swift Annual Seminar, Celbridge.

1989: Executive Committee member of Aosdána; re-elected in 1991.

1985–1994: Fixed-term contracts, Department of English and Samuel Beckett Drama Centre, Trinity College, Dublin.

1984–1985: Visiting (full) Professor, Department of English, Clemson University, South Carolina.

1983 (Autumn): Visiting Professor, Department of English, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

1983 (Spring): British Council Travelling Scholar at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

1981: Member of Senate, also Board of the Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds.

1979–1982: Moderator for BEd degree, Trinity and All Saints Colleges, Yorkshire.

1975 to date: Corresponding Editor, *Long Room* (bulletin of the Library, Trinity College, Dublin).

1974–1982: Tenured Lecturer, School of English, University of Leeds.

1973–1978: Assistant Editor, *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* (Toronto and London).

1971–1973: Temporary Lecturer in Anglo-Irish Literature, New University of Ulster.

Awards and Grants

2016: Elected member of the Royal Irish Academy.

2015: Elected honorary member of the Széchenyi Academy of Letters and Arts, Budapest.

1996: Elected fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

1992: László Kéry Memorial Prize.

1988: Hungarian Ministerial Prize for Verse Translation.

1984: Elected (as Hugh Maxton) a life member of Aosdána.

1980: Una Ellis-Fermor Memorial Fund grant.

1976: British Academy grant for research.

1976: Poetry Book Society Choice for *The Noise of the Fields*.

Principal Publications

Monographs

Enigmas of Sacrifice: A Critique of Joseph M. Plunkett and the Dublin Insurrection of 1916 (East Lancing: Michigan State University Press, 2016), 400 pp.

Northman John Hewitt (1907–1987), an Irish Writer, His World and His Times (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), xx, 294 pp.

Dublin 1916: The French Connection (Dublin Gill and Macmillan, 2012), 256 pp.

'We Irish' in Europe: Yeats, Berkeley and Joseph Hone (Dublin: UCD Press, 2010), 212 pp.

Blood Kindred: W.B. Yeats: The Life, the Death, the Politics (London: Pimlico, 2005), 482 pp.

The Silence of Barbara Synge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 304 pp.

Roger Casement in Death: Or, Haunting the Free State (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2002), 240 pp.

Fool of the Family: A Life of J.M. Synge (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 500 pp.

The Pamphlet Debate on the Union Between Great Britain and Ireland 1797 to 1800 (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996), 126 pp.

From Burke to Becket: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), 470 pp.

The Dublin Paper War of 1786–1788: A Bibliographical and Critical Inquiry (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 168 pp.

Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History through Balzac, Le Fanu, Yeats and Bowen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 256 pp. Reissued in paperback in 2011.

The Battle of the Books: Two Decades of Irish Cultural Debate (Mullingar: Lilliput Press, 1986), 96 pp.

Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary History from 1789 to 1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 424 pp.

Sheridan Le Fanu (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1997), 324 pp, illust. A reprint, with minimal additions.

Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland, 2nd expanded edn. (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), 324 pp.

Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 310 pp, illus.

Collections of Essays and Other Edited Works

The Works of Maria Edgeworth, gen. ed. Marilyn Butler and Mitzi Myers (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999 onwards), founding co-general editor.

The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998), 686 pp, general editor.

In the Prison of his Days: A Miscellany for Nelson Mandela on his Seventieth Birthday (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1988), 96 pp.

'*The Dublin University Magazine* 1833–1877' [attributions], in *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824–1900*, vol. 4, ed. by Walter E. Houghton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 193–363.

James Joyce and Modern Literature, ed. with A.J. Stead (London: Routledge, 1982), 222 pp. Second edition London: Taylor & Francis, 2015, 222 pp.

A Festschrift for Francis Stuart on his Seventieth Birthday (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1972), 64 pp.

Texts Edited and Introduced

The Easter Proclamation 1916: A Comparative Analysis, by Liam de Paor (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), 128 pp.

Michael Davitt: From the Gaelic American, by John Devoy, ed. with Carla King (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2008), 168 pp.

Memories of West Wicklow 1813–1939, by William Hanbidge and Mary Hanbidge (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2005), 110 pp.

Ferocious Humanism: An Anthology of Irish Poetry from Before Swift to Yeats and After (London: Dent; New York: New York University Press, 2000), 356 pp.

Phineas Finn, by Anthony Trollope (London: Everyman, 1997).

La Vendée, by Anthony Trollope, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, vol. 1, gen. ed. Seamus Deane (London: Faber, 1991), pp. 1011–1052 ('Maria Edgeworth'), pp. 1070–1172 ('Language, Class and Genre 1780–1830'), pp. 1173–1300 ('The Intellectual Revival of the 1830s and '40s'); vol. 2, pp. 831–949 ('Irish Gothicism, its Finer Legacy, 1820–1945').

Selected Poems of Austin Clarke (with corrections) (London: Penguin, 1992), 280 pp.

Selected Poems of Austin Clarke (Dublin: Lilliput Press; Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Wake Forest University Press, 1991), 280 pp.

Ormond, by Maria Edgeworth (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1990).

In a Glass Darkly, by Sheridan Le Fanu (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1990).

Memoirs of a Wild Goose, by Charles Bewley (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1989).

The Absentee, by Maria Edgeworth, with Kim Walker, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Borrhomeo the Astrologer, by Sheridan Le Fanu (Edinburgh: Tragara Press, 1985).

The Eustace Diamonds, by Anthony Trollope, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

The Kellys and the O'Kellys, by Anthony Trollope, intro. by William Trevor, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Uncle Silas, by Sheridan Le Fanu, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Articles

William John Mc Cormack, *Understanding Seamus Heaney: Between Bartók and Robert Lowell / Hogyan értsük Seamus Heaney-t: Bartók és Robert Lowell között*, bilingual edition, foreword by Győző Ferencz, Hungarian translation by Mónika Mesterházi (Budapest: Széchenyi Irodalmi és Művészeti Akadémia, 2020).

'What is a Forgery or a Catalyst? The So-called "Castle Document" of Holy Week, 1916', in *Making 1916*, ed. by. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 57–69.

'George Moore (1852–1933), the Fictions of a Wild Goose', in *Mayo History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, ed. by Gerard Moran and Nollaig O Muraíle (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2014), pp. 483–504.

'"Whom We Name Not": *The House by the Churchyard* and its Annotation', in *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes and Traditions 1760–1890* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 147–167.

'The Irish Banning of Elie Cohen's *Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp* (1954)', *Book History*, 16 (2013), 318–328.

'Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, a Modified Codicological Approach', in *Le Cabinet de curieux; culture, savoirs, religion de l'antiquité à ancient régime*, ed. by Magdalena Kozluk (Paris: Garnier, 2013), pp. 279–288.

'"Lycidas" (1637) and Timely Reading: Some Observations on John Milton and *Histories of Ireland* (1633)', in *Enigma and Revelation in Renaissance English Literature: Essays Presented to Eiléan ní Chuilleanáin*, ed. by Helen Cooney and Mark S. Sweetnam (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 199–215.

'Church, State, Childhood and Youth 1865–1885', in *W.B. Yeats in Context*, ed. by David Holdeman and Ben Levitas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 15–24.

'Universal Language (1641) to Universal War (1814): A Reading of Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage*', in *The Alchemy of Medicine and Print: The Edward Worth Library, Dublin*, ed. by Danielle Westerhof (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 89–109.

'Oliver Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (1770) and Retrospective Localism', in *Longford, History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, ed. by Martin Morris and Fergus O'Ferrall (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2010), pp. 259–281.

'Some Commercial and Other Sources for the Edward Worth Library (1733)', in *Georgian Dublin*, ed. by Gillian O'Brien and Finola O'Kane (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), pp. 165–174.

'Robert Emmet and Roger Casement', in *Reinterpreting Robert Emmet: Essays on the Life and Legacy of Robert Emmet*, ed. by Anne Dolan, Patrick Geoghegan and Darryl Jones (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007), pp. 219–226.

'Edmund Burke, Yeats and Leo Frobenius: "The State a Tree"?', in *Edmund Burke's Irish Identities*, ed. by Sean Patrick Donlan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), pp. 226–262.

'Yeats's Politics Since 1943: Approaches and Reproaches', in *Yearbook of English Studies*, 35 (2005), pp. 131–145.

'Reflections on Writing and Editing with Reference to National Archives (UK), CO 904/1–3 & HO 161/1–5', in *That Woman! Studies in Irish Bibliography: A Festschrift for Mary 'Paul' Pollard*, ed. by Charles Benson and Siobhán Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Lilliput Press for the Library Association of Ireland, 2005), pp. 258–285.

'Edgeworth, Maria'; 'Le Fanu, Joseph Thomas Sheridan'; 'Croker, Thomas Crofton' [3 articles], in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

'Notes from the Borderland', in *Playboys of the Western World*, ed. by Adrian Frazer (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 144–160.

'Laughter and After: Introduction to Bernard Shaw', in *Plays Pleasant* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. vii–xiv.

'Never Give All the Heart: Introduction to Oliver MacDonagh', in *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath*, 2nd edn (Dublin: University College Press, 2003), pp. vii–xvii.

'Dr W.J. Maloney, MC, of Edinburgh, Gallipoli and New York', in *Borderlands: Essays in Literature and Medicine in Honour of J.B. Lyons*, ed. by Davis Coakley and Mary O'Doherty (Dublin: Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, 2002), pp. 44–59.

'Some Versions of Progress Under the Union, With Special Reference to Robert Owen in the 1820s', in *Hearts and Minds: Irish Culture and Society under the Act of Union*, ed. by Bruce Stewart (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 2002), pp. 90–97.

'Haunted Realism: Beckett Through Fontane', in *Theodor Fontane and the European Context*, ed. by Patricia Howe and Helen Chambers (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 181–196.

'John Millington Synge (1871–1909): "The Well of the Saints": Synge and De-Sacralization', in *John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from his Library*, ed. by Janis & Richard Londraville (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 2001), pp. 307–323.

'Joseph O'Neill (1886–1953): *The Kingdom-Maker* and its Author', in *John Quinn: Selected Irish Writers from his Library*, ed. by Janis & Richard Londraville (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 2001), pp. 271–281.

'Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan', in *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 3rd edn, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

'Between Burke and the Union: Reflections on PRO: CO 904/2', in *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. by John Whale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 60–93).

'Introduction', in *The Irish Parliamentary Register, 1782–1797* [Fascimile reprint], 17 vol. (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1999), vol. 1, pp v–xi.

'Wilde and Parnell', in *Wilde the Irishman*, ed. by Jerusha Mc Cormack (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 95–102.

'Irish Gothic', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 135–137.

'J. Sheridan Le Fanu', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 145–146.

'"Fallings from us, vanishings" (Wordsworth), or, How I Didn't Get to Where I am Today': An Inaugural Lecture Given by Bill Mc Cormack (18 March 1997) (London: Goldsmiths College, 1999), 18 pp.

'The "Plymouth" Brethren? Prologomena to the Re-writing of J.M. Synge's Biography', in 'The Endless Knot: Literature and Religion in Ireland', a special issue of *Religion and Literature*, 28.2–3 (summer–autumn 1996), 83–96.

'Never Put Your Name to an Anonymous Letter: Serial Reading in *The Dublin University Magazine*, 1861 to 1869,' in *The Year Book of English Studies*, 26 (1996), 100–115.

'Convergent Criticism; The "Biographia Literaria" of Vivian Mercier and the State of Irish Literary History', *Bullán* (Oxford), 2.1 (Summer 1995), 79–100.

'Austin Clarke: The Poet as Scapegoat of Modernism', in *Modernism and Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s*, ed. by Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), pp. 75–102.

'Lecky, Mark Twain, and Literary History, [Appendix to] Donal McCartney', in *W.E.H. Lecky: Historian and Politician* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1994), pp. 195–207.

'Jonathan Swift as Publisher of Sir William Temple's Correspondence', with N.F. Lowe, *Swift Studies*, 8 (1993), 45–57.

'Edmund Burke, his Image in Painting and Literature [and also] Men of the West [Douglas Hyde, J.M. Synge, and Mairtín Ó Cadhain]', in *Treasures of the Mind*, ed. by David Scott (London: Sothebys, 1992), pp. 119–125 and 127–134.

'Samuel Beckett and the Negro Anthology', *Hermathena* (September 1992), 73–92.

'In Piam Memoriam Agnes Nemes Nagy (1922–1991), with two poems translated by Hugh Maxton', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, 124 (Winter 1991), 23–30.

'The Tedium of History: An Approach to Maria Edgeworth's Patronage', in *Ideology and the Historians; Papers Read to the 19th Irish*

Conference of Historians, ed. by Ciaran Brady (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), pp. 77–98.

'Ideology and Setting, with Special Reference to the Fiction of Maria Edgeworth', in *Ancestral Voices: The Big House in Anglo-Irish Literature*, ed. by Otto Rauchbauer (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1991), pp. 33–60.

'Seamus Heaney and the Business of Culture', *Text and Context* (1990), pp. 23–33.

'Flavius Arrianus in Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage*, a Case of Nominalist Allusion', *Historical and Literary Review* (Dublin), no. 1 (1991), 1–4.

'Eighteenth-century Protestant Ascendancy: Yeats and the Historians', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, vol. 4 (1989), pp. 159–181.

'French Revolution...Anglo-Irish Literature...Beginnings? The Case of Maria Edgeworth', in *Ireland and the French Revolution*, ed. by Hugh Gough and David Dickson (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), pp. 229–243.

'James Joyce, Cliché, and the Irish Language', in *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth: Proceedings of the Ninth James Joyce Symposium*, ed. by Bernard Benstock (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989), pp. 323–336.

'Isaac Butt and the Inner Failure of Protestant Home Rule', in *Worsted in the Game: Losers in Irish History*, ed. by Ciaran Brady (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1989), pp. 121–131.

'Yeats and Modernisation', *Linen Hall Review*, 5.4 (1988), 4–7.

'*Finnegans Wake* and Irish Literary History', in *History and Violence in Anglo-Irish Literature*, ed. by Joris Duytschaever and Geert Lernout (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), pp. 111–135.

'Thomas Orde and Some Dublin Printing Jobs, 1787', *Long Room*, 33 (1988), 17–19.

'Vision and Revision in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Irish Parliamentary Rhetoric', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, vol. 2 (1987), pp. 7–37.

'Seeing Darkly: Notes on T.W. Adorno and Samuel Beckett', *Hermathena*, 141 (1986), 22–44.

'On *Gulliver's Travels*', in *Narrative from Malory to Motion Pictures*, ed. by Jeremy Hawthorn (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), pp. 70–84.

'"The Protestant Strain": Or, a Short History of Anglo-Irish Literature from Coleridge to Thomas Mann', in *Across a Roaring Hill: Essays in Honour of John Hewitt*, ed. by Gerard Dawe and Edna Longley (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1985), pp. 48–78.

'Goldsmith, Biography, and the Phenomenology of Anglo-Irish Literature', in *The Art of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. by Andrew Swarbrick (London: Vision Press, 1984), pp. 168–194.

'Sean O'Casey's Unpublished Correspondence with Raissa Lomonosova, 1925–26', with R. Davies, *Irish Slavonic Studies*, 5 (1984), pp. 181–191.

'Sons and Fathers: W.B. Yeats and a Problem in Modernism', in *Unageing Intellect: Essays on W.B. Yeats*, ed. by U. Dutta (Delhi: Doaba House, 1983), pp. 14–29.

'The Genesis of Protestant Ascendancy', in *1789: Reading, Writing, Revolution*, ed. by Francis Barker (Chelmsford: University of Essex Press, 1980), pp. 30–323.

'James Joyce's "Eveline" and a Problem in Modernism', in *Irland: Gesellschaft und Kultur III*, ed. by Dorothea Siegmund Schultze (Halle: Martin Luther-Universitat, 1982), pp. 252–264.

'Yeats's "Purgatory": A Play and a Tradition', *Crane Bag*, 3.2 (1979), 33–44.

'Yeats and a New Tradition', *Crane Bag*, 3.1 (1978), pp. 30–40. Reprinted in *W.B. Yeats: Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, ed. by David Pierce (Mountfield: Helm, 2000), pp. 496–510.

'J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "Richard Marston" (1848): The History of an Anglo-Irish Text', in *1848: The Sociology of Literature*, ed. by Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1978), pp. 107–125.

'Francis Stuart, the Recent Fiction', in *The Irish Novel in Our Time*, ed. by Patrick Rafroidi and Terence Brown (Lille: Universite de Lille, 1976), pp. 175–183.

'"Flaggers" in Maria Edgeworth's *Absentee*', *Notes and Queries*, 23.10 (October 1976), 453.

'A Manuscript Letter from Michael Banim', *Hermathena*, 117 (1974), 37–38.

'Sylvester O'Halloran and Maria Edgeworth's *Absentee*', *Long Room*, 9 (1974), 41.

'*The Absentee* and Maria Edgeworth's Notion of Didactic Fiction', *Atlantis*, 5 (1973), 123–135.

'J.S. Le Fanu: Letters to William Blackwood and John Forster', *Long Room*, 8 (1973), 29–36.

'Swedenborgianism as Structure in Le Fanu's Uncle Silas', *Long Room*, 6 (1972), 23–29.

'Straight Lines Becoming Circles: The Poetry of Seamus Heaney and Derek Mahon', *Acorn*, 17 (1972), 29–33 and 39–43.

'Mairtín Ó Cadhain as Folklorist: A Bibliographical Note', *Hermathena*, 113 (1972), 35–39.

'Francis Stuart, a Checklist and Commentary', *Long Room*, 3 (1971), 38–49.

'A Preliminary Checklist of the Separate Publications of Mairtin O Cadhain', *Long Room*, 2 (1970), 7–9.

Poetry and Prose, Published by Hugh Maxton

Happen: A Novel (Dublin: Duras Press, 2015).

Same Bridge Perhaps: And Other Fugitive Poems, with a postface by Eiléan ní Chuilleanáin (Dublin: Duras Press, 2013).

Twenty16 Vision: A Novel (Dublin: Duras Press, 2009).

Poems 2000–2005 (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2005).

hOMAGHe (Cambridge: Bamberg Press, 2004), 12 pp.

Gubu Roi: Poems & Satires, 1991–1999 (Belfast: Lagan Press, 2000).

Waking: An Irish Protestant Upbringing (Belfast: Lagan Press, 1997).

Swiftmail (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1992).

The Engraved Passion: New and Selected Poems 1970–1991 (Dublin: Dedalus Press, 1991).

Between: Selected Poems of Ágnes Nemes Nagy, trans by Hugh Maxton (Budapest: Corvina Press; Dublin: Dedalus Press, 1988).

At the Protestant Museum (Mountrath: Dolmen Press, 1986).

Jubilee for Renegades (Mountrath: Dolmen Press, 1982).

The Noise of the Fields (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1976).

Stones (Dublin: Figgis, 1970).

Bill Mc Cormack delivering the Seamus Heaney Memorial Lecture at the Széchenyi Academy of Letters and Arts in 2016. Photo Miklós Szabó.

List of Contributors

Brady, Ciaran. Irish historian; Professor Emeritus of Early Modern History and Historiography, Trinity College Dublin.

Carpenter, Andrew. Irish scholar; Emeritus Professor of English, University College Dublin.

Carville, Conor. Irish poet, scholar; Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Reading.

Donoghue, Denis. Irish literary critic; Henry James Professor of English and American Letters and University Professor Emeritus at New York University.

Ferencz, Győző. Hungarian poet, critic; Executive President, Széchenyi Academy of Letters and Arts, Budapest. Former professor of English and Irish literature at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

Friedrich, Judit. Hungarian scholar, former associate professor of English literature and literary theory, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

Hamilton, James. Irish barrister; state legal adviser and prosecutor. Former Director of Public Prosecutions of Ireland.

Hill, Geoffrey (1932–2016). English poet; professor emeritus of English literature and religion at Boston University.

Lázár, Júlia. Hungarian poet, translator, Budapest.

Macintosh, Fiona. Irish scholar; Director of The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), Professor of Classical Reception, Fellow of St Hilda's College University of Oxford.

McCarthy, Thomas. Irish poet, critic.

Montague, John (1929–2016). Irish poet, professor.

Nagy, Ágnes. Hungarian chief librarian; Head of Department of Collection of Development, Library and Information Centre, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Ní Chuilleanáin, Eiléan. Irish poet; professor emeritus, School of English, Trinity College Dublin.

O'Ferrall, Fergus. Irish historian; Lay Leader of The Methodist Church in Ireland, previously Adelaide Lecturer in Health Policy, Trinity College Dublin.

Pittion, Jean-Paul. French historian; Ancien élève de l'École Normale Supérieure, Agrégé de l'Université; PhD Fellow emeritus, Trinity College Dublin; Professeur emérite, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Tours.

Takács, Ferenc. Hungarian critic; retired associate professor of English and Irish Literature, Eörvös Loránd University, Budapest.

Tate, Dennis. Irish scholar; Emeritus Professor of German, University of Bath, UK.

Thomson, Lucinda. Irish teacher, editor and researcher, graduate of history Trinity College Dublin, former research assistant to WJ Mc Cormack.

Vesztergom, Janina. Hungarian scholar, senior lecturer of Dutch literature and culture, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.