# VOICE & DISCOURSE IN THE IRISH CONTEXT

Edited by Diana Villanueva Romero,
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and Manuel Sánchez García

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**NEG/AUX Contraction in Eighteenth-Century Irish English Emigrant Letters**

**A Corpus-Based Approach to *Waiting for Godot*'s Stage Directions: A Comparison between the French and the English Version**

# Introduction

## Carolina P. Amador-Moreno and Diana Villanueva Romero

Culture, identity and meaning-making are constructed, or performed through a variety of voices and a variety of (written and spoken) discourses in different types of mediated and non-mediated contexts and interactions. The thematic focus of this interdisciplinary volume revolves mainly around the concepts of *voice* and *discourse* in the Irish context. With this theme, the chapters included in the volume aim to examine Ireland through different disciplinary domains, such as linguistics, literature, media performance and translation. In that sense, the volume marries cutting-edge linguistic analysis with interpretations of a wide range of literary texts. From the perspective of Irish studies, reflection on how voice and discourse are represented in the Irish context provides a fruitful forum for debate and discussion from various interrelated angles. The volume discusses the work of well-known Irish authors such as Behan, Beckett, Joyce, O'Casey, Wilde, Synge and Shaw, from different perspectives, combining, for example, corpus methodologies and more traditional approaches to the study of literary

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discourse and style. It also contains detailed analyses of certain characteristic features of the variety of English spoken in Ireland as represented in different types of (public and private) writing, as well as reflections upon how Irish voices are translated and received through translation and how the voices from the margins are represented on the Irish mediascape. Further, it casts a spotlight on compelling cultural texts such as emigrant letters and the performance of a comedy duo, while balancing its focus on canonical writers with the investigation of contemporary authors such as Emma Donoghue, Colin Bateman and Robert McLiam Wilson.

Preliminary findings of some of the chapters included in the volume were discussed at the AEDEI (Asociación Española de Estudios Irlandeses) International Conference, held in Cáceres, Spain, in May 2013, where the two guest speakers, novelist Nuala Ní Chonchúir and film director Ken Wardrop reflected upon the novel *You* and the film *His and Hers* respectively. Apart from the play on the pronominal forms provided by their work, their contribution to the conference was very directly related to the theme of voice and discourse in the Irish context. Ní Chonchúir and Wardrop are two examples of Irish creators who take risks with language, and their reflections on the exploration of the voices of 70 Irish women in *His and Hers* by Wardrop, and of the 10-year-old girl in *You* by Ní Chonchúir, were a wonderful addition to the event. Some of the academic papers presented at the conference were revised afterwards by their authors so that the comments and suggestions made by the audience could be incorporated into the chapters. Other chapters were specially commissioned in order to provide readers with a general overview of current research on the topic. We are very grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of the volume for very useful comments and suggestions that allowed us to clarify the focus of this project.

All of the contributions to the volume reflect the cohesiveness of an interdisciplinary cluster addressing the issues of voice and discourse in Ireland. The aim of this cluster was to bring together researchers working from many different perspectives, a risky enterprise that we believe has resulted in a stimulating, well-balanced and informative volume that

generates discussion around the concept of *voice* and the interplay between the expression and the perception of Irishness and the sociocultural values associated with such interplay.

What all the chapters included in the volume have in common is a strong focus on language and style and an informed analysis of the material they discuss, outlining the convergence and divergence of phenomena in similar, though not identical, contexts. The chapters tackle some new topics that aim to shed new light on a range of issues broadly connected with the concepts of voice and discourse in very different ways. In unifying and cross-connecting work by scholars in the fields of linguistics and literary criticism, our aim was to deliver a lively and thought-provoking volume showing interesting and novel insights into Irish culture and literature.

Chapters are grouped by theme. Part I, 'Enregistered Voices', plays with Agha's concept of *enregisterment*, understood as 'a linguistic repertoire differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register' which indexes 'speaker status linked to a specific scheme of cultural values'.[1] This is a useful concept in the context of the present volume, as it draws attention to the social connotations associated with how the voice of the Irish is projected in different realms, and how that voice is socially recognised.

Thus, in their chapter, **Vaughan** and **Moriarty** approach the analysis of voice in the discourse of the Rubberbandits, a comedy duo representing the urban identity of Limerick city. The Rubberbandits, as the authors explain, are social actors who use various voicing techniques through which the ideological constraints of being a speaker of (Limerick) Irish English can be renegotiated. The chapter explores their performance of identit(ies) by focusing primarily on linguistic evidence and questioning the extent to which the Rubberbandits play with a particular voice through the stylisation of the *knacker*, a pejorative Irish English term used to describe a particular individual whose way of speaking, dressing and behaving denotes lack of education and a deprived social background. The authors discuss how the voicing of an inner-city accent and other linguistic resources of Limerick Irish English serve to parody the indexical linking of this particular voice with the label of knacker. The

Rubberbandits make use of salient linguistic features so that the voicing practices they engage in evoke a certain social image. The examples of language play chosen by the authors show how 'their voicing involves verbal strategies where a stylised performance puts a particular identity on show, and a certain degree of linguistic reflexivity is evident in verbal practice.' Through their exaggerated and caricatured portrayal of *the knacker*, Vaughan and Moriarty claim, the Rubberbandits invoke the humorous trope of absurdity to challenge existing stereotypes.

The analysis of linguistic stereotypes and its correspondence with real spoken discourse is also central to **Amador-Moreno** and **O'Keeffe's** chapter. Evidence for the enregisterment of linguistic varieties (and variants) depends on the availability of texts showing deliberate use of dialect for stylistic purposes.[2] In their chapter, Amador-Moreno and O'Keeffe discuss literary representations of Irish English (IrE). By looking at the *be + after + V-ing* construction (e.g. I'm after breaking the window) they discuss how different authors have made use of this signature construction of Irish English in order to signal Irishness. They show how in many cases the appearance of this structure serves to give voice to the Irish characters that appear in a novel or a play. In that sense, the linguistic element acts as part of a set of indirect or implicit characterisation tools that are often skilfully crafted into fictional writing in order to convey meaning to the reader. Amador-Moreno and O'Keeffe's chapter argues that although this Irish (Gaelic)-influenced structure has sometimes been dismissed as stereotypical and outmoded, it is still widely used in contemporary spoken interactions. The study they present analyses the use of the *after* construction in a small corpus of written Irish English and compares it with the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), which contains over 100 hours of naturally occurring casual conversations from around Ireland. Their comparison of fictional and non-fictional voices draws attention to a number of pragmatic values specific to this Irish English feature that cannot be expressed by means of other standard constructions. These pragmatic values provide the construction with a wide array of communicative functions that have guaranteed its survival as a characteristic feature of the Irish voice both in fictional and real spoken contexts.

Part II, 'Voices from the Past', also looks at variety-specific features. By focusing on the letters written by Irish emigrants and their families and

friends, De Rijke and Bonness examine spelling and grammatical variation respectively, both highlighting the usefulness of personal correspondence as a source for linguistic analysis, and drawing attention to the diachronic study of Irish voices in the context of emigration. Their data comes from the recently compiled Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR)—a collection of over 5000 texts written between the late 1600s and the early 1900s. Both chapters address what has until recently been perceived as a gap in the historical analysis of Irish English: the lack of a broad, diachronic and empirical investigation of its development, caused in part by the fact that the available material has been limited.

**De Rijke's** chapter focuses on phonology, and pays particular attention to *schwa-epenthesis*, a well-known feature of IrE that occurs across the island in words like *film* (pronounced as [ˈfɪləm]), and more regionally in words like *farm* and *girl*, which contain clusters such as /rm/ and /rl/, pronounced as [ˈfaːɹəm] and [ˈgɛɹəl] respectively. Given the sparse evidence of epenthesis in past varieties of Irish English, De Rijke's chapter sets out to discover: (1) how common is epenthesis in CORIECOR?, and (2) does its distribution (phonologically and/or regionally) differ from present-day IrE? His chapter examines spelling variation that reveals evidence of epenthesis in the corpus of emigrant letters. By systematically and qualitatively assessing phonetic representation in letters written over a period of more than 200 years, he documents possible clusters containing epenthesis, the most common words affected by the feature and the regional and diachronic development of this phonological process. The chapter shows that epenthesis is well attested in the corpus and that it is found in a wide range of clusters (e.g. /wn/, /dr/, /ŋr/, /fl/, /rl/, /tr/, /nr/ and /rn/), but to a much lesser extent in clusters where it would be expected today.

The chapter by **Bonness** studies the use of negative and auxiliary contraction versus full forms of the modal and auxiliary verbs *be*, *have*, *will* and *would* in IrE during its formative period. Like in De Rijke's chapter, empirical data for the study are also extracted from the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence, counting tokens such as '*David I hope youl not think mee Ungreatfull*' (Samuel Brown, 23 December 1793). The results for the eighteenth-century letters reveal relatively little use of contraction in general, and of auxiliary contraction in particular, which differs from

descriptions of contraction in later stages of IrE. By including different types of subjects as well as distinguishing between clausal and sub-clausal negation, the chapter also investigates limitations on contraction patterns in this particular variety of English. The chapter provides a thorough historical account of this type of contraction in early IrE, thus raising some issues related to the possible *colloquialisation* of this feature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Colloquialisation, the term used to refer to the tendency for written language to become more speech-like, is an interesting concept in the context of this volume, given its connection with the general idea of voice and orality. As Bonness argues, contracted forms (both negative contracted and auxiliary contracted) would be expected to appear relatively frequently in letters, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when this type of document becomes considerably more oral.

Part III of this volume, 'Performative Voices', opens with two articles that focus on works by Samuel Beckett. Adopting a corpus-based approach, **Ruano San Segundo** compares the stage directions of *Waiting for Godot* in its English and French versions.[3] The author's starting point is that stage directions may function as a means of character definition and identification. Methodologically he favours a corpus-based approach, as he finds its systematicity a more efficient way of analysing the recurrence of certain patterns associated with each and every character. After establishing a two-fold division of stage directions according to their location in the text—those which appear in initial position and those which run parallel to characters' words—he specifies as the corpus of analysis those directions that describe how utterances are carried out. Once their characterising value is proved in the English play, Ruano San Segundo opts for comparing stage directions in the English and French versions in order to explore the extent to which the stage directions in *Waiting for Godot* are a faithful rendering of the original French text. This leads him to conclude that *Waiting for Godot* should be considered a consequence of Beckett's continuous process of craftsmanship, given the level of discrepancy between the stage directions in the English text and the French version.

The second chapter of this part deals with Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (1972), a play built around a single voice, that of 'Mouth'. **Fernández** aims at locating Beckett's response to the idea of Ireland by rereading *Not*

*I* in the light of recent trends in Beckett studies, which favour a precise contextualisation of Beckett's works. His main tenet is that by looking at this play in relation to Ireland and Irishness, it is possible to establish how Beckett felt for his homeland. This, as Fernández defends, goes against the grain of traditional studies on Beckett, which describe him as an author obsessed with timeless issues. Thus, after painstakingly detailing the most recent research that has used this groundbreaking approach, Fernández highlights two elements in *Not I* that he describes as unmistakably Irish: the character of the woman referred to by 'Mouth' and the references to the institution where the woman was taken care of as an orphan. The first of these seems to have emerged from Beckett's own life experience in Ireland where he declares to have met many women like these: lonely, semi-vagrant old women. The second is easily associated with images of the asylums or homes that were traditionally run by the Catholic Church in Ireland. All in all, Fernández insists in stressing the contradictory nature of Beckett's relationship with his Irish identity, as if he embraced it, but, at the same time, rejected it.

The closing essay of this section also devotes attention to a major Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw, and his view of Ireland. **Rodríguez-Martín** finds in two of his historical plays—*Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Saint Joan*—a series of symbolic and allegorical elements, whether textual or otherwise, that can be linked to the political situation of Ireland. These elements voice Shaw's understanding of the political conflicts of Ireland and its controversial political status within the British Empire. In his reading of *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901) Rodríguez-Martín uncovers a clear parallel between the historical Roman Empire and the subjugated province of Egypt, featuring in the play, and the Britain and Ireland of Bernard Shaw's day This is achieved not only by means of direct comparisons which create an anachronic parallelism between the two, but also of phraseological elements that Rodríguez-Martín analyses exhaustively and by the inclusion in the play of three characters—Britannus, Apollodorus and Cleopatra—that are depicted either as national archetypes or as the embodiment of national cultural symbols. With regard to *Saint Joan* (1923), the author distinguishes a series of imperial resonances and chauvinistic national clichés that resonate with the conflict between Britain and Ireland. Moreover, the use of phraseological units also found in the previous play add to the creation of an atmosphere where the British are portrayed as oppressors of

the Irish nation, which in turn is tellingly represented by the two female protagonists, Cleopatra and Joan. In essence, in these plays, Shaw seemed to have been giving voice to his often obliterated Irish identity.

Identity is precisely the unifying element of the final part, 'Voicing Conflict', which deals with narratives where the sense of self is at stake. In the first essay, **Zubía-Fernández** tackles the effect of war on men who, once returned home, feel displaced, foreigners in a land where they no longer belong. He compares *El raro privilegio* (2012) written by Argentine writer (of Irish descent) Ronnie Quinn, with *Fado alexandrino* (2013) by Portuguese writer António Lobo Antunes. Both novels narrate the aftermath of war in the lives of those who, as described by Quinn, lived the Malvinas/Falkland War or, in Lobo Antunes's case, experienced the Portuguese Colonial War. War is analysed here as the genesis of a shared sense of dislocation and common voice among the army veterans who cannot cope with their homecoming. Having belonged to a collective identity, their separation from their former comrades marks a time of re-encounter with their own selves within circumstances that are no longer recognised, hence the sense of not belonging. Besides, as the author explains, in both the Argentinian and Portuguese cases, war veterans were frequently silenced and thus these novels constitute a way of voicing their silent recollection of past memories no one wanted to listen to.

If in the previous contribution war and its consequences reshape the voice(s) of the protagonists, in the chapter by **Casal**, love is the cause behind the emotional turmoil of the characters that populate James Joyce's 'The Dead' (*Dubliners*, 1914) and Emma Donoghue's 'Speaking in Tongues' (*Touchy Subjects*, 2011). By looking at the narrative architecture of each story and how they respectively orchestrate different voices within them, Casal rereads these stories paying special attention to how self-sacrifice, as the ultimate expression of love, is rendered by each author. She finds that the use of the interior monologue (a kind of semi-silent voice) in both stories allows for the author to enter the private sphere of the characters. However, while in Joyce's 'The Dead' the reader only participates in the voice of the male protagonist, Gabriel, in Donoghue's work the dialogical narrative design allows the author to voice the desire and longing for intimacy of the two female characters, Sylvia and Lee. Thus, although this hints at the existence of a continuum between the

two works, one seems to be created to fit the mould of male desire in a patriarchal society and the other represents twenty-first-century acceptance of alternative forms of love.

In the last essay **Schwerter** ponders the difficulties involved in translating fiction produced in Northern Ireland without erasing its idiosyncracy. She looks at two well-known '*Troubles novels*', Robert McLiam Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1996) and Colin Bateman's *Divorcing Jack* (1995) in their French, German and Spanish translations and reflects on questions of 'domestication' and 'foreignisation'.[4] As she puts it, when translating these novels, the translators not only face the challenge of transposing local voices and concepts into a different cultural environment, but they also have to deal with the particularly dark Northern Irish humour generated by the conflict that has plagued this region for years. After discussing the appropriateness of the translation of the respective titles of these novels, she questions the accuracy of the translation of concepts such as 'bomb-damage clearance sale'. These, as well as other terms that appear in these works, are highly charged with the recent history of violence witnessed in this part of the world and do not offer an easy translation. Equally interesting is her mentioning of the lack of awareness shown by some of the translators when dealing with the term 'blackberries'. Any Irish person would know this term alludes to Seamus Heaney's famous poem 'Blackberry Picking', but such subtexts would escape a translator not sufficiently knowledgeable in the local history. Hence the author concludes by highlighting the need for a good knowledge of local culture in order to avoid such common pitfalls.

Some of the issues raised in this volume when dealing with the concept of Irish voice have to do with the expression of Irish identity through fictional and non-fictional discourse. Many of the social values connected with the expression of Irishness depend on the interplay of how speakers (real and invented) portray themselves and how they are perceived by others. We believe, borrowing Bakhtin's terminology, that by considering such enriching dialogue of voices it is possible to *dialogically imagine* Ireland in its rich and varied discourses.[5] We hope that the studies presented here will provide the basis for future research and fruitful scientific debate on matters of style, discourse, historical variants of Irish English, the traits of contemporary usage of spoken English in

Ireland, the translation of Irish texts into European languages and the sociocultural subtexts of Irish writing covering drama, the novel and the short story.

## Notes

1. Asif Agha, 'The Social Life of Cultural Value', *Language and Communication* 23 (2003): 231.
2. Joan C. Beal and Paul Cooper, 'The Enregisterment of Northern English', in *Researching Northern English*, ed. Raymond Hickey (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015), 29.
3. *Waiting for Godot* was published in 1955. *En attendant Godot* had been published three years before.
4. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 15–20.
5. Mijaíl Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981).

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# Voicing the 'Knacker': Analysing the Comedy of the Rubberbandits

**Elaine Vaughan and Máiréad Moriarty**

## 1  Introduction

The present chapter deals with mediated representations of *voice*, specifically a complex comic realisation of a particular urban voice, through an examination of the linguistic practices, amongst others, of the Rubberbandits, an Irish (musical) comedy duo.[1] The Rubberbandits are from Limerick, a city in the south-west of Ireland. Their particular brand of satirical and musical comedy is based on the inner-city urban identity of Limerick, a city with a national reputation for social disadvantage and criminal gangs. While their comedy is also based on their appropriation and adaptation of artefacts from other urban 'communities of practice' (cf. the works by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet and by Wenger in the Bibliography[2])—most notably their localisation of rap and hip-hop genres to the context of Limerick city and its putative voice in their music—the mainstay of the humour is in the simultaneous lampooning and glorification of the urban culture on which it is

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based. The Rubberbandits make an interesting study in the way they appeal to both the in-groups and out-groups implicit and explicit in their humour, and the way in which they perform an urban identity, arguably not directly their own. Although their actual identities are known, the Rubberbandits always appear incognito, with plastic bags covering their faces, and when interviewed stay in the characters of their alter egos, Mr Chrome and Blind Boy Boat Club. The 'real-life' identities of the Rubberbandits are perceived as radically different to the alter egos they inhabit as part of their performance. This perceived distance—in the mind of the public, and in the commentary and responses of the audience that it is possible to access—is interesting. The larger study that the data reported on for this chapter forms part of is an ongoing project in which we examine how media (and hence mediated) representations of specific voices and discourses might reflect contemporary Irish society from the margins to the centre, and hence serve to both reinforce and challenge local social orders. These social orders themselves are based on normative understandings of certain accents, registers and other behaviours indexing, for example, criminal behaviour or particular social groups.

As a means to fully exploring this, and, of course, exploring it within the scope of the importance of voice in discourse, its creation, what is entailed in its construction and the linguistic and other modalities invoked in this construction, we examine the linguistic resources the Rubberbandits draw on to voice the 'Limerick knacker'. Where relevant, other semiotic features that are involved in framing the performance will be addressed. Our close attention to this link between voicing and social meaning is guided by recent sociolinguistic theorisations of the concept of style. We begin by contextualising the Rubberbandits and their home city of Limerick, Ireland. From here we provide a theoretical backdrop to our study whereby we focus on key concepts from the sociolinguistics of performance, and foreground how mediatised *stylisation* can be understood. In our data and methodology section, we describe firstly the types of language and other data we gathered; these are based on the performances themselves as well as how they are received and commented upon. In Sect. 4, we outline our exploration of what the performances are like, their implications and how they might be interpreted. We do

this by disassembling and reassembling the linguistic evidence of the performances/responses using the tools and data views associated with corpus analysis, and by invoking theoretical concepts from sociolinguistics, particularly concepts and perspectives from the sociolinguistics of performance.[3] The chapter provides an account of the theoretical, methodological and analytical tools that enable this principled exploration, with the intention of viewing the phenomenon under study—the performances, and responses to them—with an open mind, from a global and theoretical perspective, as well as from a more atomised, discrete-item and discourse-analytic-type perspective. We present data in the context of the performance which attest to the voice being performed; in order to do so, some introduction to the Rubberbandits and their background is necessary.

# 2 Background: Limerick 'Citaay' and the Rubberbandits

## 2.1 Limerick City

Limerick is the third largest city in the Republic of Ireland. It has a long history of social and economic disadvantage, and has been the subject of what some perceive to be excessive negative media (especially news media) coverage. Mass media contributes to the stigmatising and social exclusion of people and places which are on the margins of society, and Limerick is no exception to this. As Devereux et al. argue, Limerick city has continually been framed in the media as a place of crime, poverty and social disorder.[4] This type of media framing is of course commonplace and contributes to relations of social class that make '… working-class subjectivities pathological, so that class relations are not just economic relations but also relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgement/shame'.[5] The media coverage of Limerick has contributed to the negative stereotyping of the city which in the past has contributed to the folk label 'Stab City'. This label refers to a period in the 1990s where feuding between rival gangs in Limerick led to an increase in violent crime, particularly knife crime. It is untrue to say that the media account

of a troubled period in Limerick's past is entirely inaccurate but there is a clear imbalance in terms of the negative and positive coverage of the city, or media framing of similar criminal activity in other towns and cities in the country.[6] As far as detailed description of the variety of English used in Limerick is concerned, there is (to our knowledge) nothing as extensive as Hickey's *Dublin English* available, though it is mentioned in, for example, the same author's *Irish English*.[7] In the analysis that follows, we offer what might be glossed as refracted evidence of a type of (urban) Limerick (Irish) English—an amplified, performed variety (via the performances of the Rubberbandits) and the orthographically represented version of that variety picked up on and repeated, via catchphrases and responses, by their audience.

Media representations of Limerick have contributed to a stigmatising of certain neighbourhoods of the city, and have largely focused on individuals who might colloquially be labelled *knackers*. This concept should be explained in terms of its localised and broader cultural reference. It is roughly analogous to the term 'chav'—a class defined by the way it seems, as Morley puts it, 'to consume the wrong things in the wrong way'.[8] The concept of the chav, a stereotype of the working-class teenager in Britain, replete with associations relating to dress (leisure wear) and behaviour ('brash', 'loutish' according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* when 'chav' was added to it in 2006) and low social status, is explained by Snell in relation to Culpeper's discussion of 'social schemata'.[9] Culpeper invokes research from social psychology, inter alia, to explain how and why certain social categories such as gender and class are activated when readers (or viewers, we could say) first encounter characters. Obviously, language has a key role to play in this regard, being, as Bennett has it, a means by which the idea of chav and its connotations is given 'semiotic articulation'.[10] By extension, linguistic stylisation—and we would argue, voices appropriated and reflected from the margins—evoke not just the language used, but 'the kinds of things that *chavs* apparently think about and do […] the representation of a language is a means by which a supposed culture is represented'.[11] The *knacker* is a closely related social stereotype in Ireland: in fact, it is a term of racial abuse when it refers to the Traveller community, an indigenous minority in Ireland—as it is, it could be argued, when it is used

to denigrate a 'social class'. Conventional dictionary definitions are unhelpful where the term is concerned; even T. P. Dolan's *Dictionary of Hiberno-English*, which lists conventional and traditional definitions such as *horse trader*, or *shady dealer*, is somewhat coy when approaching the social contours of the definition, citing writer Paul Howard's character Ross O'Carroll-Kelly's reference to *Knackeragua*, a place dominated by 'knackers', but not providing a more precise definition.[12] In order to illustrate the social schemata invoked by the term, we present here a selection of definitions from Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com), an internet slang resource that Smith suggests as a locus for (re)evaluating ideologies; it is also used here given its potential as a site where enregistered varieties are codified vis-à-vis the fitness for purpose of the given voice.[13] The following definitions from the website Urban Dictionary[14] give some access to perceptions of the term *knacker*, which we believe are key to accessing the social contours of the meaning of *knacker*:

- Incestuous, boxing, sovereign ring wearing, tracksuited shaven headed scumbags. Girls wear bellytops (Even if they're 15 stone), guys are small, jewelry and violence are rampart. Enjoy having children with sisters, looking at you with squinty eyes and scaring people. In many places refers to SCUMBAGS in general, and good travellers are not covered by the word—depening where you're from.
- Irish term of affection for general scum (low lifes). Originally originating from a term of reference for travellers. But nowadays covering whole spectrum of degenerates. Inbreeding is commonplace and your mother can often be your sister.
- A knacker is your general scumbag from Ireland. Males wear caps balanced at an upright angle on their head, at least 5 gold rings and sovereigns on each hand, large gold chains around their necks, matching tracksuits or shirt under Satellite Sports stripey jumper. Adidas, puma, nike or burberry clothing essential to fit crowd. Females wear: Maternity clothes, knacker hoops (large earings that reach from earlobe to shoulder) Prams, belly tops and tracksuits with their knackery fat hanging off the side.

So, the visual and behavioural elements from the definitions become clear, and chime very strongly with Morley's observations about how chavs are perceived to look and sound, and Snell's application of the idea of class-related schemata being triggered by these perceptions.[15] Tracksuits, baseball caps worn at an angle, sovereign rings, obesity, criminal behaviour, certain types of clothes, the possession of 'lower-prestige' accents and ways of speaking all combine to index the *knacker*. It is this indexing, and, arguably, the biases triggered by these elements, their use as a way to negatively judge places and people, that the Rubberbandits lampoon and play with as part of their performances.

## 2.2    The Rubberbandits

The Rubberbandits consist of Blind Boy Boat Club (aka Blind Boy), Mr Chrome (aka Bobby Chrome) and Willie O'DJ (a play on the name of a local politician).[16] Blind Boy and Mr Chrome are the core of the act, and have been performing together as the Rubberbandits since the early 2000s, with Mr Chrome's alternately streetwise or drugged-up persona the foil to Blind Boy's more verbose, though by no means 'straight' man. While still at secondary school in Limerick city, the pair began to make and record prank phone calls, nine of which are still available to listen to online.[17] These calls, initially recorded on cassette and later transferred to CD, gained them 'fame and notoriety around Limerick',[18] and they later branched out into recording songs and making them available online, initially through a MySpace site, and performing live, for example at music festivals. In 2010 a user posted the question, *who are the rubberbandits* [*sic*], on a popular online discussion forum, Boards.ie; this was and is because when performing, the Rubberbandits always wear plastic shopping bags on their heads, with eye and mouth holes cut out, as masks. These conceal their identities (though their actual identities are known), are central to the performance and are never removed during performances or interviews (see Image 1). The Rubberbandits generally stay in character in media interviews and other appearances, though they do occasionally give off their 'real' identities, or calibrate their performance of the Rubberbandits' identity according to the context in which the performance is occurring (see Sect. 4).

**Image 1**   The Rubberbandits (reprinted by permission). L: Blind Boy Boat Club; R: Mr. Chrome

Responses to the 2010 <Boards.ie> question (exchange sequence reproduced in Table 1)[19] include both the plausibly straight and obviously humorous, and are a useful starting point for discussing the Rubberbandits' performances more generally, as well as contextualising the evolution of those performances:

This discussion of their actual identities took place in 2010, at a time when the Rubberbandits were becoming far better known, partially because of their online presence, but also because of a series of inserts they were commissioned to contribute to a popular satirical television programme, *Republic of Telly* (broadcast by RTÉ, the national broadcasting service in Ireland). These short inserts form one of the data sources for the present chapter, and are described in more detail in Sect. 3, 'Data and Methodology', below). At the same time that the Rubberbandits were involved in this programme, they released a video for their song, 'Horse Outside', which was first aired on *Republic of Telly*. It plays on a popular stereotype of Limerick *knackers* owning and riding horses around Limerick city. 'Horse Outside' was incredibly successful, and in Christmas

**Table 1** <Boards.ie> discussion, 15–12–2010

| User | Time | Response |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <Zweton> | 19:09 | ul[20] students☺ |
| <BarryDoodles> | 19:11 | The rumour is that one of them is an english student in TCD[21]. |
| <cronin_j> | 19:11 | I thought all Limerick people knew who they were. I went to school with one of them. He now teaches art. |
| <cat melodeon> | 19:12 | I heard they were LIT[22] students and that their tears are made of pure mercury. |
| <Peyton Manning> | 19:14 | Willie O'Dea is clearly one of them. |
| <ronanc15> | 19:17 | "the grand pricks of prank phonecalls"… how they've evolved😁 |
| | | Indeed, they're [their] identity would be relatively well known in limerick for years but that would spoil half the fun!! |
| | | They've been boards members for 5 years ☺ <http://www.boards.ie/vbulletin/member.php?u=50082> |
| <An File> | 19:21 | I heard their faces appear on the national stamps of Lichtenstein … |
| <Amazotheamazing> | 19:26 | I heard they are the reason the river runs through Limerick. |
| <kev ps3> | 19:37 | I remember their prank phonecalls from years back☺ |
| <Grumpypants> | 19:41 | I think there was one stage where everyone in school in limerick had a blank CD with the phone call on them. They should release them again off the back of the xmas no1, very funny better than the songs even though the songs are brilliant too. |
| <NoseyMike2010> | 19:45 | I really hope the [they] get Christmas No. 1 <link to YouTube, Horse Outside> |
| <concussion> | 19:46 | They fought for King Limerick in 1916 and were put in storage after we got our potatoes back from the British. Willie O'Dea used some of his moustache hairs to release them from their bronze exteriors in 2005 so they could show him the uh-oh end of a pistol from the non-uh-oh end. |
| <CiaranMT> | 19:48 | Insect, nominate this for thread of the week😁 |

(*Continued*)

**Table 1** (Continued)

| User | Time | Response |
|------|------|----------|
| <Cronin_j> | 19:48 | I would sincerely hope that if someone was stupid enough to post their names up here that the Mods would remove it.<br>Part of the laugh of it all is the "who are they factor" |
| <NoseyMike2010> | 19:51 | The Bird in the blue in their video is a ride!! |

Source: http://www.boards.ie/vbulletin/showthread.php?t=2056120731

2010 almost beat the *X-Factor* single for that year (by Matt Cardle) to the number one spot in the Irish music sales charts. The phenomenal amount of views of the single on YouTube was reported on internationally, and at the time of writing the video had been viewed over 13.5 million times. The Rubberbandits have performed sell-out shows throughout Ireland, the UK and the USA, and have performed at events such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Their success outside of Ireland would suggest that they tap in to something global, perhaps a shared image of gangland culture, as well as connecting with audiences due to their comedic talent and verbal dexterity. There is more to be said about the trajectory of the Rubberbandits' career to date, from prank calls to YouTube celebrity, from a localised Limerick fan base to a fan base that is fascinatingly diverse—the Hollywood actor Chris Hemsworth and rock star Noel Gallagher have publicly endorsed the duo—though we will limit ourselves here to discussing those elements of their performances which connect to conceptualisations of voice and identity in discourse, and capturing samples of their performances to illustrate these conceptualisations. We contend that through their harnessing of humour, the tongue-in-cheek nature of these performances constitute an ideal analytical site for addressing some of the concerns of the sociolinguistics of performance. This is because their comedy is a site of engagement and management of social relations, where hegemonic discourses surrounding voices from the margins of Limerick city are challenged. The humour of the Rubberbandits can be read in terms of ideologies of class distinction and their deliberate lampooning of aspects of working-class Limerick has the potential to amend misinformed or misrepresented ideas of Limerick city.

# 3      Data and Methodology

To problematise and explore the complex link between language and social meaning, as well as the significance of this voicing as a local cultural practice, we articulated the following questions in relation to the performances:

1. What are these performances like, from the point of view of linguistic construction? How might we capture these performances in some way?
2. What linguistic features are salient within the performances of the Rubberbandits?
3. To what extent might a constellation of these linguistic features give us a sense of *voice in discourse*?

There were a number of potential sources for linguistic data where the Rubberbandits were concerned, and we divided these into data relating to the performances themselves, meta-performances and meta-commentary (commentary from their audience and media commentators) on the performances. Examples of the former are the previously mentioned prank calls (some of which are available via YouTube), their recorded music (for example, lyrics from the 2011 Rubberbandits album, *Serious about Men*) and inserts and sketches for the various television programmes they have been involved in. Included also are parts of the Rubberbandits' Twitter feed (@Rubberbandits), where they tweet regularly;[23] in addition, we include interviews with the Rubberbandits where they stay in character, which might be dubbed meta-performances. For meta-commentary, we collected articles written about the Rubberbandits in national newspapers, online articles and other miscellanea pertaining to the duo. In addition, we harvested samples of comments on their YouTube clips,[24]and, as illustrated in this chapter, we looked at responses posted on their Facebook page. This is congruent with Mitra and Watts's conceptualisation of voice as a 'public occurrence' whereby a speaker—and, by extension, we argue, a performer—can be endowed with voice via a 'public *hearing/reading*' (italics in original).[25]

For the purpose of exploring in some sort of systematic way how their performances are constructed, and how we might trace how these invoke the image of the 'knacker', albeit in a playful way, a specific series of performances was identified. Between October 2010 and March 2011, on the previously mentioned satirical series, *Republic of Telly*, the Rubberbandits contributed 10 inserts on various topics. They are described as the Rubberbandits' 'Guides to' and range in length from 2 to almost 4 minutes; the comedy and the performances therein are resolutely absurd and anarchic. The 'Guides to' are available on the Rubberbandits' Facebook page, as well as on YouTube, and so each short clip was orthographically transcribed and stored as the Rubberbandits' Guides to Corpus (RGC).[26] The details of RGC can be seen in Table 2.[27]

One of the first entry points into the analysis was to treat the 'Guides to' as a small corpus, and to use concordancing software, *WordSmith Tools 5*, to gain an overall view of the RGC.[28] One of the motivations behind this was to address research question (1) above, to gain primary access to the data to get an idea of how the performance was constructed linguistically, by comparing it to a larger corpus, in this case, the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), a 1-million-word sample of naturally occurring spoken Southern Irish English.[29] A frequency list was generated for RGC (Table 3). A frequency list is generally considered a good point of entry to a language corpus (Baker 2006), giving the analyst an idea of what particular items might be worth exploring further.[30]

**Table 2**  Rubberbandits' Guides to Corpus (RGC)

| Topic | Time | Uploaded | Words |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guide to Limerick | 3:07 | 21/10/2010 | 783 |
| Guide to Temple Bar | 3:15 | 04/11/2010 | 822 |
| Guide to Madeira Cake | 1:34 | 11/11/2010 | 241 |
| Guide to Headshops | 2:17 | 19/11/2010 | 533 |
| Guide to Kilkenny | 3:04 | 24/11/2010 | 527 |
| Guide to London | 2:56 | 27/12/2010 | 732 |
| Guide to Farming | 2:05 | 04/03/2011 | 446 |
| Guide to Leprechaun Hunting | 2:09 | 10/03/2011 | 409 |
| Guide to Birds | 3:51 | 18/04/2011 | 916 |
| Guide to Fishing | 3:40 | 09/05/2011 | 849 |
| Total | | | 6258 |

**Table 3** Wordlist for RGC (generated using *WordSmith Tools 5*, Scott 2008)

| Rank | Item | Freq. | Rank | Item | Freq. |
|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1 | *the* | 254 | 11 | *he* | 66 |
| 2 | *a* | 205 | 12 | *on* | 62 |
| 3 | *you* | 197 | 13 | *is* | 59 |
| 4 | *I* | 153 | 14 | *we* | 58 |
| 5 | *to* | 143 | 15 | *yeah* | 51 |
| 6 | *of* | 138 | 16 | *what* | 49 |
| 7 | *it* | 125 | 17 | *no* | 48 |
| 8 | *that* | 108 | 18 | *like* | 45 |
| 9 | *and* | 93 | 19 | *do* | 40 |
| 10 | *in* | 89 | 20 | *my* | 37 |

As previously mentioned, corpus tools were used in the initial explorations of the data, and the perspectives offered by corpus tools are used as jumping-off points for analysis and discussion below. Although the corpus-based method is often seen as primarily quantitative, and is generally associated with larger data sets, the more important characteristic of the corpus method for us is the fact it is inherently comparative. We would also note, as have many others (notably Biber et al.[31]), that the corpus method is not synonymous with 'quantitative'. Something flagged at automatic analysis stage (generation of raw frequencies or generation of keywords, for example) can direct analytical attention, certainly. A subsequent view of flagged phenomena in context may mean that these or other items are noticed and a cross-checking of quantitative information may become relevant. Language data of the type that we analyse becomes familiar as a whole text, but dismantling and disembodying the complete text via corpus methods means that it can be seen with fresh eyes, and reveals elements which inform qualitative analysis. We use corpus tools, therefore, in a spirit of enquiry, to see what the data is 'like': we generate frequency lists and keyword lists and use them to characterise aspects of the way the Rubberbandits use language in their performances. In short, we use corpus tools and a theoretical framework from sociolinguistics to deconstruct and interpret the performances. We frame our interpretations using extracts from the Guides to Corpus, and look at what a corpus view of the data yields in terms of linguistic items particular to the performance; we provide some examples of audience response

to the performances, and then provide some interpretations and implications which underline why we present comedy, and the comedy of the Rubberbandits particularly, as an important locus of research on voice in discourse—and the discourses of the marginalised. First, we present an extended extract from the corpus to familiarise the reader with the performances more generally.

## 4    Analysis and Discussion

The 'Guide to' with the highest number of YouTube views is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the 'Guide to Limerick', with well over 1.1 million views. Extract (1) below is taken from the 'Guide to Limerick', and we pick out a sample of the linguistic items that are characteristic of both the urban identity they voice, and the tenor of the humour that plays with and disrupts the social schemata[32] activated by this voice:

Extract (1): Rubberbandits' Guide to Limerick

Mr Chrome:    Limerick City. Pig Town. The Cormorant's Nest. Call it what you want. It's still home to me and him [Blind Boy]. Founded in 1916 by none other than King Limerick who famously defeated the British with the wrong end of a sword [points to statue][33] but a lot has changed since then. We no longer wear crowns and leggings. We're not made of bronze and we definitely know the pointy end of a sword from the not pointy end of a sword. So we're here in Limerick city to find out just what makes the people tick.

Blind Boy:    [Addressing a passer-by] Sir? D'you want to do an interview for RTÉ no? [Addressing a young couple] What's the highest score you've ever gotten on Snake on your mobile phone? [Addressing two young men] Listen boys who'd win in a fight between the two of ye? [Addressing a young woman] Can I have a fag? [Addressing male teenager] When did you get your first Holy Communion and what did it taste like? [Addressing the same woman

|  |  |
|---|---|
|  | as earlier. She gives him a cigarette]. Talk to you bure [*girl*]. [Pointing to a red car] D'you see the shades [*police*] over there watch? They think that we don't know they're shades right? |
| Mr. Chrome: | We know they're shades. |
| Blind Boy: | Number one there's a double aerial and number two a Dublin reg [registration] in Limerick City. That's how you know over there. Watch this. Stand there stand there [to Mr Chrome] Watch this [gives the finger to the car as it moves away in traffic but conceals the gesture from the 'guards'.] Fuck off. Fuck off. Fuck you guards. |

While Limerick city is referred to locally as Pig Town, it was clearly not founded 'in 1916 by King Limerick'; the faux-documentary style of the commentary sets up the comic realisation of a 'vox pop', where the Rubberbandits ask a series of passers-by random questions. Quite apart from the physical, multimodal aspects of their performance—they wear tracksuits with their tracksuit bottoms tucked into white socks, and wear white runners known locally as *tackies*, a sort of urban uniform—we can see oblique and obvious references to crime and criminality. More obliquely, this is present in the reference to Limerick people knowing the 'pointy end of a sword from the not pointy end of a sword'. This has an intriguing consonance with <concussion>'s comment the 'uh-oh end of a pistol from the non-uh-oh end', as well as the faux-historical facts, in the <boards.ie> post presented earlier in the chapter (Table 1). What is interesting is their presentation of themselves as authentic Limerick citizens, outwardly streetwise and belligerent (they can spot an undercover police vehicle) but in reality rather cowardly (they will gesture rudely but in such a way that they cannot be seen; they tell the guards to 'fuck off' but so quietly that they cannot be heard). This has the dual effect of being both mocking, making fun of something intimidating to diminish its power to intimidate, and affectionate. We are also interested here in the presence of terms, such as *shades* (*police*) and *bure* (*woman/girl*, also *girlfriend*), which have their origins in Shelta, one term for the language of the Traveller community in Ireland. Within the linguistic performance, there are pronouns characteristic of contemporary spoken Irish English, *ye* (*you* plural), and other colloquial terms, such as *fag* (*cigarette*).

**Table 4** Wordlist for RGC and LCIE compared (generated using *WordSmith Tools*, Scott 2008)

| Rank | RGC | LCIE | Rank | RGC | LCIE |
|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|
| 1 | *the* | *the* | 11 | *he* | *in* |
| 2 | *a* | *I* | 12 | *on* | *was* |
| 3 | *you* | *and* | 13 | *is* | *is* |
| 4 | *I* | *you* | 14 | *we* | *like* |
| 5 | *to* | *to* | 15 | *yeah* | *know* |
| 6 | *of* | *it* | 16 | *what* | *he* |
| 7 | *it* | *a* | 17 | *no* | *on* |
| 8 | *that* | *that* | 18 | *like* | *they* |
| 9 | *and* | *of* | 19 | *do* | *have* |
| 10 | *in* | *yeah* | 20 | *my* | *there* |

From the point of view of getting at the performance, a wordlist view yields little beyond validating the small corpus itself as congruent with other samples of Irish English: comparing the RGC wordlist with the wordlist for LCIE, 15 out of 20 of the items are the same (these items are shaded in Table 4).

For the purpose of this chapter, with its particular focus on stylisation, performance and voice, a more nuanced list is necessary. Another way of picking up on what linguistic items might be particular to the language used by the Rubberbandits in their 'Guides to' performances is the generation of a keyword list. Again, using LCIE as a larger, reference corpus, it is possible to generate a wordlist which highlights items that occur with statistically significant frequency in the RGC (see, for example, Vaughan and O'Keeffe for a discussion of the perspectives afforded by drilling down into a corpus using concordancing software).[34] The keyword list can be seen in Table 5.

Now, the focus might be said to shift to those items that are characteristic of the performance more specifically, and that give a flavour of its construction. Of course, some of the items connect to the topics of the 'Guides to'—*leprechauns*, *parrots*, *trout* and *fish* connected more obviously. Other aspects which connect in to the performed voice are items like *yokes*,[36] *hash* and *joint*, all of which index the drug culture connected with the stylisation of the *knacker*. *Limerick* is also key, unsurprisingly, and the occurrence of *that* and *city* provides evidence of the Rubberbandits' catchphrase *That's Limerick city*. The tone of *That's*

**Table 5** Keyword list for RGC using LCIE as reference corpus (generated using *WordSmith Tools 5*)[35]

| Rank | Item | Rank | Item |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | *leprechaun* | 11 | *yokes* |
| 2 | *city* | 12 | *fish* |
| 3 | *Limerick* | 13 | *silly* |
| 4 | *jocks* | 14 | *snail* |
| 5 | *that* | 15 | *snakes* |
| 6 | *parrot* | 16 | *hash* |
| 7 | *bounty* | 17 | *fox* |
| 8 | *trout* | 18 | *catch* |
| 9 | *craic* | 19 | *fool* |
| 10 | *salmon* | 20 | *joint* |

*Limerick city* is a rebellious appropriation of a label intended as a slur or criticism (in the words of the Rubberbandits 'if you don't like it fuck off to Cork' ('Rubberbandits' Guide to Limerick'). This catchphrase has been seized upon, and is echoed and reified orthographically to reflect the Rubberbandits' voicing of the Limerick accent in user comments on the Rubberbandits' Facebook page, as can be seen from the extracted comments in Fig. 1:

These catchphrases also include items that the audience appear to connect with Limerick slang, and the Limerick accent—*decent* pronounced as *daycent* (/eɪ/ replacing /iː/). Similarly, the vowel sound in *beating* pronounced as /eɪ/, and the /ɪ/ represented as lengthened in *kiiid*, a vocative used as a term of address. We see other terms of address (*Aboy*; *sham*) as well as drug references (*more pounce to da ounce*). And so this voice of Limerick can be said to be reflected and refracted by the audience, showing what might constitute 'Limerick English' (or Limerick (Irish) English)—or what the Limerick 'voice' might sound/be like.

The Rubberbandits present items that index the local voice, which we would argue are then validated by the audience in the orthographic reifications presented in Fig. 1, and the audience's uptake of catchphrases (*That's Limerick City*). The Rubberbandits also co-opt an existing linguistic item, seen in the comments above, *yurt*, and this is more particular to their performance. They have offered characteristically opaque, witty definitions on the term when questioned by their followers on Facebook: 'Technically it's a tibetan hut. But the Limerick phrase "Yurt" was born in the mouth of a girl from Thomondgate and no one knows

> *Thats Limerick Citaaay!*
> *thats fuckin limerick citayyyyy*
> *Chalk it dowwwwwwwwn! S`Limerick*
> *Fuck! Yes! RAPIIIIID!!!!*
> *Shup john u gowl or ul get a baten*
> *More pounce to da ounce kiiiddd....*
> *RESULT!!!!! Nice one kiiiiiiiid.*
> *Savage Sham!!!:D*
> *Aboy Penelope*
> *daycint!*
> *dayyyyyyyyycent ;)*
> *Daaaacent. Yurt!*

**Fig. 1** Orthographic reification of 'Limerick/Rubberbandits' English'. Source: Extracted comments from Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TheRubberbandits

who it's father is. Possibly an adjective from Garryowen but some say it may even have been fathered by an adverb from Tipp[erary]'[37] or on Twitter, where in answer to a tweet asking what 'yurt' means 'because yous always use it', the response is an evasive 'the word "Yurt" can only be defined by what it isn't.'[38]

As can be seen from Image 2, it has even gained enough currency to be scrawled on a Limerick bus stop, accompanied by the name of a well-known estate in Limerick city.

Of course, the Rubberbandits make strategic performative choices, which are based on language as well as other semiotic resources to perform the specific voice they are manipulating. The key concern of this chapter has been with the semiotic resource of voice and the extent to which the Rubberbandits play with a particular voice through the stylisation of the *knacker*. Specifically, we are interested in how their voicing of an inner-city accent and other linguistic resources of Limerick (Irish) English serves to parody the indexical linking of this particular voice with the label of *knacker*. The Rubberbandits make use of salient linguistic features so that the voicing practices they engage in serve to evoke a certain social image. In playing with aspects of the very voice they open up for ridicule the Rubberbandits 'flirt with the boundaries of the socially, culturally and linguistically possible and appropriate'.[39] The instances of

**Image 2**   (authors' own)

language play presented in Extract (1) demonstrate how their voicing involves verbal strategies where a stylised performance puts a particular identity on show, and a certain degree of linguistic reflexivity is evident in verbal practice.

While the Rubberbandits draw on these resources to parody the indexical linking of voice and the *knacker*, they also use their performed personae to disrupt social schemata. Here the performance pivots on disrupting the norms of how voice is connected to access to the symbolic capital of 'high art'.[40] We have termed these performances *meta-performances*, as although the Rubberbandits stay in character, there are occasional slippages in terms of what we might term prima facie voice—the voice that they are not consciously performing as the Rubberbandits. As background to Extract (2), a caller to a radio phone-in programme, *Liveline*, broadcast on RTÉ Radio 1, has been criticising the video for 'Horse Outside' (see *The Rubberbandits* above), saying that Limerick is being portrayed in a negative light and that the video promoted drug use. The caller (Anthony) also objected to the fact that

Willie O'Dea, TD (mentioned in Note 16) has supported the Rubberbandits on this occasion. Blind Boy (Boat Club) from the Rubberbandits has been contacted to comment on this criticism. In Extract (2), Joe Duffy is introducing Blind Boy, but gets his name wrong, whereupon Blind Boy corrects him, using the vocative, *kid*, primed for its connection with the band's Limerick city identity (see Fig. 1).

Extract (2): Blind Boy Boat Club on *Liveline* (*Liveline* with Joe Duffy, RTÉ Radio 1, 15 December 2010)

Joe Duffy:    Anthony Anthony of the Rubberbandits is on the line. Anthony good afternoon.
Blind Boy:    What's happening. My name isn't Anthony at all Joe.
Joe Duffy:    Oh sorry that's Anthony that call= that's Blind Boy is it?
Blind Boy:    Blind Boy Boat Club is my name kid.

In Extract (2), Blind Boy is introducing himself in character, and what ensues is a defence delivered in character, but delivered *seriously*. This deftly undermines detractors who suggest that their comedy is puerile, or pointless, and, we argue, sends up a taken-for-granted notion of an 'educated' voice being the only one with the power to critique performance art. It delegitimises and destabilises this notion whilst at the same time exposing its presence. In Extract (3), Blind Boy takes on the caller's criticisms, mentioning first Willie O'Dea's support. O'Dea had also called in to *Liveline* to defend the Rubberbandits, and to praise their use of comedy to subvert the media portrayal of Limerick:

Extract (3): Blind Boy Boat Club responds to criticisms of the Rubberbandits. *Liveline* with Joe Duffy, RTÉ Radio 1, 15 December 2010[41]

Blind Boy:    I think I think it's just onreal ['Limerick' accent *unreal*] fair play to you Willy and thanks for supporting it that's great like. Any support we get is onreal [*unreal*] and I think anyone who's got a complaint about the video or the song like your man Anthony there who's talking away what he needs to do someone needs to give that man a dictionary and he needs to look up the word irony.

Joe Duffy:    Anthony?

Anthony:     Absolute joke <\$O1> look as as the other <\\$O1> as the other lady on the phone said I mean I'm all for humour et cetera but when you're bringing in about children and house parties and drugs and the whole lot it's a disgrace+

Blind Boy:    <\$O1> Exactly it's an absolute joke you put it well there yourself kid <\\$O1>. All right hold on a second now right. Okay the line you're referring to about children and house parties and drugs right? Let me speak now a second right. You're looking at that from a very denotative perspective right you're looking at it literally as that line is the absolute truth. What's not being looked at is the subtext. What we're talking about here is a piece of art right. It's a piece of music and it's a video right. So first of all the line that's coming out of the man's mouth you need to look at that man. Look at the way he's talking the way he's dressed the way he's carrying on. Is he a reliable man? Do you think that+

There is no doubting that although it is voiced through Blind Boy this is an artist defining how his art should be interpreted, in a sort of socio-political code-switching of voices. This small example shows the potential for comedians to re-enregister the value attached to using an accent whose mediated representation has hitherto served to index a less powerful voice in society. It can be argued that the Rubberbandits provide an alternative source of legitimacy for working-class Limerick, using the inner-city Limerick accent to index far more than the *knacker*, and in some ways destabilising this indexing. This destabilisation is shown in practice with Blind Boy's contribution to *Liveline* above.

Where resistance could be said to be the implication in Extract (3), solidarity is the intention in Extract (4). Just before the landmark Marriage Equality Referendum in Ireland, Blind Boy (the putative spokesman for the Rubberbandits) was asked to comment as part of a rather eclectic vox pop for *BBC Newsnight*.[42] Again, in character, Blind Boy voices his support for the 'Yes' campaign:

Extract (4): *BBC Newsnight*, 20 May 2015

Blind Boy:    It's part of a package. It's basic humanity and equality for our gay citizens. But also it's a powerful and deliberate turning our backs on a system that really kept us mentally oppressed for about 50 years. Am a Catholic system that it's still actually in part of our law.

Comedy is well recognised as a domain of art in which the unsayable can be said. It has a long history as a playful art form in which dominant ideologies are resisted and challenged, a space in which performers utilise a variety of resources to attempt to change, or least disrupt the taken-for-granted norms of the social world in which they reside. We suggest that the comedy of the Rubberbandits serves to challenge the hegemonic order which has disadvantaged voices from the margins of Limerick city. Their comedic style can be characterised as comedy *verité* in that it moves past the straightforward provocation of laughter, re-energising comedy's potential for social and cultural critique.[43] The Rubberbandits engage in a process of heightened reflexivity, where a discursive social stereotype is put on display and is offered up and opened up as a critical reflection of self and society—and the social schemata activated by the performed voice is disrupted. The comedy the duo produce is akin to Lockyer's characterisation of television comedy as 'a significant vehicle through which serious concerns, anxieties, and questions about social class and class identities are discursively constructed and contested'.[44] The snippets of their humour presented in this chapter, and indeed the audience reaction to this humour, shows that it is a parody that is both reflexive and ironic in nature and that speaks to both out-group and in-group members— you do not have to be from Limerick city to access the comedy of the Rubberbandits. Equally, there is something uniquely 'Limerick' about their comedy.

So, the Rubberbandits have adopted the inner-city Limerick voice as well as other semiotic resources in order to perform an identity that stands outside their real one, as previously mentioned, and this is a complex process of voicing: stylisation.[45] The comedic play they engage in 'Guides to' and the meta-performances presented here serves to '… move the use of heterogeneous stylistic resources, context-sensitive meanings and conflicting ideologies in to a reflexive arena where they can be

examined critically'.[46] In this way the Rubberbandits also engage in a process of (re)enregisterment.[47] A specific voice associated with Limerick (Irish) English has been enregistered to index *knacker*. Yet, through their lampooning of this indexical link the one-to-one association of the voice with the label of knacker is undermined, challenged, diluted and destabilised (see Extract [4]). They engage in what can also be interpreted in Bucholtz's terms as *resignification*, a process whereby 'semiotic forms acquire new meanings through the purposeful recontextualising acts of stylistic agents'.[48] Cumulatively, their humorous stylisation functions as an important discursive device and enables a process of inscription as 'cultural reassessment'.[49]

# 5    Conclusion

Mass culture plays a significant role in shaping the sociolinguistic reality of all speech communities. One of the most significant of these effects is the role of media in reproducing normalised language ideologies. As much of the recent work in what can be described as the sociolinguistics of performance has demonstrated, media privileges certain types of talk. Research in this field has focused on how particular linguistic features accrue social meaning, giving rise to an interest in how language varieties index particular social meaning. Much of the existing literature on the role of television in the (re)production of hegemonic discourse and ideologies focuses on how particular characters who represent given linguistic varieties serve to further ferment indexical social meanings associated with speakers of such varieties. For example, much of the work on media representation of AAVE looks at how performances of this linguistic vernacular often serve to further enhance stereotypes and lead to a furthering of social racism.[50]

However, bearing this work in mind, and the hitherto assumed negative consequences of mediatised stylisation, the current study shows that, in the context of the Rubberbandits, while their linguistic practices do allow for negative stereotyping, they also serve to challenge dominant ideologies. The humorous framing allows for dominant discourses and

ideologies that surround Limerick city to be challenged, and so norma-tive language ideologies are reproduced, but simultaneously reorganised, such that:

> the social meaning of linguistic form is most fundamentally a matter not of social categories such as gender, ethnicity, age or region but rather of sub-tler and more fleeting interactional moves through which speakers take stances, create alignments, and construct personas.[51]

Arguably, stylisation is a resource for challenging dominant discourses by deliberately manipulating the fluidity of social norms, ideas and prac-tices. Through the Rubberbandits' active manipulation of voice they engage simultaneously in processes of ordering and disordering norma-tive discourses.[52] King refers to this as a 'double-edged potential', which permits comedy to 'both question and reconfirm prevailing definitions […], giving it a potent but also ambiguous ideological potential'.[53] In this way, stylisation 'subverts hegemonic modes of imagination by exposing their constructed-ness.'[54] As our data would suggest, the idea of *knacker*, and indeed the notion of the Limerick *knacker*, does not exist as a person but rather as a concept, much like similar labels from other cultures such as the Australian *bogan*, the American *white trash* or the British *chav*.

The designation *knacker* has been used in Irish society to distance the middle class from the working class along lines of distinction and taste. As Tyler argues with respect to Britain, class-making is an important tool in the accumulation of social capital of the white upper and middle classes.[55] Our examination of how the Rubberbandits play with the notion of the *knacker* through their creative vernacular play with the voice and image of the perceived *knacker* foregrounds how comedic voicing can interrupt dominant discourses and help to readdress the irrationality of the taken-for-granted associations of a particular voice, in this case the inner-city accent of Limerick (Irish) English, and the imagined concept of *knacker*. The 'voices' the Rubberbandits draw on and embody in order to index the values and ideologies associated with the image of the *knacker* are deliberately absurd and overplayed. The humour of the Rubberbandits provides a unique locus for meaning-

making and therein also for the investigation of the relationship between voice and discourse. Their stylised humour depicts the view that Limerick has been ideologically and discursively constructed as poor, deviant and criminal by the Irish media. For their stylisation to succeed at the interactional level, it has to be grounded in shared language ideologies. This is evident in our data on audience engagement with the humour of the Rubberbandits. The trajectory of linguistic resources associated with voicing the *knacker* are taken up by the audience is such that it is used across different spaces of social media, in graffiti and so on. They frequently reorder and transform voices from the margins of Limerick city. Such a voice moves from being enregistered as being that of the *knacker* to a broadened capacity in terms of the accent's fitness for purpose, and as a result the Rubberbandits can be identified as taking an active role in tackling the ideological constraints such voices are subjected to.

Through their appropriation of the voice of the marginalised and demonised, the Rubberbandits' comedy reimagines the ideological social order so that the indexical valence of the voice they perform can move beyond media stereotyping of Limerick, and thus they provide an alternative to the folk-held description of Limerick as Stab City. The Rubberbandits are social actors who use various voicing techniques through which the ideological constraints of being a speaker of Limerick (Irish) English can be renegotiated. Through their exaggerated and caricatured portrayal of the *knacker* they invoke the humorous trope of absurdity to challenge existing stereotypes. Their linguistic dexterity enables a complex performance of voice, whereby it becomes a tool with which resistance to dominant discourses of disgust can be mounted. The humour of the Rubberbandits means that voices, albeit *represented* voices, from the margins can be heard and seen on the Irish mediascape. This chapter contributes to the growing body of work which critically examines high performance genres, and attempts to address an analytical exigency identified by Coupland: 'We need to understand how people *use* or *enact* or *perform* social styles for a range of symbolic purposes.'[56] The potential of comedy to reframe notions of class and place, and the role of playful voice in challenging dominant ideologies, makes for a fascinating, if complex and layered, study.

## Notes

1. We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their astute and helpful feedback on the original version of this chapter. We have integrated this feedback, and that of the editors, whom we also thank. Naturally, any omissions or shortcomings are the responsibility of the authors.
2. Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, 'Communities of Practice: Where Language, Gender and Power All Live', reprinted in *Language and Gender: A Reader*, eds Jennifer Coates and P. Pichler (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2011); and Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Language, Meaning and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
3. E.g. Nikolas Coupland, *Style. Language Variation and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
4. Eoin Devereux, Amanda Haynes and Martin J. Power, 'At the Edge: Media Constructions of a Stigmatised Irish Housing Estate', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 26, no. 2 (June 2011): 123–42.
5. Steph Lawler, 'Getting Out and Getting Away: Women's Narratives of Class Mobility', *Feminist Review* 63, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 4.
6. Devereux et al., 'At the Edge'.
7. Raymond Hickey, *Dublin English: Evolution and Change* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005); and *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
8. David Morley, 'Mediated Class-ifications: Representations of Class and Culture in Contemporary British Television', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 12, no. 4 (2009): 498.
9. Julia Snell, 'Schema Theory and the Humour of *Little Britain*', *English Today* 22, no. 1 (January 2006): 59–64; and 'From Sociolinguistic Variation to Socially Strategic Stylisation', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14, no. 5 (November 2010): 618–44; Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001); and 'A Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Characterisation', in *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*, eds Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper, 251–77 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002).
10. Joe Bennett, '"And What Comes out May Be a Kind of Screeching": The Stylisation of Chavspeak in Contemporary Britain', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16, no. 1 (2012): 7.

11. Ibid., 20.

12. Terence Patrick Dolan, *A Dictionary of Hiberno-English*, 3rd ed. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2012).

13. Rachel E. Smith, 'Urban Dictionary: Youth's Language and the Redefining of Definition', *English Today* 27, no. 4 (December 2011): 47.

14. These definitions of *knacker*, contributed to Urban Dictionary (© 1999–2016, http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=knacker) are copied here exactly as they appear on the website; no corrections to the typos and errors have been made.

15. Morley, 'Mediated Class-ifications'; and Snell, 'Schema Theory'.

16. Willie O'Dea, T. D. (Teachta Dála, or member of the Irish parliament) is a member of Fianna Fáil, a centre to centre-right political party in Ireland. Despite the fluctuating fortunes of the party itself, O'Dea has maintained the support of his constituency, Limerick city. The Rubberbandits' O'DJ character wears a Willie O'Dea mask, they have recorded a track called *Song for Willie O'Dea* and O'Dea himself has, with good humour it must be said, often voiced his support for the Rubberbandits publicly.

17. One call made to a bank in Limerick opens with the contention that a bank employee has, amongst other things, taken out a balloon and burst it in the ear of one of the boys as he was applying for a car loan. This is fairly typical of the element of the absurd that runs through their comedy.

18. Barry Duggan, 'Jokers Unmasked as Middle-Class Lads', *Irish Independent*, 17 December 2010, http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/music/jokers-unmasked-as-middleclass-lads-26607316.html.

19. As with the other online data we present in this chapter, we do not tamper with it as primary data, though we do provide glosses if the meaning cannot be reasonably construed by the reader or the meaning is obscured, e.g. in the case of **[they]** in Table 2. We provide footnotes to explain specialised references.

20. University of Limerick (UL), Ireland.

21. Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Ireland.

22. Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), Ireland.

23. Cf. Michele Zappavigna, 'Ambient Affiliation: A Linguistic Perspective on Twitter', *New Media and Society* 13, no. 5 (August 2011): 788–806; and *The Discourse of Twitter and Social Media* (London: Continuum, 2012).

24. Cf. Elaine Chun and Keith Walters, 'Orienting to Arab Orientalisms: Language, Race, and Humor in a YouTube Video', in *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*, eds Crispin Thurlow and Kristine Mroczek, 251–73 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

25. Ananda Mitra and Eric Watts, 'Theorizing Cyberspace: The Idea of Voice Applied to the Internet Discourse', *New Media and Society* 4, no. 4 (December 2002): 483.

26. Thanks to Cormac McCarthy for the original version of this corpus, compiled as part of his master's dissertation (2012). The RGC version used for this paper is based on the original but with some additional elements; vocalisations are inserted, and specific words which were transcribed as pronounced for the purpose of the original project have been changed back to standard spelling to allow for comparison with larger, more generally representative corpora.

27. These are presented in the order in which they were uploaded to YouTube by RTÉ.

28. Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools 5* (Liverpool, UK: Lexical Analysis Software, 2008).

29. Gosia Barker and Anne O'Keeffe, 'A Corpus of Irish English. Past, Present, Future', *Teanga* 18 (1999): 1–11; and Fiona Farr, Brona Murphy and Anne O'Keeffe, 'The Limerick Corpus of Irish English: Design, Description and Application', *Teanga* 21 (2004): 25–29.

30. Paul Baker, *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis* (London, UK: Continuum, 2006).

31. Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad and Randi Reppen, *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating Language Structure and Use* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

32. Cf. Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*; and 'A Cognitive Stylistic Approach'.

33. The statue is of the late actor Richard Harris, who was from Limerick. The sculpture depicts him as King Arthur in the film *Camelot*, hence the crown and leggings.

34. Elaine Vaughan and Anne O'Keeffe, 'Corpus Analysis', in *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, 1–17 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

35. Scott, *WordSmith Tools 5*.

36. *Yoke* is a term that can be used in place of *thing*, as a vague reference in general in Irish English. It can also be used, as it is here, to refer to ecstasy pills, or MDMA.

37. http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1015026962677
7200&id=45998897199.

38. https://twitter.com/rubberbandits/status/177174042422423554.

39. Joel Sherzer, *Speech Play and Verbal Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002): 1.

40. John Hall, ed., *Reworking Class* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

41. <$O> <\$O1> marks an overlapped utterance; + marks an interrupted utterance.

42. This also included the current Bishop of Limerick, Rt Rev. Brendan Leahy and Senator David Norris.

43. Elaine Chun, 'Ideologies of Legitimate Mockery: Margaret Cho's Revoicing of Mock Asian', *Pragmatics* 14, no. 2/3 (2004): 263–89; and Brett Mills, 'Comedy Verité: Contemporary Sitcom Form', *Screen* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 63–78.

44. Sharon Lockyer, 'Dynamics of Social Class Contempt in Contemporary British Television Comedy', *Social Semiotics* 20, no. 2 (2010): 121.

45. Mijaíl Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981); Ben Rampton, *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents* (London: Longman, 1995); Nikolas Coupland, 'Dialect Stylization in Radio Talk', *Language in Society* 30, no. 3 (July 2001): 345–75; and 'The Mediated Performance of Vernaculars', *Journal of English Linguistics* 37, no. 3 (September 2009): 284–300. See also Coupland, *Style*.

46. Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, 'Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990): 6.

47. Asif Agha, 'The Social Life of Cultural Value', *Language and Communication* 23 (2003): 231–73; and *Language and Social Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Barbara Johnstone, 'Dialect Enregisterment in Performance', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (January 2011): 657–79.

48. Mary Bucholtz, 'The Elements of Style', In *Language and Identity across Modes of Communication*, eds Dwi N. Djenar, Ahmar Mahboob and Ken Cruickshank (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2015), 52.

49. Coupland, *Style*.

50. Cf. Jane H. Hill, 'Styling Locally, Styling Globally: What Does It Mean?' *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3, no. 4 (November 1999): 542–56; Mary

Bucholtz, 'Sociolinguistic Nostalgia and the Authentication of Identity', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7, no. 3 (August 2003): 398–416; 'From Stance to Style: Gender, Interaction, and Indexicality in Mexican Immigrant Youth Slang', in *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, ed. Alexandra Jaffe, 146–70 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); 'Race and the Re-Embodied Voice in Hollywood Film', *Language and Communication* 31, no. 3 (July 2011): 255–265; Mary Bucholtz and Qiuana Lopez, 'Performing Blackness, Forming Whiteness: Linguistic Minstrelsy in Hollywood Film', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (2011): 680–706; and Coupland, *Style*.

51. Bucholtz, 'From Stance to Style', 146.
52. Ibid.
53. Geoff King, *Film Comedy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 145 and 129.
54. Jannis Androutsoplolous, 'Participatory Culture and Metalinguistic Discourse: Performing and Negotiating German Dialects on YouTube', in *Discourse 2.0: Language and New Media*, eds Deborah Tannen and Anna M. Trester (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 152.
55. Imogen Tyler, '"Chav Mum, Chav Scum": Class Disgust in Contemporary Britain', *Feminist Media Studies* 8, no. 1 (2008): 17–34.
56. Coupland, *Style*, 3.

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# He's After Getting Up a Load of Wind: A Corpus-Based Exploration of *be* + *after* + *V-ing* Constructions in Spoken and Written Corpora

Carolina P. Amador-Moreno and Anne O'Keeffe

## 1    Introduction

A widely known way of expressing a recently completed action in Irish English is by means of the preposition *after* + *V-ing*, as illustrated in the following example: (1) *She's after finishing her second novel*. Analyses of the Irish English (henceforth IrE) perfect construction *be* + *after* + *V-ing* have often drawn attention to how this structure differs from the Standard English (StE) perfect *have* + past participle. In previous research, the most thorough studies of this structure in the context of Irish English[1] are provided by Henry, Kallen, Harris, Filppula, McCafferty, Ronan and Pietsch.[2] The effect of language contact and bilingualism between Irish Gaelic and English has often been summoned in order to explain the difference between this and other varieties of English. In the light of second language

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acquisition processes, Romaine also refers to this feature and considers it as a trace of the Irish 'substratum influence' evident in situations where a group of speakers has shifted into a new language.[3] And from a sociolinguistic perspective, Milroy cites examples of the structure in the English of Belfast, whereas Kallen discusses the social-class factors governing its use in Dublin English.[4] Although the pragmatic value of this form has been noted in previous research (see the works by Kallen and Hickey[5]), little detailed analysis has been carried out in order to determine (1) the various meanings associated with the structure, (2) the reasons why this feature of IrE has survived and even become one of the signature constructions of this variety and (3) whether its use by native IrE speakers has any significance, at a pragmatic level compared with other varieties of English (but see also O'Keeffe and Amador-Moreno).[6]

The present chapter addresses some of these issues in looking at the occurrence of this representative structure in fictional and real spoken corpora, thus exploring the notion of fictional versus real spoken discourse and the issue of authenticity. The chapter is organised as follows: Sect. 2 discusses the work that has already been done on this particular construction. Section 3 gives details about our study, and in Sect. 4, the findings are detailed. In Sect. 5, a set of functions are presented and discussed. Finally, in the last section, some conclusions are drawn about the use of the *be + after + V-ing* structure in contemporary Irish English.

## 2      The *be + after + v-ing* Structure: A Distinctive Feature of IrE

The *after + V-ing* construction is, as we suggested above, probably the best-known IrE feature. It is variously known as the *hot news perfect* (Harris, following McCawley[7]), the *PI*,[8] the *retrospective I*,[9] the *immediate perfective*[10] or the *after perfect* (AFP).[11] It is also the most widely used construction for the portrayal of Irish characters in literature[12] and, as has been pointed out in early research,[13] it is often employed in IrE to refer to events that have taken place in the immediate or recent past (hence the label 'hot news') but the effects of which, as Filppula argues,

'persist some way or other into the present moment or […] into a secondary point of time orientation in the past', depending on whether the copula is in the past or in the present tense.[14] Apart from conveying that idea of recency which in StE is expressed by the use of the perfect *have + V-ed* plus the adverbial form *just* (e.g. *She has just finished her second novel*), in IrE this structure is employed, as Henry explains, 'to report the conclusion of an action: … by way of reference to a state initiated by the conclusion of this action.'[15]

One of the first references to this structure appears as early as 1885, in a book by Stoney, who regards the use of *after + V-ing* as incorrect:

> Don't, Pat, when you have done anything, say, 'I am after doing it'. The use of the preposition *after* in this manner is a glaring Irishism, and a violation of grammar to boot, and is, I am sorry to say, very prevalent throughout the length and breadth of the land. I have actually seen such an expression in a leading article in a leading Dublin newspaper! it is only with the present and imperfect tenses of the verb 'to be' […] that *after* is thus abused …[16]

Stoney's prescriptive observation is interesting, not only because it symbolises the attitudes of some sectors of society towards IrE during the nineteenth century, but also because it vouches for the usage of this construction outside of the literary contexts in which, one could argue, the *after* construction and other features of IrE are used for caricature.[17] An interesting reflection on the exaggerated use of this and other features on stage is provided by Sullivan, who observes that

> the depiction of the speech forms produced by the more non-standard speakers of H(iberno)-E(nglish),[18] especially in earlier times, appears to have been realized through the exaggerated use of a select number of non-standard features rather than through a more complete linguistic representation. Yet the forms which were utilized in representing HE were precisely those which served to separate HE from Standard English.[19]

Hayden and Hartog refer to this structure too, pointing out the potential for misunderstanding that this form can give rise to, even for speakers of other varieties of English: 'the form denotes a completed past, but not

a remote past: English misconception treats this part of the I[rish] E[nglish] verb as if it were an abuse by excess of the SE: "to be after" (= to be busy with, to be about to).'[20] Similarly, Joyce mentions the problems of understanding that this structure would pose to an Englishman, attributing this use to the existence of a similar structure in Irish (with the prepositional phrases *iar* or *i n-diaigh*).[21] This latter observation made by Joyce (and later by van Hamel too),[22] had already been put forward by Shee (1882: 365), who cited the sentence *I am after eating* (for *I have just eaten*) as an example of translation from Irish. Although not explicitly formulated in these terms, what Shee and Joyce allude to here is the weight of substratum influence.[23]

That the *after* + *V-ing* perfect is a calque on the Irish construction has been maintained in subsequent studies.[24] Indeed, the constructions *Bhí (tá, beidh*, etc.*)* + [*preposition tar éis/i-ndiaidh*][25] + *verbal noun or verbal adjective* are among the structures available to express the perfect tense in Irish. These constructions are illustrated in the following two sentences, adapted from *The Christian Brothers Grammar*:

| (1a) | *Tá mé* | i ndiaidh | *an bád* | *a dhíol.* |
|------|---------|-----------|----------|------------|
|      | V + S   | Prep. +   | N (O) +  | part.- V   |
|      | Is - I  | after     | the boat | selling.   |
| (1b) | *Tá mé* | tar éis   | *an teach* | *a ghlanadh.* |
|      | V + S   | Prep. +   | N (O) +  | part.- V   |
|      | Is - I  | after     | the house | cleaning.  |

Given the absence of this type of perfect in English, the *be* + *after* + *V-ing* structure has been seen as a way of expressing that sense of recency that the constructions with *tar éis/i-ndiaidh* denote in Irish.

In later studies it is the future-time reference conveyed by the same structure *be* + *after* + *V-ing* that has been the focus of attention.[26] Examples of this category such as *If you don't hurry up, they'll be after leaving by the time you get there*, cited in Hickey (2000: 101) were noted by Bliss (1979: 299–300) in the context of literature.[27] As McCafferty and others have pointed out, future uses of this structure have tended to be dismissed as 'Stage Irish',[28] and yet, 'future time reference is also present in the usage of writers from native I[rish]E[nglish]-speaking backgrounds, whose renditions of Irish speech are more difficult to write off as unreliable.'[29] To further

buttress his claim, McCafferty gives the example of William Carleton (1794–1869), 'a first-generation IE speaker whose renditions of Irish peasant speech and culture are generally highly regarded […], [Carleton] could use the construction to convey both future and perfect-tense meanings, as did many of his contemporaries.'[30] In a similar vein, Filppula mentions examples of this construction in a manuscript dating from around 1830, although he seems sceptical about the validity of this source: '[t]he conspicuously frequent use of other similar constructions in this particular text leads one to suspect that this could be a belated continuation of the Stage Irish tradition, with little or no basis in actual HE usage.'[31]

In any case, the analysis of written sources seems to have led to establishing a distinction between an 'old'[32] *after* construction with future meanings (possibly influenced by the ambiguity caused by the English preposition *after*, as Kallen suggests[33]) and a new perfect-tense *after* construction originating in Irish which came to replace the old one. According to McCafferty (2003a, 2004, 2014), both constructions would have developed at the same time within the context of language contact and shift in Ireland.[34] As he claims, the future-tense structure occurred in Ireland as a result of interaction between native speakers of British English and Irish-speaking learners of English:

> Future uses of *be after V-ing* in earlier representations of Irish English are the result of language contact between speakers of British English, who understood it as a future, and speakers of Irish acquiring English, who intended it as a calque on the equivalent perfect in Irish. As more people became bilingual in the two languages, and eventually shifted to English, perfect meanings came to dominate.[35]

Current literary portrayals of this structure, however, show that the perfect aspect is, indeed, the one that has survived, as can be observed in the following examples, taken from Dublin writer Roddy Doyle's novel, *The Snapper* (1990) (Image 1):

Doyle's exceptional knack for capturing Dublin speech has been acclaimed by critics. His realistic portrayal of the Dublin vernacular can, in a sense, be compared to Carleton's search for linguistic authenticity.[36] This sort of *speech realism* is not surprising in a culture with a long tradi-

**Roddy Doyle (The Snapper)**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | you, Sharon. 130 Let go o'me. You're **after** ripping me hoodie. Wha'. Wha' di |
| 2 | ttin' anny calculators. Young Sharon's **after gettin'** herself up the pole.  Is |
| 3 | Burgess.    Pat Burgess said his da's **after comin'** back. I knew it, I fuckin' |
| 4 | goin' on here? What's wrong? Are you **after upsettin'** your mammy? No.  No.  W |
| 5 | Aah Jaysis  What happened?  The dog's **after shittin'** in the fuckin' hall an' I |
| 6 | Ah Veronica, stop tha'  Daddy, Darren's **after hittin'** me  Jesus! Another one  I |
| 7 | t happened, Doris?  Veronica Rabbitte's **after givin'** poor Doris an awful clatter |
| 8 | Pat who?  Burgess  Is Georgie Burgess **after runnin'** away? Yeah- Pat said he fu |
| 9 | carachas.  Fuck yis.  Pat said his da's **after runnin'** away from home.  Pat who? |
| 10 | I believe Gerry Foster's young fella's **after puttin'** some  young one from Coolo |

**Image 1**    Concordance lines from Roddy Doyle's novel *The Snapper*

tion of storytelling, where the oral is often recorded in writing. The search for linguistic authenticity is also what characterises the work of some other contemporary Irish authors such as Joseph O'Connor, Dermot Bolger, Paul Howard, Kevin Barry and so on.

Access to examples of real speech produced by IrE speakers in the past is of course limited, but, as argued above, resorting to written sources can be revealing in that sense. Some of the sources discussed below provide examples of the *after* construction which lend themselves to comparative diachronic as well as synchronic analysis. As Hundt states, models of language change might look different if variation across speech and writing were taken into account in a more systematic way.[37]

# 3    This Study

Our analysis of the *be + after + V-ing* structure differs from other studies in that it is conducted on a large scale using contemporary naturally occurring spoken IrE, historical literary data and contemporary literary data. The largest source of data in statistical terms came from the Limerick

Corpus of Irish English (henceforth LCIE).[38] This is a collection of 1 million words of Irish English, which is based on over 100 hours of recordings from around the Republic of Ireland. The recordings were transcribed to form a corpus. They range across age, gender, socio-economic background and geographical location. However, LCIE does not set out to be a sociolinguistically representative corpus. Its primary aim is to represent spoken English as it is used in mostly everyday contexts in contemporary Ireland. Hence recordings took place mostly in family homes and accommodation shared by friends (these are categorised as *intimate*). There are also recordings of conversations between friends which are taken from social contexts such as pubs and restaurants (categorised as *socialising*). The corpus also includes data recording in more formal settings, for example the workplace (*professional*), shops (*transactional*) and lecture halls and university classrooms (*pedagogical*). Table 1 provides a percentage breakdown of these 'interactional categories', as well as examples from each category. The three spoken genre categories of information provision, collaborative idea and collaborative task, from McCarthy, were used to complete the matrix of interactional type versus genre.[39]

In this study, the corpus software *Wordsmith Tools* was used to automatically retrieve all instances of *be after* + *V-ing* by searching for *after \*ing*.[41] This generated concordance lines of all the occurrences. From

**Table 1** Interactional relationship types (based on McCarthy)[40]

|  | % of data | Information-provision | Collaborative idea | Collaborative task |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intimate | 79 | A friend telling a group of friends a story | Family members chatting | Family members putting up the Christmas tree |
| Socialising | 3 | Interview informal chat | Friends discussing the football | Friends fixing a computer printer |
| Professional | 8 | Report at appraisal | Team meeting at work | Waitresses doing the dishes |
| Transactional | 3 | Tupperware presentation | Chatting with bus driver | Eye examination |
| Pedagogic | 7 | Teacher-training feedback session | Student and teacher chatting | Individual computer lesson |

these, all non- *be after* + *V-ing* items were eliminated (e.g. *After opening the door …*). The remaining concordance lines were then used for qualitative analysis. Corpus software allows the researcher to retrieve the source file of any one line from a set of concordances and this facilitated detailed functional analysis and categorisation of the form, instance by instance. For any one occurrence, the corpus database could be consulted as to the age, gender, address or educational background of the speaker, the setting of the recording and so on.

The literary data came from the historical literary corpus the *Corpus of Irish English*.[42] This comprises Irish English texts from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century. We extracted five works from it to form the basis of our computer-searchable IrE literary corpus (see Table 2). These were chosen on the basis that they were representative of the period from the 1800s to the present. Edgeworth's and Carleton's work provide invaluable data from the period when the language shift from Irish to English was gathering pace. Thus, their IrE may represent the variety as it was emerging in the mouths of the Irish population.[43] Synge's plays are equally interesting from a linguistic perspective, due to his conscious use of language based on the speech of the Aran Islands,[44] and Behan's play is included as representative of Dublin English. The *Corpus Presenter* suite was used on the literary corpus: by entering the string *be* + *after* + *\*ing*, we enabled the program to retrieve concordance lines, which we then analysed as described above.[45] As a complement to the historical literary data, we then carried out a comparative qualitative analysis of our findings as related to examples of this structure obtained

**Table 2** Literary corpus from the *Corpus of Irish English*

| Author | Work (including year) | Genre | Total no. of words in corpus (actual occurrence) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Edgeworth | *Castle Rackrent* (1801) | Novel | 25,300 |
| Carleton | *Traits and Stories* (1830–1833) | Novel | 20,350 |
| Synge | *In the Shadow of the Glen* (1903) | Play | 5118 |
| Synge | *The Tinker's Wedding* (1909) | Play | 7618 |
| Behan | *The Quare Fellow* (1954) | Play | 21,294 |

from contemporary Irish writing. This part of the study was based on a total of 49 works from 20 different Irish writers (see Appendix to this chapter), covering the period between 1951 and 2007.[46] Obvious copyright limitations on the use of contemporary writing lie in the corpora available for corpus-based approaches. This means that no information is available concerning the number of words in each text. However, this is not regarded as problematic in qualitative terms. While a quantitative analysis enables us to discuss general trends in our survey, only a more qualitative approach to specific examples allows us to observe the contextual factors which affect the use of this structure. As will be discussed below, the occurrence of the *after* construction in the work of contemporary authors shows, among other things, that this structure is still perceived as characteristic of the English spoken in Ireland.

The overall frequency of the *be + after + V-ing* construction is likely to vary across these different registers. The fact that the examples come from different domains may raise the question of representativeness. However, as Stubbs argues, more often than not, 'it is not possible to have a representative sample of 'a language', since the population being sampled is infinite in extent and constantly changing.'[47] The combination spoken–written/fictional–non-fictional/contemporary–historical,   we   believe, provides a more global view of the use of *be + after +V-ing* in IrE.

# 4     Findings from This Study

In all, we found 95 occurrences in 1 million words of the LCIE spoken corpus. In order to make our quantitative results comparable, we normalised the findings from Hickey's *Corpus of Irish English* (CIE) (that is, we converted them to occurrences per million words). The normalised results are summarised in Table 3.

Our study gathered 447 tokens in total. A detailed analysis of both the literary and the non-literary data showed that the affirmative form was predominant. There were no instances of negative structures either in the spoken or the written data—which seems to indicate that what Kallen suggests in relation to the absence of this form in Dublin English is also true of current spoken IrE nationwide.[48] Interrogatives were more

**Table 3** Quantitative results for *be + after + V -ing* in LCIE and CIE literary corpus

| Data | Raw result | Result per million words for normalised comparison |
|---|---|---|
| LCIE | 95 | 95 |
| *Castle Rackrent* (Edgeworth, 1801) | 2 | 80 |
| *Traits and Stories* (Carleton, 1830–1833) | 3 | 140 |
| *In the Shadow of the Glen* (Synge, 1903) | 11 | 2149 |
| *The Tinker's Wedding* (Synge, 1909) | 8 | 1050 |
| *The Quare Fellow* (Behan, 1954) | 4 | 188 |

common in the contemporary written data than in the spoken corpus, where only four examples (one of which was reported speech) were found:

(2a)  … she said what **what are you after doing?** I I'm after doing something I shouldn't have done at all, he said so he asked for yer man to … [LCIE]

(2b)  [Conversation between a mother (B) and a daughter (A)]
B:  **Are you after cooking again?**
A:  Yes.
B:  Ah you're a great girl.          [LCIE]

(2c)  **Are they after getting** the disease like taken off the mother? [LCIE]
(2d)  **What are ye after doing**? [LCIE]

In the CIE literary corpus, only one example of interrogative is found in *The Tinker's Wedding*, whereas in the 327 tokens collected from contemporary writing between 1951 and 2007, examples such as the ones listed below are found:

(3a)   … **Were you after falling out** or what? (Dermot Bolger, *Night Shift*, 1985)
(3b)   … **Am I after doin'** somethin' on yeh? (Joseph O'Connor, *The Salesman*, 1998)
(3c)   He went into the kitchen, but I still couldn't say anything and suddenly my mother looked at me and said: '**Are you after joining** the IRA?'… (Mike McCormack, *Getting It in the Head*, 1996)

(3d)   My God, said Bimbo, dead quiet. —**Is she after doin'** somethin' to herself? (Roddy Doyle, *The Van*, 1991)

The comparison of current IrE with the literary data revealed that, in relation to time reference, only present and past references were found, with the following pattern (Table 4):

Future constructions, as pointed out above, are no longer used, as both real and fictional representations of contemporary IrE confirm. The distribution of the past and the present reference forms in the 327 examples collected from contemporary writing is shown in Fig. 1 below.

Another observation in terms of form was that the adverbs *just, only, already, probably* tend to be used in a position preceding *after* to modify the structure:

**Table 4**  Patterns found in corpora

| | |
|---|---|
| Present reference | I/'m/am after –ing |
| | She/he/it/this 's/is after (also tis—it + is) |
| | We/they/you 're/are after |
| | [noun] is after |
| Past | She/he was after |
| | We/they/you were after |
| | [noun] was after |
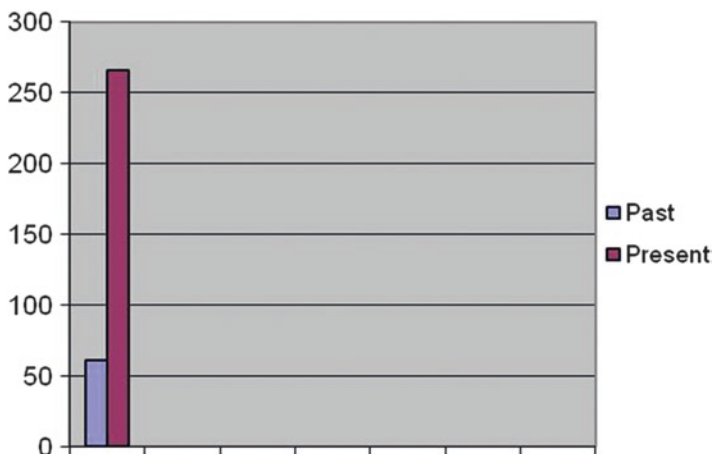


**Fig. 1**  Past and present reference forms in contemporary writing

(3a)   So it didn't matter if the entire remnants of the FitzSimons family **were just after booking** into Room 104. (Dermot Bolger, *Finbar's Hotel*, 1997).

(3b)   A:   Siobhan do you want a cup of tea.
       B:   No I'm fine. I'm **only after having** my breakfast. [LCIE]

(3c)   A:   My mother is like a dog at home don't know what's wrong with her. I'm **probably after doing** something wrong.
       B:   Is she?
       A:   Mothers are always like dogs anyways.
       B:   Yeah. [LCIE]
(3d)   He was **already after meeting** Paudie on Friday [LCIE]

As examples 3a, b and d illustrate, *just*, *only* and *already* are used to intensify immediacy while in 3c *probably* is used to modalise the structure.

Indeed, as Kallen suggests, the after construction appears not to co-occur with remote adverbials found with other perfect forms.[49] However, what is interesting in relation to *only* is that, apart from acting as an intensifier (as can be seen in the following example taken from Behan's play: WARDER 1 […] *Myself and this other man here are **only after being talking** about him*), this adverbial seems to co-occur with the *after* construction in a consistent manner in situations where it is used as part of the refusal/rejection of an offer made by another speaker.[50]

# 5    Functions of the *After* Construction

The functional analysis of our data reveals that the *after* construction is used both in fictional and in real contemporary IrE with the following purposes:

## 5.1   Focus on Immediate Outcome/Recency

The examples found in the two sub-corpora show that, as has been argued in previous research, this structure is used to emphasise immediacy and recency:

> (4a)   He's **after getting** up a load of wind [LCIE]
> (4b)   Your tart is just **after falling** down your lap! [LCIE]
> (4c)   MARY [calling out to her] What is it you're **after whispering** above with himself? [Synge, *The Tinker's Wedding*]

   However, what has gone unnoticed so far is that the use of this structure seems to have an inherent element of modality (allowing the speaker to incorporate their own attitude), so although the focus on immediate outcome/recency is evident in the examples above, it can be argued that the *after* construction is also used to mark the speaker's perspective.[51]

## 5.2   Past as Narrative Device

Our analysis of the *after* perfect in contemporary Irish English speech and writing confirms Kallen's findings in relation to its frequency in narrative situations, but it also leads us to the conclusion that it is employed for specific purposes in narrative discourse, i.e. to enable the narrator to present events as emotionally vivid and dramatic, in a similar fashion to what Williams notes in relation to current non-standard uses of the present perfect (e.g. *I have eaten*) in contemporary spoken British English; as he claims in relation to this usage of the perfect in contemporary British English, there is no syntactic device available in the standard variety which allows narrators to present certain events in the discourse sequence as particularly vivid, and which enables them to do so economically.[52] Williams's observation in relation to contemporary spoken British English usages of the present perfect seems to also be true of the IrE *after* construction.

   As these examples show, the use of the *after* construction is used to present the narration (both in fictional and non-fictional contexts) as emotionally vivid, adding a dramatic element from the narrator's perspective:

(5a)    They were just **after coming up** the main road next thing they saw these legs sticking out across the road [LCIE]

(5b)    … he said to her one day 'I am very troubled **I am after making** an awful mistake' and she said 'what what are you after doing'. 'I'm **after doing** something I shouldn't have done at all' he said so he … [LCIE]

(5c)    The next day, about one o'clock, he and she were **after taking** another small refreshment of roast-beef and porter, and pushing on, as before, when they heard the same tramping behind them, only it was ten times louder. [Carleton, *Traits and Stories*]

(5d)    This was my brother Pete, newly arrived on my doorstep with a jar of synthetic estrogen and a desire from hell: he **was after telling** me that he wanted to grow a pair of tits. (Mike McCormack, *Getting It in the Head*, 1996)

## 5.3    Comparing *(ha)ve (just) + pp. V after +ing*

Another telling aspect of the current use of this construction is that, when compared with the present perfect form in the StE variety, the IrE structure features more prominently. In our corpus of 1 million words, there were only 21 occurrences of *(ha)ve just*, 71% of which were found in specific contexts such as media, lecture and workplace, and 29% in conversations involving friends/family. In one of the contemporary novels we considered for this study, *The Snapper*, only two examples of *have* + past participle were found. Although, arguably, in writing the preference for one structure or the other can often be attributed to the particular style of the author, it is evident that the recording of this structure by authors such as Joseph O'Connor, Roddy Doyle or Dermot Bolger, all of whose writing displays plenty of features of the spoken mode, indicates that the construction under investigation is certainly part of the English they hear around them.

While the StE form is available to the IrE speaker as well, there is something to say about what guides speakers in choosing different formal realisations of the same function. The 95 examples found of the *after*

construction in LCIE, in contrast with the lower frequency of *(ha)ve +
pp.*, would suggest, first of all, that IrE speakers do not perceive the IrE
form as a stigmatised feature—something that is also supported by
Hickey's *Survey of IrE Usage*, where the acceptability rate for the sentence
'She's after spilling the milk' is quite high; but we could go even further
and argue that this structure may actually constitute a sign of identity,
which sets the Irish apart from other speakers of English. In our analysis
of the use of this structure in e-mails and advertising, we found that
speakers use it to show that they are members of the same social group,
thus signalling solidarity among speaker/addresser and listener/addressee,
an effect that the StE perfect does not convey among IrE speakers.[53]
Another conclusion in relation to the use of *be + after + V-ing* in e-mails
was that speakers seemed to resort to it as a mitigator, rendering the infor-
mation to follow less face-threatening. In the message below, the *after*
construction is used as an appeal to understanding:

> **From:** xxxxxxxxx
> **Sent:** 29 August 2006 14:19
> **To:** xxxxxxxx
> **Subject:** FW: Agenda for Wednesday
> Hi Sarah,
> **I'm only after seeing** your email. I just sent on the 2 attachments re match-
> ing funding and further details on the TTAP Strategy.
> I won't be able to attend tomorrow's meeting—I'm up to eyes trying to sort
> out the access offers and details for Registration etc. Is there anything else
> you need from me at this stage?
> Aileen.

Here, the structure is used to accomplish a particular pragmatic func-
tion. The addressee's understanding for the late response is invoked by the
sender, who uses 'I'm only after seeing your message' as a mitigator at the
beginning of the email instead of the standard form, 'I've only just seen
your email'. The latter offers less immediacy and a greater degree of
formality.

# 6     Conclusions

In this study, we have looked at the use of the *after* construction in the variety of English spoken in Ireland. The preceding sections have provided an insight into some of the aspects which had hitherto not been noticed in relation to this structure. Although many of the facts revealed by the study cannot justify generalisations without further inquiry, the comparison between the literary and non-literary data confirms that this is not simply a feature of fictional discourse, used to caricature the Irish, but a characteristic element of the English used in Ireland throughout time. The fact that some IrE structures such as this have survived is significant, because it indicates that these forms have a particular communicative function. In the case of the *after* construction, it seems evident that this form contains certain nuances that cannot be expressed by means of other standard constructions. In that sense, the construction under study here needs to be maintained in order for those nuances to be expressed. The analysis of both the literary and the spoken data shows that, apart from indicating immediacy/recency, the use of this structure marks speakers' perspective in that its use displays modality, allowing speakers to incorporate their own attitude.

Our study also confirms that, as pointed out in previous research, this structure is frequently found in narrative situations. However, what all the examples classified as 'narrative device' have in common in this study is the dramatic component, whereby the *after* construction presents events as emotionally vivid in the narration.

In relation to context, our analysis of the LCIE data shows that in current spoken IrE, the *after* construction is used more frequently in certain registers (conversation between friends and family) and not others (institutional talk, workplace), where the StE form *have + pp*. features more prominently. However, the use of the IrE construction is, as a whole, more frequently used than its StE counterpart, even in contemporary written contexts.

# Appendix: Contemporary Irish Authors

| Author | Work (including year) | Total no. of occurrences of *be* + *after* + *V-ing* |
|---|---|---|
| Glenn Patterson (1961–) | *Fat Lad* (1992) | 2 |
| Dermot Bolger (1959–) | *Night Shift* (1985) | 32 |
| | *The Woman's Daughter* (1987) | |
| | *The Journey Home* (1990) | |
| | *Emily's Shoes* (1992) | |
| | *Father's Music* (1997) | |
| | *Finbar's Hotel* (1997) | |
| | *In High Germany* (1999) | |
| | *The Valparaiso Voyage* (2001) | |
| Maeve Binchy, (1940–2012) | *Ladies' Night at Finbar's Hotel* (1999) | 1 |
| Clare Boylan, (1948–2006) | | |
| Emma Donoghue, (1969–) | | |
| Anne Haverty, (1959–) | | |
| Éilis Ní Dhuibhne, (1954–) | | |
| Kate O'Riordan, (?) | | |
| Deirdre Purcell (1945–) | | |
| Joseph O'Connor (1963–) | *The Salesman* (1998) | 136 |
| | *True Believers* (1991) | |
| | *Desperadoes* (1994) | |
| | *The Secret World of the Irish Male* (1994) | |
| | *Red Roses and Petrol* (1995) | |
| | *The Irish Male at Home and Abroad* (1996) | |
| | *Inishowen* (2000) | |
| | *The Comedian* (2000) | |
| | *Star of the Sea: Farewell to Old Ireland* (2002) | |
| | *Redemption Falls* (2007) | |

(*Continued*)

**Appendix**  (Continued)

| Author | Work (including year) | Total no. of occurrences of *be + after + V-ing* |
|---|---|---|
| Colm Tóibín (1955–) | *The Heather Blazing* (1992) | 8 |
| | *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999) | |
| Mike McCormack (1965–) | *Getting It in the Head* (1996) | 2 |
| Roddy Doyle (1958–) | *The Commitments* (1988) | 55 |
| | *Brownbread* (1989) | |
| | *The Snapper* (1990) | |
| | *The Van* (1991) | |
| | *War* (1992) | |
| | *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* (1993) | |
| | *The Woman Who Walked into Doors* (1996) | |
| | *A Star Called Henry* (1999) | |
| | *Not Just for Christmas* (1999) | |
| | *Rory & Ita* (2003) | |
| | *Oh, Play that Thing* (2004) | |
| | *Paula Spencer* (2006) | |
| 15 Irish authors | *Yeats is Dead* (2002) | 6 |
| Paul Muldoon (1951–) | *New Weather* (1994) | 1 |
| Gina Moxley (1957–) | *The Dazzling Dark* (1996) | 16 |
| Jimmy Murphy (1962–) | | |
| Marina Carr (1964–) | | |
| Martin McDonagh (1971–) | *A Skull in Connemara* (1997) | 4 |
| | *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1997) | |
| Sebastian Barry (1955–) | *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998) | 8 |
| Jamie O'Neill (1961–) | *At Swim, Two Boys* (2001) | 48 |
| | *Kilbrack* (1990) | |
| Maurice Leitch (1933–) | *Poor Lazarus* (1969) | 1 |
| Patrick McCabe (1955–) | *Emerald Germs of Ireland* (2001) | 2 |
| Michael Collins (1964–) | *The Meat Eaters* (1992) | 1 |
| Niall Williams (1958–) | *Only Say the Word* (2005) | 1 |

# Notes

1. Beyond Ireland, this construction is also attested in Hebridean English, where it is a direct transfer from Scottish Gaelic; and in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Zealand and Australia, as a result of Irish immigration (see Kevin McCafferty, '"I Think that I will be after Making Love to One of Them": A Revised Account of Irish English Be after V-ing and its Irish Source', in *'Ye whom the charms of grammar please': Studies in English Language History in Honour of Leiv Egil Breivik*, eds Kari E. Haugland, Kevin McCafferty and Kristian A. Rusten [Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014], 201–2).

2. Patrick L. Henry, *An Anglo-Irish Dialect of North Roscommon: Phonology, Accidence, Syntax* (Dublin: University College, 1957); Jeffrey Kallen, 'Tense and Aspect Categories in Irish English,' *English World Wide* 10 (1989): 1–39; 'The Hiberno-English Perfect: Grammaticalisation Revisited', *Irish University Review* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 120–36; 'Sociolinguistic Variation and Methodology: After as a Dublin Variable', in *English around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, ed. Jeremy Cheshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 61–74; John Harris, 'Syntactic Variation and Dialect Divergence', *Journal of Linguistics* 20, no. 2 (September 1984): 303–27; Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English. Language in Hibernian Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 99–107; Kevin McCafferty, '"I Think that I will be"'; Patricia Ronan, 'The *After*-Perfect in Irish English', in *Dialects across Borders. Selected Papers from the 11th International Conference on Methods in Dialectology (Methods XI), Joensuu, August 2002*, eds Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, Marjatta Palander and Esa Penttilä (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 253–70; and Lukas Pietsch, 'The Irish English "After Perfect" in Context: Borrowing and Syntactic Productivity', *Arbeiten zur Mehrsprachigkeit*. Folge B, 82 (2007): 1–32.

3. Suzanne Romaine, *Bilingualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

4. James Milroy, *Regional Accents of English: Belfast* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981); and Jeffrey Kallen, 'Sociolinguistic Variation and Methodology'.

5. Jeffrey Kallen, 'Tense and Aspect Categories'; and 'Sociolinguistic Variation and Methodology'; and Raymond Hickey, 'Models for Describing Aspect in Irish English', in *The Celtic Englishes II*, ed. Hildegard Tristram (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2000), 97–116; and

*Dublin English: Evolution and Change* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 120–21.

6. Anne O'Keeffe and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'The Pragmatics of the *be + after + V-ing* Construction in Irish English', *Intercultural Pragmatic* 6, no. 4 (December 2009): 517–34.

7. John Harris, 'Syntactic Variation', 308; and James McCawley, 'Tense and Time Reference in English', in *Grammar and Meaning: Papers on Syntactic and Semantic Topics*, ed. James McCawley (London: Academic Press, 1976), 257–72.

8. David Greene ('Perfects and Perfectives in Modern Irish', *Ériu* 30 [1979], 122–41) refers to the *after* construction as PI and to the IrE perfective with past participle + object (e.g. *I have the book read*) as the PII.

9. Patrick L. Henry, *An Anglo-Irish Dialect*, 177.

10. Raymond Hickey, 'Models for Describing Aspect', 98 ff.

11. Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English*, 99.

12. Jiro Taniguchi, A *Grammatical Analysis of Artistic Representation of Irish English* (Tokyo: Shinozaki Shorin, 1972); Alan Joseph Bliss, *Spoken English in Ireland 1600–1740* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979); J. P. Sullivan, 'The Genesis of Hiberno-English: A Socio-Historical Account', Ph.D thesis (New York: Yeshiva University, 1979'; Terence P. Dolan, 'Sean O'Casey's Use of Hiberno-English', in *Irland: Gesellschaft und Kultur*, ed. D. Siegmund-Schultze (Halle-Wintenberg: Martin-Luther Universität, 1985), 108–15; Kevin McCafferty, 'William Carleton between Irish and English: Using Literary Dialect to Study Language Contact and Change', *Language and Literature* 14, no. 4 (2005): 339–62; and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, *The Use of Hiberno-English in Patrick MacGill's Early Novels: Bilingualism and Language Shift from Irish to English in County Donegal* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 2006); and *An Introduction to Irish English* (London: Equinox, 2010).

13. See Mary Hayden, and Marcus Hartog, 'The Irish Dialect of English: Its Origins and Vocabulary', *Fortnightly Review*, New series 85 (1909): 775–85 and 933–47; A. G. van Hamel, 'On Anglo-Irish Syntax', *Englische Studien* 45 (1912): 272–92; and K. E. Younge, 'Irish Idioms in English Speech', *The Gaelic Churchman* 4–6 (1922–1927): 46–428.

14. Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English*, 99. Depending on whether the copula is in the present or in the past tense (cf. Filppula's examples: […] *a house you're after passing*, and […] *he was only after getting job* [*sic*] …).

15. Patrick L. Henry, *An Anglo-Irish Dialect*, 177.
16. Francis Sadlier Stoney, *Don't Pat: A Manual of Irishisms* (Dublin: McGee William, 1885), 59–60.
17. The eighteenth-century distinction between polite and vulgar, as is well known, disparaged all popular, dialectal forms of English. As this comment illustrates, in some cases this attitude was perpetuated well into the nineteenth century (see Dick Leith, *A Social History of English* [London: Routledge, 1983] and Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981]). Amador-Moreno and McCafferty ('*[B]ut Sure It's Only a Penny After All*': Irish English Discourse Marker *Sure*', in *Transatlantic Perspectives in Late Modern English*, ed. Marina Dossena [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015], 179–98) discuss the issue of *enregisterment* (Asif Agha, 'The Social Life of Cultural Value', *Language and Communication* 23 (2003): 231–73) in the context of Irish literature. For a discussion of the linguistic portrayal of Irish characters from 1600 to 1740 see Alan Joseph Bliss, *Spoken English in Ireland*.
18. *Hiberno-English* was the term used in earlier references to the variety of English spoken in Ireland. It combines the Latin term used by the Romans to refer to the island of Ireland, *Hibernia*, and the noun *English*. Nowadays, for the sake of clarity, the term *Irish English* is preferred.
19. J. P. Sullivan, 'The Genesis of Hiberno-English', 81.
20. Mary Hayden and Marcus Hartog, *The Irish Dialect of English*, 933.
21. Patrick Joyce, *English As We Speak It in Ireland* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1910), 85.
22. A. G. van Hamel, 'On Anglo-Irish Syntax'.
23. See Terence Odlin, *Language Transfer: Cross-Linguistic Influence in Language Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Suzanne Romaine, *Bilingualism,* 69–70.
24. For further details see John Harris, 'Syntactic Variation', 319; Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English*, 101–2; Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Kevin McCafferty, '"I Think that I will be"'.
25. Whereas the form *i-ndiaidh* is favoured in the Irish of Ulster, in southern dialects the form *tar éis* is preferred. (see Loreto Todd, *The Language of Irish Literature* [Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1989], 43).
26. E.g. Jeffrey Kallen, 'The Hiberno-English Perfect'; Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English*, 102–5; and Kevin McCafferty, '"I Think that

I will be"'; "'I'll Bee After Telling Dee de Raison ..." *Be after* V-*ing* as a Future Gram in Irish English, 1601–1750', in *The Celtic Englishes II*, ed. Hildegard Tristram (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2000), 298–317; 'Innovation in Language Contact: *Be after* V-*ing* as a Future Gram in Irish English, 1670 to the Present', *Diachronica* 21, no. 1 (2004): 113–60; 'Language Contact in Early Modern Ireland: The Case of *be after* V-*ing* as a Future Gram', *English Core Linguistics: Essays in Honour of D. J. Allerton*, ed. Cornelia Tschichold (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 323–42; and 'William Carleton between Irish and English: Using Literary Dialect'.

27. Raymond Hickey, 'Models for Describing', 101; and Alan Joseph Bliss, *Spoken English in Ireland*, 299–300. Note, however, that some authors such as Canny ('Review of *Spoken English in Ireland, 1600–1740*, by Alan Bliss', *Studia Hibernica* 20 [1980]: 167–70) have been rather critical of the historical accuracy of the data presented by Bliss. Future references of the *after* construction in earlier IrE are also recorded in Ó Corráin ('On the "After Perfect" in Irish and Hiberno-English', in *The Celtic Englishes II*, ed. Hildegard Tristram [Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2000], 154–56). For a comparative study with other prepositional constructions see also Lukas Pietsch, 'The Irish English "After Perfect"'.

28. See J. O. Bartley, *Teague, Shenkin and Sawney: Being a Historical Study of the Earliest Irish, Welsh and Scottish Characters in English Plays* [Cork: Cork University Press, 1954], 39 ff.

29. Kevin McCafferty, 'I'll Bee After Telling Dee', 299.

30. Ibid.

31. Markku Filppula, *The Grammar of Irish English*, 104.

32. This distinction between *old* and *new* is based on the date of recording of each structure in literary works.

33. Jeffrey Kallen, 'The Hiberno-English Perfect'. See also Mark Fryd ('Some Remarks on 'after + -ing' in Hiberno-English', in *L'Irlande et ses langues*, ed. Jean Briahult. [Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1992], 53–62), who discusses the interpretation of *after* as a marker of conation.

34. Kevin McCafferty, 'Language Contact'; 'William Carleton'; and 'I Think that I will be'.

35. Kevin McCafferty, 'William Carleton', 355.

36. Ibid.

37. Marianne Hundt, 'Animacy, Agency and the Spread of the Progressive in Modern English', *English Language and Linguistics* 8, no. 1 (2004): 47–69.
38. See Fiona Farr, Brona Murphy and Anne O'Keeffe, 'The Limerick Corpus of Irish English: Design, Description and Application', *Teanga* 21 (2004): 25–29.
39. Michael McCarthy, *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
40. Ibid.
41. Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools 5* (Liverpool, UK: Lexical Analysis Software, 2008).
42. Raymond Hickey, *Corpus Presenter. Software for Language and Analysis* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003).
43. Barry Sloan, *The Pioneers of Anglo-Irish Fiction, 1800–1850* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1986), 173.
44. The discussion of the poetic or stylistic function of his use of IrE is beyond the scope of this paper. For a discussion of this, see Alan Joseph Bliss, 'Languages in Contact', 40–43; Declan Kiberd, *Synge and the Irish Language* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 203 ff; or Raymond Hickey, *Corpus Presenter*, 24–26.
45. Ibid.
46. The authors are grateful to Kevin McCafferty for kindly allowing us access to these data which he compiled.
47. Michael Stubbs, *Text and Corpus Analysis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 232.
48. Jeffrey Kallen, 'Tense and Aspect Categories'.
49. He compares the sentences *France has been ruled by monarchs in the past* and *\*France is after being ruled by monarchs in the past* (Ibid., 14).
50. Anne O'Keeffe and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'The Pragmatics'.
51. Ibid.
52. Jeffrey Kallen, 'Sociolinguistic Variation and Methodology'; and Eddie Williams, 'The Present Perfect in English Media Discourse in the UK', *Vigo International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3 (2006): 9–26.
53. Anne O'Keeffe and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'The Pragmatics'; and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno and Anne O'Keeffe, 'The Pragmatics of the *be + after + V-ing* Construction in Irish English: Age and Gender?' Paper presented at the 10th International Pragmatics Conference (Göteborg, Sweden, 8–13 July 2007).

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# 'I Intend to Try Some Other Part of the Worald': Evidence of Schwa-Epenthesis in the Historical Letters of Irish Emigrants

Persijn M. de Rijke

## 1     Introduction

In the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR)—a collection of over 5000 texts, most of which are Irish emigrant letters—many non-standard features can be found, including evidence of epenthesis.[1] The spelling ⟨worald⟩ *world* in the title of this paper is an example of how this feature may appear in the corpus, as is ⟨henery⟩ *Henry* in the following example:

> (1)   *I went to Mr.*
>      *John Robeson Merchant who is Joined in Merchandise*
>      *with **henery** gore of greenback*

(Patt McGowan, Saint John's, New Brunswick to "Brother Roger," 25 December 1847)

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This paper explores such traces of epenthesis in CORIECOR between 1730 and 1930, which is the time span of the corpus at the time of writing, and aims to investigate the phonological environment of schwa-epenthesis in Irish English (IrE) in a diachronic light. Below, epenthesis as it pertains to IrE will be explained along with the material that forms the basis for this investigation. In Sect. 2, the methodology and challenges are described. The results and discussion are presented in Sect. 3. I conclude by summarising my findings in Sect. 4.

## 1.1     Epenthesis in Irish English

Schwa-epenthesis is common in Irish,[2] and consequently also in IrE. While epenthesis occurs in several varieties of English, as well as in foreign-language varieties such as Punjabi English [səkuːl] *school*, and English as a second language as demonstrated by the loanword [suturaɪku] *strike* in Japanese,[3] among first-language varieties it is perhaps especially known as a feature of IrE.

According to Hickey, epenthesis occurs in IrE due to 'a prohibition on heavy clusters'.[4] The insertion of an unstressed central vowel /ə/ in a cluster of certain consonants is used to divide the word into several syllables, thereby 'easing' the pronunciation. [ˈfiləm] *film*, for instance, is heard across Ireland, and is not connected to any social or regional stereotype.[5] However, while epenthesis in /lm/, as in *film*, and to some extent /rm/ as in [ˈfarəm] *farm*, is found across the country, epenthesis in other clusters, e.g. [ˈdʌbəlɪn] 'Dublin', is most often found in vernacular varieties.[6]

It is generally agreed that schwa-epenthesis in IrE usually occurs between a liquid and a nasal consonant. Henry claims that it is found '[b] etween r, l, and m.'[7] Kallen likewise argues that IrE 'has a pattern in which a sequence of /l/ or /r/ followed by another consonant (especially a nasal) in the syllable coda will be broken up by the insertion of a [ə].'[8] According to Walshe, schwa-epenthesis occurs in environments between a plosive, liquid or nasal and a liquid or nasal consonant; usually in the clusters /bl/, /lm/, /ln/, /rl/, /rn/, /rm./, /t̪l/ and /tl/.[9]

Recent studies on present-day IrE show examples of epenthesis in /lm/, /rm/ and /rn/ as being the most common clusters. In Hickey's *Sound Atlas of Irish English*, epenthesis can be heard in the speech of informants

from e.g. Counties Kerry and Limerick (south-west) in *film* and *farm* respectively, County Carlow (south-east) in *modern* and Dublin (east; 'fashionable Dublin English' dialect) in *film*.[10] Walshe has noted several occurrences of epenthesis in films that are either set in Ireland or contain spoken IrE.[11] He lists a number of examples with epenthesis (words containing epenthesis marked in bold):

    (2) 'Oh, it'll be like that **film** *The Boys in their Hoods*.' (*Irish Jam*, 2006)
    (3) 'Where are you, you mongrel **worm**?' (*Rat*, 2000)
    (4) '**Turn** Tír na nÓg! **Turn**!' (*Into the West*, 1992)

Even though some of the actors are not Irish or speakers of IrE themselves, epenthesis is apparently still deemed a salient enough feature of IrE that it occurs frequently in the films Walshe has analysed. He notes, however, that many modern-day accent handbooks for the stage contain numerous misrepresentations, generalisations, IrE clichés and plain inaccuracies.[12] Sell has examined schwa-epenthesis in Galway, where she found epenthesis in *film* to be the most common by far, making up 77 % of the tokens. Most of the remaining tokens are for /rm/.[13]

## 1.2 Egodocuments: Voices from the Past

The term 'egodocuments' was coined in the mid-1950s by Dutch linguist Jacques Presser and encompasses documents such as diaries, personal letters, autobiographies and memoirs.[14] While Presser's main use of such material was for historical research, the fact that many egodocuments were never intended for wide circulation or print and therefore often contain non-standard writing makes them invaluable for linguists too.

In light of emigration, letters played a particularly important role. They provided a link between the emigrant and those who stayed at home, constituting a channel through which the parties could keep in touch and exchange information on births, marriages and deaths, the status of crops and business and so on. Sometimes, the high emotional value placed on such correspondence has aided its preservation by family members. Still, the number of letters available to researchers today shows that only a fraction of emigrant letters survive. This raises the question of

representativeness. How representative can language use be in these letters if we only have access to a small percentage of the written material? Helbich and Kamphoefner suggest that around a quarter of the total amount of adult immigrants never wrote letters.[15] In their study on German emigrant letters they conclude that:

> every letter-writer is representative or unrepresentative in so many different ways by age, place of origin, social background, education, occupation, financial circumstances, residence, personality, marital and family status, religion, politics and so on that the issue of representation depends heavily on what aspect is being researched.[16]

The usefulness of personal letters for linguistic research is well-documented.[17] The occurrence of vernacular features and regional speech patterns can be used to diachronically trace language variation and change. Closeness to speech (or orality) is often easily observable in letters, especially when the author is uneducated, semi-literate or unaccustomed to putting words on paper. Elliott, Gerber and Sinke describe the letter-writing of such people as 'an exercise that taxed their abilities to the limit.'[18]

Montgomery points to a lack of punctuation or sectioning and unpredictable capitalisation in letters as evidence for approximation to speech.[19] These, he argues, make it difficult to discern 'sentence boundaries', which tells us that the authors did not rely on taught orthographical conventions but on oral conventions. Further proof of this is the use of formulaic expressions (e.g. 'I remain your humble servant' in letter closings) with variation in spelling, suggesting that the author relies more on their aural rather than visual recollection of such phrases. Since the eleventh century, those well versed in the art of letter-writing have advised people to use their own speech style as a model for writing, as the letter was seen as a 'substitute for speech made necessary by separation'.[20] Examples of this idea are frequently found in letters, as shown in example (5), below, from a study on the composition of Irish emigrant letters by Fitzpatrick:

(5)  *I fancy I am **speaking to you verbaly** while I am writing this scroll to you.* (Michael Normile, No 11h)[21]

Another indicator of orality is the repetition of information, similar to what happens in informal conversation, as seen in example (6), from CORIECOR, below:

> (6) *Philip I want to know how you and*
> *your Family is getting along and what*
> *family you have and how brother*
> *Dan and family is and where he is and*
> *what he is doeing and how Sarah*
> *and her family is and how Mary and*
> *her family is and how Eliza and her*
> *family is and if you ever get any*
> *word from Agness*

(John Gorman, Newgarden, Indiana to Philip Gorman, 6 January 1866).

Further examples of orality include unfinished or grammatically awkward sentences, discourse features (e.g. discourse markers, vocatives, interjections etc.), and, of course, phonetic or phonemic representation in spelling. Fairman claims that such spellings by inexperienced writers are often the result of 'vaguely remembered "Standard" spelling systems' mixed with a 'phonemic spelling inclination' resulting from: (a) phonemic drills at the time of schooling (e.g. *do*, *go*, *so*); and (b) because it is easier to remember phonemic spelling (e.g. ⟨enuff⟩) than etymological spelling.[22] Such cases are frequently found in CORIECOR.[23]

## 1.3    CORIECOR: Discourse across the Oceans

The CORIECOR corpus contains approximately 6500 personal letters (4 m words). Of these, 4800 come from the Irish Emigration Database (IED) while 1694 were added in 2013 from various other collections (permission for 1 m words is still pending). Ireland underwent a language shift from largely Irish-speaking to largely English-speaking during the centuries covered by CORIECOR. The letters date from the late 1600s to 1940, though most are from the mid-1800s and onward, especially due to mass emigration during this time. Also, on the whole, levels of literacy rose during the periods of migration, especially for women

emigrants.[24] In the CORIECOR corpus, there is good coverage for 1761–1910, with at least 20,000 words per decade (see Fig. 1 below). Other relevant collections, published or unpublished, will be used to fill gaps in the corpus. Ideally, CORIECOR will have at least 200,000 words per sub-period.[25]

The letters contain communication between first-generation Irish emigrants (to e.g. USA, Canada, Argentina and Australia) and family members, friends, associates and so on (in Ireland and abroad). Letter writers include both men and women from all walks of life, although the majority are men and the writers are mostly from what we today would describe as members of the middle and working classes. Geographically, many parts of Ireland are represented in the corpus, but the majority of letters come from the north and north-east. The main reason for this is that a substantial part of the corpus comes from the Irish Emigration Database (IED), which initially was focused on the province of Ulster.[26]
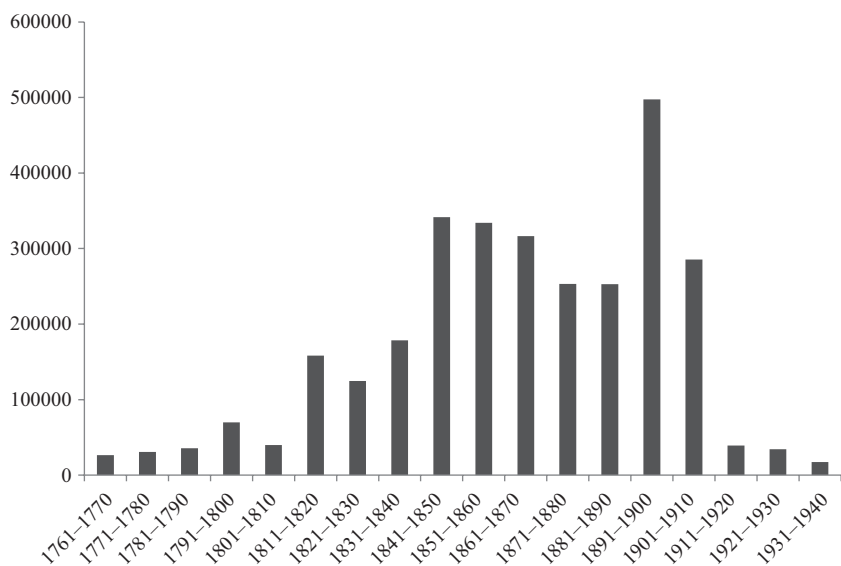


**Fig. 1**   Words (n) in CORIECOR per decade

## 2     Methodology

At the time of data collection for this paper, CORIECOR is still being compiled and thus no dedicated user interface, phonological annotations or integrated search functions exist as of yet. Locating non-standard spellings in a 4 million-word corpus is therefore no straightforward task. Fortunately, material from the IED makes up a substantial part of the corpus, and here any deviation from standard spelling, as well as abbreviations and torn, smudged or otherwise unreadable words are followed by squared brackets containing a suggestion by the transcriber of the word intended by the author:

> (7)  *I did not intend writeing [writing?] you until I*
>      *had Recd [Received?] the Box But as Peggey [Peggy?] is going*
>      *home takes the opportunity of Writeing [Writing?] you a fiew*
>      *[few?] lines.*

(E. Robinson, Liverpool, to S. Weir, Dungannon, 27 October 1797)

While it would be possible to develop a script to search for bracketed corrections, the nature of phonetic representation necessitated manual searches to collect relevant features. Firstly, a non-standard spelling was sometimes found to have been overlooked or misinterpreted by a transcriber, especially in later additions to the corpus where transcription methods have obviously differed from earlier collections, so that often no standard spellings have been added at all. Secondly, an added difficulty is that there have been a number of different transcribers for the IED material, who might have been working with differing methodologies. Lastly, some 'misspellings' can be homographs of other, existing words (e.g. ⟨the⟩ for *they*) and would therefore not have registered as a spelling mistake. In conclusion, a manual read-through was favoured over an automated script-search.

In determining the place of origin of a letter writer, I have worked from the assumption that (in the case of emigrants) a writer comes from the same place as their nuclear family. Thus, if an Irish emigrant living in Canada writes to his or her parents in County Tyrone, I assume the letter writer to come from that county as well. For all other

relations—extended family, friends, business partners and so on—the place of origin will be unknown unless there are clues in the letter itself, which was rare in such cases. Sender occupation and religion have been deduced from information given in the letters. Unfortunately, the letters were not usually written with future linguistic studies in mind, so that in many cases origin, occupation and religion remain unknown.

A few letters were disqualified after closer scrutiny, even though they contained traces of epenthesis. Two letters were too well-written, so that epenthesis was unlikely and more probably a simple spelling mistake. One letter appeared to have been written by a Scotsman and, as this study is concerned with native IrE speakers, was discarded. In addition, one other letter turned out to be a non-autograph, with no clue as to the scribe's nationality, and was thus also removed from the results. Lastly, there were a few cases of 'obvious intent', e.g. ⟨alarum⟩ where ⟨u⟩ could have been evidence of epenthesis were it not for the writer's obvious use of it in a poetic sense.

## 2.1    Challenges

The greatest difficulty in collecting the data for this study was determining whether a non-standard spelling indeed showed evidence of schwa-epenthesis. The clearest indicator of epenthesis in writing is the insertion of a vowel, most frequently an ⟨e⟩, between two consonants. In words such as ⟨worald⟩ *world* or ⟨currels⟩ *curls* this is relatively straightforward, though it is always worth remembering that any non-standard spelling may simply have been a slip of the pen and not show phonetic representation at all.[27] In some cases, identifying epenthesis can be a challenge. Consider for instance ⟨whilest⟩ *whilst* and ⟨dowery⟩ *dowry* (both in David Anderson, Lawrenceville, to 'Dear Sir', 9 February 1854). Either could be a candidate for evidence of epenthesis, but because *whilst* is an alternate form of *while*, the writer may have assumed *whilst* to be spelled ⟨while⟩+⟨st⟩. In the case of ⟨dowery⟩, one could certainly argue that the root ᴅᴏᴡ sounds like it might be ortho-graphically represented as ⟨dowe⟩, but then words like e.g. *how* or *cow* do not. Therefore, in this example, I counted ⟨dowery⟩ as showing

epenthesis, and ⟨whilest⟩ not. There have been a number of cases where this approach has been used.

It will be apparent that determining which words show epenthesis and which do not is a matter of reasoning on the part of the observer. I hold no illusions that my interpretations will appear sound to everyone. With so many different writers and so many letters with non-standard spellings (I estimate that approximately one-third of the documents in CORIECOR contain spelling-variation that renders pronunciation) an accurate mechanism for determining the validity of all supposed cases of phonetic variation might be impossible.

A different challenge was encountered with the second most common word with an indication of epenthesis. The name *Henry* is sometimes found with the spelling ⟨Hennery⟩ or variations thereof, indicating epenthesis. However, *Hennery* as first name or surname co-exists alongside *Henry*, though it is less common. This might therefore also be the case in the corpus whenever a spelling such as ⟨Hennery⟩, ⟨Henery⟩ or similar is encountered. Historically, *Hennery* might itself be a result of phonetic spelling showing epenthesis, although it could also be a shortened form of e.g. *McEnery* or *McInerney*, just as the surname *Henry* often is a shortened form of *McHenry* or *Fitzhenry* in Ireland. Nevertheless, due to the presence of other non-standard spellings in the letter, spelling-variation in the use of *Henry* itself (see example [8], below) or other evidence of orality, ⟨Hennery⟩ was found to show epenthesis in all cases. In other words, there was no evidence of the name *Hennery* in the corpus; only of epenthesis-bearing *Henry*.

> (8) *Dear **Henry** my Father had an opportunity of Seeing Alexander on*
> *Thirsday and he asked him if*
> *he would go down to See you on Tuesday* […]
> *Dear **Henery** I was informed that they have made there*
> *way into the house and has taken some of the articles out I intend to get*
> *the doore Secured untill you come home.*

(Jane Johnston, Antrim to Henry Johnson, Carrickfergus Jail, 26 May 1848)

Another problem concerned biographical data on the letter writers. It is often difficult to determine, for example, age or occupation, as one is dependent on this being mentioned in the letter itself, unless this information has been passed down to descendants and recorded for genealogical purposes. Sometimes such information is stated directly (see example [9]), but often it is not possible to determine.

> (9)  *am in my 68 year, since March*
>      *last, have only been prevented from preaching three*
>      *different sabbaths by sickness, since I came to this*
>      *country, & thank Providence my Constitution & health are*
>      *good. I preach twice every sabbath, attend my Sabbath*
>      *School, & am quite competent, both in mind & body, to*
>      *perform all my ministeral duties.*

(Robert Boyd, Canada West to Robert Young, Ballymena, 10 July 1858)

Some letters also relate that many newly arrived immigrants would take any available work and only later secure something within their chosen profession or skill set, which further complicates the matter as this may place them in a different social stratum to their original one. Most writers seem to have been involved in farm work, but it is usually not clear whether they worked as a farmhand or owned a farm themselves—either would place them on a different rung of the social ladder.

Religious affiliation is unfortunately even harder to determine than occupation. Many letters, especially those written by semi-literate authors, often contain highly formulaic language which may contain religious elements, placing the reader and/or writer under divine protection.[28] Only rarely is anything written which unequivocally places the writer in the Protestant or Catholic camp. Sometimes a comment such as example (10) below sheds light on the matter, but these are too infrequent to say much about the religious make-up of those letter writers showing evidence of epenthesis.

> (10) *you will think it*
>      *strange when I inform you that I have not been to*
>      *Church in four years I mean a Presbyterian Church*

(Mary Blair, Georgia to Mrs Jane Allen, Belfast, 25 September 1847)

One might assume most writers in the earliest parts of CORIECOR to be Protestant, given that literacy in Protestant communities was much more widespread than in Catholic communities in Ireland at this time. For the eighteenth century at least, Amador-Moreno and McCafferty note that 'a great proportion of the pioneering migrants to America were Ulster Presbyterians with relatively high levels of literacy', although for the following century this was more true for Catholics.[29] Assigning labels based on religion to many of the authors will thus perhaps never be possible.

# 3    Epenthesis in CORIECOR

In CORIECOR, evidence of schwa-epenthesis is often found with ⟨e⟩ for the epenthesis-bearing syllable, though other vowel graphemes also occur, such as ⟨Brokylin⟩ *Brooklyn*, ⟨Chrishames⟩ *Christmas* and ⟨helamis man⟩ *helmsman* (note, two tokens). A total of 254 words show evidence of schwa-epenthesis. These come from 167 letters written by 125 different individuals. Figure 2 shows the correlation between occurrences of epenthesis and the number of words in the corpus per decade (note the different scales of the y-axes).

The rate of epenthesis largely follows the word count of the corpus. In most cases, there is one token per document. Seventy-one per cent of letters with epenthesis have only one single token, whereas only 3 % have more than three tokens. The two peaks in Fig. 2 are at least partly caused by multiple tokens originating from the same individual. This is especially the case for 1891–1900, where 24 of 38 letters with epenthesis come from John J. Smyth's hand. Letters from this family make up a substantial part of the corpus in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. Conversely, it is also possible that the drop in the rate of epenthesis in 1811–1830, 1861–1880 and from 1901 onwards shows that letters from these periods are less vernacular, while in 1831–1860 and 1881–1900 they are more vernacular.

Table 1 presents the five most common words with evidence of epenthesis, and all their spelling variations in CORIECOR.[30] Words with plural and genitive -*s* are included.
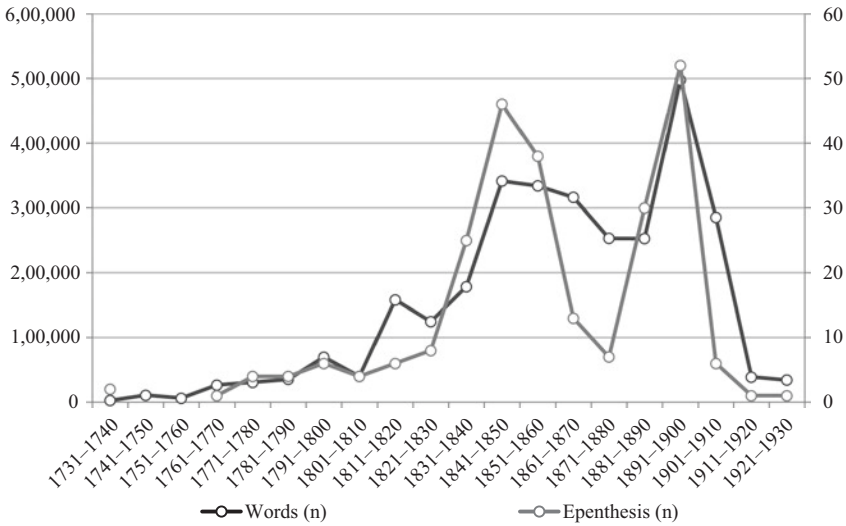
**Fig. 2** Words (n; left y-axis) and epenthesis (n; right y-axis) in CORIECOR

**Table 1** The five most common words with epenthesis (n) and their spelling variations (n) in CORIECOR

|  | (n) | Spelling variations |
|---|---|---|
| *Country(– ies)* | 73 | ⟨contary⟩ (1); ⟨contery⟩ (25); ⟨conterys⟩ (2); ⟨contrary⟩ (2); ⟨countary⟩ (4); ⟨country⟩ (31); ⟨counterys⟩ (1); ⟨cuntery⟩ (7) |
| *Henry(–'s)* | 54 | ⟨Henarey⟩ (2); ⟨Henary⟩ (4); ⟨Hendery⟩ (2); ⟨Henerey⟩ (2); ⟨Henerry⟩ (1); ⟨Henery⟩ (33); ⟨Henerys⟩ (3); ⟨Henery's⟩ (2); ⟨Hennary⟩ (1); ⟨Hennery⟩ (3); ⟨Hennerys⟩ (1) |
| *Middling* | 7 | ⟨middeling⟩ (6); ⟨mideling⟩ (1) |
| *Welfare* | 6 | ⟨welefare⟩ (6) |
| *Comrade* | 5 | ⟨comerad⟩ (1); ⟨commarade⟩ (1); ⟨comorade⟩ (3) |

Note the reinforcement of epenthesis with a preceding /d/ in ⟨Hendery⟩, and the intruding /r/ in ⟨contrary⟩.

It is immediately apparent that phonetic representations of epenthesis in *country* (73 tokens) and *Henry* (54 tokens) dwarf all other cases—they are responsible for exactly 50% of the tokens in this study. Due to the extraordinary number of occurrences of epenthesis in *country* and *Henry*,

a search for these words without epenthesis was conducted. For *country*, alternative spellings, such as ⟨contry⟩, were included (Table 2).

With 7%, the percentage of epenthesis for *Henry* is higher than for *country* with only 2%. One contributing factor might be (as mentioned in Sect. 2.1) that some of these might actually be the *Hennery* variant of the name. More likely, perhaps, is that the pronunciation of a personal name is more predisposed to be reflected in semi-literate people's writing because it is perceived as somehow 'different' than other words: who can argue with what someone calls him- or herself? This raises the question: how would a more literate person spell a name pronounced as [ˈhɛnəɹi]? Still, example (8) (see Sect. 2.1) shows that semi-literate writers often varied the spelling of similar words, even personal names, in the same passage of text due to uncertainty.

It is also improbable that /r/s being more sonorous than other consonants is the reason that *country* and *Henry* are predisposed to epenthesis, as /r/ is found in many other epenthesis-bearing clusters, but these only occur once or twice in the corpus (see Table 3, below).[31] We can thus rule out a particular realisation of /r/ as a reason for the high number of epen-

**Table 2** Distribution of epenthesis in *country* and *Henry*

|  | No epenthesis (n) | Epenthesis (n) | Total (n) | % epenthesis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Country* | 4223 | 73 | 4296 | 2% |
| *Henry* | 697 | 54 | 751 | 7% |

**Table 3** Epenthesis (n) in CORIECOR by cluster in which it occurs. Expected clusters for IrE in bold

| Cluster | (n) | Cluster | (n) | Cluster | (n) | Cluster | (n) | Cluster | (n) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /tr/ | 90 | /tn/ | 4 | /kn/ | 2 | /br/ | 1 | /nm/ | 1 |
| /nr/ | 54 | /ðr/ | 3 | /lr/ | 2 | /ds/ | 1 | /rt./ | 1 |
| **/rl/** | **9** | /fl/ | 3 | /ls/ | 2 | /kr/ | 1 | /rv/ | 1 |
| /dl/ | 8 | /gr/ | 3 | /ns/ | 2 | /ld/ | 1 | /sk/ | 1 |
| /wn/ | 8 | /kl/ | 3 | /ŋr/ | 2 | /ll/ | 1 | /sl/ | 1 |
| /dr/ | 7 | /ŋs/ | 3 | /pl/ | 2 | **/lm/** | **1** | /ʃm/ | 1 |
| /lf/ | 6 | **/tl/** | **3** | /pt./ | 2 | **/ln/** | **1** | /tm/ | 1 |
| /pr/ | 6 | /wr/ | 3 | **/rn/** | **2** | /mz/ | 1 | /vl/ | 1 |
| /mr/ | 5 | /gn/ | 2 | /rs/ | 2 | /nd/ | 1 | /vr/ | 1 |

thesis tokens in *country* and *Henry* as, if this were the case, other epenthesis-bearing clusters with /r/ as the second element should have been present in much higher numbers.

In addition to *country* and *Henry*, a corpus search for *film* was also conducted. *Film* with epenthesis did not show up in the corpus (which was to be expected), but the regularity with which this word is pronounced with epenthesis in present-day IrE warranted closer investigation.[32] The likelihood of this particular word being present in a corpus largely predating the invention of modern motion pictures was slim, although it may still have been used in the sense of 'layer' or 'coating'. Not a single occurrence of *film* was, however, found in CORIECOR. In fact, only one token of epenthesis in /lm/ was found: ⟨helamis man⟩ *helmsman*. There are eight other occurrences of *helm* in the corpus, none with epenthesis. The first name *Colm* (sometimes spelt *Colum* or *Columb*) is also often heard with epenthesis today, as evident from the alternative spellings. But this name was not found in CORIECOR either.

## 3.1   Clusters and Environments

Epenthesis usually occurs between a liquid and a nasal in IrE, but can more generously be said to occur in the phonological clusters /bl/, /lm/, /ln/, /rl/, /rn/, /rm./, /t̠l/ and /tl/ (see Sect. 1.1). Only five of these −/rl/, /tl/, /rn/, /lm/ and /ln/, with a total of 16 tokens—were found with epenthesis in the corpus. Table 3 shows the clusters which contain epenthesis.

Over half of the total tokens were found in the clusters /tr/ and /nr/. Seventy-three of the 90 tokens for /tr/ are for *country* while all 54 tokens for /nr/ are for *Henry*. One of the most frequently quoted examples of epenthesis in IrE is [ˈfarəm] *farm*. This has not been found in CORIECOR, in spite of the words *farm*, *farmhouse* or *farmland* (with various forms and spellings) occurring 931 times. In fact, the cluster /rm/ with epenthesis was not found at all in CORIECOR.

It is interesting that the expected present-day IrE clusters are so sparsely represented. If we remove *country* and *Henry* from the equation, /nr/ is not present at all while /tr/ only occurs 17 times. This is still twice as

much as the next most frequent cluster, /rl/, which *is* still often found in IrE (in e.g. [ˈɡɛrəl] *girl*). A few of the cases of /tr/ may be the result of the writer thinking that there should be an ⟨e⟩ in such positions in English, such as in ⟨illustrated⟩ *illustrated*, and thus perhaps not evidence of epenthesis after all, but this is impossible to judge except in cases where the rest of the letter is so well-written that one token of possible epenthesis is more likely to be a slip of the pen. This may also be the case for /rl/, which we find in words such as ⟨dearely⟩ *dearly* and ⟨nearily⟩ *nearly*. Again: are these spelling mistakes or do they show rendering of pronunciation?

The cluster /wn/ presents an interesting case. Maclagan and Gordon have shown that a disyllabic variant of past participles ending in *-own*, [oʊən], exists in New Zealand English.[33] This exists in all nine /oʊ + n/ past participles: *blown*, *flown*, *grown*, *known*, *mown*, *sewn*, *shown*, *sown* and *thrown*. They trace this back to at least the 1940s.[34] Epenthesis in /wn/ occurs eight times in CORIECOR, six times in words with *-own* (though only three times in past participles): ⟨growen⟩ *grown*, ⟨knowen⟩ *known*, ⟨nowen⟩ *known*, ⟨owener⟩ *owner*, ⟨oweners⟩ *owners* and ⟨owens⟩ *owns*. The earliest of these dates from 1869.

Even though epenthesis was only sparsely represented in the usual (present-day) phonological clusters for IrE, it did feature more extensively in the expected phonetic *environments*, i.e. between a plosive, liquid or nasal, and a liquid or nasal consonant (see Sect. 1.1), in which case the possible phonetic environments necessarily must be: plosive_liquid, nasal_liquid, liquid_liquid, plosive_nasal, liquid_nasal and nasal_nasal. These environments, and the occurrence of epenthesis in them, are presented in Fig. 3.[35]

Most of the plosive_liquid (122 tokens) and nasal_liquid (61 tokens) tokens come from *country* and *Henry*, respectively, but are also found in e.g. ⟨Atalantic⟩ *Atlantic* or ⟨centeral⟩ *central* and ⟨comorade⟩ *comrade* or ⟨angery⟩ *angry*. Examples from the remaining four environments liquid_liquid (12 tokens), plosive_nasal (9 tokens), liquid_nasal (4 tokens) and nasal_nasal (1 token) are ⟨cavilary⟩ *cavalry*, ⟨parteners⟩ *partners*, ⟨taveren⟩ *tavern* and ⟨confiniment⟩ *confinement*, respectively.[36] Surprisingly, 45 tokens (18 %), grouped under 'other', fall outside the
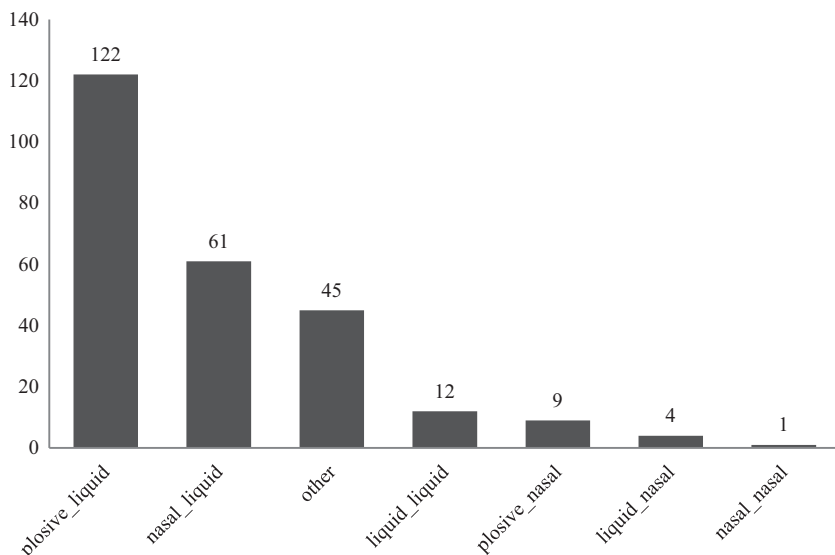
**Fig. 3** Distribution of epenthesis (n) in expected environments for IrE

expected phonetic environments altogether. These environments are given in more detail in Fig. 4.

When compared to the last four bars in Fig. 3, the range of tokens of epenthesis in unexpected environments is not very different. Overall, nine of the phonetic environments occur infrequently (fewer than four), while six occur frequently (between six and twelve tokens). The two groups that stand out are of course plosive_liquid (122 tokens) and nasal_liquid (61 tokens) which occur very frequently. But *country* (73 tokens) and *Henry* (54 tokens) account for 60 and 89 % of these, respectively. If, as in the discussion of Table 2, we remove these words from the data, we are left with 49 tokens of plosive_liquid and 7 tokens of nasal_ liquid. The latter is well within the range of frequently occurring environments. Plosive_liquid is, then, the odd one out as, even without *country* tokens, it is four times more likely to contain schwa-epenthesis than the next most frequent environment, liquid_liquid.

According to Sell, epenthesis cannot be inserted before a plosive in IrE.[37] Fig. 4 shows, however, six occurrences of schwa-epenthesis
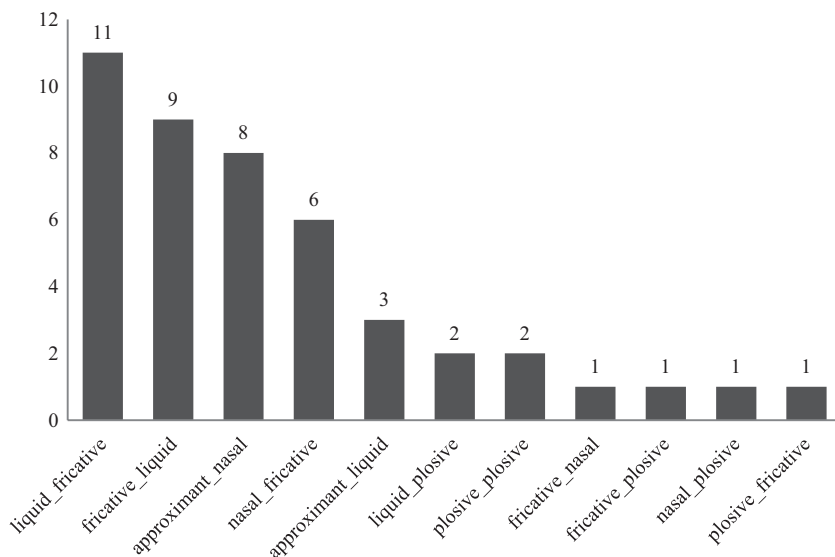
**Fig. 4** Distribution of epenthesis (n) in unexpected environments for IrE

before a plosive in words such as ⟨capitin⟩ *captain*, ⟨eleder⟩ *elder* and ⟨properity⟩ *property*.

Is there a diachronic development of epenthesis-bearing environments? Figure 5 shows the eight most frequently occurring phonetic environments with epenthesis in CORIECOR (including numbers for *country* and *Henry*), for both expected (plosive_liquid, nasal_liquid, liquid_liquid and plosive nasal; solid line) and unexpected environments (liquid_fricative, fricative_liquid, approximant_nasal and nasal_fricative; dotted line) over time.

Epenthesis is more frequent in parts of the corpus with high word counts (mid- and late nineteenth century), which are also the parts where epenthesis in less frequent environments occurs. Both make sense in that a high word count naturally heightens the chance of this feature appearing, especially in those environments that are rarer.

Most tokens in Figure 5 occur too infrequently (leaving large gaps) and in too small amounts to say much about any development. Again, epenthesis in plosive_liquid and nasal_liquid environments gives the clearest
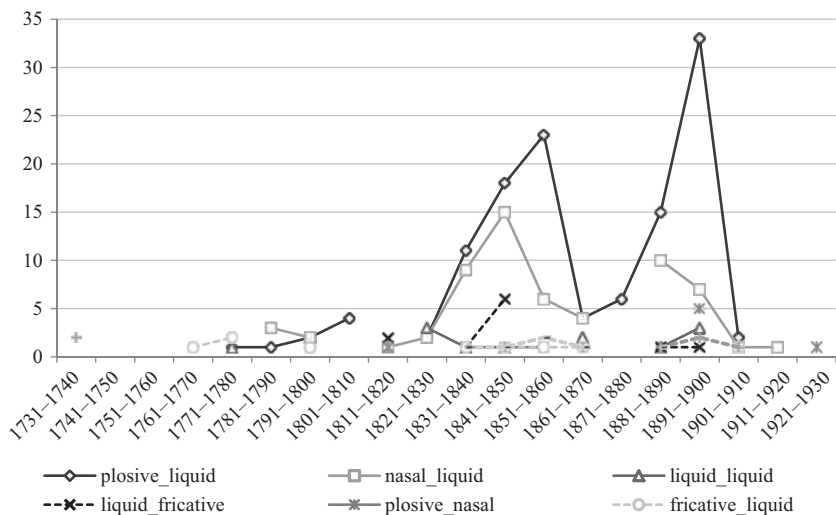
**Fig. 5** Eight most common environments with epenthesis (n) over time. Unexpected environments with dotted line

picture. But, as these instances occur in line with the overall word count per decade, the only observation we can make is that they are regular candidates for epenthesis throughout CORIECOR.

## 3.2     Geographical and Social Factors

Many observations about the letter writers with evidence of epenthesis must remain tentative for the time being, as it is not possible to compare the background information of the writers to the rest of the corpus at this time. Only when CORIECOR is completed and the social factors (gender, occupation, geographical origin etc.) of all writers are known, can more definite observations about the occurrence of epenthesis be made. In the meantime, I will present the geographical and social-background information of the letter writers relevant to this study.

The geographical distribution of tokens is shown in Fig. 6.

Not unexpectedly, given the northern bias of CORIECOR, most tokens are from Ulster. Only six cases of epenthesis come from locations outside of Ulster. Forty-six tokens are of unknown origin. For County

Unknown
**46**

Donegal

(London)Derry
**34**

Antrim
**38**

Tyrone
**55**

Belfast
**6**

ULSTER

Fermnanagh
**5**

Armagh
**22**

Down
**33**

Sligo
**1**

Leitrim    Cavan

Monaghan
**9**

Mayo

Roscommon    Longford

Louth

CONNACHT

Meath

Dublin
**2**

Galway

Westmeath

Offaly

Dublin

Kildare

LEINSTER    Wicklow

Clare

Laois

Carlow
**1**

Tipperary

Kilkenny
**2**

Limerick

Wexford

Kerry

MUNSTER

Waterford

Cork

**Fig. 6**    Geographical distribution of epenthesis (n) in Ireland

Tyrone, 47 out of 55 tokens come from members of the Smyth family, from letters written between 1891 and 1910. Tokens from the cities of Dublin and Belfast have been given separately from those of their county as they are the only major urban areas for the time covered.

Epenthesis occurs nearly exclusively in letters from rural areas, especially County Tyrone with 55 tokens (though mostly from one family) and rural counties Antrim, Down and (London)Derry with figures in the thirties. None were found from counties Donegal and Cavan, and only a handful from Fermanagh. Based on the data, epenthesis seems to be a largely north-eastern, or Mid-Ulster, phenomenon, which is not surprising given that most of the data comes from these areas and that schwa-epenthesis is a widespread feature of IrE.

As mentioned in Sect. 1.3, most letter writers in CORIECOR are men. This is reflected in the results as well (see Table 4).

Those categorised under 'unknown' are for letters which have been co-authored by a man and a woman (i.e. signed by two persons) or where a letter is only signed with an initial, and where it is unclear from the content whether it was a man or a woman who did the actual writing. While determining gender was straightforward, occupation proved to be more challenging, as evidenced by the high numbers of unknown occupations in Tables 5 and 6, below.

The time frame of CORIECOR encompasses the development of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the middle class. Given the social make-up of the corpus (mainly the middle-to-lower end of society) it will be interesting to present the tokens of epenthesis according to occupation, or at least social rank. The challenge is then to apply a single model of social class stratification. The earliest letter relevant to this study (1736) was written when there was no real middle class to speak of yet and the invention of the spinning jenny was decades away; the last letter (1930) was written in an era that saw both the Great Depression and the first

**Table 4** Epenthesis (n) in CORIECOR by gender

|         | Epenthesis (n) | Epenthesis (%) |
|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Male    | 211            | 83%            |
| Female  | 38             | 15%            |
| Unknown | 5              | 2%             |
| Total   | 254            | 100%           |

**Table 5** Social rank or occupation of letter writers with epenthesis

|  | Male (*n*) | Female (*n*) |
|---|---|---|
| Gentry | 1 | 0 |
| Clergy | 1 | 0 |
| Ship's captain | 2 | 0 |
| Professions | 3 | 0 |
| Merchants | 4 | 1 |
| Farmers | 27 | 6 |
| Clerks/shop assistants | 9 | 0 |
| Craftsmen | 8 | 0 |
| Manual workers | 7 | 0 |
| Servants | 1 | 1 |
| Unknown | 31 | 18 |
| Total | 94 | 26 |

**Table 6** Epenthesis (n) in CORIECOR by social rank

|  | Male (*n*) | Male (%) | Female (*n*) | Female (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gentry | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clergy | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ship's captain | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Professions | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Merchants | 17 | 8 | 2 | 5 |
| Farmers | 83 | 40 | 10 | 26 |
| Clerks/shop assistants | 15 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Craftsmen | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Manual workers | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Servants | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Unknown | 69 | 32 | 25 | 66 |
| Total | 211 | 100 | 38 | 100 |

intercontinental commercial airline flights. A further difficulty is which society to use as a basis—new country of residence or Ireland? Instead of a lower-/middle-/upper-class division, which would feel unnatural for part of the corpus, I will here use a model adapted from the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) whose models are for Tudor and Stuart England, while the CEEC extension, CEECE, goes up to 1800, overlapping with CORIECOR.[38] Thus, even though English society cannot be directly compared to Irish society, the CEEC(E) model with some additions will at least give some idea of the social ranks of the letter writers relevant to this study.

CEEC's upper two ranks *royalty* and *nobility* have been left out as they do not apply for the letters relevant to this study, even though a few lords are present in other parts of CORIECOR. The lowest rank, *other non-gentry*, has been further subdivided into *farmers*, *clerks/shop assistants*, *craftsmen*, *manual workers* and *servants* to better reflect eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society and because most of the authors belong to the lower part of the spectrum. The 10 levels (excluding *unknown*) more than comply with Labov's observation that at least three or four social class divisions are preferable for sociolinguistic research, although the model is, strictly speaking, concerned with social rank, not class.[39]

Ideally, *farmers* would be further subdivided into e.g. *proprietors*, *tenants/subtenants* and *farm labourers*, but in nearly all cases it is not known at what level the writer was involved in agriculture. Farmers of any kind have been grouped together while farm labourers are filed under *manual workers*. The *unknown* class accounts for the high number of letters that simply provide no clue as to the profession of their author. Many women fall into this category as their social rank is usually derived from their husband or father (in compliance with the standards of the time) and this is not always given in their writings.

It is important to be aware that these are the occupations the writers had at the time of writing the letters in question. Multiple letters from the same individual sometimes reveal a change of occupation, and sometimes of social class. This was, as far as I am aware, not the case for the letter writers who provide the data for this study.

Table 5 presents the occupation of letter writers with evidence of epenthesis. Note that the total of male and female letter writers (120) is lower than the total of individuals as given in Sect. 3 (125) because for five letter writers, gender is unknown.

For most female letter writers, it is difficult to determine social rank, as this is seldom evident from the letters. Hence, most female writers fall under the *unknown* category. Among the male letter writers (disregarding those with unknown occupations), farmer was the most common vocation, followed by clerk or shop assistant (including e.g. barman), craftsman (e.g. mould-maker) and manual worker (e.g. prospector).

The amount of epenthesis by social rank is given in Table 6. Note that the total for males and females combined in Table 6 (211 + 38 = 249) is

Table 7 Epenthesis (n) in CORIECOR by religion

| | Epenthesis (*n*) | Epenthesis (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Protestant | 78 | 31 |
| Catholic | 1 | 0 |
| Unknown | 175 | 69 |
| Total | 254 | 100 |

lower than the total tokens of epenthesis (254) because, again, tokens from writers of unknown gender (5) have been left out (see Table 4).

If we look at the number of tokens, we see that epenthesis occurs the most in letters written by farmers. Even though most of the letter writers were farmers, the number of tokens is still higher here compared to the other occupations. For both genders, merchants (hereunder also traders and businessmen) provided the second-highest number of tokens, closely followed by male clerks and shop assistants. Again, most female tokens come from those with unknown occupations. For male writers, this figure is lower than that of farmers. In other words, farmers produced more epenthesis per letter than those with unknown occupations even though the latter outnumber the former in terms of individuals.

The distribution of epenthesis by religious affiliation of letter writers is presented in Table 7.

The observation that most literate Irish emigrants in the eighteenth century were Protestants (see Sect. 2.1) is not necessarily reflected in the results as, by far, most of the material comes from the nineteenth century. Only one letter writer was found to be Catholic, although it is possible that there are many more considering the high number of writers for whom we do not know whether they were Protestants or Catholics.

# 4    Conclusions

The current view of schwa-epenthesis in IrE has it occurring frequently and across the island in words such as *farm*, *Colm* and, especially, *film*. The accepted consonant clusters in which it appears regularly are /lm/ and /rm/, or between a liquid and nasal consonant, sometimes with additional clusters given. Interestingly, epenthesis was found only sparingly in

the clusters /lm/ and /rm/ in Irish emigrant letters from between 1730 and 1930. It was, however, found to a large extent in other, though not unusual, consonant clusters (between a plosive, liquid or nasal, and a liquid or nasal consonant), as well as, to a lesser extent, in completely unexpected phonetic environments.

It would appear that schwa-epenthesis occurred in a greater range of phonetic environments in earlier IrE than it does today. Based on this study, it seems that it has become rarer, or at least restricted to liquid_nasal environments (e.g. *film* and *farm*). The fact that no epenthesis was found in *farm* (despite 931 occurrences of *farm*, *farmhouse* etc. in CORIECOR) in a corpus where farmers are heavily represented, or even in the cluster /rm/, suggests that this might be a newer development, though given the wealth of different clusters in which epenthesis was found to appear (45 in total), this seems unlikely.

*Country* and *Henry* seem to have been especially prone to schwa-insertion in the past, occurring much more frequently than any other words with epenthesis. *Country* does occur quite a lot in the corpus, as one might expect from emigrant letters describing a new country; and *Henry* is a common name in English. Still, the rate with which epenthesis in *country* and *Henry* occurs can perhaps be compared to its present-day occurrence in *film* and *farm*, respectively.

Information about the social and geographical situation of the letter writers is still limited due to the unfinished state of CORIECOR. Observations about the letters relevant to this study can therefore not yet be compared with the overall make-up of the corpus. Until then, this study shows epenthesis to be particularly prominent in the north-east of Ulster, especially amongst farmers. Because of the small amount of data, nothing conclusive could be said about epenthesis in relation to gender or religion.

## Notes

1. Kevin McCafferty, and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno. *CORIECOR— Corpus of Irish English Correspondence*. Bergen and Cáceres: University of Bergen and University of Extremadura. In preparation.

2. Alan J. Bliss, *Spoken English in Ireland 1600–1740* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979); Raymond Hickey, *A Sound Atlas of Irish English* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004); and Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Irish English. Volume 2: The Republic of Ireland* (Berlin, Boston: Mouton de Gruyter, 2013).

3. Gunnel Melchers and Philip Shaw, *World Englishes* (London: Arnold, 2003), 19.

4. Raymond Hickey, *A Sound Atlas*, 83.

5. Alan J. Bliss, ‘English in the South of Ireland’, in *Language in the British Isles*, ed. Peter Trudgill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 139; Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27; and Katrin Sell, ‘[ˈfɪləm] and [ˈfarəm]? Sociolinguistic Findings on Schwa Epenthesis in Galway English’, in *New Perspectives on Irish English*, eds Bettina Migge, and Máire Ní Chiosáin (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012), 49. As the corpus largely predates partition (1920), the term ‘Ireland’ is used for the whole island, i.e. both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

6. Raymond Hickey, *A Sound Atlas*, 83; and *Irish English*, 307–8.

7. Patrick L. Henry, *An Anglo-Irish Dialect of North Roscommon: Phonology, Accidence, Syntax* (Dublin: University College, 1957), 69.

8. Jeffrey Kallen, *Irish English*, 67.

9. Shane Walshe, *Irish English as Represented in Film* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 231. /t̪/ refers to a dental stop realisation of /θ/, common in IrE (see e.g. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 12).

10. Raymond Hickey, *A Sound Atlas*.

11. Shane Walshe, *Irish English*, 231–33.

12. Ibid., 250–69.

13. Katrin Sell, ‘[ˈfɪləm] and [ˈfarəm]’.

14. Rudolf Dekker, ‘Jacques Presser’s Heritage: Egodocuments in the Study of History’, *Memoria y civilización* 5 (2002): 13–14, http://www.egodocument.net/pdf/2.pdf.

15. Wolfgang Helbich, and Walter D. Kamphoefner, ‘How Representative Are Emigrant Letters? An Exploration of the German Case’, in *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, eds Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 29. According to these authors, illiteracy, early deaths, no relatives to write to, and disinterest in keeping contact must have been some of the reasons behind not writing.

16. Ibid., 50.

17. Michael Montgomery, 'The Linguistic Value of Ulster Emigrant Letters', *Ulster Folklife* 41 (1995): 26–41; Edgar W. Schneider, 'Variation and Change in Written Documents', in *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, eds J. K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill and Natalie Schilling-Estes (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 67–96; Stephan Elspaß, '"Everyday Language" in Emigrant Letters and Its Implications for Language Historiography: The German Case', *Multilingua. Special Issue: Lower Class Language Use in the Nineteenth Century* 26, no. 2–3 (2007): 151–65. doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/MULTI.2007.008; and Marijke van der Wal, and Gijsbert Rutten, 'Ego-Documents in a Historical-Sociolinguistic Perspective', in *Touching the Past. Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-Documents*, eds Marijke van der Wal and Gijsbert Rutten (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013), 1–17.

18. Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke, 'Introduction', in *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, eds Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3–4.

19. Michael Montgomery, 'The Linguistic Value', 31.

20. David Fitzpatrick, 'Irish Emigration and the Art of Letter-Writing', in *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, eds Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 112.

21. David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation. Personal Accounts of Migration to Australia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 89.

22. Tony Fairman, 'Writing and "the Standard": England, 1795–1834', *Multilingua. Special Issue: Lower Class Language Use in the Nineteenth Century* 26, nos 2–3 (2007): 175. doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/MULTI.2007.009.

23. See Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'A Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR): A Tool for Studying the History and Evolution of Irish English', in *New Perspectives on Irish English*, eds Bettina Migge, and Máire Ní Chiosáin (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012), 265–88; and '"I Will Be Expecting a Letter from You Before This Reaches You": Studying the Evolution of a New-Dialect Using a Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR)', in *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe*, eds Marina Dossena and Gabriella del Lungo Camiciotti (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012), 179–204.

24. Patrick Fitzgerald and B. K. Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History, 1607–2007* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 194–95.

25. Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, 'A Corpus of Irish English'.

26. The Irish Emigration Database includes material from Irish emigrants and their families. It originates from the Centre for Migration Studies at the Ulster-American Folk Park, in Omagh, Co. Tyrone. The corpus is biased towards the province of Ulster due to its initial focus on local material, but since 1988 has incorporated material from all Irish counties.

27. In both cases, epenthesis occurs in the cluster /rl/ which can contain epenthesis in IrE today, e.g. [ˈgɛɹəl] 'girl'.

28. Marijke van der Wal and Gijsbert Rutten, 'Ego-Documents', 52.

29. Carolina P. Amador-Moreno and Kevin McCafferty, 'Linguistic Identity and the Study of Emigrant Letters: Irish English in the Making', *Lengua y migración* 4, no. 2 (2012): 29.

30. Personal names and place names from letters (unless quoted directly) have in this paper been capitalised according to 'Standard' English orthography, even in those instances where the original spelling in the source letter was not. As mentioned in Sect. 4.1.2, capitalisation in ego-documents was often erratic.

31. Patrick L. Henry, *An Anglo-Irish Dialect*, 69.

32. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*; and Katrin Sell, '[ˈfɪləm] and [ˈfarəm]'.

33. Margaret A. Maclagan and Elizabeth Gordon, 'How *Grown* Grew from One Syllable to Two', *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 18, no. 1 (1998): 5–28.

34. Margaret Maclagan, and Elizabeth Gordon, 'How *Grown* Grew', 7.

35. An underscore between the labels for phonetic environments is used to indicate the position of epenthesis, e.g. 'plosive_liquid'.

36. For ‹confiniment› *confinement*, epenthesis has been identified on the basis that the silent ‹e› has been substituted by ‹i›.

37. Katrin Sell, '[ˈfɪləm] and [ˈfarəm]?', 48.

38. Terttu Nevalainen, 'Social Stratification', in *Sociolinguistics and Language Study: Studies Based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence*, eds Terttu Nevalainen and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 58.

39. William Labov, *Principles of Linguistic Change. Volume 2: Social Factor* (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 31n.

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# NEG/AUX Contraction in Eighteenth-Century Irish English Emigrant Letters

Dania Jovanna Bonness

## 1    Introduction

Historically, the advent of the English language in Ireland came with the Anglo-Normans and their English-speaking followers in the late twelfth century. They were concentrated in the south-east of the island but, in time, mingled with the Irish population and became Irish-speaking. Hence, English had a rather weak position in medieval Ireland. The situation first changed with the so-called Flight of the Earls in 1607, and the subsequent influx of English and Scottish immigrants to the northern province of Ireland, Ulster.[1] The spread of the English language continued with the Cromwellian settlements after 1649/1650 and continuously spread throughout the following centuries.[2] The time period studied in this article (1701–1800) thus covers one of the earliest centuries in which a great part of the originally Irish-speaking population in Ireland became English-speaking. In addition, it also includes a time in which political, religious and economic (e.g. famines in 1728–1729 and 1740–1741)

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problems led to mass emigration.[3] From the seventeenth century onwards, millions of Irish people left the country and sought their luck elsewhere. Many of the early emigrants left for North America or the Caribbean (the latter primarily after 1650[4]) and the former was certainly the country that received most Irish emigrants throughout the following centuries. However, some nineteenth-century emigrants also went to Argentina or headed towards the southern hemisphere. In order to stay in contact with their loved ones, families and friends, they had to learn how to read and write letters. Some of these letters have been collected in the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR), of which a subset is used as the basis for the present investigation of negation patterns in early Irish English (henceforth IrE).[5]

CORIECOR currently consists of about 6500 letters (approximately 4 million words), of which 4800 stem from the Irish Emigration Database (IED) in Omagh, Co. Tyrone in Northern Ireland. In 2013, 1694 letters were added from other published versions. The majority of the documents are personal letters written by Irish emigrants and their families between the late seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries.[6] Personal letters are commonly regarded as relatively close to vernacular speech, often reflecting more dialectal speech types,[7] and contraction is one of the features that has been observed to occur frequently in personal letters. Pallander-Collin, for example, notes that contractions, alongside features such as first- and second-person pronouns, *that* deletion, present-tense verbs or hedges are typically found in 'oral or 'involved' categories' such as personal letters.[8] The letters contained in the CORIECOR corpus are therefore considered well suited for a diachronic study on contraction and negation patterns in early IrE.

Negation has in recent decades attracted the attention of researchers and has been investigated from different angles. Some have focused on contracted forms in different registers,[9] while others have investigated restrictions on the use of contraction.[10] Castillo-González's study is an international comparison of NEG/AUX contraction in British, American, Australian and New Zealand English.[11] Historical investigations of contraction patterns are rare, but Brainerd, for example, looks at the historical development of NEG contraction in literary texts from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, and López-Couso investigates conditioning

factors for contraction with BE and HAVE in speech-based British English written texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (as represented in ARCHER: A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers).[12] Her results show that AUX contraction of BE, in cases where both contraction patterns are possible, predominates over NEG contraction throughout the period investigated, while HAVE prefers it the other way round. Interestingly, this is still valid for contraction patterns in present-day English.[13]

## 1.1 Negation Patterns in English: NEG/AUX Contraction Versus Full Form

In general, a speaker of English has three different options to express negation with the auxiliaries BE, HAVE, WILL and WOULD:

(a) *I will not sleep much tonight* (full form)
(b) *I'll not sleep much tonight* (AUX contraction)
(c) *I won't sleep much tonight* (NEG contraction)

With AUX contraction (b), the auxiliary is cliticised to the preceding pronoun or noun phrase, whereas NEG contraction (c) occurs when the auxiliary is contracted with the following negator NOT. In present-day Standard English, all modal and auxiliary verbs can have NEG contraction in more informal contexts, while full forms are used in more emphatic or formal contexts.[14] From a historical point of view, Sundby, Bjørge and Haugland note that contractions were strongly criticised by primarily Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison in the early eighteenth century, and Haugland adds that 'two-word contractions' (such as *won't* or *it's*) were even more condemned than contractions within a word (as exemplified by *allow'd* or *wou'd*).[15] López-Couso states that contractions nevertheless increased in published material throughout the nineteenth century.[16] In general, contractions in both (b) and (c) are said to appear more frequently in spoken discourse[17] and in interactive registers.[18] According to Schneider, there exists a 'continuum of increasing distance between an original speech event and its written record', from recorded to invented,

with letters being placed in the middle of the continuum.[19] Contracted forms (both NEG-contracted and AUX-contracted) might be expected to appear relatively frequently in the CORIECOR texts.

Little is actually known about the historical development of these contraction patterns in IrE, and the present study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion of negation patterns in this variety. Hickey states that a change occurred from the use of AUX contraction with WILL plus a personal pronoun (*I'll not*) to NEG contraction (*I won't*) in IrE during the nineteenth century.[20] His statement is primarily based on literary texts by Dion Boucicault, Sean O'Casey and John Millington Synge, three writers from Dublin.[21] Tagliamonte and Tagliamonte and Smith investigated the use of NEG/AUX contraction in present-day English, both British and IrE varieties, and report on an almost categorical use of AUX contraction with WILL in their Northern Ireland community.[22] Both studies are based on the same interviews, which were carried out in remote dialect areas on the British Isles, including the north and south of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. IrE is often assumed to follow Northern British English patterns due to large-scale settlement from northern England and Scotland during the seventeenth century.[23] Anderwald, for example, looks at the Scottish negative clitic *–nae*, which can still be found in present-day Ulster Scots.[24] Another allegedly typical IrE contraction derived from Scottish English is *amn't*, the contraction of *am + not*.[25]

Since recording equipment was not invented until the twentieth century, researchers, in order to study language variation and change historically, have to rely on written documents. A drawback in studying IrE is the limited availability of data that reflect the most vernacular forms of this variety. As pointed out by McCafferty, and McCafferty and Amador-Moreno, many of the studies conducted to date tend to rely on literary sources (as does Hickey's claim), often focusing on a specific period in time, or investigating the correspondence of well-educated members of society.[26] CORIECOR, however, offers new ways of researching the evolution of IrE over time.

In 1978, Trudgill hypothesised that there is geographical variation in the use of NEG/AUX contraction in British English, with an increase in AUX contraction the 'further north one goes'.[27] This would mean a more frequent use of contracted forms of BE, HAVE, WILL and WOULD + NOT in

the north of England and Scotland. This observation is supported by, for example, Beal, who reports on the use of AUX contraction with WILL in Tyneside English, as well as by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik, who likewise refer to the common use of this variant in northern England and Scotland.[28] Southern British varieties, in contrast, seem to prefer the contracted negative particle (Beal 1993: 199), i.e. *-n't* as in *aren't*, *hadn't*, *haven't*, *won't* or *wouldn't*. However, it has been pointed out elsewhere that there is no big difference between NEG contraction and AUX contraction with auxiliary BE in these dialects, which generally prefer contraction of the auxiliary with the preceding subject.[29] Likewise, AUX contraction of HAVE is rare in all the locales investigated by Tagliamonte.[30] The current study looks at the frequency of contracted and full forms in eighteenth-century letters, examining observable differences with regard to the author's geographic origin, gender and social status.

## 1.2   Aim and Scope

The point of departure of the present study is Hickey's claim that '[i]n the textual record of Irish English, indeed in historical varieties of English in general, contractions of *will* with a personal pronoun in the negative are to be found copiously'.[31] He further notes that the change from AUX contraction (*'ll not*) to NEG contraction (*won't*) started in the nineteenth century and that the former 'would seem to have died out during the first half of the twentieth century'.[32] Interestingly, Tagliamonte reports that AUX contraction with WILL is alive and well in contemporary spoken English in Northern Ireland (Cullybackey) and Lowland Scotland (Cumnock).[33] In fact, she finds an almost categorical use of AUX *'ll not* (91%) in the former location and even describes it as an 'Irish feature'.[34] My hypothesis is that AUX contraction, especially with WILL, should be commonly used in the eighteenth-century emigrant letters.

Since there are gaps in CORIECOR's coverage of the eighteenth-century, two published collections were included in addition to the CORIECOR texts. These are *Eight Letters from Ireland to John Forsythe the Emigrant with Some Others of Interest and a Genealogy of Four Generations of Forsythes in America* (9 letters) and *Irish Immigrants in the*
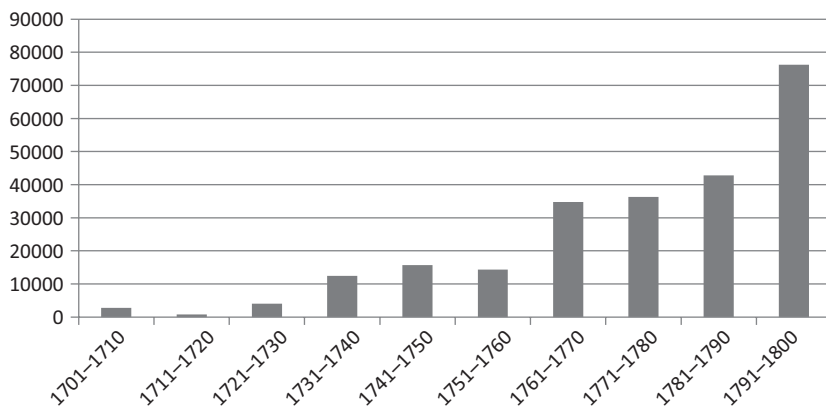
**Fig. 1** Distribution of words per decade

*Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (68 letters).[35] In total, the data set used in this study consists of 405 letters, equalling around 240,000 words. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of words per decade in the subcorpus used for the present study.

As can be seen from the figure, there are relatively few words for the earliest decades (only 769 words in the period 1711–1720), whereas coverage is much better for the second half of the century (at least 30,000 words per decade). The CORIECOR corpus in its present form is still being compiled and the aim is to fill the gaps with published and unpublished collections.

## 2     Methodology

The fact that CORIECOR is still under construction also means that the letters are not tagged or annotated yet, and neither are the two added sets of letters. For the analysis, I therefore extracted all instances of NOT using *WordSmith Tools 6.0*.[36] This ensured that all instances of the full forms and AUX-contracted forms, including variant spellings (such as *youl not* or *his not < he's not*), were included in the analysis. For the NEG contractions, I created an alphabetical wordlist in *WordSmith Tools 6.0* and then

searched for relevant tokens manually. This procedure elicited 1628 instances of NOT in the eighteenth-century letters. However, not all of these were relevant for an analysis of NEG/AUX contraction. All instances that did not include the auxiliaries BE, HAVE, WILL or WOULD, or which were overlooked duplicates, were excluded from the investigation,[37] leaving 627 tokens for closer analysis. This study is not only interested in the historical negation patterns in early IrE letters, but also focuses on those situations where speakers had an actual choice between the three different forms. Contexts in which certain syntactic conditions, so-called *knockout contexts*, inhibit contraction were therefore excluded from analysis.[38]

Full forms, NEG contractions and AUX contractions are only interchangeable in declarative sentences,[39] and whereas the full form is generally always an option, AUX contraction is, for example, impossible in contexts where there is no overt subject for the auxiliary to attach to (1), or where the subject is elided in coordination (2).[40]

(1) ***Have not*** *been able to get the money yet, such is the times here.* (Hamilton Young, 6 September 1786, CORIECOR)[41]
(2) *God be thanked! He died like a man and* ***has not*** *dishonoured his family.* (Thomas Ledlie Birch, September 1798, CORIECOR)

Also environments with inverted subjects generally inhibit AUX contraction. These contexts include *yes–no* questions (3), question tags (4)[42] and conditional clauses with subject-verb inversion (5).[43]

(3) ***Is it not*** *the interest of Britain to increase extend and strengthen our colonies now in the time of peace* (Arthur Dobbs, 1 January 1752, CORIECOR)
(4) *so i guess you will excuse me* ***wont you*** (Lizzie, 9 January 1886, CORIECOR)
(5) *and* ***had I not*** *the most convincing proofs of the truth of what I here transmit you, I should be silent on the subject.* (Anon., 6 April 1774, CORIECOR)

Intervening elements between the subject and the auxiliary, either phrasal or clausal elements, as in (6), are further knockout contexts.[44]

Also commas or quotation marks between the subject and the auxiliary, as in example (7), may inhibit AUX contraction.[45]

(6) **The provost**, *who was frequently not in the best of tempers (especially when the Captain was not on board), though he frequently shaked hands with prisoners,* **would not** *infrequently tell them that they should not get up.* (Thomas Ledlie Birch, September 1798, CORIECOR)

(7) *The tenor of the Orange oath, it seems now is, that* **they** *'***will not** *be unfriendly to such Roman Catholics as shall join in supporting the present Constitution of Ireland in Church and State, but if once induced to draw the sword against Catholics, they will pursue them to death.'* (Thomas Ledlie Birch, September 1798, CORIECOR)

Other knockout contexts that were not included are:

(8) Four instances of *be not*:

(a) *so that if* **I be not** *reliv'd in a short time, I Shall be oblig'd to Sell my Cloaths and return to New: York,* (Silvester Ferall, 16 June 1745, CORIECOR)

(b) *If* **the ballance of my account be not** *remitted, please to Send it in white Irish Sheeting* (John Reynell, 30 July 1770, CORIECOR)

(c) *… must desire thee* **in case the acts laying a Duty on Tea to be paid in America be not** *Repealed, so ship me p [per?] first good opportunity directly from Ireland, all the Linnen I wish for in mine of the 30th of 11 mo; last.* (John Reynell, 12 June 1770, CORIECOR)

(d) *they are Remitted on mine and my Kinsman Samuel Coates joint Account and desire thou will Send the following parcel of Linens on our joint Account, as soon as possible on the best and lowest Terms, directly from Ireland*, **in case the Act of Parliament for Raising a Revenue on Tea in America, be not** *Repealed, or like to be soon;* (John Reynell, 3 July 1770, CORIECOR)

(9) Three instances where *your* (or *his*) is the genitive:

(a) *… who tells me that you had a little touch of the gout but I shou'd hope by **your not** mentioning any thing of it that your other complaint is much better* (Arthur Pomeroy, 12 March 1769, CORIECOR)

(b) *there is no help for **your not** being able to send the Salmon* (Hamilton Young, 30 November 1787, CORIECOR)

(c) *and he himself is well pleased with his Situation all but **his not** having as much whisky as he likes* (Art. Pomeroy, January 1769, CORIECOR)

These exclusions leave us with 502 tokens in which the full form, NEG contraction and AUX contraction can be used interchangeably. These are analysed in Sect. 3 according to the frequency of the three variants with the auxiliaries BE, HAVE, WILL and WOULD + NOT (see Table 1), before Sects. 3.1 and 3.2 take a closer look at the auxiliaries BE and WILL individually. Section 3.3 then focuses on the authors' geographical origin. For the analysis, the writers were grouped according to whether they were of Ulster origin or from the rest of Ireland. In cases where the writer's origin could not be identified from the content of the letters, the writer was attributed to a third group of 'unknown' origin. Section 3.4 specifies the distribution of NEG/AUX contraction and full forms extracted from the letters written by men and women. For the investigation of the authors' social status in Sect. 3.5, the letter writers were grouped into categories according to occupation or, for the females, according to their fathers' or husbands' occupations.

**Table 1** Full forms and contracted forms in eighteenth-century emigrant letters

|  | BE | | HAVE | | WILL | | WOULD | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Full form | 170 | 97 | 148 | 99 | 71 | 73 | 81 | 100 | 470 |
| AUX | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| NEG | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 23 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Total | 175 | 100 | 149 | 100 | 97 | 100 | 81 | 100 | 502 |

# 3     Findings

The following section presents and describes the results for contraction patterns with BE, HAVE, WILL and WOULD as used in eighteenth-century emigrant letters according to frequency and the author's geographic origin, gender and social status. The analysis is concerned with the full forms *am not*, *are not*, *is not*, *have not*, *has not*, *had not*, *will not* and *would not*, the AUX-contracted variants *'m not*, *'re not*, *'s not*, *'ve not*, *'d not* and *'ll not*, and the NEG-contracted variants *ain't*, *aren't*, *haven't*, *hasn't*, *hadn't*, *won't* and *wouldn't*. The AUX-contracted variant *'s* can reflect both the third-person singular present tense forms *is* and *has*, whereas *'d* can represent *had* or *would*. The NEG-contracted form *ain't* is a more non-standard form that can be used for *am not/are not/is not* or *have not/has not*. Brainerd (1989: 176) also states that early forms of NEG contraction can be realised as *an't*, *ben't* and *han't*, and one instance of *ant* has indeed been found from 1768.[46] Table 1 presents a general overview of the raw numbers and percentages of NEG/AUX contraction versus the full form of the auxiliaries as used in the letters contained in CORIECOR and the two additional volumes mentioned above.

Clearly, BE and HAVE are used almost twice as often as WILL and WOULD, which is probably due to the fact that the former two can be used as both lexical verbs and auxiliaries.[47] Furthermore, there is little or no variation between full forms and contracted forms with the auxiliaries HAVE and WOULD, with only one token of *hasn't* in the 1760s.[48] Auxiliary BE shows minimal variation between the full form (97%) and AUX contraction (2%), whereas WILL shows the use of contracted forms in one-quarter of all instances with WILL + NOT. NEG *won't* is used in 24% of tokens, whereas the allegedly Irish feature AUX *'ll not* is only used in 3% (3/71 tokens).

The findings in Table 1 show that NEG contraction with WILL was already frequently used prior to the nineteenth century. Since the full form is used almost categorically with HAVE and WOULD, the further analysis of the eighteenth-century letters will focus on the auxiliaries BE and WILL.

## 3.1    NEG/AUX Contraction with BE

As we can see in Table 1, AUX contraction of BE is used in 2% of all instances. How are these contracted tokens distributed chronologically in the eighteenth century? Is there an observable increase in the use of AUX contraction in the letters? For this analysis, realisations such as *his* for *he's* have been accepted for analysis in cases where their meaning could not be misinterpreted (see example a) below).[49]

10. (a) *I hope my dear Richard will be convinced it did not proceed from neglect on our part that **his not** going sooner*. (Anne Caldwell, 1 August 1798, CORIECOR)

    (b) *\*… and he himself is well pleased with his Situation all but **his not** having as much whisky as he likes* (Art. Pomeroy, January 1769, CORIECOR)

Table 2 demonstrates a clear tendency towards the use of the full form with BE + NOT, with this being used more than 92% in each decade. Since there is no variation at all between 1701 and 1760 (the full form is used throughout), these decades have been grouped together. AUX contraction is attested from the 1760s onwards but, at no more than 4%, its use is rather moderate. The table does not indicate a consistent increase in the use of AUX contraction during the latter half of the century, but rather a random distribution. There is furthermore only one single token with NEG contraction, in 1768 (see endnote 46).

**Table 2** Use of contracted and full forms with BE, 1701–1800 (*n* = 175)

|  | Full form | | AUX | | NEG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| 1701–1760 | 29 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1761–1770 | 24 | 92 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| 1771–1780 | 32 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1781–1790 | 34 | 97 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 1791–1800 | 51 | 96 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 170 | 97 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

We can say that the Irish letters analysed in this study show very little use of contracted forms, and if contracted at all, AUX contraction is used slightly more often than NEG contraction with BE.

## 3.2    NEG/AUX Contraction with WILL

Contraction of WILL was expected to show a clear preference for AUX contraction, since Tagliamonte described this as a typical feature of present-day IrE.[50] In addition, Hickey claims that it was frequently used in IrE before the nineteenth century.[51] Table 1 indeed shows that WILL is the auxiliary that displays most variation between full and contracted forms, but NEG contraction is clearly the dominant choice between the contracted variants. In the analysis, the spellings *ill* or *youl* for *'ll* and *wont* for *won't* were also included. In fact, the spelling *wont* was far more common than *won't* in the letters investigated.

11. (a) *David I hope **youl not** think mee Ungreatfull* (Samuel Brown, 23 December 1793, CORIECOR)

    (b) ***the Aple wont** do to Ship* (Hamilton Young, 4 December 1788, CORIECOR).

The diachronic distribution (Table 3) shows that there are very few tokens for WILL + NOT prior to 1760 (*n* = 6). This makes it difficult to say much about the use of NEG/AUX contraction before 1760. For the moment, it can be stated that, up to the 1760s, the early letters exclusively show the full form variant. The situation changes in the second half of the century, in which the use of NEG contraction emerges. NEG contraction with WILL is used during the succeeding decades, varying from 15% to 47% usage, which suggests that it was becoming a stable variant in written IrE at that time. In sum, Table 3 shows that the full form is used in all decades. The letter writers generally choose between full forms and NEG contraction, while AUX contraction is only a minor option.

The results presented in Table 3 are surprising given Hickey's claim that 'in the textual record of Irish English, …, contractions of *will* with a personal pronoun in the negative are to be found copiously'.[52] A tendency

**Table 3** Use of contracted and full forms with WILL, 1701–1800 (*n* = 97)

|  | Full form | | AUX | | NEG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| 1701–1760 | 6 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1761–1770 | 11 | 65 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 29 |
| 1771–1780 | 11 | 85 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| 1781–1790 | 8 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 47 |
| 1791–1800 | 35 | 76 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 20 |
| Total | 71 | 73 | 3 | 3 | 23 | 24 |

**Table 4** Types of subjects with WILL, 1761–1800 (*n* = 91)[57]

|  | NP | | Pro | | Existential *there* | | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % | *N* | % |
| Full *will* | 21 | 78 | 41 | 70 | 1 | 100 | 2 | 50 |
| AUX *will* | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NEG *will* | 6 | 22 | 15 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 50 |
| Total | 27 | 100 | 59 | 100 | 1 | 100 | 4 | 100 |

towards AUX contraction with personal pronouns (in present-day English) has also been pointed out by, amongst others, Tagliamonte and Smith.[53] Based on the data in Table 3, the analysis of contraction patterns of WILL + NOT has not distinguished between personal pronouns and other subject types. In present-day English, AUX contraction is primarily associated with pronominal subjects,[54] and López-Couso states that this is also valid for her eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British English data in ARCHER.[55] Tagliamonte, however, cites a noun phrase subject for present-day IrE (*This kind of language 'll no get money for you*).[56] Table 4 gives a more detailed overview of the distribution of subjects with full and contracted forms between the years 1761 and 1800 in the subcorpus analysed in the current study. The personal pronouns (59 tokens) are the type of subject used most often in the letters, followed by noun phrases (27 tokens), simple and complex, and other subject types (5 tokens), i.e. relative and demonstrative pronouns. With 70% usage, the full form *will not* is the preferred choice with personal pronouns, followed by NEG contraction with 25%. AUX contraction is used in only 5% of all instances and is restricted to personal pronouns. The full form is also the main choice with NP subjects (78%), whereas NEG contraction is used in 22% of

cases. Not only the full form *will* + *not*, but also NEG *won't* occurs with both simple and complex NP (e.g. *I hope* **the recommending thee to our Friend Israel Pemberton wont** *prove otherways* [John Reynell, 3 July 1770, CORIECOR]). NEG *won't* and the full form are used interchangeably with demonstrative and relative pronouns (50%) in the eighteenth-century letters, though this result is based on only two tokens per variant. When it comes to existential *there*, the only token extracted from the letters shows the full form.

Summing up, Table 4 shows that NEG contraction is used with a range of subject types in the IrE letters. AUX contraction, on the other hand, appears to have been limited to personal pronoun subjects in the eighteenth century.

## 3.3     Geographic Origin of the Letter Writers

In present-day IrE, AUX contraction has been claimed to be a feature that is more present in the north of Ireland, due to the influence of Scottish settlers during the seventeenth century.[58] Kallen reports on two informants from Roscommon and Leitrim in ICE-Ireland (the Ireland component of the International Corpus of English) who provided the only tokens of AUX contraction with WILL outside Ulster in the corpus.[59] The majority of the letters included in CORIECOR are in fact from Ulster. The 405 letters of the eighteenth-century corpus were written by about 261 authors.[60] Of these, 147 authors contributed relevant tokens for this study and are therefore included in the analysis. Seventy-two authors can be assigned as being of Ulster origin and 15 come from the rest of Ireland (mainly Dublin), while 60 stem from unknown places. In order to determine where the letter writers originally came from, namely Ulster versus the rest of Ireland, I looked at the recipients of the letters. In cases where the letters were sent to the nuclear family, i.e. parents or siblings, the recipients' residence was counted as the author's place of origin, especially if there was further reference to other members of the family. In cases where the letters were sent from Ireland, the letter writer's address was usually also considered his or her place of origin. Exceptions were made where additional information on the writer's geographic origin was available, for example from other letters
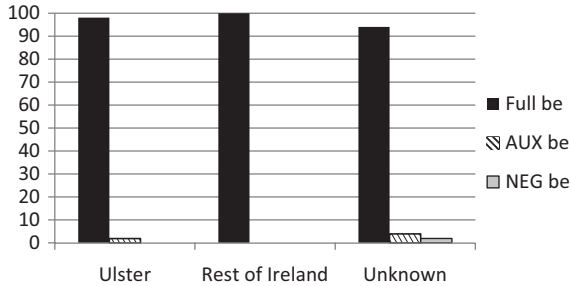
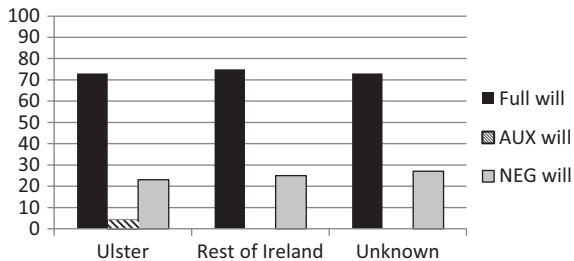**Fig. 2**  Distribution of contracted and full forms with BE according to the letter writer's geographic origin



**Fig. 3**  Distribution of contracted and full forms with WILL according to the letter writer's geographic origin

included in the corpus.[61] CORIECOR occasionally includes letters from several members of a family, which allows for a more detailed analysis of the letter writers' geographical origins. In four cases, where letters were sent to the extended family (here cousins), the recipient's address was also counted as the writer's birthplace, mainly because the letters included greetings to the writer's nuclear family. Since the categories are rather broad, namely 'Ulster' versus 'rest of Ireland', this method is considered suitable. Without a doubt, detailed information on the author's place of origin would of course be preferable, but in some cases this kind of network-reconstruction is the most detailed information we can get.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the use of contracted versus full forms of BE and WILL in Ulster, the rest of Ireland and unknown places. Figure 2 shows that all three categories clearly prefer the full form with BE + NOT. AUX contraction of BE is extremely rare in the eighteenth-century letters.

Ulster writers, coming from Belfast and Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, choose AUX contraction in only 2% of all instances, while none of the writers from the rest of Ireland uses this variant. AUX contraction is furthermore used in 4% of tokens by the authors whose geographical origin could not be determined.[62] The latter group also exhibits the only instance of NEG contraction with BE, in this case the third-person singular form *ant* (see endnote 46).

From Table 3 we learned that the full form is used in 73% of all instances of WILL + NOT, followed by NEG contraction with 24%, whereas AUX contraction is used in only 3% of tokens. Among the different groups in Fig. 3, the distribution is as follows: the full form is the dominant choice in all three groups, though the percentages are lower than in the BE set. AUX contraction (4%) is exclusively used in letters by Ulster writers from Co. Tyrone and Co. Londonderry, as well as from Belfast. NEG contraction is also used by authors of Ulster origin (from counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Londonderry and Tyrone, as well as from the city of Belfast). NEG *won't* is furthermore used by writers of unknown origin, and writers from the rest of Ireland (Waterford and Dublin, respectively). NEG contraction is thus distributed rather evenly, being used between 23% and 27% by all groups.

In summary, the results for WILL mildly support the claim that AUX contraction is an Ulster feature. AUX contraction of BE is, if present at all, only found in the letters of Ulster writers, or writers whose geographic origins remain unknown. The relatively high percentages of NEG-contracted *won't* was contrary to what was expected in the eighteenth-century Irish letters. In light of Hickey's claim that the use of AUX-contracted *'ll not* is to be found copiously in historical texts of IrE, and his statement that a change to NEG contraction occurred in the nineteenth century, the fact that NEG *won't* is used in one-quarter of all instances, in Ulster as well as the rest of Ireland, is an important finding.[63]

## 3.4   Biological Sex

Modern sociolinguistic research has shown that the language of men and women often differs and Labov has pointed out two major patterns in sex or gender differentiation. First, he states that, in stable sociolinguistic

stratification, men use a higher frequency of non-standard forms than women. Second, he claims that women generally use a higher frequency of the incoming forms than men, thus initiating linguistic change.[64] Applying Labov's insights to differences between the sexes in eighteenth-century IrE may be difficult because we know too little about the linguistic situation of IrE at that time.[65] Apart from our own results, we have so far no information on what the established variants were in eighteenth-century IrE, as the variety itself was still emerging at that time, and the situation cannot be described as stable. Furthermore, there was no standardised educational system that guaranteed a homogenous education to the Irish population prior to the introduction of the national school system in 1831, and illiteracy was still high in the eighteenth century.

In the corpus analysed in this study, the distribution of male and female writers is unbalanced. Only 27 (10%) out of the 261 letter writers were women, as opposed to 180 male writers (69%). Fifty-four authors (21%) cannot be assigned to either sex—though considering the time at which the letters were written, and the contents of the letters (on war, military reports, about meetings with the Indians, etc.), most of them were presumably written by men. Of the 147 authors with tokens considered for analysis, 112 (76%) were men and 20 (14%) were women. For the remaining 15 writers (10%), their sex is not known. Tables 5 and 6 nevertheless allow for some observations on how many of the full forms and the contracted forms elicited from the letters were used by male and female writers. Table 5 shows that the men use little contraction with BE, as only 4 out of 138 tokens are contracted. One woman uses AUX contraction with BE + NOT, while none of the female writers uses NEG contraction at all. If we look at the percentages, the difference

**Table 5** Distribution of contracted and full forms with BE according to biological sex of the letter writers (*n* = 175)

|         | Male | | Female | | Unknown | |
|---------|------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|
|         | *N*  | %   | *N*    | %   | *N*     | %   |
| Full be | 134  | 97  | 20     | 95  | 16      | 100 |
| AUX be  | 3    | 2   | 1      | 5   | 0       | 0   |
| NEG be  | 1    | 1   | 0      | 0   | 0       | 0   |
| Total   | 138  | 100 | 21     | 100 | 16      | 100 |

**Table 6** Distribution of contracted and full forms with WILL according to biological sex of the letter writers (*n* = 97)

|           | Male | | Female | | Unknown | |
|-----------|------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|
|           | *N*  | %   | *N*    | %   | *N*     | %   |
| Full will | 56   | 74  | 15     | 71  | 0       | 0   |
| AUX will  | 3    | 4   | 0      | 0   | 0       | 0   |
| NEG will  | 17   | 22  | 6      | 29  | 0       | 0   |
| Total     | 76   | 100 | 21     | 100 | 0       | 0   |

is small. The male writers use the full form in 97% and the female writers in 95% of tokens. Table 5 shows one token for AUX contraction with BE among the female writers, but given the low token frequency this makes 5% use of this variant altogether. The male writers use AUX contraction in 2% of all instances and NEG contraction in 1% of tokens. All in all, contraction with BE is rather infrequent in the eighteenth-century Irish letters investigated and will therefore not be pursued further in this analysis.

So far, WILL + NOT is clearly the variable that has shown most variation in the texts analysed. Table 6 displays the distribution of the full form *will + not*, AUX-contracted *'ll not* and NEG-contracted *won't* as used by male and female writers. The full form is again the preferred choice among both men and women, though to a lesser degree than with BE. Out of the 76 tokens elicited from the male writers, 56 (74%) show the full form *will not*. Among the female writers, the full form is used in 71% (*n* = 15) of instances. If contraction is used, NEG contraction is the preferred choice (*n* = 17, 22%) among the men, whereas AUX contraction is only used in three instances (4%). The women use NEG contraction in 6 out of 21 tokens, which means they use it slightly more often than the men, namely in 29% of all instances. AUX contraction is not used by the female letter writers analysed in this study.

Summing up, this section gives some interesting insights into the use of contracted forms with BE and WILL + NOT as displayed by men and women, though the number of tokens are too low to make conclusive generalisations on their usage.

# 4    Social Stratification

For social stratification, this study takes Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg's chart for rank and status in Tudor and Stuart England as a point of reference.[66] The major dividing line in their chart lies between the gentry and the non-gentry, with professions such as army officer, lawyer or doctor as a group in between. The professions are characterised by the fact that the members are non-manual workers. For the non-gentry, yeoman, merchant, husbandman, craftsman, tradesman, artificer, labourer, cottager and pauper are listed in hierarchical order. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg's model describes the early modern period (1500–1700) in England and has been slightly modified to better fit the authors of the eighteenth-century Irish emigrants' letters (1700–1800) included in this study. As suggested by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, the main dividing line is between gentry and non-gentry.[67] However, there are only a few letters from the gentry in the corpus; most of the letter writers were merchants and professionals, or their social rank remains unknown. There is only one letter writer in the CORIECOR corpus who has been assigned to the upper gentry, a Member of the Irish Parliament who later became a governor in the United States. Six writers have been ranked as belonging to the lower gentry, among them a wealthy member of an old Ulster family, his son, and his niece, who lived with him. Fourteen authors belong to the lower clergy, eleven of them males and three females. These three females were all daughters of clergymen. Along with the professionals, the clergy has been placed between the gentry and the non-gentry. The women in this study are assigned to either the social rank of their father, or that of their husband. In cases where a woman changed her social rank during her lifetime, the highest social rank was chosen. This also applies to male emigrants who acquired a higher social rank after emigration. Among *professionals*, the authors of the letters held occupations such as high-ranking army officer (colonel, captain etc.), politicians (including governor), physicists or teachers. The *merchants* are placed on the topmost layer of the non-gentry, as many of them were successful businessmen, and also the *farmers* in the corpus were not necessarily small peasants, but often agriculturalists from a comfortable or prosperous background. *Businessmen*, or businesswomen, includes occupations such as that of

entrepreneur, hosier or woollen draper, but also a mother who had intensive business relations with her son in America, and two female gastronomes who ran a tavern and a public house, respectively. In the lower layer of the non-gentry are *clerks, craftsmen, manual labourers, convicts.* In addition, there are writers of unknown social rank. Although some of the latter letters are well-written, and some authors do write about family members placed in the professions, or about business, the letters do not reveal sufficient information to assign their writers to one of the groups listed above. Table 7[68] shows that the 'unknown' group makes up about one third of the total number of correspondents. The remaining 96 authors are spread

**Table 7**  Rank and status in the eighteenth-century letters

| Rank | Grade | | Males | Females | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *N* | *N* | *N* |
| Gentry | Upper | *Member of Parliament* | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Lower | *Members of an old Ulster family, Gentleman/Lady* | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| | Clergy | | | | |
| | Lower | *Reverend, Minister, Clergyman* | 11 | 3 | 0 |
| | *Professionals* | | | | |
| | | *Governor, Army Officer, Politician, Doctor, Judge/ Solicitor, Privy Counselor Notary scrivener, Teacher* | 17 | 3 | 0 |
| | Merchants | | 18 | 1 | 0 |
| Non-Gentry | Farmers | *Farmer, Tenant Farmer, Plantation Owner, Gentleman Farmer* | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| | Businessmen | *Entrepreneur, Businessman, Hosier, Woollen Draper, Gastronome* | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| | Clerk | | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Craftsmen | *Bookbinder, Weaver, Apprenticed Artisan, House Painter* | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | Labourers | *Manual Worker, Servant* | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| | Convicts | | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Unknown | | 28 | 8 | 15 |
| | Total | | 112 | 20 | 15 |

among the social ranks as follows: 21 letter writers from the gentry (*n* = 7) and the clergy (*n* = 14), 20 from the professions, 19 writers were merchants and 36 correspondents were distributed among the lower layers of the non-gentry. Of the 20 female writers included in the analysis, five actually have their origin in the gentry and the lower clergy, while three of them belong to the professions and one to the merchants. Only three female writers come from the remaining groups of the non-gentry, while eight female writers' social backgrounds remain unknown.

The preceding sections showed that most variation in IrE occurred with the auxiliary WILL. Table 8 looks at the distribution of NEG/AUX contraction and full forms with WILL + NOT according to social rank. From Table 1, we know that there are 97 instances of WILL in the letters analysed, while the table below illustrates how these are allotted among the different social ranks. The full form is clearly the preferred choice among all social groups, though only the lower gentry uses *will not* throughout. The remaining groups vary from 50% usage of full forms (craftsmen) to 80% (farmers), while the group of writers whose social rank could not be assessed uses the full form in 86% of their tokens. Also NEG contraction can be found within all social groups except the gentry. Interestingly, all social layers show relatively similar distributions of NEG *won't*, ranging from 20% to 33%. The results for the four lowest ranks are however based on only very few tokens and should be interpreted with

**Table 8** Frequency of contracted and full forms of WILL + NOT (*n* = 97) in the letters according to social rank

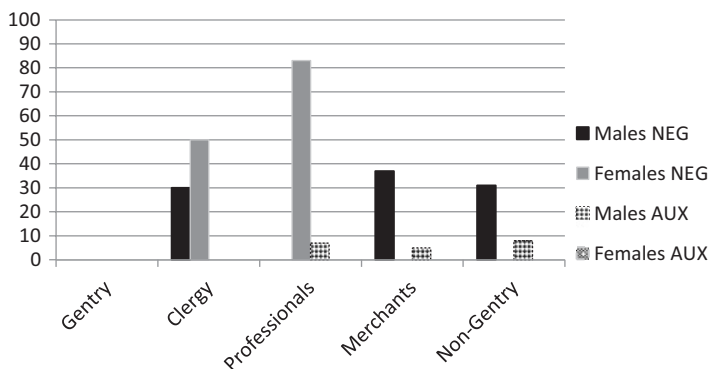| Rank | | Full form | | AUX | | NEG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Gentry | Lower Clergy | 2 | *100* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Lower | 8 | *67* | 0 | 0 | *4* | 33 |
| | *Professionals* | 15 | *71* | 1 | 5 | *5* | 24 |
| | Merchants | 17 | *68* | 1 | 4 | 7 | 28 |
| Non-Gentry | Farmers | 4 | *80* | 0 | 0 | *1* | 20 |
| | Businessmen | 2 | *67* | 0 | 0 | *1* | 33 |
| | Clerks | 2 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 33 |
| | Craftsmen | 2 | *50* | 1 | 25 | *1* | 25 |
| | Unknown | 19 | 86 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 14 |

**Fig. 4** Distribution of AUX-contracted *won't* and NEG-contracted *'ll not* by social rank and biological sex (*n* = 97)

some caution. The 'unknown' group deviates from the rest with 14% NEG contraction. AUX *'ll not* is found only in letters written by members of the professions, merchants and craftsmen, though it should again be noted that each group only provides one single token of this variant.

Figure 4 illustrates sex differences in the use of NEG and AUX contraction with WILL, aligned with social rank.[69] For clarity, the different layers of the gentry and the non-gentry have been grouped together, with the exception of the merchants. From Table 6 we know already that the women use more NEG contraction than men, and Fig. 4 illustrates how NEG-contracted *won't* is used by the male and female letter writers of the different social ranks. The female writers of the professional stratum use NEG contraction in 83% of tokens (*n* = 5), while the male writers do not use it at all. The daughters of the clergymen show 50% usage of this variant, though this result is based on only one token. They are followed by the male merchants (37%, *n* = 7), the males from the lower levels of the non-gentry (31%, *n* = 4) and the clergymen themselves (30%, *n* = 3). Contraction is more widespread throughout the social groups among male writers than the female ones. No women from the non-gentry use NEG contraction in the eighteenth-century letters analysed, and AUX contraction is not used at all by the female authors. Among the male writers, AUX contraction is used at relatively equal rates among the professionals (7%), merchants (5%) and members of the non-gentry (8%),

though it has to be noted that the percentages are again only based on one single token per social group. Interestingly, none of the male writers from the professional stratum uses NEG contraction with WILL.

In summary, NEG-contracted *won't* is used at higher rates by female writers of the higher social ranks, followed by male merchants and male writers from the clergy and the non-gentry, while AUX contraction is present only at low rates among males of the non-gentry (merchants and craftsmen) and the professionals.

# 5    Conclusions

The results reported above provide a first impression of the use of NEG/AUX contraction in early IrE as represented by emigrant letters. The full forms *is/are not*, *have/has/had not*, *will not* and *would not* prevail consistently across time and across the social categories examined in this paper. HAVE and WOULD hardly show any variation at all. Auxiliary BE occurs sporadically with AUX contraction in the second half of the century, but a look at BE in more detail shows that AUX contraction is loosely scattered throughout the decades. There is no clear tendency observable in the data and the low number of tokens makes it difficult to say anything conclusive about this variant. Also, the allegedly IrE feature AUX contraction (*'ll not*) is only found in 3% of all tokens extracted from the letters. NEG contraction with WILL, in contrast, is used in 24% of all tokens. These findings are unexpected, and do not support Hickey's claim that AUX contraction with WILL was frequent before the nineteenth century. The use of *won't* rises rather rapidly during the latter half of the eighteenth century and its high frequency raises the question of whether this feature had been present in early IrE prior to the 1760s as well. NEG contraction can furthermore be used with a wide range of subjects, whereas AUX-contracted *'ll not* is restricted to personal pronouns. This finding supports Hickey's observation that AUX contraction of WILL + NOT is found with personal pronouns in historical IrE texts, though it does not back the claim that it was found 'copiously'.[70]

Contraction with auxiliary WILL certainly turned out to be the most salient feature in the letters investigated. Although AUX contraction is indeed only used by authors of Ulster origin, even they actually prefer *won't* to *'ll not*. The former variant becomes even more meaningful with regard to biological sex. Table 6 illustrates that women actually use NEG contraction at a higher rate than men: 29% contraction by females as opposed to 22% by males. This is interesting with regard to Labov's principle II, which states that, in change from below, women are often the innovators of linguistic change.[71] However, Labov also notes that sex differentiation has to be analysed separately for each social group, in our case social rank.[72] In the present study, the greatest differences are found between the men and women of the professional stratum, where NEG contraction is only found among the female letter writers, and the merchants, where NEG contraction is exclusively used by male writers. AUX contraction was only found among the men, and it is completely absent among the letter writers belonging to the gentry and the clergy.

Altogether, the full form prevails with all four auxiliaries, but NEG contraction of WILL clearly increases in the latter half of the century. The fact that the full form is used extensively throughout the century might be grounded in the stigmatisation of contraction in the early eighteenth century, as noted in Sect. 1.1. A great part of the Irish population at that time had no, or only rudimentary, reading and writing skills, and those who were literate might have been rather careful letter writers (cf. Bliss 1979: 173). It will definitely be interesting to see how the use of NEG/AUX contraction developed throughout the subsequent decades and centuries. Will Hickey be proved right about the increase of NEG contraction in the nineteenth and early twentieth century?[73] Or will AUX contraction take over, thus shedding more light on Tagliamonte's account of AUX contraction in present-day Ulster Scots? In this connection, it would also be interesting to have a closer look at the differences between auxiliary versus copula uses of BE and HAVE in further work on this feature. Also worth looking at more closely is the language of the merchants: why did the (male) merchants, a group that we would expect to have used writing professionally, use NEG contraction at relatively high rates? Previous research has shown that mercantile language often has an important role in language change,[74] and a more detailed analysis of contraction patterns in merchant letters in CORIECOR remains another potentially fruitful topic for future research.

# Notes

1. The term Ulster refers to the counties Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Monaghan and County Tyrone, and is not to be confused with today's Northern Ireland.
2. Cf. Raymond Hickey, *Dublin English. Evolution and Change* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005), 151–56.
3. Patrick Fitzgerald, and Brian Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History, 1607–2007* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 128.
4. Ibid., 122.
5. Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIECOR). Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno (University of Bergen and University of Extremadura, in preparation). The present study is part of the 'Contact, Variation and Change' project (CONVAR) at the University of Bergen, Norway (Research Council of Norway grant no. 213245), which is concerned with the emergence and development of IrE over time. The author wishes to thank Kevin McCafferty, Carolina P. Amador-Moreno and the anonymous reviewer for feedback and comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
6. The term 'emigrant letter' here not only refers to the letters written by the emigrants themselves, but also to letters written by family members and friends to the emigrant.
7. Cf. Douglas Biber, *Dimensions of Register Variation: A Cross-Linguistic Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 283–300; Michael Montgomery, 'The Linguistic Value of Ulster Emigrant Letters', *Ulster Folklife* 41 (1995): 27; Minna Palander-Collin, 'Correspondence', in *Historical Pragmatics*, eds Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010), 658; Kevin McCafferty, and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno. '"I Will Be Expecting a Letter from You Before This Reaches You". A Corpus-Based Study of *shall/will* Variation in Irish English Correspondence', in *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe*, eds Marina Dossena and Gabriella del Lungo Camiciotti (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012). 183. In Biber's study (ibid., 288), the degree of orality varies throughout the centuries. According to him, seventeenth-century letters are more involved and oral than eighteenth- and nineteenth-century letters, but they are all less involved than twentieth-century letters.
8. Minna Palander-Collin, 'Correspondence,' 658.
9. E.g. Margareta Westergren Axelsson, 'Contracted Forms in Newspaper Language: Inter- and Intra-Textual Variation', *ICAME Journal* 20

(1996): 5–21; and Malcah Yaeger-Dror, Lauren Hall-Lew and Sharon Deckert, '*It's not* or *isn't it*? Using Large Corpora to Determine the Influences on Contraction Strategies', *Language Variation and Change* 14, no. 1 (March 2002): 79–118.

10. Ellen M. Kaisse, 'The Syntax of Auxiliary Reduction in English', *Language* 59, no. 1 (March 1983): 93–122; and Goran Kjellmer, 'On Contraction in Modern English', *Studia Neophilologica* 69 no. 2 (1998): 155–86.

11. María del Pilar Castillo-González, 'Uncontracted Negatives and Negative Contractions in Contemporary English: A Corpus-Based Study'. Doctoral dissertation. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2007. http://dspace.usc.es/bitstream/10347/2328/1/9788497508759_content.pdf.

12. Barron Brainerd, 'The Contractions of Not: A Historical Note', *Journal of English Linguistics* 22 (1989): 176–96; and María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation in Late Modern English,' in *'Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed': New Insights into Late Modern English*, eds Javier Pérez-Guerra, Dolores González-Álvarez, Jorge L. Bueno-Alonso and Esperanza Rama-Martínez (Bern: Peter Lang: 2007) 301–23.

13. Douglas Biber et al., *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, third edition (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 1129–30; Sali Tagliamonte, and Jennifer Smith, 'Either *it isn't* or *it's not*: NEG/AUX Contraction in British Dialects', *English World Wide* 23, no. 2 (January 2002): 260; and María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation', 311–12.

14. Joan Beal, 'The Grammar of Tyneside and Northumbrian English', in *Real English: The Grammar of English Dialects in the British Isles*, eds James Milroy and Leslie Milroy (New York: Longman, 1993), 199.

15. Bertil Sundby, Anne Kari Bjørge and Kari E. Haugland, *A Dictionary of English Normative Grammar 1700 – 1800* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991), 161; and Kari E. Haugland, 'Is't allow'd or ain't it? On Contraction in Early Grammars and Spelling Books', *Studia Neophilologica* 67 (1995): 175.

16. María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation', 302.

17. Charles C. Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), 8; and Goran Kjellmer, 'On Contraction', 159.

18. Michael Swan, *Practical English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 159; and Malcah Yaeger-Dror, Lauren Hall-Lew and Sharon Deckert, '*It's not* or *isn't it*?', 81.

19. Edgar W. Schneider, 'Variation and Change in Written Documents', in *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, ed. J. K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill and Natalie Schilling-Estes (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 72.

20. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 272–73.

21. Apart from Hickey's study, there have been, to my knowledge, no further investigations that have looked at contraction patterns with BE, HAVE, WILL or WOULD in IrE from a historical point of view.

22. Sali A. Tagliamonte, *Roots of English. Exploring the History of Dialects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Sali A. Tagliamonte, and Jennifer Smith, 'Either it isn't or it's not'.

23. Lieselotte Anderwald, *Negation in Non-Standard British English: Gaps, Regularizations and Asymmetries* (London: Routledge, 2002), 47; and Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 93, 273; and Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Irish English. Volume 2: Republic of Ireland* (Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013), 107–108.

24. Lieselotte Anderwald, 'Negation and Non-Standard', 47. An example from the corpus is: 'if I war now in Ereland, I wad **ne** stay there' (James Murray, 27 October 1737, CORIECOR).

25. No token of *amn't* was actually found in the letters analysed.

26. Kevin McCafferty, 'Victories Fastened in Grammar: Historical Documentation of Irish English', *English Today* 27, no. 2 (June 2011): 19; Kevin McCafferty and Carolina P. Amador-Moreno, '"I Will Be Expecting"', 181; and Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*.

27. Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), 13.

28. Joan Beal, 'The Grammar of Tyneside', 199; Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (New York: Longman, 1985), 123. Cf. also Michael Swan, *Practical English Usage*, 159.

29. Lieselotte Anderwald, *Negation in Non-Standard*, 74–75; and Sali A. Tagliamonte, *Roots of English*, 89.

30. Ibid. Cf. also Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*, 1128.

31. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 272.

32. Ibid. See also Raymond Hickey, *Dublin English*, 122, 206. Raw numbers supporting Hickey's claim can be found in Hickey (*Irish English*, 273), but quantitative findings do not appear to have been published. It should be noted that AUX-contracted and full forms are grouped as one variant as opposed to NEG contraction in Hickey's survey.

33. Sali A. Tagliamonte, *Roots of English*.

34. Ibid., 89. Also Kallen (*Irish English. Volume 2*, 107-108) reports that this feature may be found in present-day Northern Irish English. In contrast

to the present study, Tagliamonte only looked at AUX versus NEG contraction. Full forms were not included in her analysis.

35. John Forsythe, *Eight Letters from Ireland to John Forsythe the Emigrant with Some Others of Interest and a Genealogy of Four Generations of Forsythes in America* (Pittsburgh: 1941); and Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce D. Boling and David N. Doyle, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

36. Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools 6* (Liverpool: Lexical Analysis Software, 2012).

37. Furthermore, two instances of *hath not* and three of *thou hast not/had not* and *has not*, respectively, were excluded from further analysis. These are not contracted in my data and therefore excluded.

38. Phonological contexts have so far not been taken into consideration as we are exclusively dealing with written records. However, third-person singular subjects ending in *–s* would for example inhibit AUX contraction with BE in speech due to a phonological clash of consonants.

39. Lieselotte, Anderwald, *Negation in Non-Standard*, 72–73.

40. Sali A. Tagliamonte, and Jennifer Smith, 'Either *it isn't* or *it's not*', 263; and María del Pilar Castillo-González, 'Uncontracted Negatives', 52.

41. Spelling and punctuation are as in the originals.

42. Lieselotte Anderwald, *Negation in Non-Standard*, 73; María del Pilar Castillo-González, 'Uncontracted Negatives', 50–51; José Ramón Valera Pérez, 'Operator and Negative Contraction in Spoken British English: A Change in Progress', in *The Verb Phrase in English: Investigating Recent Language Change with Corpora*, eds Bas Aarts, Joanne Close, Geoffrey N. Leech and Shean Wallis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 9; and María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation', 303.

43. Margareta Westergren Axelsson, *Contractions in British Newspapers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia, 1998), 52, cited by María del Pilar Castillo-González ('Uncontracted Negatives', 52); and Bonnie S. McElhinny, 'Copula and Auxiliary Contraction in the Speech of White Americans', *American Speech*, 68, no. 4 (Winter 1993), 372.

44. Goran Kjellmer, 'On Contraction', 156; María del Pilar Castillo-González, 'Uncontracted Negatives', 53; and María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation', 304.

45. Margareta Westergren Axelsson, *Contractions in British Newspapers*, 58ff; cited by María del Pilar Castillo-González, 'Uncontracted Negatives', 54; and Goran Kjellmer, 'On Contraction', 165, 173.

46. This is: 'in this Time we Discovered some Burthen opprests her with much relenting her rashness in Leaving her friends to Come to America to Marry **a poor man that ant** able to afford her a Comfortable Support' (Samuel Forman, 27 February 1768, CORIECOR).

47. In the analysis, no distinction was made between lexical or auxiliary usage.

48. This is: 'in this Province **she hasnt** any Child as yet' (Samuel Forman, 27 February 1768, CORIECOR)

49. Examples marked with an asterisk are instances that, in spite of the spelling, do not show NEG/AUX contraction.

50. Sali A. Tagliamonte, *Roots of English*, 89.

51. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 272–73.

52. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 272.

53. Sali A. Tagliamonte and Jennifer Smith, 'Either *it isn't* or *it's not*', 260.

54. E.g. Doublas Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*, 1129–30; and Sali A. Tagliamonte and Jennifer Smith, 'Either *it isn't* or *it's not*', 260.

55. María José López-Couso, 'Auxiliary and Negative Cliticisation', 316–17. However, López-Couso suggests that the nature of the subject is actually less important for the promotion of contraction than the effects of string frequency (Ibid., 320). String frequency has not been considered in the current study.

56. Sali A. Tagliamonte, *Roots of English*, 89.

57. This table only looks at the decades in which contraction occurs in the letters. The number of tokens is therefore lower than in Table 3.

58. E.g. Sali A. Tagliamonte, ibid., 92; Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 273; and Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Irish English. Volume 2*, 107.

59. Jeffrey L. Kallen, *Irish English. Volume 2*, 107. Both counties are relatively close to Ulster.

60. It is unfortunately not possible to give the exact number because some of the letters were written by unknown authors.

61. For some authors additional information was also found in articles and books.

62. Note that the results presented for AUX contraction in Fig. 2 are based on just two Ulster writers and two writers of unknown origin.

63. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*.

64. William Labov, 'The Intersection of Sex and Social Class in the Course of Linguistic Change', *Language Variation and Change* 2 (1990): 205–6.
65. This study refers to the letter writers' biological sex, either male or female, and not to the social concept of *gender*.
66. Terttu Nevalainen and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg, *Sociolinguistics and Language History: Studies Based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 26, 58.
67. Ibid., 25.
68. Table 7 solely refers to the authors included in the analysis, i.e. those who produced relevant tokens.
69. The writers whose social rank is unknown have not been included here.
70. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 272.
71. William Labov, 'The Interaction', 205–6.
72. Ibid., 221. Investigations into different ethnic or religious groups, urban versus rural groups or generational differences are, for the time being, beyond the scope of this study.
73. Raymond Hickey, *Irish English*, 221.
74. Esther-Miriam Wagner, 'Challenges of Multiglossia: Scribes and the Emergence of Substandard Judaeo-Arabic Registers', in *Scribes as Agents of Language Change*, eds Esther-Miriam Wagner, Ben Outhwaite and Bettina Beinhoff (Berlin: de Gruyter-Mouton, 2013), 261–75.

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# A Corpus-Based Approach to *Waiting for Godot*'s Stage Directions: A Comparison between the French and the English Version

Pablo Ruano San Segundo

## 1    Introduction

By bridging the gap between corpus linguistics and literary stylistics, corpus stylistics has made new avenues of analysis available for the study of literary authors.[1] One of its major contributions is 'to further our understanding of the linguistic units in literary texts and the effects these have on the way in which readers create meanings from texts',[2] since such approaches may reveal new 'patterns that we as readers may not be aware of, although such patterns might still contribute to the effects we perceive'.[3] In this paper, the patterns under investigation are those which arise from the use of stage directions supplying information about how the utterances of the characters are to be spoken or enacted, both in the French and English versions of the play. I aim to show that these bracketed data are not 'translations at all',[4] as *Waiting for Godot*, released in 1955, has features which *En attendant Godot*, published in 1952, lacks.[5]

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Indeed, stage directions may fulfil an important function within the architecture of a play from a textual point of view;[6] they can provide information about how words are to be uttered, which may indicate traits of a speaker's character or personality.[7] For instance:

(1)    VLADIMIR: [*taking string from his pocket*]. We'll try and lace it.
       ESTRAGON: [**vehemently**]. No no, no laces, no laces!
       VLADIMIR: You'll be sorry. Let's try the other. [*As before*]. Well?
       ESTRAGON: [**grudgingly**]. It fits too.

(Act 2)

Both [*vehemently*] and [*grudgingly*] indicate how Estragon's utterances are to be spoken, thus projecting his bitter character. Bearing in mind that 'certain personalities gravitate toward certain speech acts', it may be a safe assumption that when this sort of stage direction is systematically used to introduce words of a certain character, it may end up not only modelling discourse but also indicating traits of the character it appears with.[8] Thus, the fact that examples such as *[despairingly]*, *[exasperated]*, *[feebly]*, *[forcibly]* or *[violently]* are repeatedly used to introduce Estragon's words may contribute to depict his unfriendly nature due to the systematicity with which the reader come across them throughout the play. Besides, some stage directions—*[despairingly]*, *[exasperated]* or *[forcibly]*, for instance—and so certain attitudes are attributed only to Estragon's discourse, which reinforces the depicting role that they may play.

Due to their dispersed nature, however, the systematicity with which some of these directions are used is not always easy to spot with the naked eye in the written text. Using a corpus-based approach, though, it is possible to retrieve all instances of stage directions and identify which ones appear next to which specific character, and thereby to show whether there are any recurrent patterns of use between the two. Patterns will be analysed in the English text first and then in the original French version, a comparison which is intended to illustrate any stylistic differences between the texts.[9]

## 2     Beckett and Bilingualism

It is a well-known fact that Beckett's linguistic circumstances are rarely found in literature, for

> [W]e are faced, not with a writer who abandoned one language for another (a not infrequent occurrence), but with the possible unique phenomenon of one who, throughout his career, has divided his efforts and his interests between two languages.[10]

Unlike other twentieth-century major bilingual writers, his bilingualism was the product of a deliberate choice, for he was neither persecuted nor born into a minority language.[11] His English- and French-speaking fictive universes have given rise, unsurprisingly, to two major schools of criticism: the Anglophone and the Francophone, with clearly diverging—and sometimes opposing—viewpoints.[12] I will try to detach myself from these trends, embarking from a premise way less reductionist: that Beckett's self-imposed exile led him to write many of his works initially in French. This will provide a more neutral starting point when approaching his self-translations from a stylistic point of view.

The occasional coexistence of French and English in Beckett's writings invalidates the relationship between source language and target language as such, even though there is always a text that was written first. Nevertheless, whatever the language used in his original versions, comparisons may be realised in either direction (French–English–French), since there is a sense of double existence which, to some extent, nullifies the originality of the initial text. Beer puts it very well when she claims that

> Beckett, by accident or design, found himself in his maturity writing texts that he knew would have to be self-translated. As a result, a sense of double existence began to be inherent in the first of the two versions. So successfully did he create these linguistic twins that readers and audiences in either language can move from work to work […] without the slightest awareness that in each pair one is an original in their own language, the other a translation.[13]

This equity proves meaningful, as it refutes the usually acknowledged axiom that the original must be considered superior to its translation. In Beckett's case this does not apply, since one cannot refer to a real translation, but to a second version. It is this same status which makes many critics consider his final versions a continuation of the process of craftsmanship, where some relevant modifications may occur. As St. Pierre states,

> [T]he changes Beckett makes in the process of translation are considered not only acceptable but significant, an indication of the reading of the text adopted by the author himself. The unquestioning acceptance of these changes, by readers and critics alike, would seem to indicate that, at least in the case of an author translating his or her own works, the standard— although by no means unproblematic—measure of the faithfulness of a translation is no longer operative.[14]

This being so, the present analysis bolsters, with quantifiable data, the idea that *Waiting for Godot*, rather than a self-translation, is the final outcome. Of course, *En attendant Godot* is considered neither an incomplete work nor a faulty play. By labelling *Waiting for Godot* as the ultimate creation, I am just trying to emphasise its degree of refinement, for it not only keeps intact the essence of the French original, but also has certain aspects that are more carefully polished than in the former work, the stage directions under analysis here being the perfect example.

# 3    Methodology

For the search and retrieval of the stage directions in the English text, a corpus-based methodology has been used. It has been carried out with the help of *Wordsmith Tools 6 ©*, which allows a systematic trawling of this element.[15] Beyond the type of information they provide readers with, stage directions can be divided into two types, depending on their location in the text. On the one hand, there are those which appear in an initial position, between the character's name and the utterance, and which offer guidance about the manner in which the utterance should be spoken:

(2)  ESTRAGON: [*forcibly*]. Bags. [*He points at Lucky*]. Why? Always hold. [*He sags, panting*]. Never put down. [*He opens his hands, straightens up with relief*]. Why?

(Act 1)

On the other hand, there are those which run parallel to characters' words, and provide information or guidance about the immediate scene, movement(s) or gesture(s), as in:

(3)  ESTRAGON: [*forcibly*]. Bags. [***He points at Lucky***]. Why? Always hold. [***He sags, panting***]. Never put down. [***He opens his hands, straightens up with relief***]. Why?

(Act 1)

The latter are far more frequent throughout the play, as examples (2) and (3) show. Of course, stage directions in initial position can also provide information about, for instance, characters' actions:

(4)  VLADIMIR: [***taking string from his pocket***]. We'll try and lace it.

[Act 2]

By the same token, those embedded in a turn may sometimes indicate the way in which words are to be articulated:

(5)  ESTRAGON: This is how it is. [*He reflects*]. The bough … the bough … [***Angrily***]. Use your head, can't you?

[Act 1]

Using *WordSmith*, stage directions can be searched comprehensively in each position. In order to find those in initial position, the concordance search *NAME: [\** will suffice, for it will isolate the words that appear after the square brackets placed immediately after the corresponding name. In the case of Estragon, for instance, the concordance search *ESTRAGON: [\** retrieves a total of 91 hits (Fig. 1):

However, the retrieval of those interspersed in a turn is a little more complex. Unlike those in an initial position, where the name of the character acts as the distinctive element when carrying out the concordance

**Fig. 1** Concordance search *ESTRAGON: [\** (20 of 91 examples)

searches, this second block of stage directions do not have any distin-
guishing items which facilitate their retrieval. One solution is to slightly
alter the text. Thus, a parenthesis has been substituted for the original
square bracket, the parenthesis being the new distinguishing element
with respect to the stage directions in an initial position. For example:

> (6)    ESTRAGON: [*step forward*]. You're angry? (***Silence. Step forward***]**.**
> Forgive me. (***Silence. Step forward. Estragon lays his hand on
> Vladimir's shoulder***]. Come, Didi. (**Silence**]**.** Give me your hand.
> (**Vladimir half turns**]**.** Embrace me! (***Vladimir stiffens***]**.** Don't be
> stubborn! (***Vladimir softens. They embrace. Estragon recoils***]**.** You
> stink of garlic!
>
> [Act 1]

**Fig. 2** Concordance search *(\** for Estragon (20 of 72 examples)

Thanks to this modification, when making the concordance search *(\**, those already tracked down will not be retrieved, but only those scattered throughout a character's turn. The only problem with this search is that its output does not discriminate between the characters to whom stage directions are attached. To overcome this obstacle, I simply carried out a manual analysis to separate Estragon's, Vladimir's, Pozzo's, the boy's and Lucky's discourses from each other. To continue with the example of Estragon, this search retrieves a total of 72 hits (Fig. 2):

These two searches[16] make it possible to separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, for they isolate every single stage direction from each character's discourse in the English text. The number of examples retrieved amounts to 629, as distributed in Table 1:[17,18,19,20,21,22,23]

**Table 1** Stage directions in *Waiting for Godot*

| | Estragon | | Vladimir | | Pozzo | | Boy | | Lucky | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ESTRAGON [* | (* | VLADIMIR [* | (* | POZZO [* | (* | BOY [* | (* | (* | N | % |
| Voice | 48 | 4 | 30 | 6 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 108 | 17.2 |
| Addressing | 5 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 4.7 |
| Stage-related | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1.1 |
| Action | 10 | 21 | 5 | 49 | 5 | 102 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 194 | 30.9 |
| Other information | 28 | 46 | 22 | 93 | 4 | 95 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 290 | 46.1 |
| Total | 91 | 72 | 70 | 150 | 29 | 211 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 629 | 100 |

Some of those 629 examples correspond to more than one of the categories at the same time—i.e. there are stage directions whose content can be, for instance, of the action and addressing type:

> (7)    VLADIMIR: Extraordinary the tricks that memory plays! (***Estragon tries to speak, renounces, limps to his place, sits down and begins to take off his boots. To Boy.***] Well?
>
> [Act 1]

These examples are plentiful. However, there are not many which contain, among the different types of information offered, details about how utterances are to be spoken. When this happens,[24] I have opted for labelling them according to the first type of information provided. Thus, example (7) has been counted as 'action'.[25] Once refined, the total number of instances under the 'voice' label adds up to 108.

Finally, these 108 examples will be manually compared with their French equivalents, as will be shown in Sect. 5.

# 4    Analysis

Annoyance is, without question, the most common feature the reader finds in stage directions modelling characters' utterances in *Waiting for Godot*. These stage directions help to reflect the general negative emotions which dominate the play, as the three following examples of *[angrily]* demonstrate:

> (8)    VLADIMIR: Boots must be taken off every day. I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?
> ESTRAGON: [*feebly*]. Help me!
> VLADIMIR: It hurts?
> ESTRAGON: [*angrily*]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!
> VLADIMIR: [*angrily*]. No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.
> ESTRAGON: It hurts?
> VLADIMIR: [*angrily*]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!
>
> (Act 1)

**Table 2** Stage directions modelling Pozzo's utterances

| Pozzo | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [*angrily*] | [*fervently*] | [*normal voice*] | [*terrifying voice*] |
| [*anguished*] | [*groaning, clutching his head*] | [*peremptory*] | (*vibrantly*) |
| [*calmer*] | [*impatient*] | (*Sobbing*) | [*violently*] |
| [*delighted*] | [*in raptures*] | [*sobbing*] | |
| [*disappointed*] | (*Lyrically*) | [*suddenly furious*] | |

Nevertheless, beyond this discontent, a look at the 108 English examples retrieved will show that stage directions are far from being randomly arranged, for there are certain examples which tend to occur with a specific character exclusively. With Lucky or the boy, finding any sort of systematicity is barely possible, since their textual lives are so scanty that there is no room for a recurrent use of stage directions. With Pozzo, the slave driver, however, it starts to be possible to discern a pattern, as presented in Table 2.

Beyond the logical correlation between his way of speaking and his mood,[26] there is one example used twice: *[sobbing]*. Even though barely anything can be stated on the basis of only two instances, it is worth remarking that this very piece of information does not occur with any other character. That is to say, there exists a textual collocation 'POZZO: [*sobbing*]', which perfectly matches his minor breakdowns when things do not go his way, as in:

(9)  POZZO: Don't let him go! (*Vladimir and Estragon totter*). Don't move! (*Pozzo fetches bag and basket and brings them towards Lucky*). Hold him tight! (*He puts the bag in Lucky's hand. Lucky drops it immediately*). Don't let him go! (*He puts back the bag in Lucky's hand. Gradually, at the feel of the bag, Lucky recovers his senses and his fingers finally close round the handle*). Hold him tight! (*As before with basket*) […]. Thank you, gentlemen, and let me … (*he fumbles in his pockets*)… let me wish you … (*fumbles*) … wish you … (*fumbles*) … what have I done with my watch? (*Fumbles*). A genuine half-hunter, gentlemen, with deadbeat escapement! (**Sobbing**]. Twas my granpa gave it to me! (*He searches on the ground, Vladimir and Estragon likewise. Pozzo turns over with his foot the remains of Lucky's hat*). Well now isn't that just—

(Act 1)

Table 3  Stage directions modelling Vladimir's utterances

| Vladimir | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [*admiringly*] | [*gloomily*] | [*reassuring*] | [*vexed*] |
| [*alarmed*] | [*grudgingly*] | [*scandalized*] | [*vexed*] |
| [*angrily*] | [*halting, violently*] | [*sententious*] | [*violently*] |
| [*angrily*] | [*hurt, coldly*] | [*softly*] | [*violently*] |
| [*conciliating*] | [*impatiently*] | [*softly*] | (*With emphasis*] |
| (*Decisively*] | [*in anguish*] | [*stutteringly resolute*] | [*without anger*] |
| [*distinctly*] | (*Indifferent*] | [*tenderly*] | |
| (*Estragon groans. Silence*] | (*Joyous*] | [*triumphantly, pointing to the boots*] | |
| [*exploding*] | [*louder*] | [*triumphantly*] | |
| [*feebly*] | [*musingly*] | [*vehemently*] | |

This apparently incidental recurrent use of a stage direction with a single character is far more common with Vladimir and Estragon. In the case of Vladimir, the 36 stage directions retrieved are (Table 3):

As can be perceived, the general tone is rather violent. Examples such as *[exploding]*, *[grudgingly]*, *[impatiently]*, *[in anguish]*, *[vehemently]* or *[with emphasis]* illustrate Vladimir's stance towards his utterances very well. However, the most striking fact in the arrangement of stage directions with Vladimir's discourse is the significant increase of instances used more than once to introduce his words. There are up to five examples used twice: *[angrily]*, *[softly]*, *[triumphantly]*, *[vexed]* and *[violently]*.[27] These stage directions—with the single exception of *[softly]*—reinforce the excessiveness of his utterances, ratifying the negative emotions that dominate his textual life. Besides, two of them introduce his words exclusively: *[softly]* and *[vexed]*. These are not random examples, but stage directions which project a relevant trait of his character, namely, his feeling of inferiority in relation to Estragon. The two uses of *[softly]* suggest that Vladimir, despite being intellectually superior to Estragon, feels subject to him.[28] That is why he accepts his directives:

(10)    VLADIMIR: Wait. (*He goes over and sits down beside Estragon and begins to sing in a loud voice*]. Bye bye bye bye Bye bye–
ESTRAGON: [*looking up angrily*]. Not so loud!

VLADIMIR: [*softly*].
Bye bye bye bye
Bye bye bye bye
Bye bye bye bye
Bye bye …

[Act 2]

The same can be applied to *[vexed],* which also is only applied to Vladimir:

(11)    VLADIMIR: Now? … (*Joyous.*] There you are again … (*Indifferent*]. There we are again … (*Gloomy*]. There I am again.
ESTRAGON: You see, you feel worse when I'm with you. I feel better alone too.
VLADIMIR: [*vexed*]. Then why do you always come crawling back?
ESTRAGON: I don't know.

(Act 2)

The case of Estragon is, finally, the clearest example of such a systematic use of this element with a character. His textual life hoards the most extensive catalogue of stage directions modelling utterances, with 52 examples (Table 4):

The emotional tone perceived is, unsurprisingly, that of moodiness (*[angrily]*, *[suddenly furious]*) and vehemence (*[highly excited]*, *[vehemently]*, *[with exaggerated enthusiasm]*). Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that the number of stage directions used repeatedly to model his words increases significantly in comparison to those of Pozzo and Vladimir, with eight examples used at least twice: *[despairingly]*, *[exasperated]*, *[feebly]*, *[forcibly]*, *[irritably]*, *[louder]*, *[timidly]* and *[violently]*. And it is even more so that six of them are attached to his discourse exclusively. He is the only character who says things *[despairingly]* (four times),[29] in a manner that is *[exasperated]* (four times), *[forcibly]* (twice) *[irritably]* (three times), *[louder]* (twice) and *[timidly]* (three times). These are all examples from which some traits of his character can be drawn. Let us consider a couple of cases. The use of [*despairingly*], for instance, accounts for his despondency and his bad memory, since it tends to appear when he needs to be reminded that they are waiting for Godot:

**Table 4** Stage directions modelling Estragon's utterances

| Estragon | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| [*a little calmer*] | [*exasperated*] | [*louder*] | [*violently*] |
| [*Angrily*] | [*faintly*] | [*louder*] | [*violently*] |
| [*anxious*] | [*feebly*] | [*sadly*] | [*violently*] |
| [*aphoristic for once*] | [*feebly*] | [*sagging*] | [*voluptuously*] |
| [*calmer*] | [*forcibly*] | [*shocked*] | [*waving*] |
| [*chewing*] | [*forcibly*] | [*suddenly furious*] | [*weary*] |
| [*coldly*] | [*gently*] | [*timidly, to Pozzo*] | (*With assurance*] |
| [*convulsed with merriment*] | [*grudgingly*] | [*timidly*] | [*with effort*] |
| (*Pause. Despairing*] | [*hastily*] | [*timidly*] | [*with exaggerated enthusiasm*] |
| (*Despairingly*] | [*highly excited*] | [*triumphantly*] | [*with finality*] |
| [*despairingly*] | [*irritably*] | [*undertone*] | |
| [*despairingly*] | [*irritably*] | [*vehemently*] | |
| [*exasperated*] | [*irritably*] | [*very insidious*] | |
| [*exasperated*] | [*laughing noisily*] | [*violently*] | |

(12)   VLADIMIR: We can't.
ESTRAGON: Why not?
VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
ESTRAGON: [***despairingly***]. Ah! (*Pause*]. You're sure it was here?

(Act 1)

(13)   ESTRAGON: What do we do now?
VLADIMIR: I don't know.
ESTRAGON: Let's go.
VLADIMIR: We can't.
ESTRAGON: Why not?
VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
ESTRAGON: [***despairingly***]. Ah!

[Act 1]

The repeated use of *[irritably]*, *[forcibly]* and *[exasperated]*, on the other hand, help to illustrate his impetuous and inconsiderate behaviour:

(14)   VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (*He reflects.*] Get up till I embrace you.
ESTRAGON: [***irritably***]. Not now, not now.

(Act 1)

(15)   BOY: Mister Albert …?
VLADIMIR: Yes.
ESTRAGON: What do you want?
VLADIMIR: Approach!
The Boy does not move.
ESTRAGON: [***forcibly***]. Approach when you're told, can't you?

(Act 1)

(16)   VLADIMIR: [*letting go the leg*]. Where are your boots?
ESTRAGON: I must have thrown them away.
VLADIMIR: When?
ESTRAGON: I don't know.
VLADIMIR: Why?
ESTRAGON: [***exasperated***]. I don't know why I don't know!
VLADIMIR: No, I mean why did you throw them away?
ESTRAGON: [***exasperated***]. Because they were hurting me!

(Act 2)

In the light of these few examples, it becomes clear that the stage directions in *Waiting for Godot*, due to their recurrent—and sometimes exclusive—use, have a role for specifying character traits. But is this refined arrangement a faithful rendering of the original French text?

# 5     Differences between *Waiting for Godot* and *En Attendant Godot*

It is my contention that the stage directions of *Waiting for Godot* should be considered a consequence of Beckett's continuous process of craftsmanship, since the stage directions in the English text differ greatly from those in the French version, at least from a stylistic point of view. In the case of Pozzo, for instance, the only example used in English on more

**Table 5** Recurrent stage directions with Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot* and French equivalencies

| Pozzo | |
| --- | --- |
| *Waiting for Godot* | *En attendant Godot* |
| (*sobbing*] | *[*sanglotant*)* |
| [*sobbing*] | [NO] |

than one occasion to introduce his words—*[sobbing]*, employed twice and attached to his utterances exclusively—can only be found in the original play once, with no authorial comment in the other instance about how his words are to be uttered (Table 5):[30]

Although an isolated example, this omission results in a loss of details which may affect the portrayal of the slave driver as character who is frustrated when things do not go his own way, as in the example commented on in the previous section:

(17)   POZZO: Don't let him go! (*Vladimir and Estragon totter*]. Don't move! (*Pozzo fetches bag and basket and brings them towards Lucky*]. Hold him tight! (*He puts the bag in Lucky's hand. Lucky drops it immediately*]. Don't let him go! (*He puts back the bag in Lucky's hand. Gradually, at the feel of the bag, Lucky recovers his senses and his fingers finally close round the handle*]. Hold him tight! (*As before with basket*] […]. Thank you, gentlemen, and let me … (*he fumbles in his pockets*] … let me wish you … (*fumbles*] … wish you … (*fumbles*] … what have I done with my watch? (*Fumbles*]. A genuine half-hunter, gentlemen, with deadbeat escapement! (***Sobbing***]. Twas my granpa gave it to me! (*He searches on the ground, Vladimir and Estragon likewise. Pozzo turns over with his foot the remains of Lucky's hat*]. Well now isn't that just—

(Act 1)

*POZZO: Ne le lâchez pas! [*Estragon et Vladimir chancellent*]. Ne bougez pas! [*Pozzo va prendre la valise et le panier et les apporte vers Lucky*]. Tenez-le bien! [*Il met la valise dans la main de Lucky, qui la lâche aussitôt*]. Ne le lâchez pas [*Il recommence. Peu à peu au contact de la valise, Lucky reprend ses esprits et ses doigts finissent pas se resserrer autor de la poignée*]. Tenez-le toujours! [*Même jeu avec

*panier] […]. Merci, messieurs, et laissez-moi vous—[il fouille dans ses poches]—vous souhaiter—[il fouille]—vous souhaiter—[il fouille] mais où ai-je donc mis ma montre? [Il fouille]. Ça alors! [Il lève une tête défaite]. Une veritable savonnette, messieurs, à secondes trotteuses. C'est mon pépé qui me l'a donnée. [Il fouille]. Elle est peut-être tombée. [Il cherche par terre, ainsi que Vladimir et Estragon. Pozzo retourne de son pied les restes du chapeau de Lucky]. Ça, par exemple!*

The case of Vladimir is even clearer. None of the five stage directions which occur more than once in the English text to introduce his words arises from a systematic use in the French play, as can be observed in the following table (Table 6):

These differences bring about a series of stylistic implications that have a direct influence on his depiction. Let us take the examples of *[angrily]* and *[violently]* as a case in point. In both instances it can be observed that on one of the two occasions where in *Waiting for Godot* we are provided with an accurate description of how Vladimir's utterances are carried out, in the French play there is no information at all. The playwright's lack of interference in *En attendant Godot* results—if we compare it to *Waiting for Godot*—in a paucity of details that, in English, do contribute to the projection of his peevishness:

**Table 6** Recurrent stage directions with Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot* and French equivalencies

| Vladimir | |
| --- | --- |
| *Waiting for Godot* | *En attendant Godot* |
| [*angrily*] | *[avec emportement]* |
| [*angrily*] | [NO] |
| [*triumphantly, pointing to the boots*] | *[montrant les chaussures]* |
| [*triumphantly*] | *[triomphant]* |
| [*softly*] | *[moins fort]* |
| [*softly*] | [NO] |
| [*vexed*] | *[piqué]* |
| [*vexed*] | *[vexé]* |
| [*violently*] | *[avec force]* |
| [*violently*] | [NO] |

(18)   VLADIMIR: It hurts?
ESTRAGON: [*angrily*]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!
VLADIMIR: [*angrily*]. No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.
ESTRAGON: It hurts?
VLADIMIR: [**angrily**]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

(Act 1)

*VLADIMIR: Tu as mal?*
*ESTRAGON: Mal! Il me demande si j'ai mal!*
*VLADIMIR: [*avec emportement*] Il n'y a jamais que toi qui souffre! Moi je ne compte pas. Je voudrais pourtant te voir à ma place. Tu m'en dirais des nouvelles.*
*ESTRAGON: Tu as eu mal?*
*VLADIMIR: Mal! Il me demande si j'ai eu mal!*

(19)   ESTRAGON: I was dreaming I was happy.
VLADIMIR: That passed the time.
ESTRAGON: I was dreaming that—
VLADIMIR: [**violently**]. Don't tell me! (*Silence.*] I wonder is he really blind.

(Act 2)

*ESTRAGON: Je rêvais que j'étais heureux.*
*VLADIMIR: Ça a fait passer le temps.*
*ESTRAGON: Je rêvais que …*
*VLADIMIR: Tais-toi! [*Silence*]. Je me demande s'il est vraiment aveugle.*

It is, nevertheless, with the examples attached to Vladimir exclusively—*[softly]* and *[vexed]*—where this unevenness is best perceived from a stylistic point of view. In the case of *[softly]*, a similar stage direction—*[moins fort]*—is employed just once, while with the other utterance no guidance is provided; with *[vexed]*, on the contrary, while it is true that a similar piece of information is used in both cases in the French play, Beckett employs two different stage directions—*[piqué]* and *[vexé]*–, thus suppressing the associative relationship established between the character and the very stage direction which reinforces his portrayal in the English

text. This arrangement tallies closely with Beckett's perception of English. Unlike French, he acknowledged English a good language for drama because of 'its concreteness, its close relationship between thing and vocable',[31] as demonstrated by this example.

The case of Estragon is, finally, the most representative example when it comes to stating the differences between *Waiting for Godot* and *En attendant Godot* as far as the arrangement of stage directions is concerned. These are the French equivalencies for those examples used at least twice in the English play (Table 7):

Some of the stage directions used more than once to model Estragon's words in the English text were already present in French: *[faiblement]*,

**Table 7** Recurrent stage directions with Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* and French equivalencies

| Estragon | |
| --- | --- |
| *Waiting for Godot* | *En attendant Godot* |
| [*despairingly*] | [NO] |
| [*despairingly*] | *[*Avec reproche*]* |
| (*despairingly*) | [NO] |
| (*Pause. Despairing*] | *[*Un temps*]* |
| [*feebly*] | *[*faiblement*]* |
| [*feebly*] | *[*faiblement*]* |
| [*forcibly*] | *[*avec force*]* |
| [*forcibly*] | *[*avec force*]* |
| [*irritably*] | *[*avec irritation*]* |
| [*irritably*] | *[*agacé*]* |
| [*irritably*] | *[*avec irritation*]* |
| [*timidly to Pozzo*] | *[*à Pozzo*]* |
| [*timidly*] | *[*timidement*]* |
| [*timidly*] | *[*timidement*]* |
| [*violently*] | [NO] |
| [*violently*] | *[*avec force*]* |
| [*violently*] | *[*à Vladimir*]* |
| [*violently*] | [NO] |
| [*exasperated*] | *[*excédé*]* |
| [*exasperated*] | [NO] |
| [*exasperated*] | [NO] |
| [*louder*] | *[*plus fort*]* |
| [*louder*] | *[*plus fort*]* |

*[avec force]*, *[avec irritation]*, *[timidement]* and *[plus fort]*. These five cases bolster the systematicity with which they may be employed. Nonetheless, they do not show the refinement found in English. The use of *[avec force]*, for instance, goes beyond the four examples attached to Estragon, modulating one of Vladimir's utterances too.[32]

Apart from these five cases, the rest of the stage directions recurrently used in English to shape Estragon's utterances are not faithful renderings of the original. Let us take *[violently]* as an example. With four occurrences, it is one of the stage directions with more presence in the discourse of a single character. That presence is, however, merely coincidental in French, since only the aforementioned *[avec force]* accounts for an utterance pronounced in such a way. In the three remaining occasions where *[violently]* occurs in English, either a different stage direction is used (once) or there is no authorial comment when introducing his words (twice), as in the following examples:

(20)    VLADIMIR: You have a message from Mr. Godot?
        BOY: Yes Sir.
        VLADIMIR: Well, what is it?
        ESTRAGON: What kept you so late?
        The Boy looks at them in turn, not knowing to which he should reply.
        VLADIMIR: [*to Estragon*]. Let him alone.
        ESTRAGON: [***violently***]. You let me alone. (*Advancing, to the Boy*]. Do you know what time it is?

                                                                    (Act 1)

        VLADIMIR: Tu as un message de monsieur Godot?
        GARCON: Oui, monsieur.
        VLADIMIR: Eh bien, dis le.
        ESTRAGON: Pourquoi tu viens si tard?
        Le garçon les regarde l'un après l'autre, ne sachant á qui répondre.
        VLADIMIR: [á Estragon] Laisse-le tranquille.
        ESTRAGON: [**à Vladimir**] Fous-moi la paix, toi. Tu sais l'heure qu'il est?

(21)   ESTRAGON: [*violently*]. I'm hungry!
       VLADIMIR: Do you want a carrot?
       ESTRAGON: Is that all there is?
       VLADIMIR: I might have some turnips.

                                                              (Act 1)


       *ESTRAGON: J'ai faim.*
       *VLADIMIR: Veux-tu une carotte?*
       *ESTRAGON: Il n'y a pas autre chose?*
       *VLADIMIR: Je dois avoir quelques navets.*

The French original, therefore, lacks the violent tone in the articulation of Estragon's discourse that can be observed in the final version and which may contribute to the projection of his surliness.

In the case of *[despairingly]*, again, a similar stage direction can be found just once in the French text. In the three remaining cases, *En attendant Godot* does not provide the reader with any sort of explanation which accounts for Estragon's despondency. This lack of information related to his misery affects his portrayal, for it is attached to his discourse exclusively. The loss of such nuances that occurs when this type of data is not explicitly presented can be observed in the two following examples, where the French text does not project his gloominess when he is reminded that they are waiting for Godot, as was commented on in the previous section:

(22)   VLADIMIR: We can't.
       ESTRAGON: Why not?
       VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
       ESTRAGON: [*despairingly*]. Ah! (Pause). You're sure it was here?
                                                              (Act 1)


       *VLADIMIR: On ne peut pas.*
       *ESTRAGON: Pourquoi?*
       *VLADIMIR: On attend … Godot.*
       *ESTRAGON: C'est vrai. [*Un temps*]. Tu es sûr que cést ici?*

(23)  VLADIMIR: We can't.
      ESTRAGON: Why not?
      VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.
      ESTRAGON: [***despairingly***]. Ah!

                                               (Act 1)

      *VLADIMIR: On ne peut pas.*
      *ESTRAGON: Pourquoi?*
      *VLADIMIR: On attend Godot.*
      *ESTRAGON: C'est vrai.*

Beckett's decision to use *[despairingly]* on both occasions seems to be in line with his wish to emphasise Estragon's attitude—his character, after all—in two identical situations. The same can be applied to *[exasperated]*, which in English is attached to Estragon's words exclusively too, resulting in the three-time collocation: 'ESTRAGON: [*exasperated*]' which contributes to the projection of his moodiness. In the French text, however, there is just a single use of a similar stage direction: *[excedé]*. In the other two situations, this cue is not present:

(24)  VLADIMIR: [*letting go the leg*]. Where are your boots?
      ESTRAGON: I must have thrown them away.
      VLADIMIR: When?
      ESTRAGON: I don't know.
      VLADIMIR: Why?
      ESTRAGON: [***exasperated***]. I don't know why I don't know!
      VLADIMIR: No, I mean why did you throw them away?
      ESTRAGON: [***exasperated***]. Because they were hurting me!

                                               (Act 2)

      *VLADIMIR: Où sont tes chaussures?*
      *ESTRAGON: J'ai dû les jeter.*
      *VLADIMIR: Quand?*
      *ESTRAGON: Je ne sais pas.*
      *VLADIMIR: Pourquoi?*
      *ESTRAGON: Je ne me rappelle pas.*
      *VLADIMIR: Non, je veux dire pourquoi tu les as jetées?*
      *ESTRAGON: Elles me faisaient mal.*

On the whole, these examples, as well as those not listed due to length constraints, demonstrate that *En attendant Godot* lacks the refinement observed in the final version of the play. Stage directions are much more carefully sorted in *Waiting for Godot*, and seem to respond to a more premeditated choice than in the French play. It is difficult to state whether and to what extent Beckett was conscious of every single instance commented on. In any case, the present analysis demonstrates that he was more precise when writing in English. Some scholars hold that he did not intentionally change second versions of his works to make them clearer or to rethink his earlier ideas, but made changes simply because of the language itself. In Butler's words, for instance,

> [W]here he [Beckett] appears to make a change or to develop a thought or simply to omit or add gratuitously, it is most likely that he is responding not to an internal imperative to revise earlier work but to the external imperatives of language, culture, and self-consistency.[33]

This stance, albeit plausible, does not seem completely adequate, for his changes in *Waiting for Godot*, as the above examples have shown, bring about stylistic differences that distance the final outcome from *En attendant Godot*. Judging the reasons why this level of refinement is found in the English play would be an issue to be tackled on a larger scale than this study permits. Nevertheless, Beckett's aforementioned perception of English as a more concrete language than French can be pointed out. It was, furthermore, his mother tongue, so it is not surprising that the English text enjoys a higher level of refinement. Finally, the seemingly collocational-like use of certain stage directions need not be that striking either, for a person's linguistic repertoire in his native tongue leads him to the use of certain chunks almost unconsciously.[34] These are, however, just a few feasible explanations, which call for a more in-depth analysis in order to be either proved or disproved. Anyhow, what seems clear is that Beckett's second versions are not translations as such, but an evolution of the writing process. Thus, without implying that *En attendant Godot* is a work in progress, it is true that *Waiting for Godot* enjoys, at least in terms of stage directions, a more polished organisation than the original. Hence, his second texts should rather be considered as authorised versions in

which the playwright carries out modifications, which may bring about relevant stylistic consequences, such as those detailed in this study.

# 6 Conclusion

Normally, opinions proffered regarding the differences between the French and the English versions of Beckettian texts stem from an attentive reading of his plays. With the help of a corpus-based approach, however, it is possible to offer a more precise account of one part of them, with tangible results that can challenge empirically existing approaches to his bilingualism. Thus, on the basis of the 108 examples retrieved with computational methodology, it has been possible to shed light on the stylistic differences between *En attendant Godot* and *Waiting for Godot* regarding the use and arrangement of stage directions, and to demonstrate that the later versions should be regarded, not so much as self-translations, but rather as authorial versions in which Beckett continues with the process of craftsmanship. Beyond the reasons that lie behind such a refined arrangement, what cannot be denied is that those stage directions are more carefully sorted in the English play, resulting in a subtle characterising device that cannot be found in the original French text.

# Notes

1. Cf. Michaela Mahlberg, 'Corpus Linguistics: Bridging the Gap between Linguistic and Literary Studies', in *Text, Discourse and Corpora. Theory and Analysis*, eds Michael Hoey, Michaela Mahlberg, Michael Stubbs and Wolfgang Teubert (London: Continuum, 2007), 219–46. Virginia Woolf (Svenja Adolphs and Ronald Carter, 'Corpus Stylistics: Point of View and Semantic Prosodies in *To the Lighthouse*', *Poetica* 58 [2002]: 7–20), Joseph Conrad (Michael Stubbs, 'Conrad in the Computer: Examples of Quantitative Stylistics Methods', *Language and Literature* 14, no. 1 [February 2005]: 5–24), William Shakespeare (Jonathan Culpeper, 'Keyness: Words, Parts-of-Speech and Semantic Categories in

the Character-Talk of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 14, no. 1 [2009]: 29–59), Jane Austen (Bettina Fischer-Starcke, *Corpus Linguistics in Literary Analysis: Jane Austen and her Contemporaries* [London: Continuum, 2010]) or Charles Dickens (Michaela Mahlberg, *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013]) are just some well-known authors whose works have been scrutinised from such a perspective. Despite some scholars' initial reluctance to accept these statistical studies, the truth is that they satisfy that demand for empirical evidence that, when it comes to the demonstration of certain aspects, can only be at best hinted at by an attentive reading.

2. Michaela Mahlberg, Catherine Smith and Simon Preston, 'Phrases in Literary Contexts: Patterns and Distributions of Suspensions in Dickens's Novels', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 18, no. 1 (2013), 36.

3. Ibid., 27.

4. Ann Beer, 'Beckett's Bilingualism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 210. It is widely acknowledged that Beckett's second versions were quite different from the originals, which raises the question of whether they should actually be considered translations as such. Let us take *Malone Dies* as an example. As St. Pierre posits, 'can *Malone Dies* be considered a translation of *Malone meurt* despite the numerous passages deleted and added, to mention only the most obvious changes, or would it not be more exact to see *Malone meurt* as a draft, if not first then also not final, of *Malone Dies?*' (Paul St. Pierre, 'Translation as Writing Across Languages: Samuel Beckett and Fakir Mohan Senapati', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 9, no. 1 [1996]: 235). In particular, the English text is different from the original in both the 'deletions (over 1000 words, including some forty-five sentences) and the additions (approximately 300 words)' (ibid., 237–38).

5. Samuel Beckett, *En attendant Godot* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1952); and *Waiting for Godot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1955).

6. For a more comprehensive account of the role of stage directions from a textual point of view, see, for instance, the works by Patricia A. Suchy ('When Words Collide: The Stage Direction as Utterance', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 6, no. 1 [Fall 1991]: 69–82) and Manfred Jahn ('Narrative Voice and Agency in Drama: Aspects of a Narratology of Drama', *New Literary History* 32, no. 3 [Summer 2001]: 659–79) in the bibliography of this chapter.

7. For an in-depth analysis of how characterisation works in plays, see John Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

8. Mary Jane Hurst, 'Utterances in Ivy Compton-Burnett's *A Family and a Fortune*', *Language and Style* 20, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 356.

9. Needless to say, this study does not intend to offer a hermetic interpretation or a reductive reading of *Waiting for Godot*, but rather to shed light on the so far neglected function of the play's stage directions.

10. Harry Cockerham, 'Bilingual Playwright', in *Beckett the Shape Changer*, ed. Katharine Worth (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 143. Beckett's bilingualism is a widely discussed subject. For further information on it, see the works by Ann Beer ('"Watt", Knott and Beckett's Bilingualism', *Journal of Beckett Studies* 10 [1985]: 37–75); Ruby Cohn ('Samuel Beckett Self-Translator', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 65 [1985]: 613–21); Alan W. Friedman, Charles Rossman and Dina Sherzer, eds (*Beckett Translating/Translating Beckett* [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987]); Brian T. Fitch (*Beckett and Babel: An Investigation into the Status of the Bilingual Work* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988]); or Lance S. Butler ('Two Darks: A Solution to the Problem of Beckett's Bilingualism', in *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 3 [1994]: 115–35), among others.

11. Ann Beer, 'Beckett's Bilingualism', 214.

12. Cf. P. J. Murphy, Werner Huber, Rolf Breuer, and Konrad Schoell, *Critique of Beckett Criticism: A Guide to Research in English, French and German* (Columbia: Camden House, 1994).

13. Ann Beer, 'Beckett's Bilingualism', 209.

14. Paul St. Pierre, 'Translation as Writing', 235.

15. Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools 6* (Liverpool: Lexical Analysis Software, 2013). In order to be processed using the software, the play had to be converted into a plain text file. As in Mike Scott and Christopher Tribble's computer-assisted analysis of Beckett's *Texts for Nothing, 1* ('Counting Things in Texts You Can't Count on: A Study of Samuel Beckett's *Texts for Nothing, 1*', in *Textual Patterns: Keywords and Corpus Analysis in Language Education*, eds Mike Scott and Cristopher Tribble [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006], 179–93), I input the text using a word processor. Needless to say, typos are likely to occur in manual typewriting, but this is a sword of Damocles that even hangs over texts on Project Gutenberg, the digitised text site par excellence. Therefore, apart from being a time-consuming process, typing up a text does not seem

any worse than scanning and then processing it with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software (the norm for digitised texts).

16. They are actually ten different concordance searches: *Estragon: [\**, *Vladimir: [\**, *Pozzo: [\**, *Boy: [\**, *Lucky: [\** and *(\** with Estragon's, Vladimir's, Pozzo's, the boy's and Lucky's discourses respectively.

17. The choice of these five categories in particular stems only from the desire to divide stage directions according to their content in well-differentiated blocks. Apart from this consideration, any other form of division might be equally valid.

18. The concordance search *Lucky: [\** does not retrieve any example.

19. These are the examples under analysis here, those describing how utterances are carried out: *[terrifying voice]*, *[grudgingly]*, *[groaning]* and so on.

20. These are simply examples which indicate who the character is talking to: *[To Estragon]*, *[To Lucky]*, *[To Vladimir]*.

21. This refers to the instructions that actors are given in terms of coming on- or off-stage. From a textual point of view, these instructions just indicate the presence or absence of the character in the scene: *[Enter Lucky]*, *[Exit Pozzo]*.

22. Stage directions labelled as action are those which indicate movement. Of necessity, this category—albeit possible—has not been divided into further sub-categories. It encompasses any kind of movement carried out by the corresponding character: *[He puts his watch back in his pocket]*, *[He kicks Lucky]*, etc.

23. This label covers any example which does not fit in any of the previous categories. Information related to thoughts, glances and so on has been gathered up under this tag: *[He reflects]*, *[He looks at the sky]*.

24. Such as in: VLADIMIR: [*to Estragon*]. Show me. [*Estragon shows his leg. To Pozzo,* **angrily**]. He's bleeding!

25. This could be perceived as a flaw in the methodology, but it actually has little influence on the results obtained; it is simply pointed out here for the sake of transparency.

26. Indeed, he has a temperamental character, as most of the stage directions that introduce his words demonstrate: *[angrily]*, *[anguished]*, *[groaning, clutching his head]*, *[in raptures]*, *[suddenly furious]*, *[vibrantly]* or *[violently]*.

27. Three times if *[halting, violently]* is counted.

28. It may be worth recalling that tells Estragon 'You're my only hope' at the beginning of the play.

29. There are three instances of *[despairingly]* and one of *[despairing]*.
30. The label [NO] is used to refer to those cases where there is no stage direction in the text.
31. Quoted in Ann Beer, 'Beckett's Bilingualism,' 215.
32. See Table 6.
33. Lance S. Butler, 'Two Darks', 127.
34. See, for instance, Góran Kjellmer ('A Mint of Phrases', in *English in Corpus Linguistics. Studies in Honour of Jan Svartvik*, eds Karin Aijmer, and Bengt Altenberg [London: Longman. 1991], 121–27), who argues that a person's mental lexicon is made up not only of words as such but also of larger phraseological units. When it comes to playwrights, stage directions are the best place to look for such already-moulded units, since they are the only element which allows explicit authorial interference within a play.

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# Samuel Beckett's Irish Voice in *Not I*

José Francisco Fernández

All Beckett's plays destabilise common assumptions about theatre, escaping from conventional plots, interaction of characters and the traditional exposition of a situation, but few of them are as mesmerising, hypnotic and enigmatic as *Not I* (1972). Here, the spectator is denied everything: plot, delineation of characters, beginning, closure, even acting in the conventional sense. It is also an extremely demanding play for the actress who plays Mouth as she has to cover herself in black paint and let herself be blinded by a cloth so that only her mouth appears on stage. She will then vomit a chain of almost unintelligible words for around 15 minutes in utter darkness.

> There is not a single aspect of *Not I* that isn't difficult. As with all Beckett's work, there are strict stage directions that must be adhered to. He was a holistic artist, and the visual, textual and sensory elements of

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the performance are of equal importance. Included in this, I might add, is the actor's terror. Every performance is knife-edge stuff.[1]

Irish actress Lisa Dwan, who went on tour with *Not I* in 2013 and 2014, is the most recent in a long list of actresses (including Billie Whitelaw, Jessica Tandy, Jude Kelly and Kate Somerby, among others) who have experienced first-hand the aridity of Beckett's anti-play and the strenuous physical effort that is demanded from them: 'I know now how an athlete feels when his muscles become over-tired', said Billie Whitelaw remembering her performance in *Not I*.[2] The main difficulty lies in the fact that, more than in any other of his pieces for the theatre, a voice is virtually the only protagonist: 'Beckett's play concentrates remorselessly on the act of telling to the exclusion of the rich variety of action and response characteristic of other forms of life, and which inform other styles of dramatic action (…) In *Not I*, the act of telling, not the told story, is the subject of the play.'[3]

Although the author made it clear that the play was not meant to be understood, but felt, that it had to appeal to the spectators' emotions, not to their intellect,[4] this has not deterred scholars from offering multiple interpretations to explain this unparalleled theatrical event. *Not I* has been studied from a wide range of viewpoints: from a psychoanalytic approach,[5] from the perspectives of literary translation and bilingualism,[6] from a spatio-geographical consideration[7] and even from the perspective of Japanese Zen Buddhism,[8] to name but a few. The aim of this essay is to examine the ideological implications concerning Beckett's feelings for Ireland that are hinted at in *Not I*. My contention is that this particular dramatic piece contains traces of an Irish context, the recovery of which can inform a deeper understanding of the play's cultural and historical interpretative possibilities. In this sense, the essay aligns itself with the growing trend over the last decade to historicise Beckett's work in relation to Ireland and Irishness.

Anyone interested in ascertaining Beckett's idea of Ireland, as glimpsed for example through the labyrinth of words in *Not I*, cannot afford to overlook the change of approach that has recently taken place in Beckett studies. What can be seen in the work of scholars such as Sinéad Mooney, Seán Kennedy or James McNaughton, to mention but a few, is that the

myth that was so pervasive in the study of Beckett's *oeuvre* for decades, namely, the idea of Samuel Beckett being an author who only addressed eternal truths, has been dismantled.[9] Beckett was supposed to be beyond any specificity as regards geographical locations, national identities or historical events; he was said to speak to no one in particular but to all mankind in general. Samuel Beckett only confronted timeless issues and this was the reason why anyone at any time could identify with his work. A suspicion that Beckett might be referring to actual, concrete events and places (however filtered and modified by his art) has been voiced by Andrew Gibson when he writes that Beckett's works 'are frequently marked […] by a biographically rooted historical consciousness, if often sporadically, fleetingly or here and there'.[10]

I am not suggesting, of course, that Beckett has been misread or misunderstood by legions of critics in the past. Leading Beckett scholars of what could be loosely termed as the first generation, including Ruby Cohn, John Pilling, Enoch Brater and Raymond Federman, have laid the foundations for the understanding of Beckett's writing for future generations. They have made extremely valuable contributions and their work is based on erudition, academic rigour, depth of analysis and informed devotion to the author. If the dominant current within Beckett studies in the 1990s was underpinned by readings inspired by poststructuralism,[11] the recent, historicist perspective has simply widened a new line of investigation that had already been hinted at in the 1980s by pioneering articles and books such as those by J. C. C. Mays and Eoin O'Brien,[12] although James Knowlson's biography of Samuel Beckett, *Damned to Fame*, 'gave a major fillip to anyone wishing to locate Beckett's work in history'.[13] This new approach, which has contributed to the revitalisation of Beckett studies, coexists with other contemporary currents such as genetic studies or Beckett and bilingualism.

The first intellectuals who initiated the discussion on Beckett were, naturally, French critics in the 1950s, when the Irish author became a noticeable figure thanks to the success of *En attendant Godot* (1953). France in the post-war years was experiencing a painful process of introspection, trying to assimilate what had happened in the previous decade: a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Nazis, the years of occupation, the shame of acquiescence—in many cases—with a regime of terror, the

brutal trials of collaborationists after the war. As Richard Seaver has put it: 'the occupation brought out the worst in many—as it brought the best in some—and for those who survived with their lives, if not their consciences, intact, a whole new world of hardship and deprivation awaited them after the momentary euphoria of the liberation had worn off'.[14] The memories of war were so embarrassing that 'it was preferable to read Beckett as addressing man's alienation and the human condition rather than anything as specific as everyday life in the years of the Resistance'.[15] Other critics have put forward the idea that an image of a 'sanitised' Beckett was maintained because many feared that if their revered author were brought down to earth they would be introducing adulterated elements into their analysis, 'tainting an otherwise pure art form',[16] showing him too close to worldly matters that may prove uncomfortable: 'And Beckett's critics, or rather his admirers, jealously guard his reputation against contextual readings that bring nation and religion too close to the individual artist.'[17] More recently, Anthony Uhlmann has taken up the issue of Beckett's apparent divorce from the period in which he lived, drawing attention to Beckett's 'strategy of negation' in his works.[18] After confirming that in his private papers (personal writings and letters) Beckett showed himself to be very much engaged with the intellectual issues of his time, Uhlmann notes that in his literary production he cultivated an aesthetics where the absence of a direct link to external events is blatantly significant. The context, writes Uhlmann, is there but the connection has been severed:

> This process of occlusion gives the works much of their power and allows them to generate a sense of abstraction that reconnects them with any place, any people, any time, rather than tying them once and forever to particular times and places. Yet, paradoxically, this is possible for Beckett because of the coherence and depth of analysis that have gone into the use of contexts and sources that he has then hidden.[19]

What has emerged thanks to Beckett criticism in the twenty-first century is that an apolitical, ahistorical and atemporal reading of Beckett is today untenable: 'The claim that Beckett's writing emerges from, and contains a certain nostalgic reference to, a white, male, Protestant, Irish, impoverished

bourgeois culture, is recognised and undisputed by the majority of his critics.'[20] In recent years, too, the Irish aspect of his work has been foregrounded, with scholars claiming for Beckett an indirect but nevertheless distinguishable concern for Ireland that had traditionally been ignored or dismissed.[21]

So what are the Irish elements, however blurred and hazy, that can be perceived in *Not I*? What clues do they provide about what the author wanted to do with them and the significance they might have for Beckett's concern for Ireland? Before addressing these questions, let us first consider a brief description of the play in order to contextualise the critical discussion that will ensue in the following pages. *Not I* is a clear example of avant-garde theatre in which everything associated with conventional acting is excised. On a blacked-out stage, a spotlight focuses on a woman's mouth. This mouth, in a stream of almost unintelligible speech, tells a story of dispossession: an old female tramp, in her seventies, after a life of misery which began in an orphanage and continued in permanent solitude, one day explodes and speaks out, emptying herself, virtually vomiting out words in a bout of 'logorrhoea', very much in the style of Lucky in his famous monologue in *Waiting for Godot*: 'when suddenly she realized … words were –… what?… who?… no!… she!… […] realized … words were coming … imagine!… words were coming … a voice she did not recognize … at first … so long since it had sounded … then finally had to admit … could be none other … than her own'.[22] The main difference with Lucky's speech is that Mouth repeatedly denies being the same person she is talking about. The effect on the spectators is devastating. They receive disconnected bits of information, fragments of a life in ruins, which should be codified and put in order: 'The audience cannot imagine Mouth's story without becoming fictionalisers.'[23] But this is not possible because of the speed at which the whole affair is carried out.

There is only one other person on stage, a hooded figure called the Auditor who listens to Mouth and hopelessly shrugs his/her shoulders. According to Hersh Zeifman, the Auditor seems to be saying to Mouth: 'Look, start by acknowledging that it is *you* you are talking about, that it is *your* terror, *your* suffering. And then admit that redemption from that suffering is impossible; perhaps in that very admission there is a kind of redemption, the only redemption man is capable of achieving.'[24]

I suggest that there are at least two elements in *Not I* that are unmistakably Irish. First, despite the lack of information in the play itself, the character of the woman referred to by 'Mouth', a semi-vagrant who spends her days in and out of town, living in solitude, obsessed with her own story, is based on an Irish stereotype, as Beckett himself admitted: 'I knew that woman in Ireland. I knew who she was—not "she" specifically, one single woman, but there were many of those old crones, stumbling down the lanes, in the ditches, beside the hedgerows. Ireland is full of them. And I heard "her" saying what I wrote in *Not I.* I actually heard it.'[25] In other instances, however, when describing the same destitute individual, Beckett omitted any reference to the woman's birthplace. This is how he defined his creation in the synopsis of the play:

> 1. Premature birth
> Parents unknown
> No love at any time
> At age of 70 in a field picking cowslips suddenly finds herself in the dark
>
> 2. No feeling apart from buzzing in her head and awareness of a ray of light
> Mind still active in a way
> First thought: she is being punished for her sins
> Dismissed as she realises she is not suffering
> Second thought: perhaps she should groan (to please tormentor)
> Failure to utter a sound
> All silent but for the buzzing
> Motionless but for eyes opening and shutting
> Mind questions this in view of life scene 1 (field)
> Hears a voice largely unintelligible[26]

Scholars have elaborated on this rudimentary sketch of a person, trying to fill in the gaps left by the author. This is how theatre critic and professor Rosette C. Lamont builds her own image of the character referred to by Mouth: 'Born prematurely and out of wedlock, Mouth may be a kind of halfwit, surviving somehow in the countryside by running small errands for people, or perhaps cleaning houses. Most probably she depends on charity. She seems to have been arrested briefly, then

released. We do not find out why, nor does "she", separate or severed from "I".'[27] The question of nationality, therefore, is often absent in critical commentaries, probably because Irishness has not traditionally been a matter of concern when discussing the play, but there can be little doubt that the source for the main character is based on 'remembered voices of aged Irish women'.[28]

Secondly, the woman finds herself at one point in a concrete Irish location, an open field near Beckett's house in Foxrock, where she has a moment of revelation: 'Then no more till this … old hag already … sitting staring at her hand … where was it? … Croker's Acres … one evening on the way home … home! … a little mound in Croker's Acres … dusk … sitting staring at her hand… there in her lap … palm upward … suddenly saw it wet … the palm … tears presumably … hers presumably … no one else for miles …'.[29] The place will be familiar to Beckett's readers, just like the Dublin mountains, the South Eastern Railway Terminus or the Ballyogan Road, landscapes of his early life that appear frequently in his writings. In 'the peaceful pastoral atmosphere of Croker's acres' Beckett as a child had one of his favourite hideouts.[30]

Apart from these references, there is an additional trait in *Not I* that may be located in an Irish context. The institution where the woman was taken care of as an orphan brings to mind images of asylums or homes that were traditionally run by the Catholic Church in Ireland: 'for her first thought was … oh long after … sudden flash … brought up as she had been to believe … with the other waifs … in a merciful … [*Brief laugh.*] … God … [*Good laugh.*] … first thought was … oh long after … sudden flash … she was being punished'.[31] Although there is no specific mention in the text of a particular religious order, it is difficult to imagine an organisation other than the Catholic Church in early independent Ireland dealing with these issues, being an institution at the time 'strongly committed to retaining its dominant influence in matters of health and welfare'.[32]

A tension can be detected from the start between the Ireland that is evoked and the negation of that presence. The same ambivalence can be observed in the use of language. On the one hand, the ceaseless speech produced by Mouth recalls the stereotype of blarney or Irish banter. On the other hand, Beckett in *Not I*, as in other dramatic pieces

from about roughly the same time (*Eh Joe*, *That Time* and *Footfalls*), took pains to remove any traces of Irishness.[33] It is well known that Beckett demanded that the actress who played Mouth maintain a flat, unemotional tone. In this he followed a pattern presented in many other of his plays; Joan Plowright, who was the first actress to be offered the role of Winnie in *Happy Days*, said about Beckett's instructions: 'He wanted it performed as he heard it in his head; and did not want any delineation of character or any emotional depth.'[34] The general rule was to keep their voices flat: '"too much colour, Billie, too much colour", meaning to leave off acting, and instead to transmit the structure of the sentence, the pace and musicality of the words themselves, the power of what was being said or left unsaid, made to function like pauses in music'.[35] He wanted to place the linguistic act in the central position of the performance (as Katharine Worth wrote: 'Mouth in *Not I* is no more than a speech organ functioning weirdly in a dark void')[36] thereby banishing any elements that might be considered a distraction, to the extent of accepting that the Auditor might be removed from the performance.

Beckett certainly insisted on disregarding any hint of an accent in the act of speaking by Mouth: 'No Irishness intended' he wrote to Alan Schneider discussing an aspect on pronunciation for the 1972 American production.[37] In this sense it can be said that the shape of the play stems from the same impulse that made him turn to the French language in the 1940s, to write with no style, but taken to its limit: by spewing a cascade of almost disconnected words, style would be equally reduced to zero: 'Their content [the memories recalled by Mouth] is unimportant, their realness is irrelevant: what matters is simply the act of telling them, their verbalisation here and now.'[38]

Throughout his development as a playwright and fiction writer, Beckett always subjected Ireland to a continuous process of detachment, an evolution that has been studied in detail by J. C. C. Mays. In his opinion, Beckett moved from the Ireland he had been acquainted with as a young man in his first writings, to the landscape of his childhood in the *Trilogy*. But even in the last book of the series, *The Unnamable* (first published in 1953, in French), he strove to put further distance between himself and his background, in an effort to remove any aspect of the landscape that

might be too close to him (and therefore prone to falsification and over-sentimentalisation): 'He wrote it [*The Unnamable*] in order to break through the simplest, earliest, most instinctive (Irish) form in which he knew himself.'[39] Further on, Beckett made use of a strict pattern of language to increase the gap from his subject matter, and *Not I* would find its place here, as Mouth's memories and the verbalisation of them seem to come from an Ireland of the past, a general background noise of former times so that 'Words pour from Mouth only to leave Mouth surrounded with sound; Mouth … comes to be *over*-heard.'[40] This may explain Beckett's precise reference in the play to Croker's Acres; the landscape had been sanitised and cleared of personal recollections, it was safe therefore to refer to Ireland without compromising his emotions. The connection with his place of birth is so indirectly conjured up (consisting of over-heard words by a 'bag-lady' figure of the past) that the evocation of the place can appear clear of sentimental debris. Ireland is there but it is not possible to apprehend its contours.

The fragmented sense of identity of the voice in the play may also be consonant with Beckett's contradictory and ambiguous engagement with Ireland. George O'Brien has identified a number of Irish themes which are echoed in essential works of the Beckettian canon, including a 'moribund sense of agency', together with 'an arguably Anglo-Irish sensitivity to decline and fall'.[41] A voice that remembers episodes from the past but which avoids any identification with the character being described is a motif that could easily fit into a reflection on the problem of Irish identity typically characterised by 'a continually projected utopianism',[42] or a continuous delay of the very act of definition of the national story. Liam de Paor writes that, when attempting to locate an '*identifiable* Irish identity', we find ambiguity, and an insistence on the part of many Irish writers 'that we in Ireland are not what we seem on the surface to be, but something else, older, wiser, truer; to be found not here and now but only in the past and in the future'.[43] In that respect, the voice in *Not I* could be taken as an imperfect, but strangely genuine, emblem for a protracted definition of Irishness because of its insistence on not being the protagonist of one's history: 'if Mouth could recognise or accept that she is telling her own story it is possible that she too would be allowed to stop repeating it'.[44] It comes as no surprise that the disembodied mouth

and the desexualised body of the Auditor proclaim 'a metaphysics of alienation' as defined by John H. Lutterbie and, incidentally, it is difficult to imagine a more appropriate concept for the representation of an utopian 'no-place', as Declan Kiberd describes the absence of Ireland in English texts, than a literary work which denies itself the right of identity in its very title.[45]

There are other subtle ways in which the text in *Not I* may be indicative of Beckett's interest in the problem of what constitutes Irishness. I am referring to the frequent mentions of a murmur, the presence of distant voices so characteristic of Beckett's work, which in *Not I* takes the form of a buzzing: 'yes … all the time the buzzing … so-called … in the ears … though of course actually … not in the ears at all … in the skull … dull roar in the skull'.[46] The presence of alien voices in Beckett's texts is a recurrent feature: the murmurs heard by Molloy in the forest; 'all the dead voices' heard by Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*;[47] the rattling of chains in *Texts for Nothing* or the singing that Camier hears in the distance: 'For all the world is a mixed choir.'[48] Voices, murmurs, distant singing, buzzing … One is tempted to define Beckett's landscapes as populated by ghosts, as if the author were reaching for an Ireland of the past that he could not apprehend but which manifested itself in this evanescent manner. Along this line, Shane Weller defines Beckett's work as an almost uninterrupted 'memento mori', characterising his work as 'elegiac', because he comes to see art in mourning for its object 'and because the voices that find expression in literature are increasingly, for Beckett, in a certain sense the voices of the dead'.[49]

Andrew Gibson has convincingly explained the abundance of remote voices in Beckett's works as the attempt to overcome the distance that traditionally separated his social class, the Protestant bourgeoisie, from the Catholic masses, those who suffered the iniquities of Irish history: 'His own class', writes Gibson, 'had commonly refused to assume any historical responsibility for the other Ireland. But the other Ireland nags away pervasively and insidiously within his characters' monologues and speeches'.[50] Beckett did not fall into the delusion that he could identify with the vast Catholic layer of the population, but at least he left the testimony of their existence, lurking in the margins of history, imploring to be listened to and cared for. The figure of the Auditor might introduce

in this particular context the kind of supportive, although ineffectual, companionship that someone of Beckett's background might provide to a complaining and desperate voice: 'Most clearly in the intensity of its interest and the silent helplessness of its gestures, Auditor embodies the watching, listening and "auditing" functions of an audience, while at the same time it supplies the observer or the witness to another's presence and suffering that for so long has seemed indispensable to Beckett's stage world'.[51]

A significant variation as regards the presentation of other voices in *Not I* lies in the voice of Mouth being accompanied by a beam of light: 'and all the time this ray or beam … like moonbeam … but probably not … certainly not …'.[52] The pictorial, visual symbol of a flash, perhaps opening through the sky, is a marked difference from other similar examples in his plays and novels. A beam of light in a dark atmosphere is of course a symbol of hope, of every cloud having a silver lining, of a light at the end of the tunnel. But the fact that this ray is being described by a mouth with no eyes cannot be but a self-deflated image, a representation of confidence that annuls itself, adding anxiety rather than relief from despair. Besides, as the moonbeam is repeated throughout the discourse by Mouth, its force becomes diluted each time it is depicted. The first time, it is 'a ray of light [that] came and went […] such as the moon might cast … drifting … in and out of cloud',[53] then it is 'this ray or beam … like moonbeam … but probably not … certainly not',[54] next it is referred to as 'the beam … flickering on and off … starting to move around … like moonbeam but not'[55] and finally as 'the beam … poking around … painless … so far … ha!'[56] Mouth has been defined by Katherine Weiss as a 'black hole' which both absorbs and rejects the textual material of the play.[57] The profound irony of a black hole longing for a ray of light is nothing but another element of discomfort for the self-deprecating image of the individual described by Mouth, and in the end is perfectly coherent with the whole atmosphere of hopelessness that acts as a background to the play. Additionally, this orifice which ejects verbal waste, 'so that speech becomes equated with other bodily expulsions',[58] recalls other excremental images in Beckett's prose, like 'history's ancient faeces' of 'First Love' by which he mockingly referred to the remnants of a distant past revered by Irish nationalists.[59]

*Not I* by Samuel Beckett, as stated at the beginning of this essay, can be approached from different interpretative angles. This stunning theatrical event, devised by the author in his mature years, encapsulated the obsessions and motives of a lifetime. What this essay has set out to demonstrate is that hidden within the fabric of Mouth's demented words there are precise references to Ireland (Irish women as the original source for the voice and the mention of a particular location near Dublin), together with some vague outlines reminiscent of an Irish setting, and that these textual elements contribute to the creation of an evocative background in *Not I*. What emerges from these allusions is that Beckett never abandoned a preoccupation with Ireland that, flickering and intermittent as it was, like the beam of light which is somehow perceived but not seen by Mouth, was nevertheless a haunting matter of concern for Beckett, finding its way even into the most emotionally charged of his plays.

## Notes

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5. Julia Kristeva, 'The Father, Love, and Banishment', in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 148–58.
6. Patrizia Fusella, 'Samuel Beckett's *Pas moi/Not I*: Pas Traduction, Not Creation', *Textus: English Studies in Italy* 15, no. 1 (2002): 121–44.
7. Pim Verhulst, 'Spatio-Geographical Abstraction in Samuel Beckett's *Not I/Pas moi*', *English Text Construction* 1, no. 2 (July 2008): 267–80.
8. Kyle Gillette, 'Zen and the Art of Self-Negation in Samuel Beckett's *Not I*', *Comparative Drama* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 283–302.

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11. Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Richard Begam, *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); and Thomas Trezise, *Into the Breach: Samuel Beckett and the Ends of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

12. J. C. C. Mays, 'Young Beckett's Irish Roots', *Irish University Review* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 18–33; and Eoin O'Brien, *The Beckett Country* (Dublin: The Black Cat Press, 1986).

13. Seán Kennedy, 'Introduction,' in *Samuel Beckett. History, Memory, Archive*, eds Seán Kennedy and Katherine Weiss (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

14. Richard Seaver, *The Tender Hour of Twilight* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 6.

15. Marjorie Perloff, 'In Love with Hiding: Samuel Beckett's War', *Iowa Review* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 78.

16. Peter Boxall, 'Samuel Beckett: Towards a Political Reading', *Irish Studies Review* 10, no. 2 (2002): 161.

17. Willy Maley, 'Bend It Like Beckett: Class Rules in Irish Literature', *The Irish Review* 47 (Winter 2013): 66–67.

18. Anthony Uhlmann, 'Introduction', in *Samuel Beckett in Context*, ed. Anthony Uhlmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

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24. Hersh Zeifman, 'Being and Non-Being: Samuel Beckett's *Not I*', *Modern Drama* 19 (1976): 43.
25. In James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 590.
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30. Eoin O'Brien, *The Beckett Country*, 49.
31. Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works*, 377.
32. Roy F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: Penguin, 1989), 520.
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34. Joan Plowright, *And That's Not All* (London: Orion, 2002), 104.
35. Anne Atik, *How It Was* (London: Faber, 2001), 40.
36. Katharine Worth, 'Beckett's Ghosts', in *Beckett in Dublin*, ed. S. E. Wilmer (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1992), 62.
37. In Emilie Morin, *Samuel Beckett*, 147.
38. Brynildur Boyce, 'The Negative Imprint of the Past in Samuel Beckett's *Embers* and *Not I*', in *Recovering Memory. Irish Representations of Past and Present*, eds Hedda Friberg, Irene Gilsenan Nordin and Lene Yding Pedersen (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 199.
39. J. C. C. Mays, 'Irish Beckett, a Borderline Instance', in *Beckett in Dublin*, ed. S. E. Wilmer (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1992), 137.
40. Ibid., 142. The author's emphasis.
41. George O'Brien, 'Contemporary Prose in English: 1940–2000', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*. Vol. 2. *1890–2000*, ed. Margaret Kelleher and Philip O'Leary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 424.
42. Colin Graham, *Deconstructing Ireland: Identity, Theory, Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.
43. In Anne MacCarthy, *Identities in Irish Literature* (A Coruña: Netbiblo, 2004), 111. The author's emphasis.

44. Rosemary Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows. Samuel Beckett's Drama 1956–1976* (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1988), 123.

45. John H. Lutterbie, '"Tender Mercies": Subjectivity and Subjection in Samuel Beckett's *Not I*', in *The World of Samuel Beckett*, ed. Joseph H. Smith (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 87; and Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Vintage, 1996), 12.

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47. Ibid., 58.

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58. Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 118.

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# Bernard Shaw and the Subtextual Irish Question

## Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín

Bernard Shaw, even if we for a moment forget about his extraordinary literary career, was a well-known figure in his lifetime because of his political commitment and advanced social views. That said, it remains a striking fact that his political opinions did not have a fundamentally Irish scope, largely because 'he had his eye on the wider scene—the contemporary world where international capitalism and aspiring international socialism eclipsed any sentimental backyard parochialism'.[1]

Although Shaw had a personal preference for the underdog, and proclaimed that he 'would rather be burnt at the stake by Irish Catholics than protected by Englishmen', he nonetheless held that nationalist claims had to be superseded if the real problems of the population were to be solved.[2] That is why Shaw began his self-drafted 'Irish Nationalism and Labour Internationalism' with a plea for cooperation, in the understanding that 'the interests of the Irish worker and the British worker are the same'.[3] The problem lay, however, in the fact that 'a healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones';[4] or, conversely:

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> A conquered nation is like a man with cancer: he can think of nothing else, and is forced to place himself, to the exclusion of all better company, in the hands of quacks who profess to treat or cure cancer. [...] English rule is such an intolerable abomination that no other subject can reach the people. Nationalism stands between Ireland and the light of the world.[5]

In fact, *John Bull's Other Island*[6] is the only play in the Shavian canon whose plot and setting suggest a direct engagement with the Irish Question.[7] In it, we witness a business project in Ireland developed in partnership by an anglicised Irishman (Doyle) and an Englishman who becomes madly infatuated with the aura of the country. This mundane plot serves as the perfect framework with which to challenge traditional social, national, ideological and even gender[8] stereotypes. As Grene observes, *John Bull's Other Island* is the ultimate realisation of Shaw's long-standing rejection of 'the Arnoldian polarity of the emotional Celt and the practical Saxon'.[9] The play contradicts popular beliefs by placing each national archetype at the opposite end of the cline to the expected one, primarily as a means of highlighting that the gradually changing situation in land ownership was on no account a fertile soil for the much sought-after revival of Irish culture. Thus, the 'arriviste rural Catholic middle class' that had begun to emerge as a consequence of Wyndham's Land Purchase Act[10]—about which Shaw had a rather more pessimistic opinion[11] than most others in Ireland—'found no great difficulty in playing up to the expectations of a romantic English liberal visitor, such as Tom Broadbent'.[12] The end of landlordism in Ireland was far from having been achieved.

But even in the case of a play as distinctly Irish as *John Bull*, Shaw was—like many other Irish writers of the time—catering to a worldwide audience and readership.[13] Not for nothing did he state that 'theatre is a metropolitan phenomenon and, the larger the metropolis the more significant the success'.[14] These notions, in turn, seem to reinforce the general notion that Shaw did not 'pretend that the departure of the last Englishman from Irish soil would ring the death knell of exploitation'.[15] In fact, few of his political essays and speeches—in relative terms—deal with specifically Irish issues; perhaps because, as few are willing to concede, he instead 'used his dramatic genius to expose the tragedy and ugliness of political violence' and conflict in Ireland.[16]

If—as has already been suggested—Shaw did not make use of his pamphleteer persona to express his views on the many ills that ailed Ireland, it is only natural to look for the expression of his 'dramatic genius' as the main channel for such views. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate Shaw's opinions on the political conflicts of Ireland and its controversial political status within the British Empire through an exploration of the allegorical and symbolic elements present in two of his historical plays: *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Saint Joan*. Both plays will be analysed in chronological order from the viewpoint of these textual elements. Not only is this a convenient method with which to organise the discussion; it also enables us to track certain changes in Shaw's perspective as historical events unfolded in the intervening years between the writing of both plays.[17]

The Irish allegorical and intertextual symbolism in *Caesar and Cleopatra* is rather more comprehensive in its outlook than that in *Saint Joan*, given that from the opening stage direction of the play readers are provided with clear hints as to what the Roman Empire and the subjugated province of Egypt may also stand for. Direct comparisons between present-day England and the historical time depicted in the play are established frequently, and even the props and stage-setting serve this purpose:

> The palace, an old, low, Syrian building of whitened mud, is not so ugly as Buckingham Palace; and the officers in the courtyard are more highly civilized than modern English officers: for example, they do not dig up the corpses of their dead enemies and mutilate them, as we dug up Cromwell and the Mahdi.[18]

Likewise, the Prologue that Shaw included in 1912 as an alternative to the opening of the play abounds in the same kind of parallelisms. Thus, Ra informs his audience of 'compulsory educated ones' that just like 'there is an old England and a new, and ye stand perplexed between the twain; so in the days when I was worshipped was there an old Rome and a new, and men standing perplexed between them'.[19] Had this not been sufficient warning for directors and readers, Shaw went to greater lengths in his 'Notes to *Caesar and Cleopatra*' to emphasise the similitudes between the epoch depicted in the play and present-day conditions, for

'all the savagery, barbarism, dark ages and the rest of it of which we have any record as existing in the past, exists at the present moment'.[20]

If anachronic parallelism sets the tone for a contemporary reading of the play, the conflict between the 'conquered nation' and the occupying imperial force displays another major link between the play and the Irish political situation. To begin with, the relationship between Egypt and Rome is unequal, just as it was between Ireland and England—even when Ireland is compared to the rest of the British Empire. Egypt has to pay taxes to Rome ('sixteen hundred talents') that it cannot afford, and Caesar claims that 'taxes are the chief business of a conqueror of the world'.[21] Similarly—and in stressing this fact Shaw was prescient—Ireland's depressing economic situation was always due, in part, to England's fiscal pressure, as Figgis denounces:

> For to none but herself [*England*] is she responsible for the taxes she imposes on Ireland, or the methods she chooses to dispense that taxation. Both the amount imposed and the manner of its spending have been decreed in the interests of empire, and it is thus truly not a taxation, caused by the services a nation renders to itself, but a tribute imposed by an imperial government on a nation reduced by war.[22]

Excessive taxation also became one of the main arguments overseas in favour of the independence of Ireland, as demonstrated in some propositions to the US Committee on Foreign Affairs:

> In 18 years [after the Act of Union of 1800] England increased Irish taxation nearly twice and a half what it had been in the year of the union, but increased her own taxation by only one-quarter. By 1914 the taxation in England had been decreased 3 shillings per head compared with the taxation in 1819, while the taxation in Ireland had been increased 29 shillings per head. That is, Great Britain had received roundly a 5 per cent relief in taxation while Ireland had been burdened 200 per cent.[23]

There exist, in addition, two phraseological elements that epitomise the conflictive relationship between conqueror and conquered, whether in the literal reading of the play (Rome and Egypt) or in the symbolic one (Britain and Ireland). Furthermore, these elements stand out among the

typical Shavian anachronisms, so that their subtextual nature surfaces amidst the dramatic dialogue. The first of these is the nationalistic cry of the Egyptian courtiers: 'Egypt for the Egyptians', which is initially intended as a rebellious motto later to be mocked by Rufio and echoed ironically by Caesar when he is only able to keep two buildings as his stronghold and cannot seize the rest:

> THE BOLDER COURTIERS (encouraged by Pothinus's tone and Caesar's quietness). Yes, yes. Egypt for the Egyptians!
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>
> ALL THE COURTIERS (shouting fiercely and crowding towards Caesar). Away with you. Egypt for the Egyptians! Begone.
>
> ----------
>
> RUFIO (contemptuously). Egypt for the Egyptians! Do you forget that there is a Roman army of occupation here, left by Aulus Gabinius when he set up your toy king for you?
>
> ----------
>
> CAESAR. We will have that [*building*, *the theatre*] too: it commands the strand, for the rest, Egypt for the Egyptians![24]

This phrase is a straightforward modified version of 'Ireland for the Irish'. The origin of this motto lies in O'Connell's famous speech 'In Favour of the Repeal of the Union', where he states 'I am for leaving England to the English, Scotland to the Scotch; but we must have Ireland for the Irish.'[25] The deep nationalist implications of these words caught on during Ireland's struggle for independence, as attested in the print media of the period.[26] Indeed, 'Ireland for the Irish' is one of the most easily recognisable mottos of the Irish nationalist movement of the time. In the decade before the publication of the play alone, it is not difficult to find this phrase as a headline—whether to describe the ideals of the Irish National League (*Northern Daily Mail*, 24 September 1890), to summarise a speech by Fenian leader O'Donovan Rossa (*The Yorkshire Herald*, 10 July 1894) or to inform of the establishment of a United Irish League in Belfast (*The Edinburgh Evening News*, 5 June 1899).[27] This patriotic

wish for 'Ireland for the Irish' was also used in book-length works that sought rational solutions for the Irish Question, such as Henry O'Neill's book of that title or Robert Dennis's treatise.[28]

It would be unfair, however, to deny the overwhelming evidence for considering this phrase ('Egypt for the Egyptians') a direct echo of Sir William Harcourt's words, as evidenced by Shaw's revisions of the type-script of the French translation of *Caesar and Cleopatra*.[29] In fact, media references to this phrase are as frequent as those to its Irish counterpart. By and large, the protean nature of this nationalist cry allows for a broad symbolic reading of the play against imperialism and blind nationalism.[30] This general rejection of oppressive nationalism and the interchangeabil-ity of specific referents can be ascertained from Shaw's recorded corre-spondence. Take, for instance, Shaw's suggestion in a 1902 letter to Siegfried Trebitsch that a production in Vienna should change the char-acter of Britannus so that the Austrian audience could establish their own real-life parallelisms 'with Britannus changed into an echt Wiener bour-geois'.[31] As we shall see, Britannus is largely a comic national stereotype who can only be properly understood within the cultural scope of the British Isles, and who may not translate easily outside its specific geo-graphical and political domain.

The other phraseological unit with an underlying Irish subtext is the 'Roman army of occupation', which is used five times in the play as a counterbalance to the Egyptians' desire for independence.[32] This phrase rings with echoes of the discourse employed by Irish nationalists to criti-cise the presence of a 'British/English army of occupation' on Irish soil. For instance, to return to the Repeal Association for a moment, O'Connell's promoting of a Catholic rebellion has been seen by histori-ans as 'exposing a tyrannized Irish colony held down by a British army of occupation'.[33] At the time the play was written, one could often come across occurrences of the phrase with this exact referent. Thus—and con-sidering again only the last few years before the play premiered—the Liberal MP for York Alfred E. Pease complained of the cost of keeping the armed forces ('English Army of Occupation') in Ireland (*The Northern Echo*, 26 March 1890), a topic that was still part of the public debate two years later (*The Sunderland Daily Echo*, 1 July 1892).[34] From the perspective of the early nationalist Irish media as well, it was clear that the

Royal Irish Constabulary ('The Army of Occupation') were not a police but a military force (*The Freeman's Journal*, 17 March 1896).[35] To this day, this type of phraseology has lived on in the verbiage of certain factions of present-day nationalist groups, particularly to refer to the presence of the British Army in Ulster. Take, for instance, the following excerpt from an IRA/Sinn Fein statement in 1977:

> … let them end the cant and humbug of 'one army and one government' in Ireland. There is but one Ireland and One Nation, one unlawful army— **the British army of occupation**.[36]

The Irish elements in *Caesar and Cleopatra* are not exclusively textual, for there exist three characters that are depicted either as national archetypes or as the embodiment of national cultural symbols, and whose roles in the play function beyond the immediate dramatic interaction. It should come as no surprise, in fact, that Shaw would openly admit that 'national types are openly made fun on' in the play.[37]

Paradoxically perhaps, the best delineated character is Britannus, a clichéd portrayal of the sociological ills of imperial Britain, whom Caesar describes as a barbarian who 'thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature'.[38] Britannus, of course, chauvinistically believes that 'it is these Egyptians who are barbarians'. Shaw gives us additional information in many of his stage directions as to the comic, self-absorbed nature of the character, who represents the conceit of imperial bureaucracy. Britannus is 'carefully dressed in blue, with portfolio, inkhorn, and reed pen at his girdle … [with] serious air and sense of the importance of the business in hand', and he usually 'bows stiffly' while he disapproves of 'informal expressions'.[39] Even in the midst of a heated argument, Britannus grows 'haughtily indignant' at most.

Britannus's counterpoint is represented by Apollodorus, a carpet merchant and self-proclaimed patrician whose 'universal password' is 'art for art's sake'.[40] This maxim is a clear allusion to the aesthetic controversy between Shaw and Oscar Wilde over what the function of art should be, and one of the first hints at the 'distinctly Irish quality' of this character.[41] In principle, he is the quintessential Irish cliché in that he picks fights ('I will make amends for that insult with my sword at fitting time and

place'), likes to drink ('My friends: will you not enter the palace and bury our quarrel in a bowl of wine?'), displays a dreamy and gay personality, and becomes enthralled by Cleopatra's personal growth ('I profess myself a converted man. When Cleopatra is priestess, Apollodorus is devotee'). Indeed, Queen Cleopatra also possesses a number of traditionally Irish qualities, the list of which establishes a clear parallelism between her and Joan, as we shall see in the second section of this essay.

The first symbolic link between Cleopatra and Ireland is mostly legendary: oral tradition literature likens Ireland to a female character—especially to a queen or goddess that gave Ireland its name, like Ériu[42]—whereas Cleopatra's equally legendary and goddess-like status is also attested to in the play:

> BELZANOR. […] but Cleopatra is descended from the river Nile; and the lands of our fathers will grow no grain if the Nile rises not to water them.
>
>    ----------
>
> CLEOPATRA. […] My great-grandmother's great-grandmother was a black kitten of the sacred white cat; and the river Nile made her his seventh wife. That is why my hair is so wavy. And I always want to be let do as I like, no matter whether it is the will of the gods or not: that is because my blood is made with Nile water.[43]

In this respect, anachronism is once again a major source of information, for we learn that Cleopatra is being influenced by the feminist movement from the metropolis, a situation that is akin to that of the early Irish feminists. Thus, when Ftatateeta accuses Cleopatra of wanting 'to be what these Romans call a New Woman' she is inadvertently evoking the experience of Irish women like Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, who acknowledged that 'the Votes for Women Movement in England some years later stirred a responsive chord in some Irish feminist breasts'.[44]

If the combination of anachronistic political discourse and symbolism allows for an Irish reading of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, much the same can be said of *Saint Joan*. In the case of the latter, however, there is also a pervading religious element that enhances the plausibility of this exegesis—together with a more analogous setting, geographically and culturally.

To begin with the aspects that are also featured in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, let us return to the subtle balance between historical accuracy—a notorious deficit in Shaw's drama—and hints to present-day audiences and readers. In sum, 'the most notorious characteristic of Shaw's history plays is their liberal use of conspicuous and deliberate anachronisms'.[45] For instance, De Stogumber displays the natural attachment to feudal institutions when asked if he was an Englishman ('Certainly not, my lord: I am a gentleman'[46]); while he is at the same time appalled to 'see Englishmen beaten by a French bastard and a witch from Lousy Champagne'.[47] Indeed, the rise of nationalism and the creation of modern nation states is perhaps the most important historical axe that Shaw grinds in the play—and one of its dramatic functions is to enable an Irish reading of it. Let us see why.

*Saint Joan* (1924) was written during and published right after the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921) and the Irish Civil War (1922–1923), a coincidence that had allowed Shaw to witness the violent revolts brought about by nationalist zealots. Shaw felt disgusted by the state of affairs in post-1916 Ireland, and he urged 'all, at heavy disadvantages, [to] do what we can to stop explosions of mere blind hatred'.[48] In addition, he had the foresight to perceive that Ireland's 'troubles are beginning, not ending' after the Anglo-Irish treaty, because the country 'will have to govern herself'.[49] Others have previously perceived a deep political connection between the genesis of the play and the chaotic political process that Ireland was undergoing at the time. If Joan was a person whom the society of her times did not tolerate, Shaw reminds us that society must allow for 'a large liberty to shock conventional people, and a well informed sense of the value of originality, individuality, and eccentricity' lest we end up amidst a general state of 'apparent stagnation covering a repression of evolutionary forces which will eventually explode with extravagant and probably destructive violence'.[50] These words make Allen wonder:

> What else was he thinking of here but Ireland after 1916, the city streets destroyed in the Easter Rising, one of its martyrs, Roger Casement, mentioned in Shaw's preface, one of its participants, Constance Markiewicz, later acting the role of Joan in his play?[51]

On a rather more curious note, readers should be reminded that large portions of the play were written during one of the few visits Shaw paid to Ireland—and the last one at that—after leaving it for London in 1876. In fact—I do not know whether out of a subconscious nationalistic connection—a heated argument rose among the people in the counties of Cork and Kerry over where the play had been written. In a further blow against petty nationalism, Shaw offered a detailed account of the writing process of *Saint Joan*[52] in a letter to the editor of the *Irish Independent*, in which he states that 'the play was neither begun nor finished in Eire', and goes on to list 'ten birth places in all' (Glengarriff and Parknasilla in Ireland; plus London, Ayot St Lawrence, Bournemouth, Minehead, Malvern, Stratford-upon-Avon, Birmingham and Oxford).[53] The Anglo-Irish controversy remained untouched.

In addition to the above, it should not be forgotten that the English are, once again, the invading army in the play. This also parallels the imperial resonances in *Caesar and Cleopatra* that we have already discussed, a notion that is further reinforced by the existence of other chauvinistic national clichés in *Saint Joan*. To begin with, all English defeats are explained by the sorcery and witchcraft of Joan, because 'no Englishman is fairly beaten', according to Chaplain De Stogumber, who embodies the English nationalist archetype.[54] Ethically and morally, the English also believe they occupy the high ground, for 'How can what an Englishman believes be heresy? It is a contradiction in terms.'[55] Furthermore, the Chaplain even believes that Joan's heresy can be attested by the fact that her voices did not speak to her in English.[56] Likewise, the English are entitled to legitimate nationalism—with a recognisable phrasing– but not other nations:

> THE CHAPLAIN. Certainly England for the English goes without saying: it is the simple law of nature. But this woman denies to England her legitimate conquests, given her by God because of her peculiar fitness to rule over less civilized races for their own good.[57]

De Stogumber's overstatedly patriotic ideas are met with varying degrees of opposition or comic derision throughout the play, particularly from the French characters. Robert de Baudricourt fears the English

viciousness in battle and their 'plundering, burning, turning the country-side into a desert', although Charles believes that 'they are better at fighting than at thinking' and for Joan 'they understand nothing but hard knocks and slashes'.[58] The mockery progresses alongside the plot when Cauchon challenges De Stogumber's blind faith in English supremacy by declaring that 'the bare fact that an English army has been defeated by a French one will not convince them that there is any sorcery in the matter'.[59] Cauchon's claims are later synthesised in his cry that 'You English are strangely blunt in the mind.'[60]

All things considered, then, it is not difficult to see some of the passages of the play in quite a different light. Thus, when Joan 'threatens to drive the English from the soil of France', Cauchon calls 'this side of her heresy Nationalism'.[61] Furthermore, the allusion to nationalism and—once again—the desire to free a conquered nation from the English yoke, is expressed in strikingly familiar terms:

> CAUCHON …. I can express it only by such phrases as *France for the French, England for the English, Italy for the Italians, Spain for the Spanish*, and so forth. It is sometimes so narrow and bitter in country folk that it surprises me that this country girl can rise above the idea of her village for its villagers ….

> WARWICK. Well, if you will burn the Protestant, I will burn the Nationalist, though perhaps I shall not carry Messire John with me there. *England for the English* will appeal to him. [62]

That this way of synthesising nationalist claims is a clear phraseological parallelism between both plays is beyond dispute; and it could be argued that these formulations buttress the opening idea that nationalism is one of the blemishes of advanced human societies.

What cannot be considered a universal phenomenon, however, is the inner struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism that Joan undergoes. This constitutes the most distinctly subtextual Irish element in the play and is unsurprisingly highlighted by Shaw in the opening lines of its preface, for 'though a professed and most pious Catholic, and the projector of a Crusade against the Husites, she was in fact one of the first Protestant

martyrs'.[63] Moreover, Shaw establishes a much more conspicuous link between Ireland and Joan later in the preface:

> The Reformation, which Joan had unconsciously anticipated, kept the questions which arose in her case burning up to our own day (you can see plenty of the burnt houses still in Ireland), with the result that Joan has remained the subject of anti-Clerical lies, of specifically Protestant lies, and of Roman Catholic evasions of her unconscious Protestantism. The truth sticks in our throats with all the sauces it is served with: it will never go down until we take it without any sauce at all.[64]

It can be argued that this Catholic–Protestant duality is as clear a reference to Ireland as one can think of, particularly because of the anachronistic fact that Joan lived before the time of the Protestant Reformation she 'had unconsciously anticipated'. A similar anachronic foreshadowing of the Reformation is uttered by Cauchon: 'Scratch an Englishman, and find a Protestant.'[65] In fact, in this scene we are witnessing a rather common stylistic device in Shaw's dramatic dialogue whenever he has to introduce a term that does not naturally fit the discourse of the play: the seeming ad hoc coinage of an already existing word or phrase by one of the characters—existing in modern usage, but not yet adopted at the time the play depicts—so that it can be used freely from then on.[66] In this case, it is Warwick who comes up with the word 'Protestantism':

> WARWICK. Quite so. These two ideas of hers are the same idea at bottom. It goes deep, my lord. It is the protest of the individual soul against the interference of priest or peer between the private man and his God. I should call it Protestantism if I had to find a name for it.[67]

In the strictly personal realm of Joan as a character, the symbolic concomitances with Cleopatra—and, hence, with Ireland—are also striking. To begin with, they are both the female leaders of nations oppressed by the imperial oppressor, a role for which their male counterparts want to take credit (the Dauphin, Ptolemy). In addition—much like Cleopatra—Joan is a religious figure with some sort of mystic or ascetic strain. From the Preface, it was clear for Shaw that 'if Joan was mad, all Christendom was mad too',[68] a belief that is also mentioned in the play itself:

JOAN *[impatient, but friendly]* They all say I am mad until I talk to them, squire. But you see that it is the will of God that you are to do what He has put into my mind.[69]

Joan also establishes herself as yet another powerful female character in the Shavian canon; another example of how Shaw—for some, a feminist in spite of himself—borrows from the emerging concept of the New Woman in a move akin to that which has already been discussed with Cleopatra.[70] Thus, the author acknowledges that only from a feminist perspective can the figure of Joan be entirely understood: 'If a historian is an Anti-Feminist, and does not believe women to be capable of genius in the traditional masculine departments, he will never make anything of Joan.'[71] Is it pushing the parallelism too far if one argues that neither would he make anything of Ireland, the archetypal woman-nation, from such a viewpoint of scepticism and bigotry?

Finally, the different fate of the two heroines in the plays analysed herein is worth discussing. Whereas Cleopatra grows into a powerful woman over the course of the play—physically, emotionally and politically—Joan suffers progressive deterioration in her military and political leadership. Given that Shaw follows Joan's trial with extreme faithfulness and accuracy, no claims can be made as to the influence the years of turmoil in Ireland between the turn of the century and 1923 may have had in the plot of the play.[72] Notwithstanding this, Shaw was very concerned with the political and social changes in Ireland and Joan turned out to be the perfect heroine through which a subtextual nationalist message could be conveyed in the play.[73] First, because her troubles are sublimated in the play when she is reinstated and ultimately canonised—a symbol of Shaw's perhaps naive idea that there was hope and a simple solution to Ireland's ills. In fact, the Epilogue—the silver lining in the gloomy clouds over Joan, or Ireland—was probably the first part to be conceived, chiefly as a means to redeem her after many unfair and erroneous treatments of this historical character.[74] To add fuel to the fire, the English were to blame for many of those unjust accounts of Joan.[75]

But Joan is also truly Irish within the literary tradition of the time because she stands alongside a number of contemporary literary charac-

ters that fall into the 'androgynous hero/heroine' category, as a refinement of Shaw's 'more inclusive philosophy of interpenetrating opposites' regarding Ireland.[76]

This essay has tried to illustrate how two of the most widely acclaimed Shaw plays contain a series of stylistic elements whose symbolic interpretation pinpoints many of Shaw's views on the political situation of Ireland in the latter years of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth. These elements can be classified according to their nature (whether textual or otherwise) and their role within the dramatic work.

Among the textual elements, Shaw adapted the phraseology of the political discourse of the time in order to ring bells for audiences. In the same vein, all sorts of textual and subtextual symbolism (mystic and religious iconography, gender connotations and verbal anachronism) serve the purpose of reinforcing the aforementioned echoes and creating a textual network of nodes of Irishness.

The non-textual elements pivot around characterisation and the resulting effect of a series of national archetypes which—although impressionistically superficial—utilise the cathartic power of comedy to create Shaw's proverbial sugar-coating.[77] In the form of flat clichés, these characters simplify the message while avoiding hampering the universal appeal of the plays; for, needless to say, both *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Saint Joan* explore much more important questions, and that is what grants them masterpiece status.

In light of the dramatic and linguistic phenomena discussed above, one feels tempted to sketch a tentative picture of Shaw's view of Ireland. For him, Ireland must have been a nation that had endured a long, oppressive, foreign yoke—yet a yoke that had become so natural to her that she had ended up developing some sort of Stockholm syndrome. The reason for this capture-bonding can be attributed to a number of different factors, especially Ireland's own immaturity (Cleopatra and Joan are also symbols of this) and her own inner struggles of all sorts (religious and political above all). Perhaps that is why he foresaw that liberation must inevitably come in the form of internal violence and bloodshed—an ominous outcome that would take the form of hopeful expiation and a sudden, unpleasant thrust into adulthood for these Shavian heroines, as well as for Ireland.

# Notes

1. Martin Meisel, '"Dear Harp of My Country"; or, Shaw and Boucicault', *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 30 (2010): 43.
2. George Bernard Shaw, *The Matter with Ireland*, eds Dan H. Laurence and David Herbert Greene (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 72.
3. George Bernard Shaw, *Irish Nationalism and Labour Internationalism* (London: Garden City Press, 1920), 5.
4. George Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw Collected Plays with Prefaces*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1971), 841–42. In this chapter, all quotations from the plays and prefaces are from this seven-volume edition.
5. Ibid.
6. 'A Preface for Politicians' is the prefatory essay to *John Bull's Other Island*.
7. The fact that Shaw favoured internationalism has sometimes resulted in a widespread neglect of his work within the Irish cultural tradition at large. This incomprehensible prejudice has only recently begun to be replaced by a holistic account of his 'Irishness'. See, for example, the themed issue on 'Shaw and the Irish Literary Tradition' (Peter Gahan, ed. *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 30 [2010]) or, more recently, David Clare's *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (New York: Palgrave, 2015).
8. As Brad Kent rightly points out, Shaw 'was deploying and responding to archetypes that were well known and that would likely evoke specific reactions' ('The Politics of Shaw's Irish Women in *John Bull's Other Island*', in *Shaw and Feminisms: On Stage and Off*, eds Dorothy A. Hadfield and Jean R. Reynolds [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013], 74).
9. Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 18.
10. This Act, 'framed around the idea of voluntary land purchase', meant for many 'the beginning of a new consensual approach to reform and indeed the dawning of a new, admittedly slowly evolving, inclusivist national spirit' (Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798–1998: War, Peace, and Beyond* [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 150).
11. The 'Preface for Politicians' sums up the feeling of stagnation that Wyndham's Land Purchase Act may foster among the new landed class, just as it had fostered 'unnatural' loyal Irishmen, for 'no doubt English rule is vigorously exploited in the interests of the property, power, and promotion of the Irish classes as against the Irish masses' (Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 812).

12. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Random House, 2002), 51.

13. See Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama*, 48 ff.

14. Ibid.

15. Archer, Peter. 'Shaw and the Irish Question', *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 11 (1991): 120.

16. Ibid., 128.

17. Shaw wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* in 1898 (premiered in 1901), but it was to undergo revision in 1930. *Saint Joan* was written and premiered in 1923, although it is likely that a trip to Orleans in 1913 (Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw: The One-Volume Definitive Edition* [New York: Random House, 1997], 520) and Joan's canonisation in 1920 successively sparked the idea of the play.

18. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 168.

19. Ibid., 162.

20. Ibid., 295. For a more comprehensive discussion of the concept of whether historical progress is real and attainable, with specific references to *Caesar and Cleopatra*, see Jonathan L. Wisenthal, *Shaw's Sense of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 101 ff.

21. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 200.

22. Darrell Figgis, *The Economic Case for Irish Independence* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1920), 13.

23. US Government, 'The Irish Question: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-fifth Congress, Third Session, on H. J. res. 357, Requesting the Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the International Peace Conference to Present to the Said Conference the Right of Ireland to Freedom, Independence, and Self-determination' (Washington: Government Printing Office, 12 December 1918), 28.

24. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 204–5, 214, 217.

25. William J. Bryan and Francis W. Halsey. *The World's Famous Orations*. Volume VI: *Ireland* (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), 204. 'Ireland for the Irish' became the slogan of O'Connell's Repeal Association, and was reproduced in posters and all sorts of souvenir prints (cf. Eileen Reilly, 'Modern Ireland: An Introductory Survey', in *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, eds Joseph J. Lee and Marion R. Casey [New York: New York University Press, 2006], 87).

26. A search on the British Newspaper Archive (http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/) retrieves hundreds of occurrences of the exact phrase in the right context just for the span between 1850 and 1900. The phrase was even translated literally outside the English-speaking world to illustrate the ideas of Irish nationalists. For example, the National Digital Newspaper Archive of Spain (Hemeroteca Digital, available at http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/) contains abundant examples of 'Irlanda para los irlandeses' in articles dating as far back as the 1840s.

27. 'Ireland for the Irish', *Northern Daily Mail*, 24 September 1890, 4; 'Ireland for the Irish,' *The Yorkshire Herald*, 10 July 1894, 6; and 'Ireland for the Irish', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 5 June 1899, 2.

28. Henry O'Neill, *Ireland for the Irish: A Practical, Peaceable, and Just Solution of the Irish Land Question* (London: Trübner and Co, 1868); and Robert Dennis, *Industrial Ireland: A Practical and Non-Political View of 'Ireland for the Irish'* (London: John Murray, 1887).

29. Jonathan L. Wisenthal, *Shaw's Sense of History*, 102.

30. See Judith Evans, *The Politics and Plays of Bernard Shaw* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 43–44, for a general discussion on this topic.

31. Samuel A. Weiss, ed., *Bernard Shaw's Letters to Siegfried Trebitsch* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 20. Siegfried Trebitsch was Shaw's German translator.

32. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 204, 206–7, 216, 240.

33. Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *Textures of Irish America* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 130.

34. 'The English Army of Occupation in Ireland', *The Northern Echo*, 26 March 1890, 3; and 'The English Army of Occupation in Ireland', *The Sunderland Daily Echo*, 1 July 1892, 2.

35. 'The Army of Occupation', *The Freeman's Journal*, 17 March 1896, 4.

36. Rona M. Fields, *Northern Ireland: Society under Siege* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1980), 173. My emphasis.

37. Dan H. Laurence, ed., *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters (1898–1910)* (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972), 394.

38. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 203.

39. Ibid., 198–200, 204.

40. Ibid., 226–27.

41. Stanley Weintraub, 'The Hibernian School: Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw', *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 13 (1993): 29. Elsie B. Adams (*Bernard Shaw and the Aesthetes* [Columbus: Ohio State

University Press, 1971]) provides a deep discussion on the personal and artistic relationship between Shaw and the so-called 'aesthetes'.

42. John T. Koch, ed., *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 709 ff. In Shaw's time, Horace Plunkett (Horace Plunkett, Ellice Pilkington, and George Russell, *The United Irishwomen: Their Place, Work, and Ideals* [Dublin: Maunsel, 1911], 1) begins his argument by stating that 'Ireland, more than any other country, is spoken of as a woman.'

43. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume II, 175, 184.

44. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, 'Reminiscences of an Irish Suffragette', in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. Vol. V: *Irish Women's Writing and Tradition*, ed. Angela Bourke (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 92.

45. Jonathan L. Wisental, *Shaw's Sense of History*, 101.

46. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume VI, 125.

47. Ibid., 126.

48. George Bernard Shaw, 'G. B. S. on Ireland', *Weekly Irish Times*, 22 August 1922, 8.

49. George Bernard Shaw, 'The Irish Crisis by Bernard Shaw in "Manchester Guardian"', *The Maoriland Worker*, 8 March 1922, 1.

50. Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume VI, 60.

51. Nicholas Allen, 'Reflections on Twentieth-Century Irish Literature', *An Exhibition of Irish Literary Materials in Wilson Library*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://www2.lib.unc.edu/rbc/n4/reflections.html. Accessed 1 September 2014.

52. Shaw explains: 'Now for the facts as to "St. Joan". I wrote it in 1923. During that year I was at Glengarriff from the 18th July to the 15th August, and at Parknasilla from the 15th August to the 18th September working at the play all the time' (Bernard Shaw, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw*, volume VI, 242).

53. Ibid., 241–43.

54. Ibid., 128.

55. Ibid., 136. Compare Caesar's words regarding the Britons' belief that 'the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature'.

56. Ibid., 162.

57. Ibid., 140.

58. Ibid., 93, 113, 122.

59. Ibid., 129.

60. Ibid., 131.

61. Ibid., 139.

62. Ibid., 139–40. My emphasis.

63. Ibid., 14.

64. Ibid., 67.

65. Ibid., 139.

66. We may remind readers of the scene in the first part of *Back to Methuselah* ('In the Beginning') in which the Serpent invents new words such as 'dead', 'born', or 'miracle' so that the only humans in Eden can properly refer to the new realities they discover in their daily toil.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 28.

69. Ibid., 85.

70. It is interesting to note how the phrase 'New Woman' was mentioned explicitly in *Caesar and Cleopatra* and is omitted twenty-odd years later in *Saint Joan*. The new ground broken by feminists around the world and especially in England had finally made an impact.

71. Ibid., 20.

72. For a discussion of Shaw's sources and their use thereof, see Michel Pharand, *Bernard Shaw and the French* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 154–55.

73. See Peter Archer, 'Shaw and the Irish Question'; and Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 51–63, among others.

74. Michel Pharand, *Bernard Shaw and the French*, 151.

75. Letter to Mrs Patrick Campbell (8 September 1913). In Dan H. Laurence, *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters (1911–1925)* (London: Max Reinhardt, 1985), 201–2.

76. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 6.

77. I would like to clarify what I mean by 'sugar-coating'. This is a critical term that has often been used to devaluate Shaw's drama on the grounds that (a) it is not weighty enough, and (b) it is merely a soap box for the author's ideology. It is my contention that neither of the above applies to Shaw, for—contrary to the popularly held belief that 'if a work is comic it cannot, by that very fact, be of any genuine weight' (John A. Mills, *Language and Laughter: Comic Diction in the Plays of Bernard Shaw* [Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969], x)—the ability to make an otherwise unpleasant topic palatable by virtue of humour is one of Shaw's greatest assets.

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# Voices from War, a Privileged Fado

**Daniel de Zubía Fernández**

With the growth of comparative studies, new approaches have revealed how shared voice(s) and tone(s) may be perceived. Some voices may be concealed in any urban *beco* or alleyway in Lisbon and in Buenos Aires, in a fictional space where some army veterans are found. In literature and cinema, places like Afghanistan, Angola, Europe, the former Yugoslavia, the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, Iraq, Palestine and Syria are not mere fictional locations of a given war, but the settings where people find, meet and define themselves and each other in any specific war. War is a source of crucial life experiences that translate into fiction, where both the viewer and reader meet and find some individuals back in their motherland trying to digest and assimilate their war experiences. Regardless of the war the characters fought in, when listening closely to their voices a range of sounds may be distinguished. In those sounds and words, a thematic analysis brings up a common narrative thread, neither limited by literary

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traditions nor historical time, but a place in which a fictionalised collective voice can be heard. In *Fado alexandrino* and in *El raro privilegio* [The Odd Privilege] whether described in a 'fado' song or a novel, war surfaces as a collective experience for a fictional community of voices.[1]

This chapter focuses on the novels *Fado alexandrino* by the Portuguese novelist António Lobo Antunes (b. 1942) and on *El raro privilegio* by Ronnie Quinn (b. 1960), an Argentine writer of Irish descent. My main interest is to compare how writers belonging to different literary traditions are affected by the same pretextual experience: war as an accident in their lives, translated into a fictional reflection on aspects of this experience. In these two novels a common voice is heard; Lobo Antunes and Quinn use a mixture of fact and fiction to generate this common voice, with which they evoke the Portuguese Colonial War[2] and the Falklands/Malvinas War,[3] as well as the dislocation that people such as these novels' protagonists experienced back in their respective motherlands. Certainly, the fictional construction is different in each novel. Nevertheless, their shared sense of dislocation and common voice is the angle that will be tackled in this essay.

# 1    *Fado alexandrino* and *El raro privilegio*

In these two novels, António Lobo Antunes and Ronnie Quinn narrate accounts of war from a number of different perspectives. War, however, is an experience that conscript soldiers cannot control, and it is therefore confronted in the narrative present. The soldiers' experiences of war determine the relations between war veterans and the rest of society. The war veterans are presented as individuals who feel, and are, displaced in Buenos Aires and Lisbon. From their perspective, their motherlands do not seem to be the familiar places they knew before the war.

In *Fado alexandrino*, António Lobo Antunes offers an account of five veterans from the Colonial Wars (1961–1974). As pointed out by Maria Alzira Seixo, this novel focuses on the African wars and the post-war urban experience, as well as the role of family in the protagonists' childhood, and the difficulty the soldiers have in expressing and decoding emotions; we see evidence of the latter when they mingle with women.[4] The novel is divided into three main sections: before, during and after the revolution. Four of the characters recount their stories to a fifth. The three parts of the

novel are structured around the Carnation Revolution (25 April, 1974). As military officers organise the revolution, each character has to make a crucial choice about whether to join it, oppose it or run away when the uprising occurs. Throughout the novel, we see that incidents and images from the Colonial War in Mozambique are still present in the lives of these army veterans. Though their lives change according to the choices they make, the consequences of war tend to resist and are still present in their lives. By the time of their reunion after the revolution, none of them seems to have gained much, suggesting that the Carnation Revolution was not as significant for these soldiers as the war that preceded it. Their meeting in Mozambique had been the essential moment in their lives. Now, the five former soldiers meet back in Lisbon, some 10 years later, for a night of debauchery, at which they share their stories and catch up on the events of the intervening years. Despite their differences of rank, social background and political points of view, their experiences after the war have been similar overall. Their difficulty mingling with women clearly illustrates the problems they face when socialising in general, as they are not able to fully adapt to the new political landscape that has been brought on by the revolution. Their time together as a cohesive group is the basis of their bond; it is a form of collective identity highlighted with the intermingling of the army veterans' voices and stories, as presented in this process of organization of their individual and group memory, their dislocated lives.

The main character of *El raro privilegio* is named after the author of the novel. The character Quinn, as I shall refer to him in the pages of this essay, is an Argentine lad of Irish descent who fought in the Malvinas/Falklands war (April–June 1982) and now lives in Buenos Aires. He is a native English speaker who was sent to war since speaking English was an essential skill for the Argentine army, enabling them to spy on the British army on the islands. Thus, the character Quinn was one of the last Argentine soldiers to leave the islands at the very end of the war. Back in Buenos Aires, he lives in the family home with his mother, paternal aunts and close relatives. It is back in the motherland where he found and still finds some comfort, both in English and Spanish, but this is only so at home. He is working as an English teacher; his personal connections with contemporary Argentina are rather weak, as he hasn't met many people since the war. His work as a teacher remains as a side aspect in the novel.

As the character Quinn remembers at the beginning of the novel, when he first returned from the war he spent all his time sleeping and watching movies: he limited his life to passive activities, observing but not taking part, listening to the radio and music of that place and time, and, only communicating with his close relatives in the family home. The character Quinn is busy enough ruminating over his own past. *El raro privilegio* unfolds from his experiences. The character is called by the police to be told that an army veteran friend has died, having apparently committed suicide. Thus, Ronnie Quinn's narrative not only goes beyond an actual memory or account of war and post-war experiences, but also contains elements of, and transcends, the genre expectations of a detective/spy novel: this is more than just a factual mystery to be solved.

In *El raro privilegio* some former soldiers find themselves embroiled in a mystery after a friend and ex-soldier, el Turco,[5] supposedly commits suicide. In his address book el Turco kept the names and phone numbers of all his wartime friends. By combining the theme of war with the detective/spy element, Quinn illustrates certain trends in contemporary democratic Argentina, where business practices are not always above board. The problem of arms trafficking allows Quinn, the writer, to portray Argentine society through the lens of detective/spy literature, often perceived as a literature of escape but which also, notably, usually includes a representation of a period in social history. Through their memories, Ronnie Quinn's characters move through different spaces in Buenos Aires, Montevideo and the Malvinas, as seen in the novel when the character Quinn's past is narrated; at this point, that war and those islands emerge as an element representing a clear breaking point and the defining time in the main characters' lives. This element allows the character Quinn to interpret and understand his current life and the events he finds himself led into. In *El raro privilegio,* war and the veterans' experience of war constitute the bond that holds them together in the face of their dislocated lives. This bond appears in the process of organisation of their individual and group memory, where the option for the character Quinn is to leave by plane Argentina. In this novel, Ronnie Quinn explores the inner conflict that the character Quinn goes through, trying to find his own place in contemporary Argentina; where, from his perspective, there are two groups in society, those who fought in the Malvinas war and the rest. In

both *Fado alexandrino* and *El raro privilegio*, the writers introduce a fictional narrative whose core element is war. Certainly, this is an experience that leads characters in both novels to feel out of control; they find themselves struggling with the limited emotional or physical personal resources at their disposal. The war was the turning point in their lives, the experience they are trying to come to terms with. Thus, their war experience is going to determine and to make itself a condition in the lives of most of the characters in these two novels.

## 2     War and Fiction, Argentina and Portugal

In all literary traditions, the connection between war and fiction is a prominent one given that storytelling lies at the heart of the narration not just as a reflection upon a traumatic individual experience, but as a fictional framework in which to reflect upon human existence. War is the reason for some events and encounters, as for some characters who were directly involved in the conflict, the only thing they have in common is that they share this moment in time. Much of the storytelling concentrates on the experiences of these people, and is expressed by voices that haunt some characters, whose narrative present is determined by that past. Thus, their war experience is a core element of the narration, not just a mere setting that may explain their fictional lives and experiences. The narrative voices the past in the characters' present. These fictionalised voices may take the form of a Portuguese 'fado' song, but echo the meaning of the Latin noun *fatum*, in that the fate of these voices and characters proves to be purely determined by the characters' pasts, their own experiences of war. Thus, parallel discourses are being generated being that fate a matter that brings each character back to their past, both a common and an individual past, but where to also carefully hear the voices that resonate from that past. For this reason, Susan Barnett's 'has-happenedness' approach allows us to consider literature with an awareness of its the historic context, where the act of writing and reading takes place.[6] This is also the space in which the narration takes place, providing a common sphere in which the relations between different periods in history can be analysed. Consequently, in the social margins of contemporary Portugal and Argentina, facts and fiction outline the fictional crossroads where Lobo Antunes and

Quinn call into question, through the lives of some army veterans, the absurdity of militarism and the war; where they give a voice to these army veterans and to common discourses.

In Portugal and Argentina, by means of the Salazarist discourse in Portugal and equally that of Argentina's Junta Militar, nationalist rhetoric and discourse constituted a common feature that was vivid during both of these wars. For both regimes these two wars meant the maintenance of the nationalist discourse that they were promoting. These two regimes concentrated their nations' efforts and aspirations on these wars since they were promoting the eternal nationalist values and conceptions of each nation. The significance of this discourse lies in the fact that the African Colonies, for Portugal, and the Falklands/Malvinas, for Argentina, implied the completion of the nation, which was a vital driving force and concept for both regimes. So, even if Boaventura de Sousa Santos was only referring to Portugal, it could be argued that Argentina was also a society 'craving change, … resisting change, … in vertiginous movement, … frozen by vertigo.'[7] Thus, being defeated in these wars meant the non-completion of each nation in each true form, as the regime saw it. As a result, when the Estado Novo dictatorship ended in April 1974, the coup d'état that brought it down was connected to the defeats of the Colonial Wars.[8] In June 1983, after defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War, the Argentine Junta Militar (1976–1983) also collapsed.[9] Both regimes shared one target: the reuniting of their country with its territories, of Portugal with the Colonies, of Argentina with the Falklands/Malvinas. As this target was not achieved, these two countries were left amidst the rumbles, as Lobo Antunes put it. Both societies were left amidst the ruins at a crucial time in which they were facing a new political era: that of post-dictatorship. As underlined by Eduardo Lourenço, after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal 'everything was charged to Salazar, and Salazar was not charged to anyone',[10] which also applies to Argentina in the 1980s and 1990s. Standing by those ruins, conscripted army veterans represented a silenced collective memory in Argentina and Portugal, as these veterans were overloaded with an excess of personal recollection. In Portugal and Argentina few people were willing to hear about those experiences of war. For both António Lobo Antunes and Ronnie Quinn, the Colonial War and the Falkvinas War (if I may refer to it as such) consti-

tute a pretextual experience; the personal driving force that allows Lobo Antunes and Quinn, as conscripted army veterans of each war, to explore and show where characters like themselves end up in their societies after having lived through and survived a war. And so the character Quinn says: 'Yo estaba harto de escuchar lo mismo. Para la mayoría lo que nos pasó era una anécdota. Lo comentaban como a un partido de algún mundial de fútbol.'[11] Therefore, Quinn describes a division between two groups in Argentina: the conscripted soldiers and the majority of Argentine society. The character Quinn perceives that for the latter, the war is just a historical incident with little biographical meaning. For the former, war was more than just an anecdote, it was an event with enduring meaning in their lives, more significant than experiencing defeat in a soccer match. It exceeded the limits of the pitch, of the motherland. The personal and biographical implications of the war for them are at the core of their lives and the narration: it explores what this group of conscript soldiers in the motherland have to process.

## 3    Being Back in the Motherland

As pointed out by Santos, in the aftermath of these wars, both Portugal and Argentina were torn between craving and resisting change. As portrayed in these two novels, for their soldiers, returning meant coming back to a different society to the one they had left; a thornier society, undergoing change. In the translation into fiction of these experiences, being back in the motherland is an essential fictional ingredient that allows Lobo Antunes and Quinn to articulate the sense of unsettlement these army veterans experience. As conscript soldiers, they had no say in when to leave and return to the motherland, which visibly illustrates the sense of dislocation they underwent. Thus, even if initially being back in the motherland is perceived as being back to where they were before conscription, their encounter with their motherland is not trouble-free.

Both Lobo Antunes and Quinn turn to historical facts—connected with these two wars and those who returned to their motherland after them—as the source for fiction which is critical of contemporary Portugal and Argentina. As a result, Susan Bassnett's 'has-happenedness'[12] approach allows

to connect literature and a historic context, where the act of writing and reading takes place. This is also the space where the narration takes place, providing a common sphere where to analyse the relation between the two novels. Thus, the 'has-happenedness' of the plurality of voices depicts a group of soldiers who have returned from a lost war and who, either in Buenos Aires or in Lisbon, find there is no room for them. So, in both capitals, human degradation is manifest in the existence of characters who have undergone the 'violent process of deterritorialization and re-territorialization, marked by the individual and collective loss', by the existence of their collective and individual voices.[13] As noted by Ribeiro with reference to Portugal, but in a comment that could also apply to Argentina, the experience of place and space is a feature of recent Portuguese prose; she relates that 'the collective loss of memory [about some facts] and an excess of personal memory' coexist in the urban lives of these conscript army veterans, who have returned to their motherland along with their vivid recollections.[14] In these novels the urban space is presented as an area in which the protagonists do not interact with society, unless society requests them to do so. The urban space is where the protagonists meet up and increasingly realise that their experience of Lisbon or Buenos Aires is home to that group bond, in which they try to construct their form of identity around their group.

In this manner, the experience of war comprises two clear moments and directions: leaving and returning to the motherland. Thus, homecoming is the unmistakable shared experience for the community of voices portrayed in *Fado alexandrino* and in *El raro privilegio*. This is related to the essential stage of returning, 'desde que volvimos'.[15] As emphasised by the use of the adverb 'since', that past time is crucial in the character Quinn's eyes, and where he situates himself, since he uses the first-person plural: 'we returned'. Those not belonging to his group are those that did not return from war, the rest of Argentine society. In addition, the essence of what made the experience of those war veterans unique was 'returning home, finding themselves back in that familiar space'. Once there, this experience becomes a coming-to-terms with how that very same space, home and the motherland, no longer feels so familiar. The war is the turning point in their lives in the narrative present. As a result, war is at the heart of the narration since war turns into a 'topos' in some of the characters' memories. The characters' personal experience brings the reader through familiar urban landscapes and

alleyways where, however, the characters are still trapped by their war experiences, and have limited breathing space in their surroundings. The characters hardly interact with others, and find themselves on the edges of society. This is related to the fact that these post-dictatorship societies had changed and, additionally, to the transformations that had taken place in them after each war. Thus, the task of confronting and attempt to process past situations and experiences, faced before but associated with the narrative present, are handled back in their motherland. The dislocation these former soldiers experience is attributable to their return to a changed society.

 War circumstances and experiences determine the lives of these soldiers. In the two novels, both of which could be described 'as a fictionalization of the past',[16] this 'topos' is the space that inhabits the memory of the characters, coming back in the novels as flashbacks, driving them to search for answers to the question(s) that still haunt them. Through a kaleidoscopic perspective, Lobo Antunes and Quinn depict, in the alleyways of both societies, a space where this type of 'Other' attempts to find their individual space and, as well, where by fictionalizing these writers live, survive or overcome that experience. Even if the war between nations is over, this is not so in their lives. As a result, in an exercise of memory and recollection, they attempt to organise both their collective and individual memory, voicing that imagined community. Memory is the device that keeps and recalls facts, events or experiences, that personal mental picture. Being this a crepuscular memory, this type of memory is an essential one since, for these war veterans, time stopped with those wars as this was a breaking point in their lives, 'conceiving imagination as the arrangement of memory', as the length of time over which remembering extends.[17]

## 4 A Category of Other(s)

In this manner, these former soldiers incarnate a certain type of 'Other', a group which remains, whose members have experienced war and who still find themselves conscripted by that circumstance, which is determining the course of their lives. This is because of the sense of unsettlement and perturbation they experienced in Portugal and Argentina, since the characters are representative of those army veterans who need to come to terms with their

war experience and their role in their societies, in the past and in the present. Given that other nationals do not share that war experience, nor the unsettlement brought with it, these characters stand as 'Others', who must learn to cope with their own narrative present. As a result, the inner group voice reflects the disconnection between society and these 'Others' as only the group's members are familiar with that voice. Thus, a bitter tone and a lonely surface illustrate how these 'Others' do not distinguish their own space within those societies. The gap between the groups of these 'Others' and those who did not go to war constitute a preliminary feature. However, the core aspect in these novels is the disconnection between the two groups, which is attributable to the unique experience of war for these 'Others'. The tone and voice of those who have not experienced war is evidence of the lack of interest and concern for 'el sufrimiento de los que fueron a Angola' [the suffering of those who went to Angola]' in the words of Lobo Antunes.[18] In the eyes of these societies: 'cuando terminó todo, volvimos a nuestras vidas de costumbre y fuimos nosotros los responsables de la derrota [when everything was over, we came back to our ordinary lives and we were responsible for the defeat]';[19] the veterans returned to a life as conscripted army veterans and defeated citizens. As a consequence, living in the motherland in isolation was an initial step in the process of personally absorbing their experiences, whilst separated from each other. Nevertheless, for this imagined community, in both *Fado alexandrino* and *El raro privilegio*, a corpse proves to be the initiating factor in coming to terms with the past.[20] Thus, this voiceless being will offer the characters, for the first time, the chance to give testimony and to be heard. '¿Te molesta si te pregunto algo sobre Malvinas? [Does it annoy you, me asking you about the Malvinas?]' is the first question the character Quinn is asked by a policeman.[21] Back in the motherland, the veterans become aware that they belong to a category of 'Others', as opposed to those who were not conscripts.

## 5    Dislocated Voices

Voices and silences articulate the expression and outcry of these army veterans. In the pattern of these sounds homecoming is a vital moment, as mentioned before, but being listened to at home constitutes another essential

moment, a way of accomplishing the homecoming process. Voices and sounds bring us towards the original starting point, place or condition. Hence, the character Quinn recalls how, after the war he used to spend all his time sleeping and watching movies, limiting his life to passive activities, observing but not taking part in life, listening to the radio and consuming the media of that society. Only his close relatives listened to him, not the rest of society. On his own, the character Quinn is busy enough fictionalising his and his fellow veterans' past. The time they spent together in the 'Falkvinas' war created a bond between them and, now, another event will bring them together in Buenos Aires. This stirs up the character Quinn's memories of the events and people he encountered during the war. The police contact him because a fellow veteran that he knew has killed three people. This will lead the war veterans to meet up again.

This murder is revealing, not just of how some internal layers of society function, but of this group of army veterans, whose disruptive behavior becomes visible to Argentine society. Thus, the police get in touch with the character Quinn. This is a noteworthy phone call for the character as, for the first time, since he returned to Buenos Aires, he appears to be relevant in the eyes of the motherland, even if this is just because the authorities want to find out why his friend has killed three citizens, or what he himself knew about this killing. In the novel no connection is made between the psychological conditions of the killer and the killing itself. In this novel, Ronnie Quinn is not primarily concerned with the socio-mental aspects of the war experience, of whether this man is a mass murderer or not. Ronnie Quinn's intention is to bring together the protagonist and his former companions, and to confront contemporary Argentine society with a corpse. So, since 'murder is the unique crime, and its investigation tears down the privacy of both the living and the dead', this corpse echoes the lives of the living and the dead of Argentine society as it will bring to light what remained concealed in that society: the 'Falkvinas war, having lost that war, war veterans, corruption.'[22] The character Quinn finds himself, once again, caught between the police and his wartime friends, thus the narration portrays and explores that past and present while the character Quinn wanders around Buenos Aires and Montevideo, embroiled in a mystery, with many unanswered and vague questions. The character Quinn meets up with his fellow veterans, people

from varied social backgrounds, a circumstance that forces them to share their stories and questions of the Falkvinas years.

In *Fado alexandrino,* a murder takes place when one of the army veterans is killed just for fun.[23] This corpse functions as the element that 'tears down the privacy' of these army veterans back in Portugal.[24] Further, the novel reflects the process of dehumanisation that the army veterans experienced in Africa, since they treat this death in the same way they used to deal with the deaths of Africans during the war.[25] The protagonists 'relate their personal crises that are circumstantially reinforced by a feeling of temporal and geographical displacement in the post-colonial setting of the metropolis'.[26] The conscript army veterans back home form a silenced collective memory, overloaded with an excess of personal recollections, that their societies are not willing to hear about. Thus, at their reunion, they can verbalise their thoughts/memories and feel heard. In *Fado alexandrino* and *El raro privilegio,* the use of voice highlights how their experience is a common one. Whether or not they can become a part of their respective societies again is determined by their identities, which are now fixed and determined by their personal and shared war experience. This sense of displacement articulates their voices back in the motherland; the only breathing space in that society is in the company of their old war comrades, where those who are 'Other' can establish a bond. The dual function of the reunion is essential in both novels. Back in the motherland, this reunion is a time to exchange and share their experiences, and when a dead body is found, it provides them with the opportunity to become visible and audible to their societies.

In this context, Lobo Antunes and Quinn tear down divisions between present and past by introducing the corpse into the narration. Although a corpse is a body with no voice, it is still able to reveal information to those alive as it can articulate the exploration of this time and space where these former soldiers are going to be relevant for these two societies. Thus, in *El raro privilegio*, the death of a Falkvinas veteran who had been involved in an arms-trafficking case exposes some of the detritus of contemporary Argentine society. In *Fado alexandrino*, Celestino, the communication officer, dies after a night out involving heavy drinking and the company of prostitutes. As a woman in the cabaret asks: 'Que fazemos nós do cadáver? … dentro de três horas … é um fedor aqui não se pode.'[27] In both novels, a corpse is the element that goes beyond the actual limits of the group and

the momentary intense stink as the murder affects the society. This exemplifies how the connection between the group of former soldiers, not fully visible in the eyes of these two societies they belong to, is clear in the eyes of the reader, not just for the legal implications of the murder. Long after the wars and the experience of defeat, Lobo Antunes and Quinn are underlining the presence of the army veterans in their respective societies and as a result raising awareness of them in contemporary Argentina and Portugal. Furthermore, the legal implications of the murder are not treated as significant to the plot; this emphasises how these two novels are not concerned with the who-done-it aspect of such an offence, but more with using it to shed light on the actual homecoming of the protagonists of these two novels and contemporary Argentina and Portugal.

Consequently, the detective or spy component in Quinn's novel goes beyond the factual mystery to be solved, allowing the writer to examine the underbelly of that society. Therefore, in post-Falkvinas Argentina, Ronnie Quinn brings to light some of the less visible aspects of Argentine society, the arms trafficking and money laundering; in this underworld, the police, the army, Mossad, the IRA, the paramilitary groups in Libya and Croatia, and a new subversive group are pretty close entities. In *El raro privilegio* the corpse gives voice to what lies beneath the surface of Argentina; and Ronnie Quinn brings into light the official discourse of Argentina about its claim to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. As reverberated in the last years, for Ronnie Quinn, this claim is no longer essential for the nation. As a consequence, Argentine claims over these islands are something of a side issue, only relevant for those who fought in the war. Besides, the function of the corpse is to make those 'Others', those semi-outsiders defeated in those wars, become temporarily visible to their societies, in an ephemeral way; for almost as long as the corpse stinks. Thus, in *El raro privilegio*, Buenos Aires police's main concern is not the murder that has been committed against a background of arms trafficking and money laundering, but how this killing is portrayed by the media.

In *Fado alexandrino*, Lobo Antunes focuses on how the army veterans deal with the murder of Celestino, the communication officer, and how destiny itself deals with this murder. As a matter of fact, on the night when all the army veterans meet, the veteran that killed Celestino himself dies in a car crash. Celestino represents the ideals of the Carnation

Revolution and his death demystifies that revolution, revealing a society not fit for change, where destiny seems more significant than the people's will. In the portrayal of these two societies that crave change, each murder exemplifies a state of *non-change*: these societies were and still remain frozen by pure vertigo or by other forces. Furthermore, the narrative structure of the fado or novel allows its protagonists, the army veterans, to witness the underworld that Argentine and Portuguese society do not seem to notice, or that they do not wish the media to portray. In the case of Argentina, this underworld is at the fringes of contemporary democratic Argentina, and is a place where the nature of the various businesses carried out there is not always clear. In the case of Portugal, this underworld portrays the disillusion of the periods both before and after the Carnation Revolution, and with how that revolution's promises have not come true. Officially, such dissatisfaction is swept aside. An obvious sense of disillusionment at the failure to realise an illusion also determines the lives of the characters in *El raro privilegio*, in post-Army Junta Argentina.

Furthermore, dislocation is at the heart of the narrative, along with the processes of deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation, of individual and collective loss. As one of the protagonists states in *Fado alexandrino*: 'Não conheço esta casa. Não conheço estes cheiros, estes sabores, estas vozes. Não conheço estas mulheres nem estes homens. Não conheço estes cães de madrugada na rua lá fora, os ruídos, a manhã …'; this is an individual who is unable to decode what was, and is home.[28] The connection with that extent, of not being able to relate to even a range of view or sounds of and in the motherland, is absent. In these two novels, the protagonists experience an identity crisis, determined by their experiences of war and of returning to the motherland. The obstacles faced by the protagonists are immense. The displacement they feel is determined by a difficulty in recognising urban space, in communicating and exchanging their thoughts and impressions with other people. Thus, the significance of the phrase 'não conheço' clearly illustrates what they experience: an ability to perceive or understand the difference between truth and lies, a lack of a clear understanding of the urban space they inhabit, even if that seemed something fixed in their mind or memory, but appeared hazily in their eyes. Likewise, the character Quinn is not acquainted with that urban space and society: 'Ya había pasado bastante tiempo desde que habíamos vuelto. Vivíamos en democracia, pocos

recordaban Malvinas, más bien se trataba de olvidarlas, de ocultar la guerra y a nosotros. Por lo general se hablaba poco y nada del tema.'[29] Hence, both novels portray the difficulty of the transition for conscripted soldiers returning to civilian life in the motherland. For that society forgetting was easy whereas for the former soldiers it was not. For the veterans, their difficulties mainly stem from not being able to find or regain the space they had formerly occupied in society. This gap and/or clash constitutes the common core experience for the group. Back in the motherland, their memories, their accounts of war and post-war experiences establish the fictional thread of this 'has-happenedness'. Thus, memory, the recollection of those events, illustrates the difficult transition for soldiers returning to civilian life. In their memories, the characters alternate between different spaces in Buenos Aires or Lisbon, the Falklands/Malvinas Islands or Mozambique, in flashbacks to the characters' pasts which reveal that space of war as the clear and unique turning point in their lives. The characters find themselves recollecting moments and events of those past wars, and try to grasp some form of answers to their queries and uncertainties. These narrative devices allow Ronnie Quinn and Lobo Antunes interpret and reveal these characters' current lives, and the events they have experienced, which were previously unknown to their fellow Argentines and Portuguese. Nevertheless, the bonds between the army veterans are shown to be the vital elements for them; the writers are voicing the characters' own pasts, so that 'fictional writing emphasizes the specific fiction of particular events experienced by individuals.'[30] Thus, fiction is a sphere in which specific issues and topics, such as war and returning to the motherland, can be explored, and through this exploration the tone and voice of the individuals involved in the war can emerge. Thanks to this, both Lobo Antunes and Ronnie Quinn's characters respectively inhabit common spheres; each group has a collective identity that is emphasised by the intermingling of experiences and voices.

The specific events experienced by the individuals lay emphasis on that collective group identity. For the characters, their personal connections with contemporary Argentina and Portugal are rather weak, as they have not met many people after the war, and the only ties they have with members of their societies are with social outcasts or their own relatives. The fictional representation of the group of army veterans' interactions with society leaves the reader dissatisfied. The army veterans' breathing space is

the group of soldiers. The account they voice is only shared between them, just known to a few people. Their striking thoughts and memories of the horror of war illustrate their disgust at those wars; all the more so since they realise that the administration, the same force that sent them to fight, has never supported them. In both novels the characters are shaped by their experiences of war. The psychology of the army veterans plays a significant role, depicting the clashes they encounter in their transition to civilian life. The war was a time of horror, but also of humour and absurdity, a bright ingredient in such a dark landscape. In his case, this absurdity comes from the fact that the character Quinn speaks English, which for him was nothing unusual, but part of his everyday life:

> ¿Estábamos en guerra con Inglaterra? … En ese momento mi cabeza no paraba de darme vueltas. Yo había estudiado en un colegio inglés, mi vieja era anglicana. Por el lado paterno éramos descendientes de irlandeses católicos. Hace siglos que peleaban con los ingleses. Existen grandes diferencias entre irlandeses e ingleses. Para la mayoría de los argentinos son imposibles de distinguir. A nadie le importa y es lógico. En realidad sucede así en general, es difícil distinguir a un armenio de un turco o a un judío de un ruso. No son pocos los que desconocen hasta que son dos islas distintas. U2 ayudó mucho a diferenciarlos aunque la música en inglés, era siempre inglesa.[31]

In addition, the character Quinn reveals his unique perspective, since even though both the English and the Irish spoke the English language, only the character Quinn's relatives were aware of his privilege, not his fellow Argentines. 'Mi única cualidad era saber hablar inglés. Algo no tan valioso antes de la guerra. ¿Qué chances había de que entráramos en conflicto con una nación angloparlante?'[32] However, the fact of being a witness to the war, which most Argentine citizens had not been, constitutes a subsequent privilege. As mentioned before, the war was particularly relevant since the end of the Argentine Junta closely followed the Falkvinas war. In Ronnie Quinn's experience of war, the reader sees how the character Quinn could reach territory that few Argentines have been to, which both allowed and forced him to interact with the Kelpers, as he was culturally not that distant from them.[33] The character Quinn also translates silly things as 'Made in the United Kingdom' on a manual, which his general considers to be relevant, and shares some humour with the reader when the general interprets this

as meaning that the manual is not English.[34] The character Quinn also has to witness the horror of raids and the uncertainty of not knowing what was going on during the war. In the character Quinn's experience of the narrative present, the reader sees how this character's privilege is connected to his war experience. However, this period of time will have unexpected consequences in the life of the character Quinn. In *El raro privilegio*, Ronnie Quinn reveals the connections between arms trafficking, money laundering and the police as a side-narrative, to underline that many aspects of the sociopolitical landscape are not fully visible to mainstream Argentine society; and to show how the Argentine claim to the Falkland Islands is made with other purposes in mind. Only the character Quinn and his colleagues witness these offences and this landscape, which is evidence of their privilege. The epilogue in the book is a turning point, since it reveals that things do not always turn out to be as initially believed or expected. Ronnie Quinn shows the reader that sometimes a different ending can be found, and faced. These novels go beyond a mere memoir of the narrators' lives and experiences. As underlined in *El raro privilegio*, the character Quinn realised how, being back in Argentina, as it happened to the Irish, sometimes you may have enemies on both sides. While at war, the character Quinn has to translate some sentences and phrases for his army superiors:

> Revisaban los folletos. Yo hacía flexiones. Cuando se cansaron de no entender, me llamaron para que les tradujera.
> - Hecho en Reino Unido- señalé.
> - ¡Ja! ¿Ve que no es inglés? ¡Burro!- dijo el Cabo. El General estaba a punto de pegarle.
>  …
> y escuché:
> - Apple, apple, banana, chicken …
> - ¿Qué dice?
> - Manzana, manzana, banana, pollo- traduje rápido.
> - ¿Qué significa?
> - No lo sé.
> - Soldado, ¿sabe inglés o no?[35]

The list of nouns, 'Apple, apple, banana, chicken' articulate the level of irrationality humans face in any war, where superiors are not always

smart enough to grasp certain things. Along with the absurdity of war and of some of those involved in it, the superior officer's reaction also exemplifies a lack of trust. In his privileged situation, the character Quinn has more insight into the types of generals who were leading the war. He also meets the Kelpers and perceives that his army, the Argentines, is not welcome. Nonetheless, the character Quinn sees the Kelpers as human beings and remembers how one Kelper 'me advirtió ahora que éramos amigos'.[36] Furthermore, in this novel the Irish experience of diaspora is exemplified by the situations that the character Quinn finds himself in: for the Argentine army, he is a type of Other, who has a privileged status as he can speak English; on the other hand, for the Kelpers, although he is an Argentine, an invader, he is also a friend. This is shown, for example, when the character Quinn arbitrates some small conflicts between the Argentine army and the Kelpers: a bag of carrots is stolen by some Argentine soldiers and the character Quinn returns it to the Kelper it was taken from. He is a descendent of Irish settlers, who attempts to settle a dispute between two opposing sides. This experience is a good example of his status as an individual with a unique and privileged perspective on society, in the context of irrational times and events.

Back in the motherland, as in *Fado alexandrino*, the character Quinn experiences the redefinition of his space in the motherland but also of himself as an individual. War and defeat, going and coming back and experiences of war are key elements in the lives of the veterans. This redefinition of self is associated with the continental limits of each nation. Thus, in the eyes of both societies, those who were involved in these two wars are seen as in some degree as responsible for the current situation of each nation. As both Quinn and Lobo Antunes recall, army veterans were marginalised by both societies; for example, 'a nadie le interesaba recordar el sufrimiento de los que fueron a Angola …'.[37] Both writers underline how those soldiers, once back in the motherland, failed to find a channel of communication with their respective societies, experiencing a level of rejection of their voices as 'Others'. They were left on their own and with only one bond: to the other members of their group of 'Others', people with various backgrounds, but who shared the experience of war and homecoming.

# 6    Conclusion

The question in these two novels is not how much of the novels should be assumed as factual or not. As proposed by Ronnie Quinn and António Lobo Antunes, the fictionalisation of the war and the aftermath regards to imagination as the arrangement of memory for the imagined community: these former soldiers back in the motherland. In these novels, Antunes and Quinn relate to the power of reproducing images and experiences stored in the protagonists memory under the suggestion of associated events in the present. The clash between the present and the past is palpable. Both writers embody the power of recombining former experiences in the fictional breathing space where to voice those experiences and the clash back in the motherland. This is a 'has-happenedness' of piercing voices with a shared tone. Ronnie Quinn had to go to war over a remote tiny territory and wrote this book, fermenting his memory in fiction, as António Lobo Antunes did. For that reason, Quinn does present some striking images of war and of the literary present of being back in the motherland, evoking the experience of finding one's way around Buenos Aires and looking for answers to questions. However, this novel also allows Quinn to make the men who fought that war visible to Argentine society— to shed light on those who lost the war against a European navy. The narrative voice is a transformed one that allows him to describe events and to portray a wider Argentine society through the prism of the detective/spy novel genre, in which secondary plots can turn into more significant ones. In two parallel situations presented in the novel, the reader sees how in both cases Ronnie Quinn, the character, left the Falkvinas and is about to leave Argentina, as he feels there is not room for him.

In *Fado alexandrino*, the army veterans are unable to fully adapt to the new political and social landscape brought on by the Carnation Revolution. The intermingling of the characters' voices and stories emphasises the collective identity of those who went to Angola and Mozambique, of those men shaped by their common experience in the war and who can never become part of normal society again. 'Não conheço esta noite. Não conheço esta casa. Não conheço este cheiros, este sabores, estas vozes … os ruidos lá fora.'[38] In this quote, the characters do not recognise the night, house, odours, flavours, voices; in that space they can no longer sense or hear noises out and about, as they are in a society where they cannot locate themselves anymore.

Both in *Fado alexandrino* and *El raro privilegio* the narrative driving force
is vivid, presented with flashbacks that alternate between different spaces,
including their narrator's striking thoughts and memories of the horror of
war, and depicting their disgust at those wars and at the lack of prospects
faced by those who fought in them. By voicing these common spaces in indi-
vidual silence and mutual conversations, both writers underline the difficulty
of the process of adaptation and the relevance of their bond. Homecoming is
presented as that difficult process of adaptation, of being listened to.

To conclude, without a doubt, in these two novels the '"has-
happenedness"' reproduces voices that find a limited space in which to
reverberate. The war was a time of horror, but also provides a humorous
ingredient in this dark landscape. Even if superficially the characters are
from different social classes and backgrounds, different ranks and politi-
cal views, they all share similar overall experiences before and after the
war; they are unable to fully adapt to the new political landscape of post-
dictatorship Argentina and Portugal. These novels seem to suggest that
the characters have been fundamentally shaped by their common experi-
ence in the war and can never become a part of normal society again.
However, war also emerges as the first privileged time in the life of these
army veterans, because it afforded them the opportunity to witness events
that were not visible to most Argentine or Portuguese citizens. Those
events have particular relevance, since these defeats meant the end of the
Argentine Junta and the Portuguese Estado Novo, respectively. This ele-
ment allows the characters to interpret and understand what they are
living through in contemporary Argentina and Portugal, where some
years after those events certain things have not changed that much.

The centrality of memory, both personal and fictional, in which war is
a common narrative constituent, is voiced in recollections and as an
account as presented by Ronnie Quinn and António Lobo Antunes in the
analysed novels. As in a 'fado' song, in these novels some of those war vet-
eran voices are being made perceptible, just by a kind of fermented imagi-
nation. This is where war surfaces as a mutual experience for the imagined
community of voices. In these descriptions of the difficult transition for
soldiers returning to civilian life, a plurality of voices is portrayed and
mirrored by a historical memory, even though there is not much room left
for them, neither in Buenos Aires nor in Lisbon. The veterans' reunion

is the breathing/listening space in which they find a space where their voices echo. An echo is always limited by a given space; those limits, in these two novels, include the groups of army veterans and their families, but do not extend beyond these. Representatives of the Irish diaspora, in the case of Ronnie Quinn, and of the Portuguese returnees, in the case of António Lobo Antunes, conjure a highly charged atmosphere voiced in the narrative present. Both Quinn and Lobo Antunes provide portrayals societies—Argentina and Portugal—undergoing great change. The perspective offered by the group of former army members who met up some time after the war is a decisive aspect. This is just the time for an exercise of memory about where they are in society, a process of organisation of their individual and group memory. This is the inner voice of the group's right to be heard and to reflect on the disconnection between society and those who fought during the Colonial Wars. Fiction, imagination and memory merge in these two novels, in which literature articulates Portugal's and Argentina's past and present, allowing António Lobo Antunes and Ronnie Quinn to reflect the failures of those times, of the nationalist rhetoric and discourse promoted by Salazarism and the Argentine Junta Militar, and also by giving voice to those who had been denied one in those societies.

## Notes

1. A. Lobo Antunes, *Fado alexandrino* (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 1983); and Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio* (Buenos Aires, Dunquen, 2012).
2. Unlike other European nations after the post World War II period (1945–1962), Portugal had still not granted independence to its colonies (Angola, Cape Verde, East Timor, Guinea, Macau, Mozambique, Santo Tomé and Principe). The Portuguese Colonial War or War of Liberation (1961–1974) was fought between the nationalist movement in Portugal's African colonies and mainland Portugal.
3. For many years, Argentina and the United Kingdom have argued over the Falkland Islands or Malvinas. In April 1982 Argentina took over these islands. The war between these two countries ended in June 1982.
4. Maria Alzira Seixo, 'Still Facts and Living Factions: The Literary Work of António Lobo Antunes, an Introduction', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 19/20 (2011): 19–43.

5. This translates as 'the Turkish man'. In American Spanish, even though Turks are not Arabs, this term is used to describe people of any Arabian or geographically close background.

6. Susan Bassnett, 'Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century', *Comparative Critical Studies* 3, no. 1–2 (June 2006): 9.

7. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 'Portugal: Tales of Being and Not Being', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 19/20 (2011): 407.

8. Between 1926 and 1974 a corporatist authoritarian regime ruled Portugal, which from 1933 was known as *Estado Novo*. Led by Professor António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970), this dictatorship was opposed to communism, socialism, liberalism and anti-colonialism, and sought to retain the Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia. The 1974 Carnation Revolution, which overthrew the Estado Novo, brought this regime to an end. The new Portuguese regime withdrew from East Timor and the African colonies.

9. In Argentina in March 1976 the so-called Proceso de Reorganización Nacional or National Reorganization Process, a military dictatorship, seized power, pursuing a 'Dirty War' against any opposition. After losing the Falkland/Malvinas War, the Junta faced public opposition and handed over power in 1983.

10. Eduardo Lourenço, 'Portugal and Its Destiny', trans. Kenneth Krabbenhoft, in *Chaos and Splendor, and Other Essays*, ed. Carlos Veloso (Dartmouth: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 2002), 156.

11. 'I was sick of listening to the same reactions over and over again. For the majority, what happened to us was an anecdote. They spoke about it as if it were a World Cup football match' (Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio*, 3).

12. S. Bassnett 'Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century'. Comparative Critical Studies 3/1–2 (2003): 9.

13. Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, 'Empire, Colonial Wars and Post-Colonialism', *Portuguese Studies* 18 (2002): 187.

14. Ibid., 186.

15. 'Since we returned' (Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio*, 23).

16. Felipe Cammaert, '"You Don't Invent Anything": Memory and the Patterns of Fiction', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 19/20 (2011). 272.

17. Felipe Cammaert, '"You Don't Invent Anything"', 275.

18. Mª Luisa Blanco, *Conversaciones con António Lobo Antunes* (Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2005), 49.

19. 'When everything was over, we came back to our ordinary lives and we were responsible for the defeat' (Ronnie Quinn, 'Ronnie Quinn y el

"raro privilegio" de combatir en Malvinas,' http://jujuyalmomento. com/?ronnie-quinn-y-el-raro-privilegio-de-combatir-en-malvinas&page =ampliada&id=17475. Accessed 3 April 2013).

20. As mentioned earlier, in the narrative of crime stories which include a murder investigation a corpse functions as the element that rips open the lives of the living and the dead, bringing up questions in the search for an answer, going beyond the actual 'whodunit' crime mystery.

21. 'Does it annoy you me asking you about the Malvinas?' (Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio*, 3).

22. P. D. James, *Talking about Detective Fiction* (Oxford: Faber and Faber, 2009), 126.

23. Maria Alzira Seixo, 'Still Facts and Living Factions', 30.

24. P. D. James, *Talking about Detective Fiction*, 126.

25. V. P. Costa, 'A Perda do Caminho para Casa em *Fado alexandrino* de António Lobo Antunes.' Unpublished M. A. Thesis. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. http://www.letras.ufrj.br/posverna/mestrado/ CostaVP.pdf. Accessed 28 June 2014, 31.

26. Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez, 'Post-Imperial Performativies: Sexual Misencounters and Engendering of Desire in António Lobo Antunes's *Fado Alexandrino*', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 19/20 (2011): 102–03.

27. 'What are we doing with the corpse? … in three hours … the stink in here will be unbearable' (A. Lobo Antunes, *Fado alexandrino*, 519).

28. 'I do not know that house. I do not know those smells, those flavours, those voices. I do not know these women, these men. I do not know these night dogs in the street, the noises, the morning …' (ibid., 436).

29. 'It was long since we had returned. We were living in a democracy, few remembered the Malvinas, it was rather about forgetting the islands, hiding the war and us. Overall, little was spoken and nothing was said about the topic [Falklands/Malvinas War]' (Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio*, 39).

30. Maria Alzira Seixo, 'Still Facts and Living Factions', 20.

31. 'We were at war with England? … At that moment my head was going round non-stop. I had studied in an English school, my mother was an Anglican. On my father's side, we were descended from Irish Catholics. They had been fighting the English for centuries. There are huge differences between the Irish and the English. For most Argentines these are impossible to distinguish. Nobody cares and that is logical. That is normal; it is difficult to distinguish an Armenian from a Turk or a Jew from a Russian. Most people don't even know that they are different islands. U2 were a big help

in differentiating the two even if music in English was always seen as English' (Ronnie Quinn, *El raro privilegio*, 16)

32. 'Speaking English was my only asset. What were the chances of starting a war with an English-speaking country?' (ibid., 11).

33. Falkland Islanders, also known as Falklanders, are nicknamed 'Kelpers'. In the novel, Ronnie Quinn refers to them as 'Kelpers'.

34. Ibid.

35. They were checking the leaflets. I was doing push-ups. When they got tired of not understanding, they called me to translate.

> - Made in the United Kingdom— I translated.
> - Ok, Don't you see it's not English? Stupid!- said the Corporal. The General was about to beat him.
>  …
>  and I heard:
> - Apple, apple, banana, chicken …
> - What is he saying?
> - Apple, apple, banana, chicken– I quickly translated.
> - What does it mean?
> - I do not know.
> - Soldier, do you speak English or not? (Ibid.)

36. 'He warned me that now we were friends' (ibid., 6).

37. 'No one was interested in remembering the suffering of those that went to Angola [to war]' (Mª Luisa Blanco, *Conversaciones con António Lobo Antunes*, 49).

38. See endnote 27.

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# A Century Apart: Intimacy, Love and Desire from James Joyce to Emma Donoghue

Teresa Casal

*Voice is called forth by resonance.*
*Carol Gilligan*

## 1 From James Joyce's 'The Dead' to Emma Donoghue's 'Speaking in Tongues'

One would say that the Ireland longed for in James Joyce's 'The Dead', the last story in *Dubliners* (1914), had materialised by the time Emma Donoghue came to write 'Speaking in Tongues' (2006) roughly one century later.[1] That Ireland would indeed need to be spacious enough to accommodate the various notions of that country voiced throughout Joyce's story: Molly Ivors's Gaelic Ireland, reaching out to the west of Ireland, but also Gabriel Conroy's cosmopolitan Ireland, treasuring its links to continental Europe; a predominantly Catholic Ireland, but also

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one of Mr Brown's 'other persuasion';[2] an Ireland with a form of Catholicism that respects religious dogma but questions women's exclusion from religious rituals, as Aunt Kate does;[3] an Ireland in which women need not live in the shade of dead brothers and solicitous nephews, as Gabriel's aunts do, and in which women's options need not be between the dutiful role of wife and a deliberate avoidance of marriage, as seems to be the case with working-class Lily and possibly with the educated and politically active Molly Ivors; an Ireland in which love may be consummated, as Gabriel longs but fails to do, and not merely sacrificed, as heroically happens with Michael Furey; an Ireland in which women may likewise voice their desire and not merely their suspicion of 'the men that is now',[4] as Lily does; or their longing for the men that 'died for love of me', as Gretta does;[5] ultimately, an Ireland worth living in and not merely dying for.

Emma Donoghue's short story 'Speaking in Tongues' seems to suggest that early-twenty-first-century Ireland has materialised previous national and personal longings. Initially published in *The Mammoth Book of Lesbian Erotica*, the story features in Donoghue's 2006 collection *Touchy Subjects*, which is organised into sections named Babies, Domesticity, Strangers, Desire and Death. 'Speaking in Tongues' features in the section named Desire, which includes stories of homosexual and heterosexual desire. The story, whose title is a biblical allusion, is set in Galway, the city where Joyce's Gretta Conroy comes from, where Michael Furey braved death to wave her goodbye before she left for Dublin, and where Molly Ivors planned to return on her summer expedition to the Aran Islands. In Donoghue's story, Galway is the setting for a conference with the bilingual title 'Dhá Theanga/Two Tongues: A Conference on Bilingualism in Ireland Today', which would suggest both the material reality and the institutional recognition of the bilingual Ireland dreamed of by Molly Ivors.[6] Yet, the conference on bilingualism, set in a city swarming with foreign tourists, is also where the two female characters meet at a poetry reading in Irish, while Connemara, where Michael Furey lies buried, is where they eventually consummate their desire before parting and returning to their respective cities, the poet's Dublin and the student's Cork.

To all appearances and purposes, Donoghue's twenty-first-century Ireland has not only made room for its two languages to thrive, but also

for desire, hetero- as well as homosexual, to be expressed and consummated. Donoghue's Galway thus seems to be a long way away from the strictures associated with a prudish and conservative Gaelic Ireland, and Irish Ireland seems to coexist freely with the cosmopolitan Ireland dreamed of by Gabriel Conroy. Indeed, the female characters' agency and participation in public life further indicates a much wider choice of lifestyles than would have been available to Joyce's Dubliners, particularly to the women of that time, who, unlike their male counterparts, could not even wander about the city as fully enfranchised citizens, or if they did, risked being considered 'the comical girl', including by other female Dubliners, as happens with Molly Ivors.[7] If, in Joyce's Dublin, male wandering might be a cover-up for the paralysis that is general all over Ireland, Joyce's and Gabriel's apprehensions about Ireland's constraints seem misplaced in Donoghue's Ireland, where women act as free agents and can be poets and academics in whichever language they please, and lovers in whichever manner they choose.

The dynamics of these social developments seem to be replicated in the stories' respective aesthetic frameworks. While both Joyce's and Donoghue's stories resort to interior monologue, the centrality of Gabriel's perspective in 'The Dead' is replaced in 'Speaking in Tongues' by a dialogical narrative design that replicates the topic of bilingualism and affords the reader unique access to both lovers' minds. One would surmise that monological male desire in 'The Dead' gives way to dialogical lesbian desire in 'Speaking in Tongues', and therefore that the reciprocal intimacy that is frustrated in 'The Dead' would be consummated in 'Speaking in Tongues'. That, however, is not the case, and it is therefore relevant to consider how the narratives respectively render love, desire and intimacy.

If matters of love and desire are conditioned by social manners and mores, they also go beyond them. Literature, and narrative fiction in particular, often ventures into the point where public and private voices meet, allowing us not only to listen to dialogues, but to eavesdrop on characters' minds.[8] Among other things, 'The Dead' and 'Speaking in Tongues' afford us access to their protagonists' longings for love and desire, while confronting us with the challenges they face in achieving intimacy with their beloved. Through dialogue and the description of social interaction by a third-person narrator, Joyce presents the multiple

and often discordant voices of early-twenty-first-century Dublin, whose owners have gathered to celebrate the feast of the epiphany in an atmosphere fraught with tension despite its festive veneer. Yet, although the narrative is initially perceived through 'Lily, the caretaker's daughter'[9] who welcomes guests to 'the Misses Morkan's annual dance',[10] as soon as the anxiously awaited Gabriel arrives at his aunts' door focalisation shifts and subtly combines occasional narrative omniscience with Gabriel Conroy's prevailing point of view, so that the reader can now overhear Gabriel's inner voice while also glimpsing the tangible signs of his embodied tension.[11] Our position as readers is close to Gabriel's insofar as we are confined to his subjective experience and barred access to other characters' subjectivity: like him, we are left to try and interpret others' behaviour, but unlike him we are also left to interpret his.

While 'The Dead' initially focuses on Dublin social life and only gradually narrows its focus to Gabriel and the hotel bedroom where he will overnight with his wife Gretta, Donoghue's 'Speaking in Tongues' begins by foregrounding the relationship between two women against the backdrop of a conference on bilingualism in Galway, the heart of Gaelic Ireland. Seemingly suggesting that national issues and social mores are in the background rather than at the forefront of personal concerns, Donoghue's dialogical narrative is rendered in two alternating first-person voices, that of the older woman, Sylvia Dwyer, and that of the younger one, Lee Maloney. This double insight into both lovers' mental discourses leaves the reader in the unique position of triangulating their relationship, if only by deriving awareness of what informs their respective choices. Thus, while Joyce's story moves from the social to the personal and in the process broadens the view to encompass 'all the living and the dead',[12] Donoghue's focus on the personal counters both the characters' and the reader's tacit assumption that educated twenty-first-century Irish women are unencumbered in their choices and behaviour, and faces the reader with the extent to which intrasubjective experience and personal decisions may continue to be shaped by internalised social mores and supposedly shared assumptions.

Between them, Joyce's and Donoghue's respective stories point to important political and social developments, as well as to persisting challenges in interpersonal relations. They suggest that such challenges are

particularly manifest in intimate relations (which in both cases are of a sexual nature)[13] for two basic reasons: perhaps more than other forms of social interaction, intimacy is largely governed by non-verbal behaviour and tacit codes and assumptions; and it involves a high level of self-exposure and the concurrent risk of being hurt. Both in the case of Gabriel and Gretta's long marriage in 'The Dead' and of Sylvia and Lee's budding relationship in 'Speaking in Tongues', communication is fraught with uncertainty and there is a very thin line between understanding and misunderstanding. Joyce and Donoghue render the interpretative process whereby lovers perceive and try to read one another, while also pointing to the internalised and culturally operative notions of love and intimacy at play in such a process.

Drawing on culturally embedded notions of love and intimacy, as discussed respectively by psychologists Carol Gilligan and Ziyad Marar,[14] this essay examines the interplay between public and private voices represented in James Joyce's 'The Dead' and Emma Donoghue's 'Speaking in Tongues', so as to consider the extent to which intimate interpersonal relations have been reshaped in the intervening century. For all the political, social and cultural changes that Ireland has undergone over the last century, from the 1912–1922 decade that led up to independence and partition and which is currently being commemorated; to the economically affluent and socially secularised Ireland that emerged in the 1990s, the decade that witnessed the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1993, the legalisation of divorce in 1995 and the Belfast Agreement in 1998; to the Celtic Tiger years, when immigration replaced emigration up until the 2008 financial crash—to what extent have these changes toward a post-colonial and post-patriarchal society reconfigured the experience of love, desire and intimacy?

## 2    On the Desire for, and Fear of, Love and Intimacy

From *In a Different Voice* to *Joining the Resistance*, Carol Gilligan's work draws on myths and stories, using them as 'sense-making devices' that can both encapsulate dominant perceptions and explore alternative

ones.[15] If 'love by its very nature is free', as Gilligan claims, if 'when we fall in love, we fall into relationship and out of categories, because love is always particular', then stories frame and offer particular examples of the course of love, thus inviting us to think about love not merely as an abstract concept, but as lived experience.[16] Noting the cultural prevalence of tragic love stories, Gilligan's guiding question is why we are 'so drawn' to them and how we can 'find our way to a new paradigm of love between men and women'[17]—or quite simply between humans, we might add; indeed, in view of Emma Donoghue's lesbian lovers, we might consider whether these Irish homosexual lovers offer a post-patriarchal paradigm for love relations. Seeing in Freud's influential interpretation of the Oedipus tragedy 'a doom-laden story about patriarchy and forbidden love',[18] Gilligan regards the myth of Psyche and Cupid as 'a story that shows a way out of the Oedipus tragedy'.[19] This way out involves listening to voice, namely to Psyche's voice, 'the young woman who breaks taboos on seeing and speaking, who insists on having a voice and not becoming an object', and also 'the daughter named Pleasure who holds a promise for transformation'.[20] The myth provides not only a story of resistance, but also a story of transformation, and voice is key to both. Voice, Gilligan notes elsewhere, 'is embodied and in language, it connects psychology with biology and culture without reducing it to either'.[21] Yet, as her research on young boys' and adolescent girls' silenced voices indicates, voice needs to be listened to and acknowledged if it is to be of any consequence.

It is precisely because voice is relational and subject to social regulation that there is an 'affinity between love and democracy', as intimated by Cupid and Psyche's story, in which Psyche's voice disrupts the rules regulating the encounters between a god and a mortal.[22] Yet, Gilligan contends, at a time 'when frameworks are shifting … it has become possible to envision a democracy that is not patriarchal', but it remains 'more difficult to imagine a love that is passionate without becoming tragic'.[23] Vulnerability emerges as the primary risk of love:

> Leaving patriarchy for love or democracy sounds easy, even inviting, but it is psychically as well as politically risky; at least at first, it seems to mean giving up power and control …. The hope of the new, the nakedness of

standing without a frame heightens our awareness of vulnerability and, with it, the temptation to return at whatever cost to the known.[24]

Vulnerability is likewise central to the fear of intimacy, as noted by Ziyad Marar in *Intimacy: Understanding the Subtle Power of Human Connection*, which draws as much on philosophy and psychology as it does on literary fiction and film. Acknowledging that intimacy and love 'share some features', he differentiates them by arguing that, 'intimacy is intrinsically reciprocal. It is not a trait or state. Love, like other emotional states, can be seen as characteristic of an individual, while intimacy is of necessity a relational idea, like conversation.'[25] Noting that literature on intimacy seems to suggest that 'We are drawn to the ideal of intimacy and fear it too', Marar identifies a circumstantial and an existential fear of intimacy: on the one hand, we realise that intimacy involves 'a degree of exposure and vulnerability' and thus fear 'rejection' and the attending '[h]umiliation and pain'; on the other, we fear 'that [intimacy] is impossible', and therefore that 'not only do we die alone but we may live alone too'.[26] Yet, these twin fears 'conjure up the corollary desire: a frail hope to connect despite the pain of isolation' since, as social beings, 'the hope for intimacy lies deep in most of us':

> We think of ourselves as isolated individuals sometimes, but every social being is socially constituted. We make no sense without our audiences, and the social animal needs others in order to live well. For human beings that feeling of being known, that shared and forgiving sense of frailty, is redemptive in a way that nothing else can be.
>
> …
>
> Whether in a single conversation or in a relationship built over time, intimacy can offer safety, trust and the feeling of being uniquely understood: the opposite of isolation.[27]

According to Marar, 'the clearest examples of intimacy are *reciprocal, conspiratorial, emotional* and *kind*':

> The reciprocal [lens] offers mutual recognition: a simultaneous knowingness or awareness of each other …. The conspiratorial element indicates that this awareness must be to some degree concealed from people outside

that intimate connection, and this secret sharing brings with it vulnerability (to exposure or betrayal) and the need for trust (which links this to the fourth feature of kindness). The third characteristic of intimacy is that it is emotionally heightened.[28]

Further elaborating on the risk and the fears that accompany the desire for intimacy, he adds:

Intimacy requires a leap of faith because it involves recognition of the hazardous fact that others might know you better than you know yourself ….

And this is where the fourth characteristic comes in. We hope for that judgement to be kind. Intimacy, at heart, requires a benevolent stance towards the other person based on trust, respect or affection ….

Take kindness away from intimacy and you get torture.[29]

This is why intimacy is both desired and feared, and why trust and kindness are needed if we are to expose our vulnerability. Yet intimacy involves 'the invitation … to renounce control, or at least not to believe that control is always the way out of pain.'[30] Drawing on Keats's notion of negative capability, Marar adds: 'if we go back to the enablers of intimacy—the mutual knowingness, the secrecy and sense of exposure, the heightened feeling of emotion that is not willed and the kindness to be gentle with each other's fallibility—these are all ways in which we can link intimacy with vulnerability'.[31] Intimacy is also thereby linked to the risks of 'leaving patriarchy for love or democracy' noted by Gilligan.[32] Whereas in the case of love the 'known' we are tempted to revert to is the tragic love story, in the case of intimacy it is isolation.

In view of these insights on love and intimacy, we may more aptly consider the extent to which 'The Dead' and 'Speaking in Tongues' echo patriarchal relations and/or feature voices of resistance, as well as how they respectively conceive of the possibility for love and intimacy in early-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century Ireland. Longer, with a larger cast and a more complex plot, 'The Dead' features several voices of resistance, although the central love story is hardly exemplary of fulfilled

intimacy. Shorter and centred on a lesbian relation, 'Speaking in Tongues' begs us to consider the additional question of whether the homosexual love it depicts evades patriarchy and provides a more spacious and enabling love story.

## 3     Voicing Resistance, Love and Desire in 'The Dead'

Gabriel Conroy, the only adult surviving male in the family, is the ostensible patriarch in 'The Dead'. Anxiously awaited by his elderly aunts, Kate and Julia, and by Lily, the caretaker's daughter, who opens the door for him, his arrival is greeted with relief by the fretful aunts, who can now trust him to play the roles expected of him: to 'manage' Freddy Malins lest he is 'under the influence',[33] preside at the table, carve the goose and deliver his speech. Ever protective of his wife and children, Gabriel emerges as the benign patriarch, whose 'solicitude was a standing joke' with the family.[34] However, both his solicitude and his ability to 'manage' every form of unruliness will be tested throughout the story. His trials come from within, as his body becomes subject to mounting tension and desire, and from others, notably several discordant voices, both female (Lily, Molly Ivors and Gretta Conroy)[35] and male (Freddy Malins and Michael Furey), that threaten the desired harmony.

Indeed, even before his patriarchal status is confirmed by his aunts, it is threatened in his opening exchange with Lily. Smiling at 'the three syllables [Lily] had given his surname', the solicitous Gabriel asks her if she still goes to school and assumes that, since '[she's] done' with it, they will be going to her wedding soon.[36] Her 'back answer'[37] disconcerts him:

The girl glanced back at him over her shoulder and said with great bitterness:

—The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you.

Gabriel coloured as if he felt he had made a mistake and, without looking at her, kicked off his goloshes and flicked actively with his muffler at the patent-leather shoes ….

He had taken up a wrong tone. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter failure.[38]

Guided by his eyes and ears, Gabriel lapses into social and gender expectations regarding the course of life of a girl in Lily's position, while she deviates from them by glancing back and voicing her bitterness about the unequal and abusive nature of patriarchy. Lily's refusal to get married deviates from expected feminine and working-class behaviour and triggers Gabriel's anxiety about his 'utter failures'—the double meaning of his mental utterance not to be missed. Liberating as her refusal to engage in untrustworthy relationships may be, it is nevertheless not accompanied by an alternative to bitterness; her choice is thus neither love nor intimacy, but a self-protective isolation. The involuntary manifestations in Gabriel's body (he 'coloured') and his self-conscious attempt to recompose his figure (he 'kicked off his goloshes' …) are in turn typical of his reaction to disconcerting female behaviour throughout the story.

Gabriel's status is further tested against his generational or educational peers, respectively Freddy Malins, Gabriel's male generational counterpart, and Molly Ivors, Gabriel's female intellectual peer; both threaten the consensus sustaining the party's 'splendid style' by voicing their opinions with 'warm' and 'frank' manners.[39] Freddy is the failed version of the successful professional and family man that Gabriel has become, and his voice is constantly discredited, including when he praises the voice of a black tenor and asks an impertinent question, 'And why couldn't he have a voice too? … Is it because he's only a black?'[40] The provocative question is buried in silence, yet the narrative voice is subversive enough to register it for the reader's sake. In turn, Molly, Gabriel's only academic equal, is assigned traits that deviate from traditional notions of a delicate femininity and suggest an assertive, alert and politically committed attitude: 'She was a frank-mannered talkative young lady, with a freckled face and prominent brown eyes.'[41] Gabriel disagrees with Molly's nationalist view of Ireland and feels ill at ease with her frank manners and independent attitude as a woman—she is unmarried, politically active and moves about the city unescorted by male company, leading Gretta to call her 'the comical girl'.[42] Faced with Molly's accusation of being a 'West Briton'

for writing literary reviews in a British newspaper, Gabriel 'did not know how to meet her charge' and struggles to keep his own body under control: 'He continued blinking his eyes and trying to smile and murmured lamely that he saw nothing political in writing reviews of books.'[43] He rejects her invitation for an excursion to the Aran Islands with the excuse that he plans to travel to the Continent instead, only to be asked whether he doesn't have his 'own language to keep in touch with—Irish'.[44] His reply may echo some of Joyce's impatience with Gaelic Ireland: 'if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language'.[45] Like Lily's and unlike Freddy's, Molly's dissonant voice upsets Gabriel's patriarchal confidence, but it is questionable whether Molly 'leaves patriarchy for love and democracy'.[46] Gabriel's question hangs for the reader to appraise: 'Had she any life of her own behind all her propagandism?'[47] The question targets both her private life (the 'life of her own' expected of a woman) and her political activism, suspected of being an alternative orthodoxy ('propagandism') rather than, necessarily, a democracy. Indeed, although Molly defends Ireland's independence from British colonial rule, and although her 'comical' attitude indicates her preference for more equal gender relations, her prompt censorship of Gabriel's position suggests that Molly and Gabriel's respective notions of Ireland seem to be mutually exclusive and little inclined to explore consensual frames for coexistence. Thanks to her comparatively privileged social and educational background, Molly is more empowered and less defensive than Lily, yet, like the younger woman, she has not achieved or conceived of an alternative story capable of reconciling love and democracy both in personal and in public life. The difference is that Lily reverts to a personal isolation, whereas Molly reverts to the collective isolation of Gaelic Ireland.

Exposure to these dissonant female voices leaves Gabriel increasingly insecure and makes him long all the more for a private haven of safe communication. Rather than a haven, however, 'The Dead' presents the marital relationship as the most challenging both at an intra- and interpersonal level and Gabriel's longings for romance collapse in the face of Gretta's secret tragic love story.

In an evening punctuated by music, song evokes Gretta Conroy's first love as she listens to Bartell D'Arcy singing 'The Lass of Aughrim'.

Unseen to her and struggling to hear the song, Gabriel watches her, entranced by the 'grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something'.[48] Aesthetic framing and interpretation emerges as a form of managing the mystery: 'If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude …. *Distant Music* he would call the picture if he were a painter.'[49] By freezing the woman into an image and a caption, Gabriel appropriates the mystery while distancing himself from it—does he create an image to avoid engaging with the woman, we may wonder; is it Gretta or his picture of her that fire the desire in him as they drive toward the hotel?[50] Keeping his absent-minded wife under his gaze, 'happy that she was his, proud of her grace and wifely carriage',[51] Gabriel misguidedly takes her every move and expression to mean that she is in tune with his feelings.

Syntax, however, betrays a contrast between the control that Gabriel seeks through his gaze and the lack of control he has over his body when blood and thoughts, rather than his gaze, become the subject: 'The blood went bounding along his veins; and the thoughts went rioting through his brain, proud, joyful, tender, valorous.'[52] His desire and expectations are shaped by the chivalrous romance that unfolds in his mind and body as he perceives her to be 'so frail that he longed to defend her', so that a 'wave of yet more tender joy escaped from his heart and went coursing in warm floods in his arteries' and he longed 'to make her forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy'.[53] The hotel is part of the romance of evading everyday life and following 'wild' passion rather than 'dull' convention: 'he felt that they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a new adventure'.[54] Yet, as he 'trembl[es] with annoyance' at her 'abstracted' attitude, the language of romance gives way to a crescendo of the potentially brutal and violent language of unfulfilled male desire, as he 'long[s] to be master of her strange mood', needs to 'restrain himself' but longs to 'cry to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster her'.[55] The urge for possession, from mastery to overmastery, responds to the urge to contain and control Gretta's apparent diffidence and her failure to perform the role expected of her in the romantic script. Then, just when 'the impetuous desire' in him appears to be met by the 'yielding mood' in her,

she reveals that the song had made her think 'about a person long ago who used to sing that song' when she was living in Galway.[56] Gabriel is taken by a 'dull anger' and asks 'ironically' (220) if this was someone she was in love with. Seemingly unaware of the mounting anger and irony in Gabriel's tone, Gretta tells him about this 'delicate boy' who died at 17: 'I think he died for me', she tells Gabriel, who feels 'seized by a vague terror', as if 'some impalpable vindictive being was coming against him', the syntax and the imagery indicating Gabriel's sudden passive vulnerability.[57] Gretta, it turns out, was entertaining another romance in her mind, not of love and adventure but of love and death. In either case, life and love seem hardly compatible: either love is confined to brief secret moments snatched from the course of life, or it entails the sacrifice of life.

If Joyce borrowed Gabriel Conroy's name from the eponymous novel by Bret Harte,[58] to early-twentieth-century Irish readers Michael Furey's story might nevertheless evoke that of his namesake in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, who 'breaks away' from his bride to follow 'the Old Woman's voice'.[59] So powerful and pervasive is the cultural legacy that nurtures self-sacrificial love of nation and woman that not for a minute does Gabriel question Gretta's sacrificial account of Michael's death; she does report that he 'was very fond of [her]' and 'said he did not want to live' when he came to see her before she left for Dublin, but she had likewise mentioned that by then he was 'ill', 'in decline', 'much worse'; so presumably he could have died of illness rather than of love.[60] Yet Gabriel accepts Gretta's interpretation and concludes that, 'they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fall and wither dismally with age.'[61] Meaning is thus associated not to 'dull' quotidian life but to 'moments of ecstasy' or the glory of self-sacrifice.[62] Gabriel succumbs to Gretta's romance:

> So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think of how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life …. a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death.
>
> Perhaps she had not told him all the story.[63]

As when he aestheticised Gretta listening to 'The Lass of Aughrim', doubtful Gabriel seems to try to protect himself from feeling relegated to a minor role in Gretta's life by dissociating the woman from her image, by assuming that Michael had 'braved death' for a young and beautiful image rather than for the real woman, and that by dying young Michael had remained forever young in Gretta's mind and she in his. If Michael's sacrifice in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* had the power to rejuvenate the Old Woman, Michael Furey's sacrifice for Gretta in 'The Dead' has an ambivalent effect on Gabriel: he tries to recuperate in his mind's eye 'the face for which Michael Furey had braved death', only to cast himself as the witness of her ageing, thus making Michael's sacrifice seem futile. As with the mental painting of Gretta listening to *Distant Music*, he conceives of the woman as symbol, be it in the painting, in the romance of adventure he had entertained as they headed for the hotel or in her romance of self-sacrificial love. His seems to be a case of the dissociative process described by Carol Gilligan in terms evocative of Antonio Damasio's *The Feeling of What Happens*:[64]

> The dissociation between image and memory, between the look of things and the feeling of what happens, holds two worlds in place simultaneously: what you know and what you really know, what you feel and what you really feel, *the story you tell about yourself and the experience of what happened.*[65]

The italicised passage could aptly describe Gabriel's trajectory in 'The Dead', as his expectations fail to be matched by others' responses and he repeatedly recomposes his appearance and revises his speech, his story and his role in it—to the point of reaching the fluidity of the final image. In the end, Gabriel and Gretta lie down side by side, separated rather than bonded by the romantic narratives that they share, which value what they lack (adventure and self-sacrifice) and devalue what they have, for neither provides them with a capacious enough narrative wherein to integrate both their 'secret … moments of ecstasy' and the years of their 'dull existence together';[66] since the only conceivable outcome of such narratives is either glory or defeat, Gabriel's interpretation of Gretta's story does not even consider that her willingness to tell him about her youthful

dead love might be taken as a sign of trust; instead he feels distrust as she may have not 'told him all the story'.[67]

# 4      Voicing Love and Desire in 'Speaking in Tongues'

Not only does the reciprocity that Gabriel had anticipated not materialise, but as readers we are confined to his perspective and have no access to Gretta's thoughts or emotions except insofar as they are mediated by her words or by Gabriel's account and interpretation of her behaviour. We might therefore argue that the failure of reciprocity between the lovers is replicated at narrative level, although the narrative does register voices of resistance to class, racial, colonial and gender biases in a politically unequal society, respectively voiced by Lily, Freddy and Molly.

Emma Donoghue's story affords the reader a dialogical framework instead. The title 'Speaking in Tongues' refers to the bilingualism that gives its name to the conference at which the two characters meet, as well as to the two female voices that orchestrate the story and the verbal and non-verbal languages in which they interpret and misinterpret one another. The story's architecture consists of alternating sections, respectively in normal print and in italics, voicing the interior monologue of 34-year-old poet Sylvia Dwyer and 17-year-old student Lee Maloney. Neither can access the other's thoughts; indeed, they rarely articulate their thoughts, feelings and emotions to one another and when they do, such as when Sylvia addresses her poem 'Dhá Theanga' to Lee, they do not necessarily speak the same language: whereas Sylvia writes in Irish, Lee does not understand the language but responds to the embodied elements in the voice, for the '*woman's voice had peat and smoke in it, bacon and strong tea*'.[68] Later, when Sylvia reads the poem in Irish, 'the familiar vowels caress [Lee's] ears'[69] and Sylvia then translates it into English, so Lee's response involves senses and sense and although the thought crosses her mind that Sylvia 'must have written that poem years ago, for some other woman in some other town',[70] eventually she decides 'that every poem was made new in the reading',[71] a remark that may call for the reader's awareness of her or his own role in a story that grants the

reader unique access to both characters' subjective experience.[72] Later, Sylvia and Lee communicate in non-verbal language, following the 'unwritten script' of desire.[73] Strikingly, all the sections are written in the first-person singular and only Sylvia's last section switches into a brief 'we' when describing their lovemaking; as they part, the singular voice returns:

> We did none of the things parting lovers do if they have the time or the right. I didn't snatch at Lee's foot as she pulled her jeans on; she didn't sneak her head under my shirt as I pulled it over my face. The whole thing had to be over already.[74]

Both women refrain from articulating their feelings and act not so much on them, but on internalised assumptions about generational and social conventions. Yet, this is for the reader, not for them, to realise. The reader emerges as the third party in the story, the only one who can access both perspectives and can assess whether the lovers' thoughts are 'running with'[75] each other, as Gabriel expected Gretta's to be, or straying in different directions. Thanks to this privileged insight, it is for the reader to appreciate whether and how they understand or misunderstand one another.

The narrative's dialogical design stages the differences between the two women's voices, but also how concatenated they are. As noted by Teresa Cardoso, the older and more sophisticated Sylvia resorts to longer and more complex sentences and richer imagery, whereas the younger Lee uses a more colloquial register and slang.[76] How each reports their mutual acquaintance is exemplary of the differences in their respective voices and registers: whereas Lee says of Sylvia that '*Her smooth bob and silver-grey hair were intimidating as hell*',[77] Sylvia says of Lee that 'When I was introduced to the girl in Cork she was barely civil.'[78] Their differences and their generation gap notwithstanding, the narrative design that emerges is both dramatic and lyrical. It is dramatic in that it stages these alternating interior monologues before a listener/reader/witness, whose position is not unlike that of the spectator of a play in monologues, such as Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*;[79] the difference, however, is of

pace, for whereas Friel's characters hold long monologues in turn, Donoghue's short story stages alternating short pieces of minds speaking in tongues. A lyrical pattern emerges from this swift concatenation of alternating voices, which, in their respective registers, produce a verbal replica of the cadences of reciprocal desire: if Sylvia thinks, 'If this was going to happen, I thought, as I folded the papers', Lee promptly thinks, '*If this was going to happen, I thought, many hours later*'; if Sylvia thinks, 'Blame it on the heat', Lee thinks, '*Blame it on the dancing*'; and when Sylvia thinks, 'The frightening thought occurred to me: *I could love this girl*', Lee is likewise struck: '*The frightening thought occurred to me*: I could love this woman.'[80]

   If the lyrical patterns indicate the moods and motions of desire that unwittingly attract the two lovers, they are entwined with their attempts at making rational sense of the perplexities of the senses, as indicated by the insistence on the reporting verb 'to think' and by the 'frightening thought' that they could love the girl or woman they felt attracted to. From early on, and not unlike Gabriel's longing for romance, the two women attribute the possibility of an unnamed 'this' happening to exceptional circumstances, to the fact that Galway was neutral ground for both of them so that they felt unencumbered by their daily lives and attachments, and safe from others' judgements. As Sylvia puts it:

> If this was going to happen, I thought, as I folded the papers …, it was happening because we were not in Dublin surrounded by my friends and work life, nor in Cork cluttered up with Lee's, nor above all in Shanbally where she was born the year I left for college. Neither of us knew anything at all about Galway.[81]

Lee seeks for an elusive explanation in the 'invisible line' they have been pushed to cross:

> If this was going to happen, I thought, many hours later as the cleaners urged Sylvia and me out of the hall, it was happening because of some moment that had pushed us over an invisible line. But which moment?[82]

This line of thought leads both to 'Blame it on the heat' and the *céilí*, in Sylvia's case, and '*Blame it on the dancing*' and the late Galway nights in Lee's; in both cases stressing the exceptional excitement of the senses that eventually makes them get '*lost, completely tangled in the little roads leading into Connemara*'.[83] Under cover of night, Connemara, where Michael Furey lies buried, becomes the site where the twenty-first-century lovers follow the 'unwritten script' of desire, for, as Sylvia puts it, 'No matter how spontaneous it may feel, there's always an unwritten script … ; none of us comes without expectations to this body business.'[84] Unlike Gabriel's desire to overmaster Gretta, Donoghue describes this 'body business' as a double-voiced balletic process of mutual discovery and leaves it to the 17-year-old Lee to challenge heterosexual assumptions about homosexual lovemaking:

> I've always thought the biggest lie in the books is that women instinctively know what to do to each other because their bodies are the same. None of Sylvia's shapes were the same as mine, nor could I have guessed what she was like from how she seemed in her smart clothes. And we liked different things and took things in different order, showing each other by infinitesimal movings away and movings towards.[85]

Disclaiming an 'instinctive' knowledge guiding homosexual lovers, Lee claims instead the radical alterity and singularity of the beloved, thus pointing to the fundamental similarity between homosexual and heterosexual lovemaking. In early-twenty-first-century Ireland, and unlike the patriarchal heterosexual relation anticipated by Gabriel, Sylvia's and Lee's desire is consummated and represented in egalitarian terms, in an intimation of an alternative love story.

Yet this intimation is confined to Connemara. Indeed, mind reading proves no less challenging than body reading, and if 'none of us comes without expectations to this body business',[86] neither do either of the lovers come without assumptions to the diurnal business of parting or not parting after their nocturnal affair. It is early morning as they return to Galway and it is time to decide what to make of 'this' unnamed thing that has happened between them. Frightened as both are by the thought that they could love one another, both act according to what they assume to

be the other's expectations, in an attempt to assuage the fear of rejection by altogether avoiding a situation of potential rejection. Sylvia muses:

> I wouldn't ask to see her again. I would just leave the matter open and drive away. Lee probably got offers all the time; she was far too young to be looking for anything heavy. I'd show her I was generous enough to accept that an hour and a half was all she had to give me.[87]

Lee thinks along like-minded lines:

> I wouldn't ask anything naff like when we were likely to see each other again. I would just wave as she drove away. Sylvia probably did this kind of thing all the time; she was far too famous to be wanting anything heavy. I'd show her that I was sophisticated enough not to fall for her all in one go, not to ask for anything but the hour and a half she had to give me.[88]

Only the reader knows that they part despite their desire and because they are afraid to love. If 'this' has happened because Galway was foreign to both, if, in Shakespearean fashion, Connemara has provided nocturnal shelter for their desire, reminiscent of Gabriel's expectations vis-à-vis the Dublin hotel bedroom, what is it that prompts them to part and recoil from integrating 'this' into the rest of their lives? Is it in the nature of desire to require Connemaras, magic woods or hotel bedrooms, a space away from quotidian life? Do they part under the pressure of state or church, family and friends, of their diurnal duties and attachments? Do they act under external pressure or internalised assumptions?

Unlike in Shakespeare's romantic comedies, in Donoghue's story nocturnal matches are not integrated into diurnal affairs. Unlike in tragedies, no one dies or cries, aware of their folly or misjudgement. The reader is alone in the knowledge of the potential for mutual recognition that is not fulfilled, due to the lovers' self-defensive timidity and their reliance on internalised social conventions and assumptions rather than on how they have sensed their way toward one another. In their final decision, their sense overrules their senses, and they seek to behave in accordance with the twenty-first-century sophisticated coolness that seems to have replaced

early twentieth-century notions of heroic self-sacrifice. What seems to be sacrificed and unfulfilled in both cases is the longing for intimacy.

## 5     Intimacy and Vulnerability in 'The Dead' and 'Speaking in Tongues'

We may argue that Gabriel's vision at the end of 'The Dead' possibly responds to 'the invitation to … renounce control' mentioned by Marar, a striking development for Gabriel, who has struggled to control mind and body throughout the story. Yet, by Marar's criteria, Gabriel's experience is not one of intimacy, since it is not reciprocated. Much as the vision of snow 'general all over Ireland' may link Gabriel to 'all the living and the dead',[89] much as it may reconcile Ireland east and west of the Shannon and link it with the 'universe', his remains a solitary experience:

> His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.[90]

As often noted, the ending of 'The Dead' is ambiguous at best:[91] its sensorial and synaesthetic prose invites us to share in Gabriel's vision, yet we are made to see Gabriel and not only his vision.[92] Perhaps the 'spiritual liberation'[93] sought by Joyce involves acknowledging both the reality of our everyday lives and the mystery of what is beyond words, the gaze, sound, consciousness, life itself; perhaps it involves using words, and their power to link sense and the senses, to expand our awareness of a vast and multifaceted reality and thereby redesign a landscape where bonds and not only divides are discernible.

Yet, in 'The Dead' as in 'Speaking in Tongues', isolation prevails and intimacy remains a longing rather than an achievement at plot level. Although '[g]enerous tears filled Gabriel's eyes' as he contemplates the snowed landscape and thinks that 'such a feeling must be love',[94] the word '*generous* comes right out of the cultural mythology in which Gabriel is trapped', as noted by Vincent P. Pecora.[95] Gabriel's final vision may thus not necessarily amount to a moment of self-discovery, and may

instead reimplicate him 'in the cultural conditions he longs to transcend'.[96] Reading Joyce's story against Donoghue's further suggests the persistent difficulty not only of transcending, but of seeing and becoming aware of internalised notions of generosity and self-sacrifice. Indeed, despite all the political and social changes of the last century, love remains frightening in Donoghue's story, although there are nuances in how self-sacrifice is presented: if Gabriel and Gretta are driven by notions of self-sacrificial heroic love—the ultimate manifestation of an 'emotionally heightened'[97] moment—and Gabriel equates 'generosity' with self-sacrifice, Sylvia and Lee appear to be led by internalised notions of self-restraint, which is understood as a sign of generosity, in Sylvia's case, and sophistication, in Lee's. For both women, the sense of propriety entails choosing safe manners over risky feelings, and selflessness over what may be perceived as selfishness. Like Gabriel before them, under cover of altruistic motives Sylvia and Lee attempt to meet the other's assumptive expectations by adopting self-deprecating reasonings—they overplay the other's sexual allure, underplay their own role in the relationship, and coincide on one word to designate what they avoid: heavy. Sylvia thinks that Lee 'was far too young to be looking for anything heavy', and Lee thinks that Sylvia '*was far too famous to be wanting anything heavy*'.[98] Is it youth or fame or the very heaviness of love that they fear? After the heaviness of centuries of self-sacrificial love, what sort of heaviness drives these twenty-first-century lovers apart? The frightening thought is that they could love one another, which would entail the risk of carrying what they sensed about each other in the Connemara night into their diurnal city life. Having first perceived each other as '*intimidating as hell*' or 'barely civil',[99] the lovers' reasoning is now at once self-deprecating and self-sufficient, perhaps the twenty-first-century version of centuries of self-sacrifice insofar as both ultimately avoid engagement with life, although now the ostensible reason is self-preservation (by avoiding the risk of rejection), whereas before it was self-immolation.[100] By deciding to part and follow 'the temptation to return at whatever cost to the known',[101] to their previous lives, respectively in Dublin and Cork, Sylvia and Lee preserve a façade of invulnerability and evade intimacy, which, as Marar proposes, involves 'an act of trust and goodwill, the feeling not of invulnerability but of mutually accepted fragility'.[102]

As Joyce's complex characters in 'The Dead' intimate, patriarchy is disabling for women as well as men and neither Lily, Molly and Gretta, nor Freddy, Michael and Gabriel succeed in balancing strength and vulnerability; perhaps because they are caught up in inherited notions of masculinity and femininity, predicated on possession and seduction, that stand in the way of acknowledging a shared and vulnerable humanity, a requisite for making love compatible with life and with the longed-for but feared intimacy. After centuries of internalised divides, Donoghue's story suggests that much as reciprocal desire may be consummated, a 'mutually accepted fragility'[103] remains a secret and 'frightening thought'.[104] If, as Lee claims, '*every poem [is] made new in the reading*',[105] the question then is what each reader will make of the secret knowledge that s/he alone can derive from these lovers' choices.

## Notes

1. James Joyce, 'The Dead', in *Dubliners*, ed. Terence Brown (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 175–225; and Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', in *Touchy Subjects* (London: Virago, 2006; 2011), 179–93. Although *Dubliners* was published in 1914, its stories were written between 1904 and 1907 and 'The Dead' was concluded in Trieste in 1907.
2. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 195.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 178.
5. Ibid., 221.
6. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 181.
7. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 196.
8. As Rita Felski notes, 'While plots of history and fiction share certain features …, the novel is distinguished at the level of discourse in various ways, including, most notably, its ability to read minds … Fiction is the only medium in which the interiority of persons is promiscuously plumbed … Precisely because of the epistemological shakiness of fiction, its freedom to ignore empirical criteria and constraints of evidentiary argument, it offers an initiation into the historical aspects of intersubjectivity that is unattainable by other means' (Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2008], 89–90).

9. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 175.

10. Ibid.

11. James Wood uses the beginning of Joyce's 'The Dead' and Chekhov's story 'Rothschild's Fiddle' to illustrate what he calls 'a final refinement of free indirect style—we should just call it authorial irony—when the gap between an author's voice and a character's voice seems to collapse altogether; when a character's voice does indeed seem rebelliously to have taken over the narration altogether' (James Wood, *How Fiction Works* [London: Vintage, 2009], 19). Though I agree overall with Wood's description of the narrative voice in 'The Dead', I see it as nuanced rather than strictly linear; admittedly, 'Joyce abandons Lily's perspective, moving first into authorial omniscience and then to Gabriel Conroy's point of view' (ibid., 20), yet Gabriel's prevailing internal focalisation is occasionally undercut by authorial external focalisation. Comparing Joyce's creation of a 'relatively opaque realistic style' in *Dubliners*' initial first-person stories to 'The Dead', John Paul Riquelme perceptively notes that, 'One of Joyce's great achievements as a stylist is his development of third-person narrating strategies that create an effect of intimacy essentially similar to the effect of first-person techniques' (John Paul Riquelme, '*Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:* Transforming the Nightmare of History', in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 125–26).

12. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 225.

13. As noted by Ziyad Marar and more thoroughly discussed in the second section of this essay, although intimacy often has a 'sexual connotation', 'most intimate moments are not sexual, and plenty of sexual moments are not intimate' (Ziyad Marar, *Intimacy: Understanding the Subtle Power of Human Connection* [Durham: Acumen, 2012], 47).

14. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure: A New Map of Love* (New York: Vintage, 2002); *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); and *Joining the Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); and Ziyad Marar, *Intimacy*.

15. Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature*, 83.

16. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 206.

17. Ibid., 4.

18. Ibid., 5.

19. Ibid., 206.

20. Ibid., 207.
21. Carol Gilligan, *Joining the Resistance*, 177.
22. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 206.
23. Ibid., 230.
24. Ibid., 230–31.
25. Ziyad Marar, *Intimacy*, 49.
26. Ibid., 10, 11.
27. Ibid., 11, 12.
28. Ibid., 44, 45.
29. Ibid., 46.
30. Ibid., 201.
31. Ibid.
32. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 230.
33. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 176.
34. Ibid., 180.
35. For a feminist and a feminist-Marxist approach to the role of female characters in 'The Dead' see, respectively, Margot Norris, 'Stifled Back Answers: The Gender Politics of Art in Joyce's "The Dead"', *Modern Fiction Studies* 35, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 479–503; and Trevor L. Williams, 'Resistance to Paralysis in *Dubliners*', *Modern Fiction Studies* 35, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 452–57.
36. James Joyce, 'The Dead,' 177.
37. Ibid., 176.
38. Ibid., 178–79.
39. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 175, 189, 187.
40. Ibid., 199.
41. Ibid., 187.
42. Ibid., 196.
43. Ibid., 188.
44. Ibid., 189.
45. Ibid.
46. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 230.
47. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 192.
48. Ibid., 211.
49. Ibid.
50. In her essay on this scene, Tilly Eggers argues that 'while Gretta is a human symbol of the Virgin ideal, she is also a composite portrait of women in *Dubliners*, the symbol of all women' (Tilly Eggers, 'What Is a Woman … a Symbol of?' *James Joyce Quarterly* 18, no. 4 [Summer

1981]: 389). The risk is that woman as symbol edits out the woman (Eavan Boland, *Object Lessons: The Life of the Woman and the Poet in Our Time* [London: Vintage, 1996], 136). Carol Gilligan alerts us against the 'practice of elevating one woman to a pedestal and worshipping her image—placing her in effect out of reach, out of relationship—and loving not her but the image of her, so that when she no longer fits the image, another woman can take her place' (Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 153).

51. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 216.
52. Ibid., 214.
53. Ibid., 214, 215.
54. Ibid., 215, 216.
55. Ibid., 218.
56. Ibid., 219, 220.
57. Ibid., 220, 221.
58. Terence Brown, 'Introduction', in *Dubliners*, by James Joyce (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), xli.
59. William Butler Yeats and Augusta Gregory, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in *Selected Plays*, by William Butler Yeats, ed. Richard Allen Cave (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 28.
60. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 222, 223.
61. Ibid., 224.
62. Ibid., 215.
63. Ibid., 223.
64. Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* (London: Vintage, 2000).
65. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 203. Italics added.
66. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 214, 215.
67. Ibid., 223.
68. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 180.
69. Ibid., 183.
70. Ibid., 185.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., 183, 185.
73. Ibid., 189.
74. Ibid., 192.
75. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 219.
76. Teresa Miguéns Cardoso, 'Tradução em Trânsito. Língua, Cultura e Viagem', M. A. dissertation (Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 2013), 57–58.

77. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 180.

78. Ibid., 181.

79. Brian Friel, *Faith Healer* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980).

80. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 185–89.

81. Ibid., 185.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid., 187.

84. Ibid., 189.

85. Ibid., 190.

86. Ibid., 189.

87. Ibid., 192.

88. Ibid., 193.

89. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 225.

90. Ibid.

91. This ambiguity has generated contrastive interpretations of Gabriel's final vision. While several critics coincide in seeing it as a 'version of Michael Furey's death' (Zack Bowen, 'Joyce's Prophylatic Paralysis: Exposure in *Dubliners*', *James Joyce Quarterly* 19, no. 3 [Spring 1982]: 272–73), they may perceive it as Gabriel's 'blind' reimplication 'in the cultural conditions he longs to transcend' (Vincent P. Pecora, '"The Dead" and the Generosity of the Word', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 101, no. 2 [March 1986]: 243) or as a positive metaphorical death and rebirth: 'The Gabriel who is "dying" in the end is his mother's son, who had aligned himself with her enthusiasm for a patriarchal power structure in which manhood had been associated with movement eastward. The new Gabriel embraces the vagrant spirit of Michael Furey …, whose frailness and mortality remind him that if femininity has traditionally been equated with vulnerability and powerlessness, then we and the dead, who point the way to our end, are all finally "feminine"' (Earl G. Ingersoll, 'The Gender of Travel in "The Dead"', *James Joyce Quarterly* 30, no. 1 [Fall 1992]: 48–49). Although Ingersoll's emphasis on the need to acknowledge vulnerability and powerlessness resonates with my own, I would tend to see Michael Furey's sacrificial death as implicated by the prevailing ideology of the time and would argue that traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are themselves implicated in the patriarchal power structure and seem to be part of what characters are at odds with, from Lily and Freddy to Molly and Gabriel.

92. For a detailed approach to symbolism and Joyce's synaesthetic prose see Walter T. Rix, 'James Joyce's "The Dead": The Symbolist Inspiration

and Its Narrative Reflection', in *Critical Approaches to Anglo-Irish Literature*, eds Michael Allen and Angela Wilcox (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1989), 146–83.

93. Richard Ellmann, ed., *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 89.

94. James Joyce, 'The Dead', 224.

95. Vincent P. Pecora, 'The Dead', 242.

96. Ibid., 243. For a perceptive reading of 'The Dead' as 'an interrogation of the entire structure of generosity as it takes place in the bourgeois Dublin of [Joyce's] time', see Pecora (ibid., 238).

97. Ziyad Marar, *Intimacy*, 45.

98. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 192, 193.

99. Ibid., 180, 181.

100. Comparing Dublin in 1904 and 2004, and though granting that '*Dubliners* is not a political textbook', Michael Holmes and Alan Roughley conclude that 'despite the overt political changes in Ireland, there are also clear indications of stasis and paralysis' (Michael Holmes, and Alan Roughley, 'From Dubliners to Europeans? Political Change and Political Paralysis', in *A New and Complex Sensation: Essays on Joyce's* Dubliners, ed. Oona Frawley [Dublin: Lilliput, 2004], 43) and associate these primarily with an 'inability to adapt to a more open, multicultural world' and a persistent 'streak of xenophobia' (ibid., 42), thus pointing, albeit with a more exclusive focus on the public scene, to a persistent emphasis on division that precludes more enabling relationships. On the intersection between public and private politics in 'The Dead' see Greg C. Winston, 'Militarism in "The Dead"', in *A New and Complex Sensation: Essays on Joyce's Dubliners*, ed. Oona Frawley (Dublin: Lilliput, 2004), 122–32.

101. Carol Gilligan, *The Birth of Pleasure*, 230–31.

102. Ziyad Marar, *Intimacy*, 215.

103. Ibid.

104. Emma Donoghue, 'Speaking in Tongues', 188, 189.

105. Ibid., 185.

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# Foreign Voices and the Troubles: Northern Irish Fiction in French, German and Spanish Translation

### Stephanie Schwerter

## 1 The Challenge of Translating Northern Irish Voices

Northern Ireland has often been regarded as a place on the edge of Europe with its own violent traditions, rules and ways of functioning. Many people from other parts of the world consider the region as obscure and incomprehensible. The extent to which Northern Ireland appears to be a place apart with its own particular discourse is reflected in the translation of its literature. Since the outbreak of the Northern Irish conflict in 1968, more than 700 so-called *Troubles novels* have been written.[1] These books focus on political violence and its consequences, often including characters which belong to paramilitary organisations, the British army or the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Whereas some works are merely dismissed by critics as 'troubles trash',[2] a certain number of fine novels have been translated into different languages.

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Working with Northern Irish *Troubles fiction*, the translator faces the challenge of transposing specific voices and world views into a different cultural environment in which many Northern Irish concepts may not mean anything at all. Furthermore, he or she has to struggle with dark Northern Irish humour, which does not translate easily, particularly if the members of the target culture have not gone through periods of political turmoil. Not every translator has had the chance to live in the region before starting to work on a novel, and very often a lack of local knowledge betrays itself in his or her translation. In many cases, this leads to—sometimes very amusing—cultural errors.

In what follows, I set out to explore the German, Spanish and French translations of two widely read Troubles novels: Robert McLiam Wilson's *Eureka Street* (1996) and Colin Bateman's *Divorcing Jack* (1995).[3] Both books were published after the IRA's first ceasefire declaration in 1994. The humorous tone in which the novels are written reflects the authors' more detached attitude towards the Northern Irish situation. Through the use of irony, parody and wordplay, McLiam Wilson and Bateman attempt to subvert received perceptions and traditional one-sided interpretations of the conflict. In addition, both writers allude to very local concepts which might be incomprehensible even for people living in the South of Ireland. All this makes the novels extremely difficult to translate, as not only the writers' voice has to be conveyed but also a whole set of cultural references.

For the analysis of the translations of the two books, Lawrence Venuti's concepts of 'domestication' and 'foreignization' are helpful.[4] In a domesticating translation, according to Venuti, terms and concepts closely connected to the source culture are replaced by expressions and value systems native to the recipient culture. The original is thus reconstituted via recourse to concepts embedded within the translator's cultural environment. The foreign elements of the source text are almost entirely eliminated so that the translation reads like an original in which the translator becomes invisible. A 'foreignizing' translation, on the contrary, is rather to be seen in terms of a non-fluent or 'estranging' translation, which highlights the presence of the translator by underlining the foreign identity of the source text.[5] Yet, we should also mention that Venuti's theory places these two models on either end of a spectrum: no translation can

be 100% 'domesticating' or 'foreignizing', as elements of the opposite concept are always included. Therefore, we could consider a given translation as being 'domesticating' or 'foreignizing' to a greater or lesser extent.

## 2    Reproduced, Silenced and Added Voices in Translation

First and foremost, it is striking that the three translators of *Eureka Street* leave the title of the novel in English. Most likely, they decided to do so as French, German or Spanish translations, such as *Rue Eureka*, *Eureka-Straße* or *Calle Eureka* would lose their 'foreignizing' effect and therefore not appeal to the respective audience. Only Christa Schuenke, the German translator, slightly modifies the title of the novel by inserting 'Belfast' after 'Eureka Street'. In this way, she underlines the Northern Irish setting of the action.

In McLiam Wilson's novel, the city of Belfast is depicted through its urban space and its population. Eureka Street, the imaginary street central to the action of the book, is illustrated through the description of its inhabitants:

> Eureka Street, 10 p.m. The darkness was soft and coloured. In No. 7, Mr and Mrs Playfair mumbled in their tidy bed, a brand new Easi-sleep reduced to £99 in a bomb-damage clearance sale in a broken store at Sprucefield.[6]

The main challenge of this paragraph involves the translation of the concept 'bomb-damage clearance sale'. As an element of a typical Northern Irish discourse, the term is familiar to a person who has lived in the region during the Troubles. However, it is certainly less present in the vocabulary of a German, Spanish or French readership. The three translators opted for different degrees of 'foreignization' and 'domestication' in order to transpose the concept into the respective target culture.

Brice Matthieussent's translation of the above-mentioned paragraph into French reads as follows:

Eureka Street, dix heures du soir. L'obscurité était douce et colorée. Au numéro 7, M. et Mme Playfair marmonnaient dans leur lit minuscule, un Sommeil-d'Or flambant neuf acheté 99 livres à l'occasion d'une vente organisée dans une boutique plastiquée de Sprucefield.

[Eureka Street, 10 p.m. The darkness was soft and coloured. In No. 7 Mr and Mrs Playfair mumbled in their tiny bed, a brand new Golden-Sleep bought for 99 pounds at a sale organised in a shop which had been blown up by a bomb.][7]

Matthieussent's translation could be regarded as tending towards the 'domesticating' side of the spectrum as he adapts a number of terms and concepts to the French context. At first sight, however, the reader is struck by an odd mistake: the word 'tidy' is mistranslated as 'minuscule', actually meaning 'tiny'. This error has probably been committed out of distraction. In order to 'domesticate' the source text, Matthieussent translates 'Mr' and 'Mrs Playfair' with 'Monsieur' and 'Madame Playfair'. The made-up brand 'Easi-sleep' is rendered by the equally invented brand 'Sommeil d'or', which translates as 'Golden-sleep.' This choice has most likely been made as the word-to-word translation of 'Easi-sleep', which would be 'Sommeil facile', would not have sounded very attractive as a brand name.[8]

Furthermore, Matthieussent translates the price of the sofa '£99' with '99 livres', employing the French term for the British currency. Nevertheless, he refrains from transforming 'Eureka Street' into 'rue Eureka', its French equivalent. In Venuti's words it could be said that the street name 'Eureka Street' functions as a 'foreignizing element' in the French text.[9] It is very likely that Matthieussent opted for the English term in order to keep the reference to the title of the book, *Eureka Street*, which he also leaves untranslated. In this way, the translator underlines the situation of the source text in an anglophone environment.

The 'bomb-damage clearance sale in a broken store' becomes 'une vente dans une boutique plastiquée,' which translates as 'a sale in a shop which had been blown up by a bomb'. Matthieussent's translation obscures the fact that the sale actually takes place in order to sell goods which have been damaged in the bomb explosion. As in the French translation the reason and the nature of the event are not obvious, the

francophone reader might presume that the sale takes place as a kind of flea market or a garage sale for which the organisers had randomly chosen a damaged shop as a location. The existence of the term 'bomb-damage clearance sale' hints at the fact that the consequences of political violence, such as bomb explosions, have become habitual in such a way that words had to be invented to name them. Through Matthieussent's translation, however, the specific 'Belfast term' belonging to a particular Northern Irish discourse is entirely lost. By paraphrasing 'bomb-damage clearance sale' in his translation, Matthieussent silences the underlying voices alluding to the everyday occurrence of political violence.

The German translation of the above-mentioned paragraph by Christa Schuenke reads as follows:

> Eureka Street, abends um zehn. Die Dunkelheit war weich und voller Farben. In Nummer 7 brabbelten Mr. und Mrs. Playfair in ihrem Minibett, einer nagelneuen, auf £99 runtergesetzten Schlafcouch, die sie in einem demolierten Geschäft in Sprucefield erstanden hatten, das wegen Bombenschaden dicht machen musste.[10]
> [Eureka Street, 10 p.m. The darkness was soft and full of colours. In No. 7 Mr and Mrs Playfair mumbled in their tiny bed, a brand new sofa bed, reduced to £99 which they had acquired in a damaged shop in Sprucefield, which had to close down due to a bomb.]

It is striking that the German translator commits the same error as her French colleague: she mistakes 'tidy' for 'tiny', translating 'tidy bed' with 'Minibett', meaning 'tiny bed'. In contrast to Matthieussent, who translates 'Mr' and 'Mrs Playfair' with 'M.' and 'Mme Playfair', Schuenke keeps 'Mr' and 'Mrs' instead of employing the German terms 'Herr' and 'Frau'. The same applies to the price of the sofa; instead of translating £99 with the German '99 Pfund', she keeps the English term. The name of the street remains equally untranslated. Integrating 'foreignizing elements', Schuenke seeks to draw attention to the English-speaking context of the story. The brand 'Easi-sleep,' on the contrary, is simply rendered by the generic term 'Schlafcouch' ('sofa bed'), as a word-to-word translation of 'Easi-sleep' ('Leichter Schlaf') would rather evoke insomnia instead of a sound and relaxing sleep.[11]

In order to carry across the meaning of the term 'bomb-damage clearance sale,' Schuenke explains in a paraphrase that the sofa bed had been bought 'in einem demoliertem Geschäft in Sprucefield […] das wegen Bombenschaden dicht machen musste' ['in a damaged shop in Sprucefield, which had to close down due to a bomb']. Similar to the French translation, the reason for the sale remains obscure: the German reader does not necessarily understand that the sale had been organised with the intention to clear out the shop. The fact that the translation of the 'bomb-damage clearance sale' stays imprecise despite the translator's efforts shows that the concept is remote from contemporary German reality. As in the case of the French translation, the underlying voice hinting at the everyday experience of political violence in Northern Ireland becomes obscured.

The Spanish translation of the paragraph by Daniel Aguirre Oteiza is the most explanatory one:

> Calle Eureka, diez de la noche. La oscuridad era suave y de color. En el número 7, el señor y la señora Playfair hablaban entre dientes en su pulcra cama, una Duermefácil completamente nueva que habían comprado rebajada a noventa y nueve libras en la liquidación de una tienda de Sprucefield, arruinada a causa de los desperfectos ocasionados por una bomba.[12]
>
> [Eureka Street, 10 p.m. The darkness was soft and coloured. In No. 7 Mr and Mrs Playfair mumbled in their tidy bed, a completely new Easisleep, reduced to £99 in the clearance sale of a shop in Sprucefield, which had been ruined due to the damages caused by a bomb.]

In contrast to the French and German translation, the adjective 'tidy' is correctly translated with 'pulcra', meaning 'clean'. Aiming at a domesticating translation, Aguirre Oteiza renders the brand 'Easi-sleep' word for word as 'Duermefácil'. He also transforms Mr and Mrs Playfair into 'señor' and 'señora Playfair', hispanicising the original text. Unlike his French and German counterparts, the Spanish translator does not keep the street name but transforms it to 'calle Eureka'. In this way, the reference to the title of the book, which in the Spanish translation remains in its English original, is lost.

However, Aguirre Oteiza goes to great lengths to communicate the precise meaning of the term 'bomb-damage clearance sale', using the

elaborate paraphrase 'la liquidación de una tienda de Sprucefield, arruinada a causa de los desperfectos ocasionados por una bomba', which translates as 'the clearance sale of a shop in Sprucefield, which had been ruined due to the damage caused by a bomb'. Thanks to the term 'liquidación' the translator manages to communicate the reason for the sale and thus underlines the reference to political violence.

Possibly, Aguirre Oteiza is sensitive to the story's violent context as he originates from the Basque country.[13] The translator's decision to employ the above-mentioned paraphrase to explain the term shows his eagerness to correctly communicate the concept of 'bomb-damage clearance sale'. It is very likely that due to his personal experience of political tensions in the Basque country, Aguirre Oteiza is conscious of the importance of this particular piece of information. Thus, the translator encourages the Spanish-speaking reader in a subtle way to establish a parallel between Northern Irish and Spanish history: as Northern Ireland was shaken by the actions of paramilitary organisations from both political camps, different parts of Spain were troubled by the violent actions of ETA. Interestingly, the historic correlations highlighted by Aguirre Oteiza are also visualised in Belfast's urban space: in certain Catholic areas murals can be found which express a certain discourse of fraternisation between Northern Ireland and the Basque country.

## 3   Transferring Local Humour into a New Environment

The translation of humour is a particular challenge for the translator, especially when source and target cultures differ in their conceptions of values and norms. In the following paragraph of Robert McLiam Wilson's novel, the goings-on in house No. 27 on Eureka Street are described with a kind of humour which is not easy to translate into a different cultural environment:

> In No. 27, […] Mr and Mrs Stevens were absent, holidaying in Bundoran; Julia, their daughter (gladly left behind), was showing both her breasts to Robert Cole, who previously had glimpsed only the upper portion of the left one during a memorable party in Chemical Street.[14]

The extract is rendered by the French translator in the following way:

> Au numéro 27, […] M. et Mme Stevens étaient absents, en vacances à Bundoran; Julia, leur fille (heureusement restée à la maison), montrait ses deux seins à Robert Cole, qui auparavant n'avait aperçu que la partie supérieure du téton gauche lors d'une fête mémorable sur Chemical Street.[15]
>
> [In No. 27, (…) Mr and Mrs Stevens were absent, on holiday in Bundoran; Julia, their daughter (happily remaining at home) showed both her breasts to Robert Cole, who previously had glimpsed only the upper part of the left nipple at a memorable party in Chemical Street.]

It is striking that Matthieussent chooses to translate 'gladly left behind' by 'heureusement restée à la maison'. Whereas the English phrase suggests that Mr and Mrs Stevens's daughter is happy about being left at home, the French translation implies an external observer, who positively comments on the fact that Julia stays at home. In this way, he/she seems to express his/her approval of the young girl showing her breast to her boyfriend. Apart from this, we can observe a further interesting detail: the 'upper portion of the left [breast]', which Robert Cole had the chance to glimpse previously, is translated with 'la partie supérieure du téton gauche', meaning the 'upper part of the left nipple'. The French translation is visibly more sexualised than its English original. Considering the influence of Calvinism on Northern Irish society, the 'upper portion' of Julie's breast appears to be 'shocking' enough to intrigue Robert Cole. It is very likely that Matthieussent felt compelled to choose a stronger image to obtain the same effect with the French reader. In more liberal French society, to glimpse the 'upper portion' of a breast might not be enough to titillate the reader. Through the use of a more sexualised term, Matthieussent manages to maintain the comical tone of the original.

The German translator attempts to recreate the humorous tone of the source text by means of subtle exaggerations and a particular choice of terms:

> In Nummer 27, […] glänzten Mr. und Mrs. Stevens durch Abwesenheit, weil sie in Bundoran Urlaub machten; Julia, (ihre glücklich daheim gebliebene Tochter), war damit beschäftigt, Robert Cole ihre Brüste zu zeigen,

nachdem er zuvor auf einer denkwürdigen Party in der Chemical Street nur einen Blick auf den oberen Teil der linken hatte werfen dürfen.[16]

[In No. 27, (…) Mr and Mrs Stevens were absent because they were holidaying in Bundoran; Julia, their daughter (happily staying at home) was busy showing her breasts to Robert Cole, after he had been allowed to have a look at the upper part of the left one at a memorable party in Chemical Street.]

The German translation remains fairly close to the English original. The sentence 'Julia, their daughter, (gladly left behind)' is faithfully translated by 'Julia (ihre glücklich daheim gebliebende Tochter)'. In the translation, the connotations of the source text are preserved, so that it is clear to the German reader that Julia is happy about being left at home. In the same way, 'the upper portion of the left [breast]', is reproduced word for word without any terminological amplification. The German text strikes a humorous note through the translation of 'in No. 27 […] Mr. and Mrs. Stevens were absent', with 'in Nummer 27 […] glänzten Mr. and Mrs. Stevens mit Abwesenheit'. The German expression 'mit Abwesenheit glänzen' does not only mean to be absent but simultaneously implies that one should have been present. In the context of the above-mentioned paragraph, the expression suggests that Mr and Mrs Stevens would have been well advised to stay at home to prevent their daughter from showing her breasts to Robert Cole. This slightly overstated unspoken judgement on the part of the German translator is just the opposite of the implied comment in the French text. Whereas in Matthieussent's translation an external voice approves of Julia's performance, in the German text, the parents are almost accused of not watching over their teenage daughter closely enough.

Furthermore, translating 'at a memorable party' with 'auf einer denkwürdigen Party', Schuenke introduces a humoristic tone into the German text by means of exaggeration. Through the choice of the adjective 'denkwürdig' ('memorable'), she almost elevates the party to a 'monumental' event, as the word is frequently employed in a historic context.

The Spanish translation is the closest to the English source text:

En el número 27, […] el señor y la señora Stevens estaban ausentes, ya que se habían ido de vacaciones a Bundoran. Julia, su hija, que se había quedado en casa con mucho gusto, enseñaba sus dos pechos a Robert Cole,

quien previamente sólo había podido entrever la parte superior del izqui-
erdo durante una memorable fiesta en la calle Chemical.[17]

   [In No. 27 (…) Mr and Mrs Stevens were absent because they had gone
on holiday to Bundoran. Julia, their daughter who was very much enjoying
staying at home, was showing both her breasts to Robert Cole, who previ-
ously had only been able to glimpse the upper part of the left one during a
memorable party at Chemical Street.]

The sentence 'Julia, their daughter (gladly left behind)' is translated
with the help of the relative clause 'con mucho gusto' ('with great plea-
sure'), which stresses the young girl's enjoyment. Unlike the German and
the French translations, the Spanish text does not contain an implicit
judgement about Julia's behaviour subversively expressed through an
external voice. Furthermore, as in the previously analysed paragraph,
Aguirre Oteiza merely domesticates the terms Mr and Mrs, translating
them with 'señor' and 'señora', as well as the street name 'Chemical
Street', which he transforms into 'calle Chemical'. Unlike the French
translator, however, he does not attempt to sexualise the target text by
letting Julie reveal more than the 'upper portion' of her left breast. In this
sense, it could be said that Aguirre Oteiza makes an effort to maintain the
narrator's voice without transforming it into his own.

## 4     'The Blah Blah Blackberries': Experimenting with the Sense of Nonsense

The following extract from *Eureka Street* was chosen to demonstrate the
difficulties of translating what Lefevere calls 'nonsense poetry'.[18]
Transposing poetry from one cultural context into another, the transla-
tors have to decide whether to prioritise rhyme, while neglecting other
features of the original, or to give precedence to the content. This ques-
tion has given rise to much debate among scholars and translators. The
translators' choice whether to reproduce the rhyme pattern of the original
or not entails a complex decision-making process, which affects the form
and content of the target text in important ways. The Russian author
Joseph Brodsky claims that by ignoring the rhyming character of the

original, the translator merely transmits limited information about the content of the source text. He vehemently rejects translation into free verse, arguing that 'the music of the original' would 'fly out of the window'.[19] Lefevere, on the contrary, argues that if the translator chooses to render the rhyme patterns of the original, the syntax tends to suffer most as it is 'stretched out on the procrustean bed of sound similarity'.[20] Don Patterson underlines the impossibility of rendering both rhyme and content, arguing that this would be a recipe for 'translationese'.[21]

The following paragraph from *Eureka Street* belongs to a scene taking place in a Republican pub at a poetry reading. The slightly drunk protagonist parodies a well-known Irish poem:

> The blah blah under the brown blah of the blah blah hedges.
> I blahhed her blah with the heft of my spade
> The wet blah blahhed along the lines of the country with
>     all the blah of the blah blah blackberries.[22]

The term 'blackberries' alludes to Seamus Heaney's famous poem 'Blackberry Picking', which is widely known in Ireland and learned by heart at school. Thanks to the shared cultural background, the Irish reader is able to decode the reference to Irish literature. The foreign translator, however, is not only forced to come up with equivalent nonsense words but also has to convey the parodist character of the poem. Lefevere underlines the difficulty of translating the poetry of the absurd, maintaining that 'any attempt to translate nonsense words and expressions is literally a waste of time'.[23] In the following, we will see to which extent Matthieussent, Schuenke and Aguirre Oteiza manage to avoid 'translationese' by experimenting with the sound and content of the source text. The grammatical structure and the phonetics of their respective languages allow for different possibilities in the recreation of the given nonsense poem.

The French translation of the above mentioned paragraph reads as follows:

> Le blabla sous le bla brun des haies bla bla.
> Du dos de ma pelle je lui ai blablaté le bla.
> Le bla doré blaait le long des courbes du paysage
>     Avec tout le blabla des blablatiers noirs.[24]

[The blah blah under the blah brown of the hedges blah, blah
With the heft of my spade, I blahed her the blah.
The golden blah blahed along the lines of the landscape
With all the blah blah of the black blablaters.]

Matthieussent chooses to stick to the rhyme patterns and to the allit-
erations on /b/. In order to respect the French syntax, he is, however,
bound to invert the word order of the second line rendering 'I blahed
her blah with the heft of my spade' with 'du dos de ma pelle je luiai
blabalté le bla.' As far as the semantic meaning of the words is con-
cerned, the French translator remains relatively close to the source text,
correctly translating 'hedges' with 'haies' and 'heft of my spade' with
'dos de ma pelle'. In three cases, however, he diverges from the original.
In the third line, Mathieussent translates the word 'wet' with 'doré',
meaning 'golden'. This decision was very likely taken to maintain the
rhythm of the line, which would have been disturbed by the insertion of
the word 'humide' ('humid') as it contains one additional syllable.
Nevertheless, replacing 'wet' with 'golden', he deletes the references to
Irish weather made in the source text. For the French reader, the image
of a swampy Irish countryside is substituted by the somewhat romanti-
cized notion of a 'sun-kissed' golden landscape. This perception of
Ireland might be closer to a French idealised version of the island than
the image of a cold, damp place. Furthermore, it is striking that
Matthieussent translates 'country' with 'paysage' ('landscape') and not
'pays' ('country'). It could be argued that the expression 'lines of the
landscape' nourishes romantic notions of Ireland, whereas 'lines of the
country', rather refer to the shape of the island in a geographical way.
Through his choice of terms, Matthieussent introduces his own voice,
painting a glorified picture of the island.

In the last line, the translator has to find a solution for the translation
of the term 'blackberries' as the French word, 'mûre', would not fit the
chain of phonemes. Choosing sound over content, Matthieussent coins
the term 'blablatiers noirs', which in French does not mean anything. It
is very likely that he decided to eliminate the references to the poem
'Blackberry Picking', assuming that most of the French readers would not
be familiar with Seamus Heaney's poetry.

The German translation stays closer to its source; even the lines' word order remains. Trying to adapt the given nonsense words to German spelling, Schuenke capitalises the nouns so that the sentence follows a certain grammatical logic. In contrast to her French counterpart, she does not attempt to create a romanticised image of Ireland through the choice of beautifying terms:

Das Bla Bla unterm braunen Bla der bla bla Hecken.
Ich blahte ihr Bla mit dem Stiel meines Spatens
Das feuchte Bla blahte die Schemen des Landes mit
      all dem Bla der bla bla Blaubeeren.[25]

[The blah blah under the brown blah of the blah blah hedges.
I blahhed her blah with the heft of my spade
The wet blah blahhed along the lines of the country with
      all the blah of the blah blah blueberries.]

In the last line, Schuenke translates the word 'blackberries' with 'Blaubeeren' ('blueberries') instead of employing the correct German equivalent 'Brombeeren'. This choice must have been motivated by the desire to maintain the sound structure of the original: thanks to the first three letters of the word 'Blaubeeren', Schuenke is able to keep the alliteration with 'blahblah'. Employing a different kind of berry, she renounces content for sound and obscures the intertextual link to Heaney's poem.

The Spanish translator decides to render 'blah blah' with 'tal y tal', meaning 'such and such', even if 'blah blah' would have been perfectly imaginable in Spanish:

Al tal y tal que hay debajo del tostado
      tal de los setos tal y tal
le di un tal y tal en el tal y tal
      con el mango de mi pala
y el húmedo tal y tal surcó talmente el campo tal y tal
con todos los tal y tal del tal y tal del zarzal.[26]

[To the such and such that lies under the brown
      such and such of the hedges such and such

I gave such and such in the such and such
     with the heft of my spate
and the humid such and such he ploughed in such and such a way through
the field such and such
with all the such and such of the such and such blackberry bush.]

The reason for his choice of 'tal y tal' over 'blah blah' seems to be the last word, 'zarzal'. Like the French and German translators, he chooses rhyme over content, as 'zarzal' does not mean 'blackberry' but 'blackberry bush'. Yet again, the allusion to Seamus Heaney's poem gets lost. It is, however, debatable whether or not the French, German or Spanish reader would have been able to decode the reference to the Irish poem.

# 5     Struggling with the 'Untranslatable': The Difficulty of Transferring Telling Titles

The translation of Colin Bateman's *Divorcing Jack* gives rise to a different set of problems. As there is no Spanish translation of the book, I shall concentrate on the German and French translations. Even the title of the book represents a serious challenge in itself, especially for the German translator. Whereas Michel Lebrun, the French translator, opted for *Divorce, Jack!*, Michael Kubiak, his German counterpart, chose *Eine Nonne war sie nicht* (*She Was Not a Nun*) as the title. The difficulty arises from the fact that the title is based on a word-play central to the novel, which the reader is only able to decode after having read half of the book.

The action takes place against the backdrop of an election campaign, which the Alliance Party, with its fictional candidate Brinn, seems to be winning. Unionists and Nationalists, however, try to prevent the victory of this supposedly neutral party by all means possible. The plotline develops around Dan Starkey, a Protestant journalist, who is having an affair with a young girl named Margaret. When Margaret is unexpectedly killed, Starkey hears her last words, which sound to him like 'divorce, Jack'. After Margaret's death, Starkey is persecuted by Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries for no obvious reason. Having been shot at

and wounded while fleeing, Starkey is saved by the nurse Lee, who takes him home to look after his wounds. At her flat, Lee listens to a piece of music disliked by Starkey. The following conversation between the two characters is the key to the wordplay and thus to the title of the book:

> 'You said "Divorce Jack", Lee. The last words Margaret ever said to me. That's what you said.' […] 'Dan, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't say that. I said "Dvořák". The composer. The composer, Dan. Dvořák. I just wanted to say who wrote the music, that he wasn't crap.'
>
> And it was like coming back to life, or reaching heaven and discovering the meaning of everything. Suddenly all became clear. Dvořák. Pronounced by a slurring dying woman as 'Divorce Jack'.[27]

'Dvořák' refers to a music tape which Starkey had received from Margaret as a birthday present. However, instead of pieces by the Czech composer, the tape contained a confession by Brinn, made in a drunken state, about crimes he had previously committed for the IRA. If his confession were to get into the hands of Republican or Loyalist paramilitaries, it would lead to the candidate's downfall. For this reason, Starkey, the innocent holder of the tape, is persecuted by both political sides.

The fact that the wordplay is mainly based on phonetics makes it difficult to transfer into another language. The French translator opted for the following:

> 'Tu m'as dit "Divorce Jack", Lee. Les derniers mots de Margaret …' […] 'Dan, ce n'est pas ce que j'ai dit. J'ai dit "D'vor'jac". Le compositeur. Dvořák! Je voulais te dire que c'était de la bonne musique, c'est tout.'
>
> Ce fut comme un rideau brusquement déchiré sur un coin de paradis, comme la découverte du sens de la vie. Tout s'éclairait subitement. Dvořák. Prononcé, balbutié par une agonisante "Divorce Jack".[28]
>
> ['You said to me "Divorce Jack", Lee. Margaret's last words' (…) 'Dan, that's not what I said. I said "D'vor'jac". The composer. Dvořák! I wanted to tell you that this is good music, that's all.'
>
> This was as if a curtain had been violently torn apart which had covered a region of paradise, like the discovery of the meaning of life. All of a sudden everything became clear. Dvořák. Pronounced in the slurring speech of a woman in her death throes as 'Divorce Jack'.]

The English imperative 'Divorce, Jack!' is the same as 'Divorce, Jack!' in French, only with a different pronunciation. In order to carry the word-play across, Lebrun is compelled to make a linguistic explanation. Therefore, he decides to translate 'I said "Dvořák"', with 'J'ai dit "D'vor'jac"', imitating the phonetic deformation of the name in the mouth of an English speaker. On the basis of this explanation, the translator is able to use 'Divorce, Jack!' as the title of the book without making it sound odd to the French reader. In this way, he employs the English title only in a different grammatical form: the gerund of 'Divorcing Jack' is merely replaced by the imperative 'Divorce, Jack!' This solution allows Matthieussent to stay terminologically close to the source text, maintaining the allusion to the central wordplay of the novel.

The German translator, however, faces a more difficult challenge, as the word 'divorce' stems from an entirely different root. The German equivalent of 'divorce' would be the reflexive verb 'sich scheiden lassen', which in none of its grammatical forms would work as a catchy title for the book. Kubiak translates the above-mentioned paragraph as follows:

> 'Sie sagten "Divorce Jack", Lee. Die letzten Worte, die Margaret jemals zu mir gesagt hat. Und Sie haben das jetzt ebenfalls gesagt. […] 'Dan, es tut mir leid, so leid. Das habe ich nicht gesagt. "Dvořák". Der Komponist, Dan. Dvořák. Ich wollte nur sagen, wer diese Musik geschrieben hat, daß er keinen Mist komponiert hat.'
>
> Es war, als kehrte ich wieder ins Leben zurück oder als gelangte ich plötzlich in den Himmel und als begriffe ich plötzlich die Bedeutung von allem. Plötzlich wurde alles klar. Dvořák. Von einer sterbenden Frau undeutlich wie 'Divorce Jack' ausgesprochen.[29]
>
> ['You said "Divorce Jack", Lee. The last words Margaret ever said to me. And you just said that as well. (…) 'Dan, I'm very sorry, so sorry. I didn't say that. "Dvořák". The composer, Dan. Dvořák. I just wanted to say that the person who wrote this music did not compose rubbish.'
>
> It was as if life came back to me or as if I'd suddenly reached heaven and as if I suddenly understood the meaning of everything. Suddenly everything was clear. Dvořák. Pronounced by a dying woman as 'Divorce Jack'.]

In order to be able to explain the phonetic wordplay of the source text, Kubiak chooses to translate the phrase 'You said Divorce, Jack' by

maintaining an English element with 'Sie sagten "Divorce, Jack"'. Thus, he counts on the German reader's command of the English language. This solution would have been unacceptable in a French context, as in France Anglicisms are officially banned by the 'Loi Toubon', the law watching over the 'purity' of the French language. Therefore, the French reader rarely encounters English terms in a translated text.

As this rather complicated translation of the wordplay would not be adequate for a title in German, Kubiak chooses to focus on a different aspect of the novel. The title *Eine Nonne war sie nicht* refers to Lee's unusual part-time job: to make ends meet, she works as a stripper in a nun's outfit. Replacing *Divorcing Jack* with *Eine Nonne war sie nicht*, the translator attracts the reader's attention to one of the minor characters and not to the protagonist. Shifting the accent from Starkey to Lee, the translator misleads the potential buyers of the book, suggesting that the novel is about a character disguised as a nun. In so doing, Kubiak imposes his own voice on the German-speaking readership.

## 6    Misunderstanding Local Behaviour

The following scene takes place in the 'Dolphin', a gangster bar, in which after a day of fighting, Catholic and Protestant gangsters have a drink together:

> Nobody ever went armed to the Dolphin. Any violence that broke out was settled with fists or pint glasses and forgotten by the next morning, but it rarely did. Even gangsters have to relax sometimes.[30]

The German translation remains faithful to its source, apart from two terms, which are altered:

> Niemand ging jemals bewaffnet ins Dolphin. Jeglicher Streit, der ausbrach, wurde mit Fäusten und Bierkrügen ausgetragen und war am nächsten Tag bereits vergessen, aber es kam selten soweit. Auch Gangster müssen sich irgendwann entspannen.[31]

> [Nobody ever went armed to the Dolphin. Any dispute which broke out was carried out with fists and steins and was already forgotten by the next day, but it rarely went so far. Even gangsters have to relax at some point].

In the second sentence, Kubiak translates 'violence' with 'Streit', meaning 'dispute'. The German word 'Streit' refers to verbal exchange rather than to physical fighting. In this way, the translator eliminates the reference to the political violence characteristic of the Northern Irish Troubles. In the same sentence, Kubiak decides to render 'pint glasses' with 'Bierkrüge', meaning 'steins'. This verbal choice amounts to a serious mistranslation, as it results in the disappearance of an entire concept. To begin with, to drink beer out of steins is not an Irish habit; rather, it reminds us of the Oktoberfest in Munich, where beer is drunk out of one-litre steins. Thus, the local colour of the description of Irish pub life gets lost and a subtle German voice is introduced into the translation. Apart from that, the translator ignores what is meant by 'violence was settled with pint glasses'. This phrase is a clear reference to the fighting habits of the gangster milieu. To 'glass somebody' means to break the upper part of the glass over the head of the adversary so as to wound his face with the jagged edge of the lower part. By choosing a 'stein' as a container for the drink, the translator renders the action of 'glassing' impossible. Even if you can hit somebody's head with a stein, it is impossible to break the stein in such a manner. To a German reader the reference to steins would imply that the gangsters cheerfully have a drink together, forgetting about their animosities. It is evident that the German translator is not aware of the 'glassing tradition' of Belfast's gangster milieu. Yet again, the allusion to violence present in the source text is entirely deleted in the German translation. Thus, the warlike atmosphere which pervades the novel is not reproduced in the target text.

The French translator opts for a different solution:

> Personne n'introduisait d'armes. Toute manifestation de violence s'y réglait à coups de poing ou de verres cassés, et tout était oublié le lendemain. Mais ça se produisait rarement. Même les truands ont besoin de se détendre parfois.[32]

[Nobody brought arms. Any demonstration of violence was settled with fists and broken glasses and everything was forgotten by the next day. But this rarely happened. Even gangsters have to relax sometimes.]

Translating 'pint glasses' with 'verres cassés' ('broken glasses'), Lebrun shows his awareness of the action of 'glassing'. However, for a French reader 'verres cassés' is not a clear reference to the fighting mode as in France bottles rather than glasses are employed for the same reason. The use of bottles instead of glasses is most likely due to the fact that a broken wine glass would not have the same effect as a broken pint glass in the 'glassing process'. To achieve a cultural transfer and render the action clear, the French translator would have done better employing the expression 'broken bottle necks'. Yet, unlike the German translator, Lebrun maintains the promise of violence contained in the source text.

The next extract is taken from the same scene set in the gangster bar the Dolphin:

East Belfast gangsters in flashy suits and droopy moustaches crowded the bar, shouting bad-natured insults at each other, while their counterparts from the west of the city preferred to relax in round-table packs near the stage, where they could cover each other's backs.[33]

The German translation reads as follows:

Gangster aus Ost-Belfast in eleganten Anzügen und mit markanten Schnurrbärten bevölkerten die Bar und warfen einander üble Schimpfwörter zu, während ihre Kollegen aus dem Westen der Stadt sich an den Tischen in der Nähe der Bühne versammelten, wo sie einander den Rücken freihalten konnten.[34]

[Gangsters from East Belfast in elegant suits and striking moustaches crowded the bar and threw strong profanities at each other, while their colleagues from the west of the city got together at the table near the stage, where they could hold each other's backs free.]

A number of inaccurate translations are noticeable: 'droopy moustaches' become 'markante Schnurrbärte' ('striking moustaches') and 'flashy suits'

are rendered as 'eleganten Anzügen' ('elegant suits'). The worst error, how-ever, is the translation of the last part of the sentence 'where they could cover each other's backs'. The German translation 'wo sie einander den Rücken freihalten konnten', means exactly the opposite: 'where they could keep each other's back free'. Yet again, the German translator does not seem to be sufficiently familiar with the habits of Belfast's gangster milieu. The whole point of the action is to protect each other while covering each oth-er's backs. In the German translation, however, the gangsters could be easily attacked as their backs are uncovered. The correct translation of the sen-tence would be 'wo sie sich einander Rückendeckung geben konnten'. It is very likely that the translator was misled by the German expression 'jeman-den den Rücken frei halten' ('to keep somebody's back free'), which has an entirely different meaning. It is commonly employed to describe couples in which the husband pursues his career while the wife stays at home, taking care of household and children. In this way, she 'keeps his back free', so that he can concentrate on his work. In the context of the above-mentioned translation, the use of this expression is obviously inappropriate. Through the choice of terms, Kubiak yet again deletes the allusion to political vio-lence and in this way he obscures the local context of the book.

The French translator opted for the following translation:

Les gangsters de Belfast Est aux costards voyants et aux moustaches tom-bantes s'écrasaient au bar, échangeant des insultes grossières, tandis que leurs homologues de l'ouest de la ville préféraient se détendre aux tables bordant la scène, où ils pouvaient surveiller leurs arrières.[35]

[Gangsters from East Belfast in flashy suits and droopy moustaches crowded the bar, exchanging bad-natured insults, whereas their counter-parts of the west of the city preferred to relax at tables next to the scene where they could watch their backs.]

The translation of the last part of the sentence 'où ils pouvaient sur-veiller leurs arrières' is equally confusing and translates as: 'where they could watch their backs'. For the French reader this sounds as if they would watch their own backs and not each other's. This physically impos-sible action introduces an unintended comic element instead of referring to a specific form of behaviour generated by a violent conflict.

# 7    Conclusion

The different examples discussed in the chapter demonstrate that besides a linguistic sensitivity, a deep awareness of the local context is a key asset for any translator. This allows him or her to decide on whether to go for a more 'domesticating' or more 'foreignizing' rendering of the original. In this context, the translator has to strike the right balance between the reading habits of the audience and its knowledge of the source text's cultural background. Moreover, he or she has to struggle to reproduce the voice of the different narrators, which is a difficult task as very often translations are influenced by the translator's personal experience. The Spanish translator of *Eureka Street*, for example, proves to be much more sensitive to the literary illustration of political violence in Northern Ireland than his German and French counterparts, perhaps due to his Basque origins. The French translation not only shows the cultural background of the translator but also his attempt to subtly insert his own voice into the target text. It could be said that Matthieussent's sexualised translations of certain English terms show French society's more liberal attitude towards sexuality. The legal situation in different countries might also have an influence on translators' verbal choices. While the German translator of Bateman's novel integrates without any hesitation the English terms 'Divorce Jack' into his text, his French colleague has to look for French equivalents, as anglicisms are officially banned in French texts by the Loi Toubon.

The translation of wordplays presents translators with a particular challenge because it is highly difficult to replace one image with another without transforming the content of the message. As we saw in the case of the German translation of the title of Bateman's novel, transpositions of wordplays might be misleading. Due to the translator's choice of title, *Eine Nonne war sie nicht* (*She Was Not a Nun*) the German reader will most likely expect a novel about a fake nun and might be disappointed by the actual content of the book. As shown above, translators also have to be careful not to fall prey to national stereotypes or established perceptions of a country. Translating the 'wet blah blahhed along the lines of the country' with 'le bla doré blaait le long des courbes des paysages', Matthieussent conforms to a French romantic imagination of a 'golden'

Irish countryside, whereas it is the country's heavy rainfall which is evoked by the source text.

With regards to the translation of poetry, translators sometimes have to choose between sound and content which entails that every so often important cultural connotations are lost. However, as in the case of the 'blackberries' in the nonsense poem occurring in *Eureka Street*, we cannot always take for granted that the foreign audience is able to decode allusions to the cultural background of the target text. The worst but hardest to avoid errors, however, are mistranslations produced out of ignorance. Due to an insufficient knowledge of the source culture, these translations might result in the creation of a very different impression than that intended by the original. The misunderstandings of the German translation concerning the two scenes set in the 'Dolphin' in *Divorcing Jack* clearly illustrate this danger. Not being familiar enough with the 'glassing' and 'protecting' habits of Belfast's gangster milieu, Kubiak sets an entirely different scene, one which is more redolent of peaceful Bavaria than troubled Belfast. Thus, the underlying Northern Irish discourse of political violence becomes entirely lost.

I will conclude by saying that a translation risks cultivating a very different tone and set of meanings and voices if the translator, intentionally or unintentionally, departs too far from its source. This is all the more true of texts which emerge out of unusual circumstances, such as a particular political situation, in which special care is required. One possible solution to the problem might be a careful proofreading by a person with local knowledge. Unfortunately, the budget of most publishers does not allow this kind of double-checking. Therefore, it is to a large extent the responsibility of the translators to acquire as much local knowledge as possible before beginning their work.

## Notes

1. Patrick Magee, *Gangsters or Guerrillas? Representation of Irish Republicans in 'Troubles Fiction'* (Belfast: BTP Publications, 2001), 5.
2. Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, *(De-)Constructing the North: Fiction and the Northern Ireland Troubles since 1969* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 41–62.

3. Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street* (London: Vintage, 1996); and Colin Bateman, *Divorcing Jack* (London: Headline, 1995).

4. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008), 15–20.

5. Ibid., 15.

6. Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street*, 36.

7. Brice Matthieussent, trans., *Eureka Street*, by Robert McLiam Wilson (Paris: Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1997), 36. The English translations appearing in brackets after paragraphs in German, French or Spanish are my own translations and remain close to their respective source in order to illustrate the discrepancies between their English source and the translations proposed by the German-, French- or Spanish-speaking translators.

8. Inventing the brand 'Easi-sleep', McLiam Wilson seems to play with the term 'easy chair', which refers to a functional kind of chair such as a recliner. In a French-speaking context, this particular type of chair is called 'chaise magique' (cf. 'Uaredesign', http://www.uaredesign.com/easy-chair-chaise-beige-magis.html, accessed 3 September 2013). Matthieussent was possibly unaware of this underlying wordplay. Otherwise he could have made up a brand name based on the French equivalent of the term such as 'Sommeil magique'.

9. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 19–20.

10. Christa Schuenke, trans., *Eureka Street, Belfast*, by Robert McLiam Wilson (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1999), 31.

11. Obviously Schuenke does not make the effort to invent a German equivalent for the brand, a not insurmountably difficult task. To propose a more German-sounding translation, the imaginary brand 'Träum süß' ('Sweet Dreams'), for example, would have sufficed.

12. Daniel Aguirre Oteiza, trans., *Eureka Street*, by Robert McLiam Wilson (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1999), 46.

13. Cf. 'Who is Log', http://www.whoislog.info/profile/daniel-aguirre-oteiza.html, accessed 3 September 2013.

14. Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street*, 36.

15. Brice Matthieussent, trans., *Eureka Street*, 55.

16. Christa Schuenke, trans., *Eureka Street, Belfast*, 31.

17. Daniel Aguirre Oteiza, *Eureka Street*, 46.

18. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature. Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992), 77.

19. Solomon Volkov, *Conversations with Joseph Brodsky* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 53.
20. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature*, 70.
21. Don Patterson, *Orpheus: A Version of Rilke* (London: Faber, 2006), 80.
22. Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street*, 192.
23. André Lefevere, *Translating Literature*, 77.
24. Brice Matthieussent, trans., *Eureka Street*, 243.
25. Christa Schuenke, trans., *Eureka Street, Belfast*, 192.
26. Daniel Aguirre Oteiza, *Eureka Street*, 191–92.
27. Colin Bateman, *Divorcing Jack*, 150.
28. Michel Lebrun, trans., *Divorce Jack!*, by Colin Bateman (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 189.
29. Michael Kubiak, trans., *Eine Nonne war sie nicht*, by Colin Bateman (Bergisch Gladbach: Bastei Lübbe, 1996), 168.
30. Colin Bateman, *Divorcing Jack*, 129.
31. Michael Kubiak, trans., *Eine Nonne war sie Nicht*, 146–47.
32. Michel Lebrun, trans., *Divorce Jack!*, 165.
33. Colin Bateman, *Divorcing Jack*, 129.
34. Michael Kubiak, trans., *Eine Nonne war sie Nicht*, 146.
35. Michel Lebrun, trans., *Divorce Jack!*, 165.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.