

**A Poetics of Ghosting in
Contemporary Irish and Northern Irish Drama**

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DEDICATION

To R.J. Martinovich, Annie Martinovich, and Mark Martinovich
My very cherished Irish ghosts...

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I examine the poetics of ghosting in nine Irish and Northern Irish dramatic texts. In these texts by Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, Michael Duke, Brian Friel, Ben Hennessy, Frank McGuinness, Stewart Parker, and Vincent Woods, the ghost's story interrogates yet unites multiple narratives of history, identity, and memory. Together these plays represent a significant strain of Ireland's dramatic literature that dwells on historical trauma specifically through the figure of the ghost. Each chapter focuses on a historical event or problem as yet unresolved in the late 20th century: the historical remembrance and forgetting of Irish soldiers who served in World War One; the cycle of violence and trauma of the Troubles in Northern Ireland; and the home/scape that trapped women between the ideals of Mother Ireland and the everyday violences, disappointments, and impossibilities of actual motherhood. In the plays, the corporeal ghost is part of a past that has been invisibilized by stronger historical and political forces and thus makes its presence known in order to speak to, and as, the irresolvability of that past. A dramaturgy of ghosts and haunting emphasizes both a material manifestation and a collective haunting of the historical legacy of trauma. I argue that the ghost in dramatic representation points toward a cultural need to allow the conflicts of the past to remain unresolved, while the ghost also invites the imagining of a different future.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Ghosts and Ireland

In Ireland, as Seamus Deane has remarked, all ghosts are political.¹

Ghosts, as political beings, are figures of an unresolved past. Seamus Deane's statement calls us to consider two things: one, that on the island of Ireland the past is always political; and two, that the political is entwined in an historical web of cultural and religious identity. In other words, Ireland's ghosts are always already connected to identity and the land, and connected by what it means to be Irish, British, or Northern Irish or to be from the North or the South. Ghosts are political in Ireland because they are part of a historical landscape that has been the site of conflict for centuries, repeatedly reappearing in places in which the deceased people they represent have been marginalized or un-remembered. That historical landscape includes the conditions of colonialism, post-colonialism, partition, and civil war as well as the struggles on behalf of nationalism, unionism, and religious and political sectarianism. Since Ireland's ghosts are tethered to the politics of place and to the historical conditions of their death, they are also mired in the politics of remembrance and forgetting.

If ghosts are political, then so too is memory: to remember on either side of the border has historically meant to acknowledge those events that correspond with often narrow configurations of nationalism or unionism within the larger trajectory of Ireland's history. This overriding narrative frequently produced a reification of the historical past, which was then contained within the framework of Irish nationalism. On the island remembering the past becomes fraught with complications due to a vested interest on all

sides in claiming a past that often does not take into consideration the many complexities of the history of the Irish nation or of the social, political, and historical situation in the North. Alvin Jackson writes of the “fissiparous nature” of Irish nationalism and Irish unionism, but believes that “there was always a tendency toward producing a simplified and unifying historical creed” for the masses to consume.² Remembering the past then becomes part of this unifying creed. For my purposes here, memory refers to political memory: those events of history that a nation or group of people choose to remember so as to promote the formation of ideology and a strong national/group identity. Forgetting in this context is a political forgetting, meaning the invisibilization of non-conforming narratives involving historical events that fail to align with a circumscribed political identity and ideology. As we know, political memory becomes materialized by way of commemorations, parades, monuments, symbols, flags, and social and cultural organizations. Furthermore, as Aleida Assmann argues, nations and states “do not ‘have’ a memory; they ‘make’ one for themselves,”³ which suggests that political memory is a methodical (re)construction of the past. Ghosts inhabit the spaces in and around political remembering and forgetting because they return from a past that has yet to be resolved into a stable historical narrative, thereby troubling how we think about the past.

What does the notion of an unresolved past really mean in/for Ireland? This question is at the heart of my project as it points toward not only what an unresolved past looks like in Ireland today, but also what it portends for future generations. Around the world, examples of unresolved histories abound – the history of slavery in the United States, the historical relationship between aboriginal communities and non-indigenous settlers in Australia, and the historical event of the Jewish Holocaust in Europe – all of

which revolve around the systematic dehumanization of peoples outside the dominant culture. In Ireland, unresolved histories have less to do with stories of abjection than with those stories that do not support the meta-narrative of Ireland's history (nationalist and unionist) or to be more precise, with marginalized issues that constitute contested memories/histories of "the way it was," or in some instances, how the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland came to be. The burdens of an unresolved history continue to resonate in contemporary discourse, but more significantly, an unresolved history fights against the closure of the same kind of history and is oriented towards the future, as it allows alternative versions of the past to be continually revealed.

In this dissertation I focus on the pervasive figure of the ghost in nine Irish and Northern Irish plays through the theoretical lens of cultural and historical violence, trauma, and memory. My primary sources are the dramatic texts of playwrights Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, Michael Duke, Brian Friel, Ben Hennessy, Frank McGuinness, Stewart Parker, and Vincent Woods. Each of the three main chapters focuses on a key historical event or problem that influenced Ireland's identity and culture in the twentieth century: chapter two – the historical remembrance and forgetting of Irish soldiers who served in World War I; chapter three – the cycle of violence and trauma of the Troubles in Northern Ireland; and chapter four – the home/scape that trapped women between the ideals of Mother Ireland and everyday violences, disappointments, and impossibilities of actual motherhood. The plays were chosen based on two criteria: first, a ghost makes an appearance on the stage; and second, the play's content corresponds with these historical events and problems that were as yet unresolved on the island in the late 20th century. In the plays, the corporeal ghost is part of a past that has been invisibilized by stronger

historical and political forces and thus makes its presence known in order to speak to, and as, an irresolvability of that past. I define the ghost as either a character specified as such by the playwright, or as a character that dies at some point during the play, and then comes back.⁴ Many Irish and Northern Irish plays revolve around haunting, but very few have ghosts as actual characters, and subsequently my selection marks the limits of the ghostly genre in the island's dramaturgy, which has a plethora of ghost stories, but a dearth of ghosts on the stage. This may be because the materiality of the ghost on the stage limits the ambiguity of its presence, and yet, what theatrical device enables the dramatic writing of a history that is riven by conflict and trauma in a way that sheds light on fundamental irresolvability? A dramaturgy of ghosts and haunting not only focuses on the problematic concept of irresolvability, but also emphasizes both a material manifestation and a collective haunting of the historical legacy of trauma. Consequently the plays chosen constitute a significant strain of Irish and Northern Irish drama that constellate around traumatic history specifically through the figure of the ghost. I examine what I call a poetics of ghosting, by means of which the ghost's story in the plays interrogates yet unites multiple narratives of history and identity.

The plays chosen were all written and produced in the late 20th century, a period of enormous productivity in theatre on the island and internationally. The time frame ranges from 1973 (*The Freedom of the City*) to 2006 (*Boy Soldier*) with the majority of the plays appearing in the 1980s and 1990s. The more prominent playwrights who emerged during this time include Frank McGuinness, Marina Carr, Sebastian Barry, and Stewart Parker all of whom have work analyzed here.⁵ These playwrights are among those who produced some of the most provocative, original work in the 1980s and 90s:

Barry's critically acclaimed *The Steward of Christendom* shone a light on unwritten histories of early 20th century Ireland; the premiere production of McGuinness' *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* marked a landmark event in Irish theatre by resurrecting a piece of the North's history previously unknown to an audience in the Republic; and Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*...featured an Irish stage filled with the stories and bodies of Irish women of all ages, a sight rarely seen on the 20th century Irish stage. Fintan O'Toole dubbed playwriting in Ireland in the 1980s and 90s "the third phase," an acknowledgement of the first phase of the early 20th century and the second phase of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.⁶ Theatre companies established during this time such as the Field Day Theatre Company in Derry, Northern Ireland, the Druid Theatre Company in Galway, and Rough Magic Theatre Company in Dublin were likewise making international names for themselves.⁷ The Irish theatrical landscape had transformed into a global phenomenon.

The 1980s and 90s were also times of immense societal and economic shifts on the island. From the hunger strikes in the North (1981) to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast (1998); from the economic recession of the 1980s to the rapid economic growth (known as the Celtic Tiger) that began in 1995; from an unemployment rate of 17.4% in 1986 to 3.9% in 2000⁸; and from a fairly homogenous society marked by out-migration to a rapid influx of immigrants in the 1990s (in response to financial opportunities) – all contributed to a sense of political and economic optimism and marked an energetic but chaotic end to the 20th century. Other changes during this time included the feminization of the workforce; the diminishing authority of the Catholic Church (indicated by a decline in church attendance, the revelation of child sexual abuse by some

priests, and battles over issues like divorce and reproductive freedom⁹); and a concomitant movement towards revisionist (and anti-revisionist) historiography.

The issue of revisionism in Ireland, a hotly contested debate in the 1980s, was predominantly concerned with the challenging of Irish nationalist mythology.¹⁰ The revisionist impulse actually began in the 1930s, which according to Nancy J. Curtin was launched because the writing of Irish history “until then was subordinating historical truth to the cause of the nation.”¹¹ This historiographical upheaval in the 1930s was intended, as Curtin argues, “to cleanse the historical record of its mythological clutter,” but at the same time it was “so deeply rooted in the archives and primary sources, so shy of theoretical or interdisciplinary approaches.”¹² When a resurgence of historical revisionism took hold in the 1960s and 1970s, sparked by the renewed violence in the North and the resurgence of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, nationalism came under even more forceful critical attack. In the ensuing controversy, anti-revisionists challenged the revisionists’ attempt to divorce themselves from a “nationalism identified with propagandist myth-building and violence” and in its place offer a “bland, ‘value-free’ history” that occluded the real experiences of the Irish people.¹³ The 1980s revisionist controversy subsequently broadened to include a critique of the way Irish history had been written since the 1930s.¹⁴

The revisionist/anti-revisionist debate persists to this day to some degree and is as complex and multi-faceted as the events of Irish history themselves and the writing of them. Yet there are “as many varieties of Irish history as there are varieties of Irishness,” as Curtin believes, and so the door continues to be wide open to what she calls a “healthily contested and generally interesting reconceptualization of the Irish past.”¹⁵ The

playwrights analyzed here grappled with all of these issues: the re/thinking of historical events from the previous decades and how they were being written, the socioeconomic boom, the possible end to the Troubles, and the immense social changes for women. History is a recurring theme in many of the plays: what is Ireland and Northern Ireland's relationship to history, what does it mean for a contemporary audience, and most important what does that history mean for the future?¹⁶ I employ the ghost as a potent point of analysis in which to examine the writing of history in late 20th century plays because, as I argue, the return of the ghost complicates the writing of those histories.

Haunting and Historiography

My dissertation engages with the theoretical concerns of haunting and the nature of the ghost especially as they relate to History with a capital "H," history/ies, and historiography with the aim of disrupting commonly held truths about the past or bringing forth those events of history that have been omitted or marginalized. For my purposes here, History with a capital "H" refers to a linear sequence of historical events that have been written or recorded so as to project a singular, universal, or "official" narrative of the past. When I speak of history/ies with a small "h," I am referring to the events of the actual past, including those events either not documented or not in alignment with official versions of that past. In Ireland, these histories leave their trace in heterogeneous narratives of nation and province, "histories," which have to do with issues of identity, ostracism, victimhood, and gender. Important to note is that howsoever the term is used, "history" or "History" is always a construct, whether deliberate or not. When I speak of historiography, I refer to the writing *about* historical events (such as

World War I) as well as the writing *of* histories wherein the writing itself becomes part of the historical record. Because historiography is serious business on the island, it is important to note in my dissertation not just how historical events get recorded but what are the mechanisms involved in this recording.

My distinctive insight into the plays is that the ghost's return signals a social and cultural crisis of Ireland's History and historiography. Analyzing the dramatic text and its representation of ghosts is a way of thinking about conflicts/issues in Ireland's past that, like the ghost, must be left irresolvable. The ghost's return calls attention to the ways in which History and historiographers have neglected those stories that do not fit into the meta-narrative of Ireland's past vis-à-vis Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism. The ghost cannot be contained, nor does it want to be contained, within this meta-narrative. The problem is not the ghost. The problem is the trajectory of historical events – the rising of nationalism during WWI, the outbreak of the Troubles in the North, the 1937 Constitution. These historical moments shaped the course of events on the island by producing discourses that became stable and unchanging. Additionally, they each precipitated a condition of generational, hereditary violence that resulted in trauma.

The events of history in Ireland have (historically) been used as political and social strategies by powerful structures to write, narrate, and make History, but it is the return of the ghost that disrupts the linear and temporal flow of this History, thus perturbing what has been known or unacknowledged about the past. By challenging the meta-narrative of Ireland's History, the appearance of the ghost questions what it means to repeatedly experience a traumatic past. The chapters of my dissertation frame the discussion of History, history/ies, and historiography by problematizing trauma and

History through memory, identity, and the home, all of which are made visible by the presence of the ghost. In addition, the ghost's story in the plays allows these static notions (History, memory, identity, home) to become more flexible and open-ended, and in the process presents a way to perceive a piece of the past in the now. The ghosts here do not seek out a resolution to past conflicts because the ghost, Jacques Derrida reminds us, is always to come and so, no resolution exists: Ireland's past remains irresolvable.

Ghosts and Culture

The presence of ghosts and haunting is a common theatrical device in 20th century Irish and Northern Irish drama. In the early days of Ireland's National Theatre, W.B. Yeats championed Irish folklore as subject matter, which included ghosts, fairies, banshees, and other supernatural phenomena. A fascination with ghosts and haunting is prevalent in many cultures, but in Ireland these otherworldly figures are not relegated to the folklore of the past but are infused in present-day representation. From the spirit-demons that wreak havoc in Tom MacIntyre's *Sheep's Milk on the Boil* (1994) to the surprise appearance of the ghostly wife at the end of Conor McPherson's *Shining City* (2004), Ireland's drama celebrates the spectral, and the idea that death and life are inextricably bound up with each other. Anthony Roche is one of only a handful of theatre scholars working in Irish studies who have analyzed ghosts (and the dead who come back to life) in order to think about what their absent presence means for culture on the island.¹⁷ In his essay "Ghosts in Irish Drama," Roche focuses on three plays by J.M. Synge, W.B. Yeats, and Stewart Parker writing that not only are the characters haunted, but also the very ground beneath them is haunted by the dead. He contends that due to the

“particular nature of Irish history,” its drama insists on the presence of ghosts that as corporeal beings both resist “purely symbolic treatment” and refuse to stay dead.¹⁸ He argues that when playwrights bring ghosts onstage, “there is nothing to choose between the real and the ghostly” and so this materialization precludes the ghost being thought of in terms “strictly psychological.”¹⁹ What is left out of Roche’s and others’ writings on ghosts and drama in Ireland are any analyses of the relationship of ghosts to history by way of the ghost’s nature: its undecidability, its untimeliness, and its irresolvability.

The subject of “ghost studies” has grown exponentially over the past twenty years in the areas of sociology, philosophy, and literary criticism.²⁰ Critical thinking on ghosts has especially flourished since Derrida’s influential work on specters, mourning, and “hauntology” *Specters of Marx* first appeared in the early 1990s, provoking much discourse in both the political-philosophical realm (Marxism, historical circumstances, spectral ideologies) and the area of literary and cultural criticism (ghosts and haunting). *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International* was Derrida’s response to the fall of European communist states that began in 1989 and to the rise of global capitalism and the supposed new world order. In the book, initially given as a plenary address in 1993, Derrida grapples with the spirits of Karl Marx, whose ideas and theories by this time had been supposedly disproved by these new western-market driven economies. Derrida coined the term “hauntology” (a homonym of “ontology” in French) in which being is replaced by the presence of the ghost, which is neither alive nor dead, but both absent and present. By invoking Marx’s texts and his ghosts, Derrida argues (to put it simply) that Marx is not dead – Marx and Marxism live on by their haunting and embodiment “in concrete, material practices”²¹ – and that the presence of

the past persists to be examined as a legacy that demands different, heterogeneous readings of that past.

In this dissertation, I analyze Derrida's figurations on ghosts and the logic of haunting from a literary-critical perspective, particularly his concept of undecidability, his notion of haunting as untimely, and his ideas on mourning. For Derrida, ghosts exemplify undecidability: since a ghost is neither alive nor dead, it upsets the binary opposition that constitutes stability as well as defined and definite boundaries. The boundaries are signified by the slash between binary opposites such as inside/outside, presence/absence, Nationalist/Unionist, Irish/British, or Catholic/Protestant. The idea of identity is stable as long as the slash is not crossed. If something is an undecidable, however, it cannot be categorized in terms of either/or. When a ghost appears in a dramatic (or literary) text, it causes a disruption because of its undecidable nature. This undecidability in the representation or the presence of a ghost has the potential, Derrida maintains, to shatter the order of things. The disturbance by a ghost causes the real world of the narrative to stop (and by so doing disrupts the linearity of time) and an unreal world to take over. Derrida writes that haunting is untimely – "Haunting is historical, to be sure, but it is not dated"²² – suggesting that neither time nor the ghost can be isolated as past, present, or future. Derrida's ideas on haunting and undecidability are useful for my analysis because the perturbation of time/space allows for the overturning of ossified historical narratives. Furthermore, many of the playwrights use dramaturgical structures that fragment time and space to highlight the disruptive nature of the ghost or on the other hand, the ghost's presence catalyzes this dramaturgical disruption. Just as ghosts elude temporal linearity, some of the plays avoid linear narrativity by featuring temporally and

spatially shifting scenes that then collapse borders around identity, community, and singular versions of the past. These ruptured structures expose how familiar elements of dramaturgy (linear narratives and character identification, for example) can be transformed into the uncanny. Some of the tropes of spectrality in Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, then, offer considerable analytic force in which to interrogate the relationship between haunting and history, ghosts and mourning.

Recent scholarship on ghosts has emphasized the social and political effects of haunting, which often coincides with disrupting "official" narratives of a nation's history. These works include those within history: Coll Thrush's *Native Seattle: Stories from the Little Crossing-Over Place* (2008); cultural studies: Marilyn Ivy's *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (1995) and Heonik Kwon's *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (2008); and literary criticism: René Bergland's *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (2000). Two books deserve special attention because they not only make key arguments towards disrupting mainstream narratives but they also make significant contributions to the critical field of ghosts and haunting: Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (1994) and Kathleen Brogan's *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature* (1998). Gordon's book, a study of haunting as a social phenomenon, powerfully demonstrates the extent to which those things absent, excluded, or dead are buried deep within the social psyche thereby leaving haunting traces that impinge on the present. Even though there may be no visible evidence to these traces, they have what Gordon calls a "seething" presence. Taking her cue from what Raymond Williams called a "structure of feeling" Gordon argues for a kind of knowing that goes beyond what can

be observed through empirical means (ordinarily a key element to sociological study) and is generated instead by a keen sense of what may be no longer, but which is also “not over.” This continual negotiation between what is visible and what is hidden is what produces a “different kind of knowledge” – the thing, Gordon writes, that ghosts demand.²³ *Ghostly Matters* has broad social and cultural significance because Gordon uses the framework of sociology to investigate haunting through many “circuitous paths,”²⁴ including historical sites – early Freudian analysis, Argentina’s Dirty War of the 1970s, and 19th century America; political issues – gender oppression, state terrorism, and slavery; and literary novels – Luisa Valenzuela’s *He Who Searches* and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. *Ghostly Matters* may be labeled a sociological treatment but because Gordon chooses to veer outside the boundaries of sociology, she moreover offers a cultural and literary meditation on the effects of ghosts and haunting on the writing of histories. Gordon acknowledges the problems inherent in academic practices of grappling with ghostly matters while at the same time knowing there is something “there”: namely, the residue of political and social violences within the social psyche. Hence ghosts and haunting (and by extension Gordon) call for “a something to be done” – that is, the ethical imperative out of which comes a *concern for justice*.²⁵ The ghost, she writes, “has designs on us such that we must reckon with it graciously, attempting to offer it a hospitable memory out of a concern for justice. Out of a concern for justice would be the only reason one would bother.”²⁶ Oriented towards the future, the concern for justice is a call to act by way of the practice of mourning and re-membering – and to acknowledge the part haunting plays in every day social life.

In *Cultural Haunting*, Brogan deftly illustrates the implications of haunting in late 20th century American fiction involving minority ethnic narratives that have been neglected or erased. She contends that the novels of Louise Erdrich, Toni Morrison, and Cristina García use the ghost's story to recover the histories of native, slave, and immigrant cultures to highlight the "disjunction between mainstream history and the group's own accounts of its past."²⁷ For Brogan, ghosts emerge involuntarily, but "figure prominently wherever people must reconceive a fragmented, partially obliterated history, looking to a newly imagined past to redefine themselves for the future."²⁸ The ghost in these novels then becomes the means by which the cultural past can be accessed and by which ethnic identity can be recreated, suggesting that a ghostly historical reconfiguring is ultimately an imaginative process. Brogan uses the term "cultural haunting" for a collective struggle as well as an individual one to underscore not only the communal nature of ghosts but also the historical consciousness of a people.²⁹ The inheritance of a traumatic past and its ghostly residue resist being contained or buried, she writes, but instead must always be in a continual state of revision and integration into a more inclusive present.

Brogan, and to some extent Gordon, examine unresolved issues of minority ethnic cultures by way of the literary text, which for them becomes a haunted site. In theatre studies, not only is the dramatic text a haunted space, but so also is the theatrical performance, the rehearsal process, and the stage itself. Ghosts and haunting have been connected to theatrical traditions and performance since the origins of Western theatre in ancient Greece and the Eastern classical drama of Japanese Noh in the 14th century. In both traditions, it was the device of theatrical convention that emphasized the character as

ghost. In ancient Greece, the ghost was able to effortlessly appear and disappear by way of the Charonian stairway (or Charon steps), an underground passageway placed in the middle of the orchestra that was used for ghostly apparitions.³⁰ In Japanese Noh a passageway called *hashigakari* (literally “suspended bridge”) is used to link the worlds between the living and the dead; here however, the ghost character or *shite* moves quite visibly on the bridge-like structure, with no attempt to mask entrances or exits from/to the spirit world offstage. If we fast forward to the Victorian era, we find technological advances in the staging of ghosts such as the Phantasmagoria³¹ and Pepper’s ghost, the former a kind of mobile magic lantern used to project images of ghosts on walls, screens, and smoke and the latter a combination of plate glass and special lighting effects used to make objects seemingly appear and disappear on their own. These illusionary techniques made the ghost “real” for 19th century theatre audiences, even though audiences from the previous classical and Elizabethan Renaissance periods often held beliefs in the supernatural. How ghosts materialized on the stage, which reached a peak of fascination in the 19th century, became one way to discuss the ghost in/of theatrical performance.

The genealogy of haunting and ghosts in theatre studies evolved from the ghost’s materiality on the stage – and the external signs of ghostly manifestation – to a consideration of ghosts as the indelible traces in and of memory. This was due partly to the development of modern drama in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, wherein aspects of the human psyche (repressed trauma or conflicted memories of the past) were connected to a sense of being haunted. This kind of psychological hauntedness was already evident in the characters of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, among the most famous from Elizabethan times, but in modernist drama ghosts no longer needed to

appear in the work of Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, or Samuel Beckett. Instead, the characters in these plays are haunted by traumatic memories that then become ghostly images for the audience rather than material ghost characters.

Many theatre scholars in the 20th and 21st centuries use the metaphor of ghosts and haunting to describe various aspects of theatre practice, theory, and performance. Herbert Blau took up the notion of the ghostly in his own practice of theatre and as an essential element to his theories on theatre. With the theatre company he formed in the 1970s, KRAKEN, Blau developed a methodology – that he labeled “ghosting” in his book *Take Up the Bodies* (1982) – which images, body parts, gestures, actors, and text converge in an ongoing process that questions the “structure within the structure of which theatre is a part.”³² For Blau, ghosting involves the illusion of acting. He contends that the actor at work on the stage is an embodiment of the uncanny – a living dying entity (a ghost) involved in a theatrical transformation that absorbs character into the material body and material body into character. Theatre performance, he argues, is a site of appearances and disappearances, of the visibility of the un-real or invisible world of the text. Thus Blau uses the concept of ghosting to describe both a performative act and an ontology of theatre.

Marvin Carlson also uses the term ghosting, but as a way to describe the theatrical memory of a performance that “continues” after the curtain comes down or of an actor’s body in different roles or of the re-iterations in a dramatic text. In *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (2003) Carlson argues that it is the act of memory (of past performances, performers, spaces, and texts) that elicits the ghosting of seeing live performance. In other words, audience members participate in ghosting the theatrical

event by bringing in their own memories of previous performances. Carlson writes that the “theatre’s reuse of already familiar narrative material” as well as the re/use of the bodies of actors and performance styles lead to the theatrical process he calls “recycling.”

³³ This process of recycling, which involves using the past in a present moment of performance, has what he calls a ghosting effect. The notions of recycling and ghosting are inextricably linked for Carlson and, he contends, are vital to an understanding of how we experience live theatre.

The investigative sites of Alice Rayner’s *Ghosts: Death’s Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (2006) are mundane theatrical conventions that lie at the periphery of theatre practice (8:00pm curtain time, objects/chairs on stage, main curtain as dividing line between offstage and on) but which are fertile places for her investigation of the uncanny. She argues that Carlson’s idea about ghosting – the certain return of an identical thing the audience has experienced – relinquishes any power that the ghost or haunting might hold.³⁴ Thus, Rayner believes, ghosts must remain in the “realm of uncertainty” since ghosts hover between what is known and “the radical unknowing...for what appears.”³⁵ Her frames of analysis are psychoanalytic literary criticism and phenomenology because, she maintains, these disciplines ask questions that are not easily answerable, and like ghosts, “fail tests of rationality, and often, credibility.”³⁶ In her second chapter she examines an Irish production of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, with actors playing Gogo and Didi employing Irish dialects and the actor playing Pozzo a British one. Rayner as a member of the audience writes, “The effect of that production on me was a sense of uncanniness that is ultimately unprovable and inarguable, but I felt that I had finally seen onstage the ghosts I had always thought, but never believed, were

there.”³⁷ Through the specificity of the voices of production, she finds historical meaning and resonance: of colonialism, trauma, loss, and difference. By way of this example and others, Rayner views the theatrical production as a space to work out the complex relationship between remembering and forgetting, and she insists that more often than not, “what needs remembering” in the space of performance, “is loss itself.”³⁸ Blau, Carlson, and Rayner in much of their work focus their thinking about the relationship between ghosts, memory, and performance on the phenomenological and philosophical aspects of theatre in practice and theory.

On a Poetics of Ghosting

My project is distinct from Blau, Carlson, and Rayner as I do not examine performance or theatrical conventions nor do I utilize the theoretical lens of phenomenology or philosophy. Yet their work helps me think through a wide range of theoretical underpinnings such as the ghostly presences embedded within the “haunted” dramatic text, especially by way of the iterative nature of language (Carlson) and the relationship between theatre and historiography, and how ghosts assist in overcoming the claims of history (Rayner). For my project, I have assembled what could be viewed as a disparate group of Irish and Northern Irish plays within a “poetics of ghosting” wherein I conduct a textual and performative analysis of the dramatic script using a methodology of dramaturgical and cultural criticism, and on occasion, psychoanalytic literary criticism. My primary site – the play – is the best place in which to investigate Ireland’s ghosts for several reasons. First the history of drama in Ireland is the history of its dramatic text. Next the dramatic text is an in between space that resides between performance and

literature, and like the ghost, resists closure and invites a continual process of revealing. Also inherent in the dramatic text are elements of theatricality and performativity. Finally, as a professional theatre director, who has corporealized many a dramatic text, I thrive in the “textual practice” of reading, imagining, and experiencing the theatrical and performative elements of the playtext.

My project offers an opportunity to re-imagine the island’s historical and cultural past through this poetics of ghosting in order to analyze Irish and Northern Irish dramatic literature. Within this poetics, I examine the plays as representations of past and present events, as part of the interconnected layers of history, and as accounts of a past that is incomplete and temporally chaotic. As there is no comprehensive study of ghosts in the history plays of Ireland, my work fills a gap in Irish or Northern Irish theatrical scholarship: ghosting as a mode of analysis is a provocative way of looking at the past because it allows for a diversity of voices to be heard, and opens up a conversation that goes beyond polemics or political biases.

My interrogation of the ghost requires a consideration of three important ideas. First, my line of inquiry is a specifically literary reading that sees ghosts as metaphorical, dramaturgical devices within the diegetic reality of the plays themselves, rather than their actual staging. This approach is useful because in addition to the literary, it produces insights that have application for a practical directorial approach by situating the ghosts in a historical, social, and political context and by proposing (character) analyses that may inform the staging of ghosts. The second factor is that I have been mindful not to equate ghosts with memory because in my research I have found that ghosts frequently become a kind of stand in for memory. If remembering and forgetting are sites of

contention – because they strike at the very core of national/communal identity and what it means to belong – and ghosts are given the same status as memory, then ghosts too become sites of contention. This, for me, is not possible: memory is faulty, selective, and it fades over time, and the ghost is none of these things. Memory and ghosts share some characteristics (most notably they come from the past into the present) but for my purposes the ghost is always the apparition of a person who has died and always a character played by an actor. Consequently, it is imperative to have “ghost” and “memory” stand as isolated and separate from the other. The third factor is that I talk about the ghost as both within and outside the realm of the psychological because it represents both an individual and more than an individual as it speaks to/for a nation and a province. Along with the psychological, I consider the ghost in cultural, communal, and sociological terms such that the ghost becomes a voice for all the dead who have experienced histories of violence and exclusion. Through the power of the ghost’s absent presence, the legacy of haunting may be converted into what Brogan calls “an enabling historical consciousness.”³⁹ Brogan suggests that the concepts of haunting and historical consciousness are linked by the way that the past (history) becomes re-imagined in the present (consciousness) by the presence of the ghost. In my work, it is the act of re-imagining history via the corporeal presence of the ghost that makes historical consciousness – or an awareness of historical events and the forces behind them – possible. I argue that the ghost in dramatic representation points toward a cultural need to allow the conflicts of the past to remain unresolved, while the ghost also invites the imagining of a different future.

Chapter One, titled “Ghosts of the Great War: Irishmen on the Battlefield at Home and Abroad,” is a theorization of haunting, memory, and a resistance to mourning. The plays examined are *The Steward of Christendom* (1995) by Sebastian Barry, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (1985) by Frank McGuinness, and *Boy Soldier* (2006) by Ben Hennessy. The three plays are connected by their use of the historical context of World War I, and their staging of young soldiers who come back as ghost characters. The ghostly soldier necessarily returns because Ireland refused to acknowledge the history of the First World War for much of the 20th century while alternatively Northern Ireland persistently commemorated it. The Irish soldiers were never welcomed home because their identity as Irishmen who fought in British uniforms was not acceptable in the new nation due to the triumph of Irish nationalism. They have been forgotten to history and suppressed into the nation’s unconscious. In the North, even though the soldiers have been remembered they struggle with a fixed identity that disallows diversity or other ways of thinking about a cultural inheritance within the history of Ulster unionism. The idea of home for Ulster unionists then becomes central to this identity. In the North, how can home be thought of as a site of the imaginary, where alternative versions of identity can exist? In the plays, haunting occurs as a result of a continual remembering of the past and a resistance to mourning, which are both related to issues of identity and the home. A resistance to mourning means that a death, a loss, or the past cannot be fully mourned and so, is irresolvable. I argue that the plays construct a past in which the ghosts speak to that irresolvability and give voice to the history of WWI on the island. The three plays by Barry, Hennessy, and McGuinness imagine the

possibility of other narratives and in so doing bring WWI Irish soldiers and the men of the 36th Ulster Division back home and into history.

Chapter Two, titled “Ghosts of the Troubles: Violence, Trauma, and the Politics of Haunting,” is a study of the culture of violence and the haunting that results from it. The plays examined are *At the Black Pigs’ Dyke* (1992) by Vincent Woods, *The Freedom of the City* (1973) by Brian Friel, and *Revenge* (2004) by Michael Duke. In each, I analyze the figure of the ghost, which is always the dead victim of sectarian violence. The plays have as their subject the Troubles, a term used to describe the political violence in Northern Ireland between republican militants, loyalist paramilitaries, and British security forces, among others. For Irish and Northern Irish dramatists, the circumstances of the province’s history, beset by sectarianism and political violence, have proven to be vexing: how to find a meaningful response to the grim conditions of the Troubles that does not reinforce stereotypes, reify sectarian division, or risk a repetition of the violence? The link between imputations of violence and the representation of Irish and Northern Irish character is serious business on the island as it has the potential to counter, reinforce, or condemn fixed political and cultural identities. These identity narratives are well entrenched and obvious: Protestants are politically aligned as unionist or loyalist and therefore hostile to Catholics; Catholics are inevitably nationalist or radical republican and are opposed to Protestants; British forces are persistently sympathetic towards the Protestant community; and members of paramilitary organizations are all ruthless and indiscriminate. How then is it possible for a History to be narrated outside of these sectarian positions? The long-standing history of sectarian strife in the province would be a sign of the inadmissibility of just such a History.

Due to the challenges of representing the Troubles, the playwrights turn to ghosts who by their very return disrupt identity narratives, violent legacies, and the flow of history from past to present. Additionally the playwrights employ disruptive techniques that allow the ghost to shift effortlessly through time and space, upsetting the truth claims of both sides of the conflict. In this way, the dramaturgical devices perturb the unity of identity and narrative creating a space for the ghosts to voice what is difficult or impossible to say in the North. I argue that the plays take aim at the problems inherent in stable notions of community and identity by exhibiting the idea that history is a series of disordered but interconnected events. The fact that the ghosts have a space to voice the unsayable is at least a step towards a different, non-sectarian, relationship to history. The ghosts demand to give voice to injustice and attempt to undermine the cycle of violence, and their voices are an articulation of the repressed hopes of the body politic.

Chapter Three, titled “Mother Ireland *is Dead* – Ghost Mothers of the Late 20th Century: Haunted Women, Haunted Spaces,” is an examination of mother/daughter relationships, memory, and the home/scape. The plays analyzed are Marina Carr’s *The Mai* (1994) and *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998) and *Pentecost* (1987) by Stewart Parker. In each, the thing that haunts is the absent/dead m/other or the absent/dead child. The chapter revolves around the dismantling of the Mother Ireland myth and the trope of the proper wife by calling into question what it means to be a mother who is entrapped in patriarchal structures that prescribe a woman’s role and place. In the plays, long-standing ideals of motherhood and the proper Irish and Northern Irish woman are overturned and replaced by images of unconventional mothers who no longer want to be constrained. The ghost’s appearance is connected to the way in which the traditional home has been

transformed into a haunted home/scape, the place which Irish and Northern Irish women now want to escape. In the Republic, the Constitution of Ireland (1937) dictated that a woman's place was in the home and her role was that of mother; and sectarian divisions in the North reinforce gendered codes of behavior that also dictate a traditional role/place for women. As a result the ghostly women wrestle with the belief in the fantasy of marriage and a home life, whereas their circumstances warrant otherwise, for the ghost is a reminder of the failures of the state and the province that forbade women to imagine alternative lives and futures. I argue that the ghost interrupts the legacy of the past, which has been handed down from one generation to the next from mothers to daughters. Ultimately, the return of the ghost upsets the notion of nationalist sanctioned or sectarian versions of womanhood. The women's only resort is to finally leave the home/scape.

My dissertation offers several important insights about the need to look to Ireland's histories of the past as ever-shifting realities that – like the ghost – always have something to bring to the present. Many articles and book chapters have been written on the subject of ghosts in Irish and Northern Irish drama, but there is as of yet no full-length study nor has there been an analysis of the island's dramatic literature through the theoretical lens of ghost studies. My close dramaturgical and performative readings of the plays attempt to pin down the ghost, if only momentarily, to consider the representation of specific historical events (World War I, the Troubles) and issues (women and Mother Ireland), all of which have not been linked or examined in quite the same way as here.

With this dissertation, I also build on the expanding fields of Irish and Northern Irish theatre studies and World War I studies in Ireland. My project draws attention to two plays that are relatively new, having never been the subject of any essay or analysis:

Hennessy's *Boy Soldier*, which remains unpublished at this time, and Duke's *Revenge*, which was only recently published by Tinderbox Theatre Company in Belfast. These plays are important because they reflect the contemporary sociopolitical climate on the island: *Revenge* reveals the struggles of one family as it comes to terms with a violent past in a post-ceasefire Northern Ireland, and *Boy Soldier*, about the (alleged) youngest soldier to die in WWI who was from County Waterford, contributes to the ongoing historiographical revolution going on in Ireland about the war. While the Great War was written as two discrete narratives in Ireland, I am able to bring them together in my first chapter, synthesizing a number of voices from all sides. This synthesizing and voicing is done through the figure of the ghost, which disturbs how this event has historically been recorded. Up until now, very little critical attention has been paid to the topic of WWI in dramatic literature in Irish and Northern Irish studies. This may be because there are only a handful of Irish and Northern Irish plays with WWI as backdrop or theme. The renewed interest on the island combined with the fact that the history of WWI was neglected for so long, the subject of Ireland's involvement in the war promises to provide a number of productive sites of inquiry in both scholarship and theatrical practice.

In this poetics of ghosting, I bring together the dramatic literatures of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as one entity while at the same time acknowledging the distinct perspective playwrights from the North and the South may offer. It is often difficult to find a common discourse in which to discuss plays from both sides of the border, but by focusing on a poetics of ghosting, I am able to connect relatable threads. More often than not, dramas from the North are placed beneath the heading "Irish drama."⁴⁰ To situate these plays within the rubric of Irish drama has the potential to cause

offense to those playwrights who do not self-identify as Irish. A conscientious approach in uniting Irish and Northern Irish drama (in both titles and scholarship) will go far in recognizing the achievements of Northern Irish playwrights alongside Irish playwrights, but in their own right, and on their own terms.

An interrogation of Irish history, a theorization of haunting, and a conversation with ghosts all have the ability to provoke uneasiness due to the difficulties inherent in each. In the 21st century, Ireland and Northern Ireland seek to forge histories and identities that unsettle the inertia of those of the 20th century. The ghost's return in the plays marks a crisis in historical thinking and desire for re-inclusion into Ireland's historical discourses: a crisis for – and a desire of – those forgotten or marginalized by history. Avery Gordon tells us that to write plays or stories with ghosts in them “implies that ghosts are real, that is to say, that they produce material effects. To impute a kind of objectivity to ghosts implies that, from certain standpoints, the dialectics of visibility and invisibility involve a constant negotiation between what can be seen and what is in the shadows.”⁴¹ In the plays examined, the traumas of WWI, the Troubles, and women in the home, which have been in the shadows, are now made visible; similar to the ghost that can never be put to rest, however, these conflicts of the past must remain unresolved.

CHAPTER TWO

Ghosts of the Great War: Irishmen on the Battlefield at Home and Abroad

Dear Mother...tell them that ther is not another
grosvenor Rd fellow left but myself. Mother wee
were tramping over the dead i think there is
onley about 4 hundred left out of about 13
hundred ...Mother if God spers me to get home
safe i will have something ufal to tell you if hell
is any wores I would not like to go to it.⁴²

CROUCHER: And I prophesied, and the breath
came out of them, and the sinews came away
from them, and behold a shaking, and their bones
fell asunder, bone from his bone, and they died,
and the exceeding great army became a valley of
dry bones.⁴³

The character of The Croucher in Sean O'Casey's famous World War One play *The Silver Tassie* is enigmatic, otherworldly, and creepy. What he is exactly is unclear – perhaps a representation of death in the guise of a dead soldier or a ghostly prophet come back to warn the soldiers of the impending valley of dry bones. He sits above the action of Act II, the only act in which he appears but also the only one that takes place in the no-man's land of the Western Front, far away from home. Dressed realistically in a soldier's uniform splattered with mud and blood, he is also a prophet of doom condemning the soldiers to death. The Croucher is a paradoxical character and as such, he defies definition and symbolizes a kind of indeterminacy and a lack of closure. In this strange unfamiliar space, the quite unreal character of the Croucher is every bit a part of the abstract world of war O'Casey was attempting to create. In 1928, in a famous episode in Irish theatre history, W.B. Yeats rejected *The Silver Tassie* for production at the Abbey Theater and the reasons he gave were many.⁴⁴ Many contemporary scholars believe that

at least in part, it was the potential visibility of the Irishman in British uniform that may have been one reason for Yeats' concern. Less than ten years following the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) and the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) Irish audiences were simply not ready to see the depiction of Irish soldiers who were also part of the British army.⁴⁵ Yeats' efforts to silence the play may be viewed as an opening to the chasm that became the great amnesia of World War One in Irish historiography and culture, and the Croucher may be read as one sign of this aporia. The rejection of *The Silver Tassie* is an example of the suppression of the Irishman as British soldier, marking a beginning to the erasure of Ireland's involvement in the First World War and revealing the cultural and political mechanisms involved in that erasure.

This chapter examines the subject of the First World War in three contemporary Irish and Northern Irish plays by way of haunting, History, and ghosts that refuse to be laid to rest. The focus of analysis is the figure of the ghost, which within these plays is always the dead soldier whether Irishman or Ulsterman. The three plays that I will analyze speak to either a conflicted nation (Republic of Ireland), whose memory of the Great War has been at once polemical and amnesic, or a proud region (the North of Ireland) whose memory of the war has been fervently honored. I examine the plays' challenge to nationalism and unionism's narrowly constructed narratives of the First World War by arguing that the dead soldier doubly haunts: the *Irish* soldier represents a liminal non-binary identity, and thus he finds there is no place for him at home; the *Ulster* soldier represents the ruptures of the self within a defined and delimited identity, which hinders his desire to come home to Ulster, the thing that already lives within. I contend that the playwrights give these dead soldiers a troubled home-coming: troubled

because their place in history is irresolvable as a result of a non-fixed identity, and home-coming because it is not an event, but rather an act of futurity, of perpetually approaching but never arriving home.

The issue of identity in Ireland is often haunted by what it excludes; that is, haunted by its elision of other constructions of identity. Nationalist identity is haunted by the absent presence of unionist identity among others and unionist identity by the absent presence of nationalist identity. In 1914, the concept of national identity on the island was not as fixed as it later became following partition. Thomas Hennessey asserts, “The eve of the First World War saw an Ireland in which a fluid sense of national identity was evident. Neither Britishness nor Irishness were mutually exclusive identities.”⁴⁶

Paradoxically, identity was always already aligned with more or less stable notions of home and one’s place within it, howsoever contested that space might be (as in Home Rule). While the idea of this home/place is linked to a fierce sense of belonging, the home/place is not necessarily tethered to a specific site, but rather hovers somewhere in between the real and the imagined.⁴⁷ The notion that identity was unstable prior to WWI is significant for it meant that it was not uncommon for many people on the island to be Irish Catholic and loyal to England or to be Ulster Protestant and feel neither completely Irish nor completely British. The either/or category was not yet firmly ingrained; like the ghost, which is neither alive nor dead, and both alive and dead, the Irish soldier in the British army may be viewed as both Irish and British and not exclusively Irish or British. Similarly, the Protestant in the North may be viewed as neither exclusively Irish nor British but rather as the in-between space of the Ulsterman, which may also both be Irish and British. In this way, we can think of the ghost along with the Irish soldier in the

British army or the Ulsterman as upsetting the binary opposition of alive/dead and Irish/British. At this point in the course of historical events the blending of identity with an attachment to the home/place – whether this sense of identity was rendered unnameable by subsequent historical discourses in the South or defiantly preserved in the North – underscores the mutability of identity, whether bounded by place, loyalties, or both.

The plays analyzed are Sebastian Barry's *The Steward of Christendom* (1995), Frank McGuinness' *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (1985), and Ben Hennessy's *Boy Soldier* (2006). *The Steward of Christendom* is set in the county home in Baltinglass, County Wicklow in 1932 where its protagonist, Thomas Dunne a broken man at age 75, has lived for the past several years. Over the course of the play, Dunne relives scenes from his past but is haunted in the present by the death of his son and by the loss of his status in a changed Ireland. *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* is the story of eight volunteer recruits from Ulster who join the British army during the First World War and is a fictional account of the role played by the 36th Ulster Division on the battlefields of the Western Front and its effects on them at home in Ulster. Similar to McGuinness' play, *Boy Soldier* concerns several young men as they make their way through the recruiting process to trench warfare, but instead of the Battle of the Somme, the young recruits in Hennessy's play fight in the 2nd Battle of Ypres where the soldiers are poisoned by gas, the first time such an attack is used in warfare. While the number of Irish and Northern Irish plays whose subject matter involves the First World War has grown since the 1980s, the focus here is on those plays in which ghosts are prominently on display.⁴⁸

The Steward of Christendom and *Observe the Sons of Ulster* both feature old men who are haunted by the death of a son and a lover respectively, but who are unable to mourn the loss adequately because they refuse to give up the pain of grieving, or to allow for the closure of mourning. This means that while the ghosts are conjured again, they are unable to find a resting place at home. *Observe the Sons of Ulster* and *Boy Soldier* are linked by the way that each focuses on a band of brothers and depicts, among other things, the brutality of war, a soldier's experiences in the trenches, and the trauma of war on young men. Further, these two plays highlight the risks of a rigid attachment to a home/place that, once loosened, can be transformed into a personal and cultural recognition of the home that resides within, and with others.

All of the plays politically and culturally (re) engage with the subject of World War One and offer alternative narratives of this critical period in Irish history when the onset of the Great War allowed a series of significant events to take place. I argue that the plays disturb the meta-narrative of 20th century Irish History, entrenched attitudes about the Great War, and static collective memories of it, both in the North and in the South. In turn the plays become part of the collective memory – as canonical text or production. The texts of Barry, McGuinness, and Hennessy may be viewed as elegies for the unacknowledged dead and for those histories, like ghosts, that refuse to be easily contained within the past, but rather persistently invade the present. The plays continue to haunt Ireland's contemporary cultural landscape because at stake is the continual negotiation between the politics of remembering and the effort against forgetting. Ultimately I contend that the plays offer a way of thinking about Ireland's participation in WWI in terms of attempts at forgiveness and irresolution. The dead Irish soldier may

desire to be freed from the condemnation of many nationalists and republicans and the dead Ulster soldier to be released from the fixity of identity, but the problem of the Great War itself remains unsettled: questions about how the Irish soldier belongs or doesn't belong in Ireland's historical narrative or how the Ulsterman's sense of intense belonging-to identity can allow for diversity and complexity in the North's historical narrative remain unanswerable.

Historiography, the Great War, and Two Distinct Narratives

Many contemporary historians and cultural critics argue that the First World War must be viewed as one of the defining moments in modern Irish history, despite the undisputed significance of Ireland's struggle for independence, because the whole concept of "two Irelands" was solidified by the war.⁴⁹ These historians contend that the outbreak of World War One was the catalyst for the irreversible transformations that took place on the island, in terms of Irish politics, geographical divisions, and national identity. For example, Thomas Hennessey writes:

...the Great War transformed the Irish Question. In 1914, the Majority of Irish Nationalists accepted that Irish self-government would be within the United Kingdom; by the end of the war the majority of Nationalists apparently supported the establishment of an Irish Republic outside the British Empire.⁵⁰

Hennessey also asserts, as others do, that "the Easter Rising owed a considerable debt to the fact that the United Kingdom was involved in a major European war."⁵¹ Otherwise known as "Ireland's opportunity," the uprising against the government was made possible because of the fact that a world war was being fought elsewhere.

Due to partition then the historical event of the Great War was written in two distinct and separate ways. The partition of the island into North (six counties in the

northeastern province of Ulster) and South (twenty-six counties covering the rest of the island) took place in May 1921, two and a half years after the end of WWI in November 1918. For most of the twentieth century then, the politics of memory in what is now known as the Republic of Ireland reluctantly acknowledged the war dead, if at all. Conversely in Northern Ireland, the infamous Battle of the Somme in which scores of Northern Ulstermen died, is yearly commemorated and continues to live on in unionist mythography.

In the North the narrative of the Great War begins with the commemoration of the Battle of the Somme, one of the longest and bloodiest battles fought during the war, which lasted a total of four and a half months. The 36th Ulster Division was comprised of 12,000 soldiers and was almost entirely a Protestant regiment. The first day of the battle was July 1, 1916 and significant for Ulster Protestants because July 1st was the original date (under the Julian calendar) of the Battle of the Boyne (1690) when the Protestant King William of Orange triumphed over the Catholic King James II, thereby defeating James' attempts to recapture the throne. Every July 1st since 1916 has been celebrated as a remembrance of the two most famous battles in Ulster History, marked by what is known colloquially as The Marching Season. The First World War is a significant part of the larger narrative of the North, for as James Loughlin writes, "the historical grand narrative of Ulster unionism proved capable of subsuming the war within its explanatory myths, so that its meaning as a struggle to free Ulster of the menace of Irish nationalism was at least, if not more, important than other, wider, British concerns."⁵² The immediate post-war overwriting of Ulster war experience by the deafening narrative of Unionist patriotism and its absolute relationship to the home/place of Ulster foreclosed any notion

of mourning or ambivalence that was the hallmark of post-WWI experience elsewhere in Europe.

Other political and cultural tensions on the island were percolating underneath and alongside the larger drama of the Great War, which contributed to the writing of two distinct narratives of the war. These tensions mostly concerned the issue of Irish Home Rule, which would have granted Ireland self-government within the dominion of the United Kingdom and in effect, repealed the 1800 Act of Union between Ireland and Great Britain.⁵³ The third Irish Home Rule Bill, also known as the Government of Ireland Act 1914, was introduced in 1912, passed in 1914, but was immediately suspended due to the outbreak of war for what was to be a twelve-month period.⁵⁴

A key figure in the fight for Home Rule was John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. After the Home Rule Bill was enacted, but deferred “not later than the end of the present war,”⁵⁵ Redmond urged Irish nationalists to volunteer to fight in the war because unity with Great Britain against Germany, he believed, would lead more quickly to Home Rule’s implementation following the conflict. His argument was that fighting *for* Great Britain would show good faith in self-government *for* Ireland: we will support your sovereignty if you support ours. For some nationalists and supporters of Home Rule, Redmond included, the idea of home could be a place of “reconciliation between Ireland and Britain” while at the same time holding onto “the claims of Irish nationality.”⁵⁶ For Redmond, volunteering was not necessarily an act of loyalty to Great Britain, but rather an act of allegiance and belonging to Ireland herself. His personal and political goal of Home Rule was achieved but never implemented because the Easter Rising occurred (1916) before the end of the war. The leaders of the Easter Rising

demanded complete independence from Great Britain as opposed to the devolved government that would have been Home Rule.⁵⁷ The failure of Home Rule and the intentional amnesia of the Irish soldiers represent a double betrayal: a betrayal by the British and by their own people. The soldiers haunt because they have had no resting place and neither the Irish government nor its people have adequately recognized their sacrifice.⁵⁸ The Great War has historically been divided into two narratives on the island because it has been incorporated into the seemingly discrete narratives of Ulster unionism and Irish nationalism.

According to Keith Jeffery, there has been a “historiographical revolution” in thinking and writing about the Great War in Ireland today.⁵⁹ He believes that the relationship between Ireland and the First World War can be examined on its own, yet the war must also be integrated into the narrative of “advanced nationalism” and the Easter Rising. In this way then the Great War becomes the single most central event in 20th century Ireland not just because of what happened at the time, but also “in its longer-term legacy and the meaning which we can draw from it today.”⁶⁰ While this historiographical revolution only began in earnest in the mid-1980s, the renewed effort by Irish and Northern Irish historians as well as novelists, poets, and playwrights to shatter the silence and to thoughtfully reexamine Irish experiences of the Great War, both North and South, suggests some progress towards understanding the complexities of what the war means today in the context of that longer-term legacy.

The historical event of the Great War may have been written as two discrete narratives in the North and the South, but they are brought together here by the powerful presence of the ghost that necessarily disturbs and disrupts prevailing meta-narratives of

Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism. On the island, the restless ghosts of WWI histories haunt the present because they have had no place to call home in the South or because the idea of home is burdened by a kind of rigidity in the North. The return home of the soldier from war is always difficult but for the Irish or Ulster soldier, it is especially so because at stake is not only what it means to remember or to forget, but also how the idea of returning to the home/place is linked to a political and cultural identity as well as to their identity as a soldier. In writing about these ghosts, an effort is made to at least open the door to welcome them home knowing full well that to do so also opens the possibility they do not wish to cross the threshold.

THE STEWARD OF CHRISTENDOM

The Steward of Christendom by Sebastian Barry was first produced in 1995 at the Royal Court Theatre in London and gained the playwright international prominence. Since then Barry's plays have been produced worldwide and have been translated into numerous languages. Often set against sweeping historical narratives, his lyrical dramas are what the playwright has notably called "family plays of a sort" revolving around those forbears who have been hidden and forgotten.⁶¹ Ghosts of his own ancestry inhabit *Prayers of Sherkin* (1990), *The Only True History of Lizzie Finn* (1995), *Our Lady of Sligo* (1998), and *Hinterland* (2002), all of which recover these forgotten lives in an evocative and poetic language creating both powerfully political and intimately personal stories. A fusion of the personal and the political is a common thematic device in Irish dramatic writing and in Barry's plays this interweaving is linked with a unique historical perspective of the anti-hero or heroine. He shows little interest in writing historically accurate accounts of his ancestors, but rather is more interested in employing these

ghostly familial figures to uncover an emotional truth and, in so doing, to bestow a kind of historical significance on his forbears' seemingly negligible place in History.

The character of Thomas Dunne in *The Steward of Christendom* is based on Barry's great grandfather James Dunne who was a (Catholic) chief superintendent of the (mostly Protestant) Dublin Metropolitan Police, but whose life in the play, according to Barry, is largely invented. One aspect of that invention is the character of Thomas' only son, Willie Dunne, a soldier in the Dublin Rifles, a regiment of the British army that fought in the trenches in France.⁶² In the play, Willie's death in the First World War marks the end of the Dunne family line, as he is the only son of Thomas and his wife. When one of Dunne's daughters exclaims that Willie gave his life for Ireland, Dunne corrects her by saying, "Will gave his life to save Europe, Annie, which isn't the same thing."⁶³ Willie (unlike Dunne, who was loyal to Ireland and the British crown) was fighting for a cause larger than Ireland, but when he and the Irish soldiers returned home from Europe to a changed island they were often regarded as colonists, viewed as collaborators with Britain.

Thomas Dunne comes face to face with the label of traitor to his country by those who believe him complicit in the deaths surrounding the 1913 Dublin Lock-out,⁶⁴ and more broadly culpable as part of the colonial regime as a member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Dunne was loyal to the British crown, but he also saw himself as loyal to Ireland. The character of Dunne is haunted in several ways: by the death of his son in World War I; by the British ruling system that he laments is no longer; and by his unexpected lack of social position in the newly established Free State. Confined by his old age, as well as physically confined in a mental institution (euphemistically called the

“county home”) Dunne is visited by the ghost of Willie, who represents the repression of Dunne’s many failures: as a father, as a son, and as an Irish citizen vis-à-vis his inability to fulfill (the now) nationalist expectations of the country. Dunne’s detention in the county home is paradoxical for not only is he displaced by historical change into a kind of artificial, purgatorial home but also his home is not sustained by any sense of national belonging. I argue that the ghost of Willie, an Irish soldier in the British army, embodies both a personal life story and a public history, consequently haunting Dunne and the nation because of his (unfulfilled) desire to come home to family and Dublin. The story of the Catholic loyalist has been written out of History, yet Willie’s ghost highlights an analogous narrative, that of the Irishman aligned with the British, and in his return suggests an attempt at home-coming and a kind of humanity for these forgotten and neglected lives.

In and Out of History

In the recently edited volume on Barry’s work *Out of History* (2006), two of the essays specifically address *The Steward of Christendom*’s relationship to Ireland’s erased histories. In her article, Elizabeth Butler Cullingford’s argues that Barry’s play “would have been more powerful” if it had not only engaged in historical inaccuracies but also in biases *against* nationalism and *for* those who were loyal to the crown.⁶⁵ Cullingford discerns a need for more complexity in Barry’s use of Irish history and politics, specifically the 1913 Dublin Lock-out and what she sees as the playwright’s view of a “monolithic nationalism.”⁶⁶ Contrary to Cullingford’s analysis, John Wilson Foster specifically commends Barry for the play’s “intrinsic excellence and its fresh illumination”⁶⁷ insisting that because “we in Ireland” have a one-eyed vision of political

history, *The Steward of Christendom* successfully fills a gap in that narrative. The gap, of course, is that represented by Barry's great-grandfather Dunne, who fits neither comfortably or easily into the nationalist narrative. Foster, who is sympathetic towards Unionism further seems to suggest that Barry's play expands on the notion of the temptation to simplify in its inclusion of some of the larger issues of Irish history and memory.

What is interesting about these two writers' analysis of *The Steward of Christendom* vis-à-vis its historical in/accuracies and the value of referring to them is the idea that this work of fiction, one in which the author readily acknowledges is mostly invention, has the potential to cause fierce debate which consequently cannot be separated from a political motive or bias. I suggest that the play is not an argument for or against specific historical narratives, but rather is a symptom of something larger, namely the often uncomfortable and unsettling truths surrounding the materiality of key historical events. *The Steward of Christendom* may be read as an operation of historical recovery but more important is that it allows the broader issues of these unsettling truths to come to the surface, such as the ghostly return home of the Irish/British soldier.

Irish ambivalence toward, as well as hostility for, Irish soldiers returning home after World War I, is one of the recurring themes of the recent volume *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (2008). In his article, "200,000 Volunteer Soldiers," Philip Orr writes:

By 1918 Irish soldiers, recuperating at home or on leave, were shocked to discover antipathy to them – at least in many strongly nationalist areas. One officer, returning to Limerick...saw soldiers being stoned... For men who had gone to war on behalf of Home Rule within the Empire, it was an uneasy time as they speculated about the reception they would receive on landing in an Ireland where separatism was now the dominant philosophy.⁶⁸

In another essay, Jane Leonard states that many ex-servicemen in the South “fell foul of the IRA” and as a result were killed as retribution for their participation in the First World War.⁶⁹ The nationalist imagining of the new nation was narrowly reflected in an Irish Catholic nationalist identity, and thus violence against the Irish soldier returning home to a changed Ireland was an inevitable outcome. Neither Willie’s identity as an Irishman fighting with the Allied forces in Europe or Dunne’s identity as a Catholic loyalist fit into this new nationalist imagining. While Willie and Dunne may have been proud of their services to military regiment and crown respectively, the world of the play confirms that, post-1916, their non-binary identity becomes questionable and a legitimate target for hostility and vitriol.

Dunne may reluctantly mourn the loss of his son, but fervently longs for the colonial past, in which his dual loyalty was not incompatible. Speaking to Mrs. O’Dea, the seamstress of the county home, Dunne explains what a pity it is that newly elected (1932) President of the Executive Council Eamon de Valera wants to “buy the Irish ports back” from the British. “A man that loves his King might still have gone to live in Crosshaven or Cobh and called himself loyal and true. But soon there’ll be nowhere in Ireland where such hearts may rest” (SC, 262). There was a time when he could have been safe in any place in Ireland, or could have made Crosshaven or Cobh his home, but Dunne knows now that he would not be welcome in County Cork (location of these two port towns) because this county was radically nationalist and where most of the fighting occurred during the Irish War of Independence. Dunne continues to lament all those things that represent for him a resplendent past, and a devoted bond with Britain: “...all the proud regiments gone, the Dublin Rifles and the Dublin Fusiliers. All the lovely

uniforms. All the long traditions, broken up and flung out” (SC 263). Dunne’s mention of the Dublin Rifles highlights the idea that embedded within this sadness (for what is no longer) is an acknowledgement of the loss of his son, Willie who fought and died as part of that regiment.

Willie appears as a ghost three times in the play, and only in the present time of 1932. The ghost perturbs Dunne because his appearance as a thirteen-year-old boy – “his voice not yet broken” – yet dressed in the army uniform of an eighteen-year old recruit, does not come from Dunne’s memory of him (SC 236). Rather, this apparition, as Dunne re-members him, anachronistically joins two traumatic periods in his son’s life, when Dunne treated him badly. The first period involves Dunne’s disregard for Willie when he was young; Dunne now admits that he could never appreciate his son, nor love him the way he should have been loved. Dunne tells his son’s ghost: “I didn’t do as well as (your Mam) did, with you...Why do we not love our sons simply and be done with it?” (SC 283). The second period involves Willie’s death as a soldier. Dunne was in a position of authority as Chief Superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP), so he could have accepted his son into the force rather than having him join the army; but Dunne believed that Willie “hadn’t the height to be a policeman” (SC, 254). Dunne’s strict adherence to police code and unwavering fealty to the police force cost him his only son.

The anachronism in body and costume for Willie as a 13-year old boy in an 18-year old young man’s army uniform, indicates that time is, as Hamlet says, “out of joint.” Willie, as an apparition of two pasts, returns in the present, doubly disrupting linear temporality. Dunne’s re-membering of his son signifies those traces of the past that are repressed, yet can neither be totally forgotten nor accurately remembered. The

appearance of Willie's ghost and Dunne's re-remembering of him represents the repressed trauma of this loss coming to consciousness. Since Dunne blames himself for his son's death, Willie's attempt to be at home with his father and family may be read as Dunne's attempt to come to terms with the reality of death and to possibly assuage some of the guilt surrounding it.

The Return of Repression and the Ghost

The concept of repression and the very idea of the ghost itself, which as Derrida says, "*begins by coming back*"⁷⁰ all exhibit a common trait: the propensity to return.

Willie as ghost returns from the dead; Willie, as Dunne's repression of the past, keeps coming back. Hélène Cixous, in her reading of Freud's classic discussion of the uncanny, *Das Unheimliche* (1919), describes the relationship between the concepts of repression and the ghost. She writes:

the Ghost erases the limit which exists between two states, neither alive nor dead; passing through, the dead man returns in the manner of the Repressed. It is his coming back which makes the ghost what he is, just as it is the return of the Repressed that inscribes the repression.⁷¹

It is this movement of coming back that is at issue here, for to come back indicates a return to the known and familiar as well as to the strange and unknown, that of the unhomely (the literal translation of the German *das unheimlich*). Further, the ghost eludes the binary of alive and dead so that the ghost comes back – or makes its presence felt – in a way that cannot be defined in terms of oppositional logic. In the same way, the repressed returns. Through the event of coming back, the ghost and repression announces itself, but not before. That is, only the return of the ghost and repression makes the ghost and repression "what it is" – and "what it is" is a return of itself.

The ghost's first appearance corresponds with Dunne's liminal state, as he is on the verge of sleep, in that space between consciousness and unconsciousness. Dunne sees his son and asks if he is warm enough to which the ghost responds, "It's cold in the mud, father" (SC 253). This statement, which is Willie's only spoken line in the play, refers not only to his discomfort as a soldier, and perhaps his discomfort in death, but also alludes to his father's chilly treatment of him. In response to Willie about the cold mud, Dunne speaks to the trauma he inflicted on his son: "I know child. I'm so sorry," a reply that illustrates remorse and repentance, but that also indicates that there is nothing to be done (SC 253). Freud asserts that repression "succeeds in returning" when "the vanished affect (of repression) comes back in its transformed shape as social anxiety, moral anxiety and unlimited self-reproaches."⁷² Throughout the play Dunne can be seen struggling with a number of these self-reproaches; in the final monologue of Act One, Dunne acknowledges that he was "stupid and silent" with Willie, a small step towards a recognition and acceptance of the behavior surrounding his son's life and death (SC 274).

Conversely Dunne is unable to accept the new nation, and instead concedes a kind of ambivalence towards it. Longing for the past, he wants things as they were, but at the same time knows this is impossible.

Dear Lord, put the recruits back in their barracks in
Fitzgibbon Street, put the stout hearts back into
Christendom's Castle, and troop the colours once more for
Princess and Prince, for Queen and for King, for Chief
Secretary and Lord Lieutenant, for Viceroy and
Commander-in-Chief. (*After a little.*) But you cannot. (...)
– Gone (SC, 273).

Dunne once held a position of power in "Christendom's Castle" and had felt one with Queen and King – King Edward had once praised his wife's "mole-black" hair (SC

273) – but the new state has passed him by in more ways than one, including leaving him a “miserly” pension which he believes should have been “a beautiful pension for my forty-five years of service” (SC, 271). Dunne continues to lament the loss of “Queen and King,” status, and pay.

Objects of Loss

In *The Steward of Christendom*, one object of loss is the death of Willie and a second object of loss is the symbolic death of the colonial past. Freud’s 1915 essay, “Mourning and Melancholia,” his early work on mourning, addresses the psychological effects caused by the loss of someone or something that is loved. For Freud, mourning is a healthy expression of grief: it is a normal process that has duration but eventually ends. Melancholia, he writes, is a continuation of grief: it is “pathological” and does not end. Within both mourning and melancholia is Freud’s idea of introjection, when the subject internalizes trace-images of the object of loss.⁷³ As Tammy Clewell describes it, Freud’s theory of the subject’s internalization is a process of “hyperremembering” which “resuscitates the existence of the lost other” by “replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence” within the psyche.⁷⁴ In other words, the process of mourning is one way to think about the use of the metaphorical “dead living within us” and an incessant remembering of loss. Mourning is “completed” when the subject lets go of the object of loss from the psyche, and the ego is then free to desire a “new object.”⁷⁵ For Freud, mourning becomes pathological, or melancholia, when that internalization of the lost object becomes attached to the ego itself, and consequently the borders between the lost object and the self become blurred. Mourning and melancholia may exhibit many of the same traits, but the concern of mourning is the loss of the object (“a loved person, or...

some abstraction...such as one's country, liberty, an ideal"⁷⁶), which is eventually let go, while the concern of melancholia is the loss of the ego (in self-reproaches), which becomes inseparably attached to the lost object.⁷⁷ At first glance, it appears that the stuck condition of melancholia is what we are dealing with here as it concerns the lost objects of Willie and the colonial past.

In the play, the objects of loss are also the objects of repression; and yet, both of these lost objects haunt Dunne in slightly different ways. An object of loss does not necessarily haunt but an object of repression always has the potential to haunt. Willie as an object of loss/repression makes his presence felt by the way that Dunne not only acknowledges him and speaks to him directly, but also by the way that Dunne relies on the ghost physically to help him get into bed in the play's closing moments. Dunne is "*surprised to find (Willie's hand) solid enough when he takes it*" (SC, 299) for Dunne has up until now believed that the ghost must be one of the many shadows that he continually sees and converses with. By making the ghost real to Dunne in a physical way, the play suggests that Dunne is not strictly in mourning (not merely internalizing the object of loss) nor is he strictly melancholic (because there is a separation between lost object and ego). Rather he is somewhere in-between mourning and melancholia, in that space of resistance to mourning.

The Resistance to Mourning

To some extent, the manifestation of Willie's ghost onstage dramatizes the talking cure of psychoanalysis: Willie allows Dunne to remember, repeat, and talk through the personal trauma, which also involves the political, but there is no closure to mourning.⁷⁸ This lack of a closure to mourning is what Clewell identifies as a "resistance to

consolation,” which in turn is “the only adequate response to death and wartime destruction, to losses that are at once personal and social, emotional and political.”⁷⁹ The ghost of Willie returns not in order to heal Dunne or the nation, but rather to emphatically deny that any kind of closure to consolation can actually take place.

This resistance to mourning is also clearly evidenced in terms of the object of the lost colonial past. Dunne’s ability to articulate his loss in general terms (how police business was conducted; how order was kept) is contrasted with his inability to confront the specific loss of his social and political position in the new state. In many instances, his daughter Annie must do that for him, and sometimes out of earshot, “He’s desolated to be going back. (...) There’s your father struggling to put a brave face on this day, which is no doubt the death of all good things in this country” (SC, 285). Not unlike the situation of many Anglo-Irish men and women in Ireland following independence, Dunne’s loss and its haunting effects is significant. Dunne’s resistance to mourning towards the loss of his son and the colonial past results in “a permanent state of tension,” the effects of which are “a continual working-over of a history” and its ghosts.⁸⁰

The essays in the book *Modernism and Mourning* examine modernist literature through the lens of mourning, melancholia, and most significant the resistance to mourning as ways of responding to loss in the early 20th century. In her introduction, Patricia Rae writes that Jacques Derrida “sees all such reconciliation to loss as unethical, an act of infidelity toward lost loved ones and a failure to respect what death really means.”⁸¹ In the play, the overwhelming grief on display is unable to be brought to catharsis and so is irresolvable, like the ghost and Ireland’s past. For example, Dunne speaks to the ghost of Willie about the returned uniform:

All I got back was your uniform, with the mud only half-washed out of it. Why do they send the uniforms to the fathers and the mothers? I put it over my head and cried for a night, like an owl in a tree. I cried for a night with your uniform over my head, and no one saw me (SC 283).

The idea of Dunne talking to Willie's ghost while at the same time conjuring an image of himself with his son's empty uniform over his head crying, but only for a night, suggests someone still at odds over the grieving process. The fact that no one saw him in mourning also indicates that his loss has not been adequately acknowledged by anyone, possibly even himself. The empty mud-caked uniform represents Willie and his military service as well as Willie's sacrificed life that was subsequently ignored by Ireland. In the case of Willie, there is political significance to the resistance to mourning because the grief cannot be sufficiently recognized either by Dunne or by the nation. Derrida rejects so-called "normal mourning," and therefore he believes the best response to loss is eternal lament, which is dissimilar from melancholia. For Derrida, "successful mourning" is an aporia, an irresolvable contradiction:

We can only live this experience in the form of an aporia: the aporia of mourning and of prosopopeia, where the possible remains impossible. Where *success fails*. And where faithful interiorization bears the other and constitutes him in me (in us), at once living and dead. It makes the other a *part* of us, between us – and then the other no longer quite seems to be the other, because we grieve for him and bear him *in us*, like an unborn child, like a future. And inversely, the *failure succeeds*: an aborted interiorization is at the same time a respect for the other as other, a sort of tender rejection, a movement of renunciation which leaves the other alone, outside, over there, in his death, outside of us.⁸²

The lost loved one or the object of loss becomes part of the subject – the effective introjection, like the unborn child, may be read as the future. This is where success fails

because the lost object is living and dead within: a part that is living which is success, but also a part that is dead, a failure. At the same time, the lost object cannot truly be internalized because the person or thing is no longer. In this way the lost object has not been introjected but remains separate and apart from the person who is grieving. The failure succeeds because it is fully understood that the object is truly gone, and is outside of the subject, but in the end the object of loss is respected as an other. The only thing Dunne got back from the Front was Willie's uniform: Dunne's crying like an owl in a tree is at least partial recognition that the object of loss that filled that uniform is truly gone. Ultimately, resistance to mourning represents an unresolved and internalized yet also social and cultural conflict.

Transformational Mementos of the Dead

Similar to the object of loss in resistance to mourning (that is, the person or condition) are the tangible and material *objects that represent loss*, those things associated with the person or condition – mementos of the dead – which further contribute to the notion of haunting. These objects become both the perpetuation and the end of the person or condition, but also can be identified as transformational, and in this case, brings the Irish soldier closer to home. As Gabriele Schwab argues in her recent article on traumatic loss, “Traumatic experiences push for more overt articulation. In order to be able to perceive and integrate these hidden traces of trauma, we may need transformational objects, that is, objects that evoke a distant, often unconscious memory of the traumatic event or history.”⁸³ In the play, the letter from the Front becomes a part of (and apart from) the retrieved body of Willie. Other than Willie's uniform, the letter is the only object Dunne has left of his son, and he prods the orderly Smith to read the letter

aloud. The letter was sent home from the front lines, and it is at this moment in the play where Willie's ghost haunts Dunne in a different way for the ghost is not physically present on the stage but rather is embodied by the orderly Smith, who takes on the role of son.

In the letter, the duality of father and son is suggested in the way that the words of the living Willie alternate between that of parent and child, also exchanging the place of home and battlefield. Willie writes warmly, "It gives me great comfort to write to my father" (SC 293). Instead of the child seeking comfort from the parent's words or actions, Willie takes comfort from his own action of letter writing. As a father might say to his son, Willie is saying to Dunne, "I am comforted by thoughts of you." In this way, Willie as son and father is comforted, but also gives comfort to Dunne, as both father and son. In reference to the Easter rising, Willie writes as a father to Dunne and even changes places with him at an epicenter of battle, "I know you are in the front line there, Papa, so keep yourself safe for my return" home (SC 293). Willie (as father) expresses concern for the safety of Dunne (as son) during the troubling times back home. Willie immediately switches back to the role of prodigal son when he adds, "when Maud will cook the fatted calf!", wanting very much to return to a father who is safe and well and to a home-cooked meal (SC 293). The most poignant moment is Willie's articulation of love, respect, and admiration for his father:

my whole wish is to be home with you all in Dublin, and to abide by your wishes, whatever they be. I wish to be a more dutiful son because, Papa, in the mire of this wasteland, you stand before my eyes as the finest man I know, and in my dreams you comfort me, and keep my spirits lifted (SC 293).

These few lines sum up an enormous weight of emotion, the letter becoming the transformational object as well as the hidden trace of trauma, coming as it does from the edges of battle and the edges of life itself. During WWI, the policy of the British government regarding fallen soldiers was to let them be buried where they died. This resulted in a kind of corpselessness for the soldier's family. The traumatic collective history of WWI is encapsulated in the object/letter of the "speaking corpse." Willie gives Dunne the highest compliment a son can give his father: his absolute esteem for him as a man. For the first time in the play, the formerly hostile Smith recognizes the kind of man Dunne is because of the way his son speaks of him. Smith says, "That's a beautiful letter, Mr. Dunne. A memento. A keepsake" and as Dunne nods in agreement, Smith gets up to leave saying, "Good man, good man" (SC 293). The letter succeeds in bringing Willie back home to his father, but of course the moment is ephemeral, and the pleasure illusory. Smith proclaims as he carefully opens the letter, "It's an historical document" suggesting that the presence of this letter/object becomes larger than any object of the personal, becoming part of the culture and history (SC, 292).

Willie's haunting reflects more than the historical past, and more than an historical haunting. Roger Luckhurst writes that the historical matter of the ghost "is not simply with the ghost as interruptive witness of untold histories, as if telling this history could then lay it to rest...the ghost intersects and divides contemporaneity with a double gesture that invaginates the past and future into the present."⁸⁴ The ghost's ability to separate the present moment, in a process that allows the past and the future to be folded back in on itself into that present moment, generates an open space in which temporal zones merge as one. The structure of time is opened up by this invagination; the ghost is

oblivious to any notions of past, present, or future. In this hollow space where temporality is suspended, the ghost makes possible the idea that a man can be both father to his son and son to his father. The temporal suspension of identity here (as father or son or as both father and son) aligns with the spatial interruption of Willie's desire to be in his home/place, for this is the only point in the play where an entire scene is devoted to the Irish/British soldier, whose only desire is "to be at home with you all in Dublin" (SC, 293), but then who is not materialized on stage. The moment encapsulates the temporality of the ghost, and also represents more than an historical haunting for Willie speaks from the past in the form of the letter, Smith speaks as Willie in the present moment of performance, and as spectator, we wait for Willie to appear again in future scenes.

A Loyal/Disloyal Dog

The complexity of any grand home-coming for Willie⁸⁵ is mirrored by the complex relationships between fathers and sons – loving and unloving fathers and loved and unloved sons – and by the ambiguous attitude of the Free State towards Dunne. After 1922, Dunne was considered both an inhabitant and a stranger in his homeland, as nationalists believed him a traitor to the nationalist cause. On several occasions, Dunne uses the word dog to describe himself. At the beginning of the play, Dunne explains out loud to himself why he is in the county home, "Because you were not civil to your daughter, no, you were not. You were ranting, you were raving, and so they put you where you were safe. Like a dog that won't work without using his teeth, like a dog under sentence" (SC, 240). Later in the play, Annie describes how it was living with her father after he had been forced out of the DMP following the handover of Dublin Castle, when again Dunne unwittingly refers to himself as a dog:

I do, Papa, I remember the three years well enough. With you sinking lower and lower in your chair beside that fire, and muttering about this and that, and the way you had been abandoned, you wouldn't treat a dog like that, you said, muttering, muttering, till I was driven mad (SC, 272).

Towards the end of the play, the orderly Smith imitates a cowboy from a Gary Cooper film, mockingly says to Dunne, "You dirty dog, you dirty dog" (SC, 291). The word dog carries colloquial definitions such as "a contemptible man" and "an informer or a traitor"⁸⁶ as well as other connotations such as lowly and cowardly but also faithful.

These secondary meanings are, in effect, traces of the word dog. I use here Derrida's concept of the trace, which signifies impermanence or inconstancy to the meaning of words and of language. A word or a phrase invariably hides a hint or a trace of another meaning; the trace however does not indicate a subordinate imprint, but instead implies that there is no original source of definition. Derrida asserts, "The trace is in effect the absolute origin of meaning in general. This is a way of saying, once again, that there is no absolute origin of meaning in general. The trace is *différance* which opens up appearance and meaning."⁸⁷ Similar to a ghost, a trace can be defined as an undecidable representing a play of absence and presence as to its origin of meaning. Like the ghost, a trace leaves something behind in order to come forward: dog holds the traces of these other meanings.

In the play's final scene, the ghost of Willie appears for the last time, and it is here that these other meanings assume greatest significance. Dunne recalls a traumatic incident when as a young boy he discovered that his dog Shep had killed a sheep. Dogs, of course, are famously loyal creatures, and evoke a similar loyalty in their owners. Because the dog had betrayed its owner by killing, the young Dunne knows the dog is set

for slaughter, but feigns innocence, “For a dog that would kill a sheep would die himself. So in my innocence I went down to my father and told him and he instructed me, as was right and proper, to go back with a rope and lead Shep down so the killing could take place” (SC, 300). To the ghost Willie, Dunne explains that he understood the significance of the dog’s killing but deeply loved him anyway:

I loved the dog so sorely, I hesitated when I had the rope tied around him... now moving along but slowly, and the dog sort of dragging behind, as if he knew well his misdeed and his fate. And I stopped in the centre of the trees, and do you know my young legs would not go forward, they would not proceed, try as I might, and there I was all that afternoon and night with the dog and the hazels. How is it that the drear of winter didn’t eat my bones and murder me for my foolishness? Love of the dog kept me standing there, as only a child can stand, without moving, thinking, the poor dog whimpering with the cold...I could see black figures with lights moving and calling, calling out to me and the dog to come home (SC 300-301).

Dunne is stuck between the place of home and a place of slaughter, whereas when Willie was at the Front, he was stuck at the place of slaughter longing to come home. Dunne too wants to come home to his father, but is too afraid of what will happen to the dog. Dunne, for having stayed loyal and followed what he believed was his duty as part of the DMP, was treated like a dog, like a traitor, by his countrymen. In Dunne’s story the dog also betrayed loyalty and duty by killing a sheep, and Dunne as the boy positions himself as the dog’s protector. In this way, Dunne is no longer a representation of the dog as an object of punishment; rather in this moment he is in the ethical dilemma of whether to punish or not, whether to slay or not. This dilemma is made manifest by the boy’s inability to move, or speak, or think as he stands frozen in time all afternoon and all night in a possible attempt to stop or reverse the course of events.

For many Irish people, as exemplified by the character of Smith through most of the play, Dunne deserves punishment like the child's dog. For others, maybe he deserves protection like the dog, as he protected Dublin's streets as a member of the DMP. Upon finally arriving back home after being away all night, Dunne remembers his father coming out of the house:

It was as if I had never seen him before, never looked at him in his entirety, from head to toe. And I knew then that the dog and me were for slaughter. My feet carried me on to where he stood, immortal you would say in the door. And he put his right hand on the back of my head, and pulled me to him so that my cheek rested against the buckle of his belt. And he raised his own face to the brightening sky and praised someone, in a crushed voice, God maybe, for my safety, and stroked my hair. And the dog's crime was never spoken of, but that he lived till he died (SC 301).

In this great act of forgiveness, in word and action, Dunne – simultaneously an adult and a child – understands he was truly loved in this moment by his father, who gratefully welcomes him back home. The act of forgiveness, as well as its possibility, is an integral part of both Catholic and Protestant faiths, through which the life of the transgressor is re-integrated back into the community, affecting him both on a personal and communal level. Dunne can be read as the dog that killed: the crime was never spoken of, but he received what he called “the mercy of fathers” (SOC, 301). And he can be read as both the father and the son; as father he forgives himself and as son he is forgiven. What also must be remembered however is that Dunne is a 75-year old man recollecting a powerful story of forgiveness and love in the context of a boy's difficult relationship with his father. A second juxtaposition is that the story on stage is relayed from father to son within the context of another trying relationship. Dunne is telling the story to the ghost of Willie who is standing silently by his side. Coming as it does in the

final moments of the play, the scene underscores a man's desire to be loved by his father, by his son, and possibly, a need to be forgiven by history. There is a quality to this final scene that arouses pathos and at the same time insists on an irreconcilability to Dunne's and Willie's position in the home/place and history.

The Return Home

The play ends as Willie gets in bed alongside Dunne, the old man unburdening himself in the last line of the play, "And I would call that the mercy of fathers, when the love that lies in them deeply like the glittering face of a well is betrayed by an emergency, and the child sees at last that he is loved, loved and needed and not to be lived without, and greatly" (SC 301). In saying the child, Dunne refers both to himself and his son, a moment of ghostly symbiosis that demonstrates they both loved greatly and they indeed were loved greatly. As a symbol of the Irishman who served Britain, Willie's ghost comes back as a revelation of a purity of heart that many nationalists, unionists, and loyalists exemplified. As a son, Willie appears as a spirit of abundant love and through his ghost, the nation may now see Dunne – and as I would argue Willie – as one critic has noted, "not as...traitor to Ireland but rather as a policeman who is a ... proud product of his time."⁸⁸ The movement of Willie's ghost into the bed as a home/place itself and in the home/place of his father allows the union of father and son – as Irishman loyal to the Crown and Irish soldier in the British army – to be read as an ongoing process of integration into the cultural and historical home/place of Ireland.

Willie's ghost will necessarily return home – for the ghost begins (in the present) by coming back (from the past) and is always to come (the future). The cycle of haunting is both resolved and unfinished at the same time. The historical and political significance

of this continual haunting and desire to come home may be read as one of desired forgiveness – the need for mercy toward the Irishman aligned with Britain and towards his questionable position within the Free State in its early years and throughout the rest of the twentieth century. As the lights fade, the stage directions indicate that the ghost of Willie “lies in close” to his father (SC 301), a corporeal and ghostly convergence of past, present, and future. The familial relationship is not completely healed but may be strengthened; so too is Dunne’s relationship to the nation as it is not unproblematically integrated back into Ireland’s history. Dunne and Willie lie next to each other in the bed of the county home, their eyes closed and sleeping in the final moment of the play as the stage directions note: “(Dunne) sleeps. Willies lies in close to him. Sleeps. Music. Dark” (SC, 301). Even though Willie *sleeps* he remains in that liminal space between his yearning to be at home and its final realization as a result of the nation’s resistance to mourning. The Ireland Willie left behind is not the same upon his return. Willie’s ghost as Irish/British soldier is unable to completely rest at home because he is always to come, but more important, because he is always already othered in an irrevocably changed home/place. The Irishman in British uniform – as ghost or unconscious of the nation – becomes that part of Irish history that insists that this narrative not be forgotten. In the North, on the other hand, the story of the 36th Ulster Division whose men fought in World War I is connected to a triumphant communal memory, but also to a multiplicity of paradoxes involving cultural inheritance and what it means to belong.

OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME

Ulster’s role in the Battle of the Somme has long stood as a defining moment for Northern unionist identity. Although the Battle of the Somme was a joint operation

between British and French armies against the Germans, the 36th Ulster Division distinguished itself early on. On the first day of the offensive, July 1, 1916 the Ulster Division took five German trenches and marched farther into enemy territory than any other division.⁸⁹ The gains were short-lived however since along with the rest of the British forces, the Ulster Division suffered massive casualties that day, with 2,000 men killed and another 3,000 wounded. The division's devastating losses alongside the heroic actions of the Ulstermen contributed to the myth of the Ulsterman for as Declan Kiberd has recently written, "In the muddy fields of the Somme, a generation achieved a form of self-definition."⁹⁰ The Battle of the Somme became a significant historical event in which Ulster unionists could distinguish their political identity from their neighbors in the South and could find expression for their allegiance to the United Kingdom, especially at this politically charged moment in history.⁹¹ The blood sacrifice of the 36th (Ulster) Division became a rallying cry of loyalty to the greater good of Great Britain.

If the Republic is haunted by its erasure of the Irish soldier in WWI, the North of Ireland is culturally haunted because of an over-determined Protestant unionist and loyalist identity exemplified by Frank McGuinness' Ulstermen in *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*. The play highlights the diversity of the Protestant unionist identity (rather than its homogeneity) as well as its cracks and fissures that make it part of a rich cultural heritage. What becomes of that identity and its relationship to the home/place – however steeped it is in a specific historical, political, and cultural tradition – when it persists as stable, rigid, and unchanging? Kiberd suggests that the play "proposes that all fixed identities are dangerous and deathly, but that to live without some form of identity is impossible."⁹² The men in the play, like the histories of Ulster, become

caught in a conundrum in that liminal space between a dangerous fixed identity and attachment to home and an impossible non-identity that, by play's end leaves them stranded in the in-between. The complex drama is weighted with both personal and political issues of identity as it challenges the notion of a static identity; collapses certain foundational myths about what it means to be an Ulsterman; and highlights the effect of war trauma on the individual. The effects of this trauma force the Ulstermen to ultimately express ambivalence towards the cause for which they are fighting and towards their place within the larger culture of a unionist mythography, resulting in a double-edged trauma: from combat itself and from a breakdown of their belief in a cultural identity that has become stagnant.

While cultural identity may be considered a process as it is continually constructed or re-enacted, McGuinness' play highlights the idea that cultural identity may also be a form of paralysis. To speak of haunting in the context of Northern Ireland is to speak of it in terms of a cultural haunting, which means that the long legacy of the strictures and structures of cultural inheritance is the thing that has the potential to haunt its citizens. In the North, the idea of cultural haunting begins with an understanding of the forces of cultural heritage on identity that then allows for the possibility of a redefinition of the self within that culture.⁹³ For Kathleen Brogan, cultural haunting results in a "reframing (of) cultural inheritance" in terms of "cultural memory *and* cultural renewal."⁹⁴ Brogan's insight that "haunting provides a metaphor for historical consciousness"⁹⁵ suggests that the past is re-imagined by the presence of the ghost; in *Observe the Sons of Ulster* the present and the future are the things re-imagined by cultural haunting, even as the ghosts return from the past.

McGuinness' *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* was first staged in the Republic and quickly became an important cultural, social, and political moment because a history heretofore unknown was being presented on the National Theatre stage. The premiere of *Observe the Sons of Ulster* in February 1985 in the Peacock space of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin was considered a remarkable achievement: for McGuinness, because he wrote an inspired play about the Ulster Protestant culture having been raised in the Catholic nationalist tradition; and for the National Theatre, because they produced a play that was a "cross cultural" shift in attention. With McGuinness' play, the Battle of the Somme was written back into the history of the island, and the ghosts of Ulster soldiers brought back into the consciousness of the South.

McGuinness was made aware of the Ulster boys in the 1970s and became himself haunted by the sacrifice at the Somme, which he found to be gripping, untapped territory. Part of the inspiration for writing *Observe the Sons of Ulster*, McGuinness has said, was a visit to the war memorials at Enniskillen and Coleraine when he was a young lecturer at the New University of Ulster.⁹⁶ After viewing all of the names of the fallen soldiers from both world wars, "suffused with ghostly imaginings,"⁹⁷ two things struck him. First, how uninformed he was about the major contribution Ireland had made to the Great War effort, both North and South; and second, what would it have been like if for example all the young men in one of his classes had not returned from the war. How would that kind of loss abroad – a generation of men – impact the community and the region at home?

Observe the Sons of Ulster is divided into four parts, "Remembrance," "Initiation," "Pairing," and "Bonding," with each part taking place in a different setting:

an unidentified space where the old man Kenneth Pyper sleeps; a makeshift army barracks; a variety of locales in Ulster; and a trench at the Somme, France, respectively. The soldiers of the 36th Ulster Division first come together as young recruits, grow disillusioned from the war experience at the Front, and unite again as changed Ulstermen as they prepare for the battle at the Somme. The play's third part, "Pairing," provocatively depicts how war ravages the soldier evidenced when home on leave: the experience of external trauma causes inner turmoil. This inner conflict between the peaceful self and the warlike self results in a doubling of the ego/self in many of the characters, but especially in the character of Pyper. This conflict in the ego in Pyper is made manifest by the presence of ghosts, which in turn becomes a representation of the doubled self. The conflict for each man is not what takes place on the battlefield per se, but that which takes place "within" as a result of battle, which in turn produces a crisis of identity. This crisis of identity also creates a crisis of what it means to be at home and to the relationship between home and Ulster. All of the men except Pyper are linked by their fidelity to forms of Protestantism, loyalism, and unionism but are divided by what each of these mean to them and as a result of war, these foundational myths of identity start to crack. By the play's climax, moments before going over the top, Pyper the outsider rejoins the tribe of men and inspires them to love the home of Ulster within, leading them to believe in a glorious victory. I argue that the presence of ghosts and the traumatic doubled self results in a cultural haunting that collapses a fixed cultural identity and a rigid attachment to the home/place, which in turn becomes an unresolved conflict of the self and of the histories of the North.

The ghosts in McGuinness' play function as a return of the repressed of the protagonist –and by extension the region's – unconscious. Turning again to the connection between repression and the ghost, Freud describes the concept of repression by using the image of the ghost: "a thing which has not been understood inevitably reappears; like an unlaidd ghost, it cannot rest until the mystery has been solved and the spell broken."⁹⁸ Collectively Pyper's friends as well as his younger self *are* these unlaidd ghosts. The materializations of his long-dead friends, David Craig, Christopher Roulston and Martin Crawford, John Millen and William Moore, and George Anderson and Nat McIlwaine as well as Pyper's younger self all represent the unhomely, what Freud described as the "return of the familiar in unfamiliar form."⁹⁹ Pyper's ghosts are the known and well acquainted (his friends/his younger self) but also the mysterious and repressed, what he cannot know. Pyper's ghosts are not easily evaded:

I still see your ghosts. Very infrequently. During daylight now. Dear Lord, you are kind in your smaller mercies. Did you intend that we should keep seeing ghosts? It was the first sign that your horrors had shaken us into madness. Some were lucky enough to suffer your visions immediately. Those I belonged to, those I have not forgotten, the irreplaceable ones, they kept their nerve, and they died. I survived. No, survival was not my lot. Darkness, for eternity, is not survival.¹⁰⁰

Just as Freud's unhomely, the idea that Pyper recognizes and acknowledges his ghosts suggests that the conscious self and repression of the trauma are intermingling,¹⁰¹ which thereby loosens the boundaries between the two and provides an undelimited space in which to receive ghosts.

A Narrative of Trauma

Pyper's story is a narrative of trauma: the story of death and the story of survival. Cathy Caruth asks in her study of trauma, "Is the trauma the encounter with death, or the ongoing experience of having survived it?" For her, trauma is "the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival."¹⁰² Pyper, traumatized by the Battle of the Somme, must confront the ghosts of his friends who attempt to return home to be with him in that liminal space of survival. The effect of the ghost's return is an effort to re/live and to work through the experience of the trauma in order to come to terms with the inner conflict.

The mode of survival is similarly as traumatic as the battlefield itself, becoming its own internal war zone. Pyper may have survived the war but continually experiences or re/lives the trauma. For Freud, trauma results in a fixation on a particular moment of the past whereby this preoccupation has numerous consequences for the traumatized individual including flashbacks, dreams, and hallucinations. These seemingly out-of-body yet internal occurrences are signals that the traumatic situation has not been fully dealt with, hence the re/turn to the scene of psychic trauma. Elder Pyper is fixated on the particular months leading up to the Battle of the Somme. We know from the play's opening moments that what is about to happen is not happening for the first time, but rather for the first time, again: "Did you intend that we should *keep* seeing ghosts?" (OTSOU, 97, emphasis added) Elder Pyper is angry at having to continue to probe. The unfinished business of the internal struggle necessitates repeated probing, which will be the literal (in terms of stage action) re/turn to the event. The idea of the ghost's returned

body suggests embodied histories of the men, and the traumatic memory surrounding those histories.

In Part Two “Initiation” the shared cultural histories of the men are revealed, encompassing many strands including loyalist, unionist, members of the UVF and Orange Order, Protestant, working class and upper class. The action opens on the makeshift barracks in 1916 when the young ghost recruits arrive (again): onstage first are the now young Pyper and another new recruit David Craig. Pyper, an artist as well as a rebel against conformity, is a sarcastic sort who likes to stir up trouble. Craig calls him a “bit of a mocker” but knows that the army will “knock that out” of him (OTSOU, 104). Pyper comes from a privileged background, and is unlike the others in terms of class, sexuality, and politics, and is trying to break away from the dictates of culture and History. In contrast to Pyper, the working class men include Craig, a blacksmith; the Coleraine men Moore (a weaver) and Millen (a baker) who, like Craig, joined the 36th Division as one of Carson’s men from the Ulster Volunteer Force; and Anderson and McIlwaine, rowdy shipyard workers from Belfast, proud loyalists and members of the Orange Order. The other characters include Roulston a former Anglican preacher originally from Tyrone and the youngest recruit Crawford from Derry, who we later discover is half-Catholic. Each of the characters’ background and cultural identities is important to highlight since over the course of the play these identities collapse, their foundational beliefs upended and overturned irrevocably. In *Observe the Sons of Ulster*, the collapsing of fixed identities into ones that are more or less unstable is similar to the liminal, non-binary identities of Dunne and Willie in *The Steward of Christendom* – both of which cause anxiety due to delimited codes of identity North and South.

Cultural Haunting

The idea of cultural identity is linked to cultural haunting insofar as these soldiers are ghosts who return to haunt Pyper's psyche as well as the culture's historical consciousness.¹⁰³ The recovery of history demonstrated in *Observe the Sons of Ulster* is achieved through the agency of the ghost through which it becomes the "transitional figure moving between past and present, death and life, one culture and another."¹⁰⁴ The cultural haunting here is twofold as it moves between the cultures of the South and the North. First, the historical event of the Battle of the Somme, which had been erased in the South, is recuperated by the figure of the ghost for audiences in the Republic; and second, cultural identity and inheritance in the North, which comes dangerously close to a thing permanent and unchanging, is reframed by the figure of the ghost for an audience in Northern Ireland. For Brogan, "The double role of the ghost as metaphor for cultural invisibility and cultural continuity plays upon the curious 'there/not there' status of the ghost."¹⁰⁵ In this way cultural identity and inheritance in the North and historical meaning in the South are re-generated through the figure of the ghost and "through the process of (cultural) haunting."¹⁰⁶

Stories of cultural haunting have to do with "a people's historical consciousness" and the ways in which cultural identity has been shaped through history.¹⁰⁷ In the play, all the men except Pyper are devoted to "myths and memories that encode versions of history as 'ours'"¹⁰⁸ that may establish a sense of belonging but also forecloses other ways of thinking about historical narratives of the North. For the men the sense of belonging to a place steeped in History and to a cause larger than themselves marks the powerful influences that the cultural history of their ancestors has on them. They know

why they enlisted in the division, for God and country, and while they cannot readily express these views, they are more able to articulate what their service means to them in terms of place, also tied to cultural identity. Pyper, the odd man out, probes the men to find out why they enlisted in order to, unbeknownst to them, ridicule the reasons:

Pyper: Why spend your time here?
Craig: It goes without saying.
Pyper: Say it.
Craig: I'm in this for Ulster.
Moore: Like ourselves.
Millen: For the glory of his majesty the king and all his people.
Moore: Exactly.
Pyper: For your religion?
Craig: Yes.
Pyper: My religion too.
Pyper offers Craig his hand. They shake (OTSOU, 115).

Pyper has no religion, a fact the men do not know yet, and so the act of shaking hands is a physicalization of a mock union of cultural ideals since he barely believes in anything or anyone, much less himself. The idea of physicalizing cultural identity and heritage is a trope McGuinness uses throughout, culminating in the enactment of the Battle of the Boyne at the end of the play. In contrast to the others, Pyper does not sign up because of a sense of duty or for political principles; rather, he is trying to escape from himself and from those very societal pressures of culture.¹⁰⁹ Pyper pokes fun at his own background by exaggerating the stories about his past, not able to reconcile whom he is with what the cultural legacy dictates for him. Pyper claims no cultural identity, and later in the play in a particularly revelatory moment between him and Craig, admits that he joined the army in order to exact revenge on his "Protestant fathers" for "making me sufficiently different to believe I was unique, when my true uniqueness lay only in how alike them I really was" (OTSOU, 164). A key idea behind cultural haunting is to

“undercut the...imposition of a permanent and static memory” to allow multiple perspectives of identity, historical meaning, and the past to permeate the present.¹¹⁰

Pyper’s desire to break away from his cultural heritage and identity is juxtaposed with each of the other Ulstermen who are deeply invested in both asserting and preserving those strong cultural, religious, and societal influences.

Alongside the trauma of war, Pyper challenges the men’s notions of a static cultural identity thereby causing doubts in the men in what they have come to believe in – and rely on – as identity. The soldiers are perturbed by Pyper for their fealty and ancestry and for what they represent: former preacher Roulston for his Protestantism; Belfast-born Anderson and McIlwaine for their loyalism and devotion to the Orange Order; and Coleraine men Moore and Millen for their unionism. Pyper derides Millen and Moore, who are unwilling (or unable) to hear the sarcasm: “You are here as a volunteer in the army of your king and empire, you are here to train to meet that empire’s foe. You are here as a loyal son of Ulster, for the empire’s foe is Ulster’s foe.” To which Millen replies, “Yes” (OTSOU, 107, 108). Pyper is the thing that disrupts and disturbs the others’ notions of King and Country and what they are fighting for; in similar fashion after five months at the Front the trauma of war also destabilizes cultural identity.

The Traumatic Split of the Self

The reality of war is made palpable by the visibility of the suffering body onstage, which can be understood only through the trauma inflicted on the characters because the actual violence of combat is never shown. Part Three “Pairing” is the most provocative section of the play as it takes place back home in Ulster, after the men have spent several months in trench warfare. To find solace from their war experiences, the men retreat to

those places that resonate with their identity, as “foundational for their myths.”¹¹¹ This mixing of the trauma of war with an anticipated comfort of home is problematized by the military demands of what it means to be a soldier and the cultural demands of a proud Ulster heritage. In this third part, the stage is divided into four locales in Ulster with two men at each site: Pyper and Craig are on Boa Island in County Fermanagh; Roulston and Crawford are in a Protestant church; Millen and Moore are on a suspended ropebridge¹¹² in County Antrim; and McIlwaine and Anderson are in “the Field,” located south of Belfast. Five of the men suffer from shellshock, from the mild (Craig) to the severe (Moore). The traumatic experience of the war leads each character into a double existence of trauma and ordinary life: “the one governed by ordinary chronology, the other, being ‘in a sense, timeless,’ liable to spring to life at any moment.”¹¹³ The liminal space of the locales (an island; a church; a bridge; a field) and of the soldier – of dying and not dying – corresponds with what the spectator already knows, that the men are hovering between worlds.

Writing less than a year after the Great War had ended, Freud argued that war neuroses is a threat to the ego which arises from trauma on the battlefield and from the anxieties surrounding the dangers of being killed there. This trauma causes conflict in the ego, resulting in its doubling – a “parasitic double,” according to Freud:

The war neuroses (...) has been promoted by a conflict in the ego...The conflict is between the soldier's old peaceful ego and his new warlike one, and it becomes acute as soon as the peaceful-ego realizes what danger it runs of losing its life owing to the rashness of its newly formed, parasitic double.¹¹⁴

The conflict in the ego is not between a killing machine and a peacemonger but rather between the self that has been forced to kill or be killed and the previous self. The

inner conflict causes the new self to latch itself onto the old ego but the inner conflict is also the effect of this doubling. The inner conflict, as both cause and effect, will not be removed until the trauma has been resolved or at least settled within the psyche.

In *Observe the Sons of Ulster* the idea of a conflict of the ego, this doubling, is made manifest in the pairing of soldiers trying to cope with life back at home. The doubling is also equated with a shadowing of the self when a soldier steps outside of himself to become someone else, which of course is also himself. In his writing about the uncanny, Freud argued that the shadowed self may be “a preservation against extinction” but at the same time, it becomes “the uncanny harbinger of death.”¹¹⁵ The uncanny of the doubled self provokes an unrelenting anxiety created by this conflict in the ego and by the uncertainty surrounding any solution to the doubling. In *Observe the Sons of Ulster* this ghostly doubling is given particular signification and expressiveness: by the use of two actors to play the one character of Pyper, younger and elder and by the language of the doubled self in the character of Moore.

The ghost of younger Pyper appears alongside Elder Pyper twice in the play, allowing for a physical manifestation of the ghosted self as double. In the final moment of Part One Elder Pyper reaches towards the ghost of his younger self, saying: “Myself. My soul. Dance. Dance” (OTSOU, 101) – an acknowledgement of the corporeal inner self and soul from an othered perspective and a literal and figurative doubling enacted on stage. At the play’s end, the two are again on stage together, but the only word Elder Pyper can utter to the ghost is “Ulster,” repeating it eight times even while the ghost rallies him on: “You’ll always guard Ulster...Save it”(OTSOU, 197). The ghost of younger Pyper entreats his other self to action in the future, and yet Elder Pyper is stuck

in the repetition of Ulster unable to put the word into a sentence, to express meaning or purpose to his place within it, or to acknowledge the ghost's request. The inheritance of the cultural past remains what Brogan calls "a haunting imposition."¹¹⁶ The unresolved trauma for Pyper and Northern Ireland's citizens is not only survival and witnessing the scale of slaughter that defies comprehension, but also the fixity of the idea of Ulster even when, as the ghost of Younger Pyper says to the elder, "the province has grown lonely" and "the house has grown cold" (OTSOU, 197). Consequently the ghosts must always return. Nicholas Abraham asserts that "*The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other.*"¹¹⁷ Ghosts are embedded within the ghosts, which all live and are buried within Pyper's and the North's unconscious. Each ghost, each character serves as manifestation (a double) of the rupture of the psyche. The double role of the ghost as cultural continuity and cultural interruption points towards a larger process in the reinvention of cultural identity.

The character of Moore, because he is severely traumatized by the war, most visibly displays the rupture of ego and cultural identity but which also leads to a reunification (ego) and reinvention (cultural identity). Moore, a man in his 30s, is depicted at the play's beginning as a loyal follower, but full of bravado. Home on leave Moore and Millen are on the suspension bridge, which links the mainland to the tiny island of Carrick. Moore struggles to understand the concept of following orders from top brass when it also means certain death; he has difficulty adjusting to life back at home due to recurring images of the bloody and bleeding battlefield. On the unsteady rope-bridge, Moore thinks he is back at the Front:

Moore: I'm drenched.

Millen: That's with sweat.

Moore: Not with muck? Not with flesh? Not with blood?
Millen: Just with sweat.
Moore: I think it's blood. But it's not my own. I never saw that
much blood, Johnny.
Millen: It's not ours.
Moore: The whole world is bleeding. Nobody can stop it
(OTSOU, 154).

Moore's response that the "whole world is bleeding," suggests that he pushes the trauma beyond his individual experience to encompass a broader socio-political condition relevant to the situation in Ireland as well as the one in Europe. The physical and psychological trauma of the Great War is expanded here because embedded in the theory of individual trauma is the "core of the trauma of a larger history," which for Caruth does not mean equating individual trauma with historical or group trauma, but instead means "understand(ing) how historical...trauma is in some sense presupposed in the theory of individual trauma."¹¹⁸ To comprehend individual loss and trauma is a step towards a kind of knowledge about the mechanisms involved in historical trauma. Namely the process of the "double wound" of trauma results in "what is known, but also what remains unknown," the thing that "returns to haunt survivor(s) later on."¹¹⁹

In war neuroses the ego is "defending itself from a danger which threatens it from without or which is embodied in a shape assumed by the ego itself."¹²⁰ Moore questions Millen why they have been spared because he continually hears, and is haunted by the dead and dying men on the field, what Freud referred to as "permanent disturbances." Moore cries out that he is going to die and that "they're coming at me from all sides" even though he is miles from the Front (OTSOU, 153). Millen prompts Moore to list the names of the men who are with him in the struggle. Moore says, "All the dead people" to which Millen responds, "No. All the living. Do you see them? Who are they?" (OTSOU,

155). Moore “sees” Anderson, McIlwaine, Craig, Pyper, Roulston, and Crawford, but Millen tells him there is one person left – Moore himself:

Millen: You’ve missed one out...Do you remember him?
He saw a horse being shot. His heart went out to the horse. Now he’s seen men being shot. He came back. His heart hasn’t come back. It was cut out of him. His heart’s over there. Do you know who he is?

Moore: Yes.

Millen: Walk over to him (OTSOU, 144-145).

Millen talks about Moore in the third person as someone outside of Moore. In his book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* Robert Jay Lifton writes that doubling from extreme trauma is especially profound when it occurs “in the service of survival, for life-enhancing purposes.”¹²¹ The struggle post-trauma Lifton argues is the struggle to re-integrate two selves into a single self. Millen is assisting Moore in a physically inspired re-integration of the self. The traumatized soldier may recognize this other self, which may be read as a positive step towards re-integration, but the doubled self here represents life as well as death. Repeatedly Moore says, “We’re going to die,” to which Millen declares, “No” until he can no longer believe it himself. At this point, Millen’s response is “*Silence*” (OTSOU, 160). The locale suggests an effort to metaphorically bridge the two selves of Moore shattered from the war and from a belief that the empire’s foe was Ulster’s foe. The division of the self has caused a crisis of identity by way of this collapsed belief in Ulster causing Moore to admit defeat in saying that he will not go back, and that there is no such thing as good soldiers, only cowards (OTSOU, 155).

Crisis of Cultural Identity

The crisis of identity is transformed into a crisis of cultural identity by the way that the soldiers can no longer believe in Ulster's role in the war and by the accompanying fear of losing the grounding of that cultural identity:

McIlwaine: The war's cursed. It's good for nothing...We won't survive. We'll all going to die for nothing (OTSOU, 154).

Anderson: Pyper the bastard was right. It's all lies. We're going to die. It's all lies (OTSOU, 167).

Craig: I wanted war. I wanted a fight. I felt I was born for it...I know some one of us is going to die. I think it's me...There are hounds about me, and I'm following them to death (OTSOU, 164).

Crawford: I'm a soldier that risks his neck for no cause other than the men he's fighting with. I've seen enough to see through empires and kings and countries. I know the only side worth supporting is your own sweet self (OTSOU, 152).

The doubled self from the trauma of war is an "insurance against the destruction of the self," but here has turned into its opposite, the "announcer of death itself."¹²² Further, the belief in the cause of "the empire's foe as Ulster's foe" and in an Ulster identity to uphold the fight has been reduced to "lies" and "good for nothing." The shadowed self produces a cultural invisibility at odds with their cultural inheritance.

Moving towards a notion of cultural tradition that is a "flexible, mutable entity" allows Moore to make sense of the trauma of war and a static cultural identity. On the rope-bridge, Moore becomes a changed man. At the end of Part Three, Moore states emphatically to Millen, "You'll never lead me again. I'm on my own here, you're on your own there. That's the way it should be" (OTSOU, 168). Moore has re-defined

himself in terms of an identity that is re-singularized, just as most of the men are able to do in varying degrees in Part Four when they are back at the Front. As a result of trauma, doubling, and the process of cultural haunting, Moore is the man best able to articulate the importance of the individual man over and above cultural identity or heritage. He re-frames his cultural identity in relation to his friends as well as to the past and in this transformation enforces the “complexities and ambivalences of the culturally haunted.”¹²³

The Home/place Within

In Part Four “Bonding,” before the men go over the top, they attempt to curb their nerves, and “make the blood boil.” McIlwaine suggests playing at Battle of the Boyne. Their cultural history and identity are performed “through the re-enactment of commemorative rituals”¹²⁴:

Anderson: How the hell can two men do the Battle of the Boyne?
McIlwaine: They do it without much more at Scarva.¹²⁵
Anderson: Very thing, Battle of Scarva.
McIlwaine: They have horses at Scarva.
Anderson: We’ll get the horses. To your feet, Millen. You’re a horse
(OTSOU, 181).

This need to get the blood pumping is a physicalization of their shared cultural identity but neither Moore nor Crawford want any part of it: so Anderson and McIlwaine defiantly lift Moore on the shoulders of Millen while Anderson says to Crawford, “Do as you’re told” (OTSOU, 181). The men are culturally trapped in McGuinness’ re-enactment of a re-enactment of a re-enactment. Crawford as Protestant King Billy of Orange sits on the shoulders of his horse, Pyper, and Moore as the Catholic King James sits on the shoulders of his horse, Millen. The historical event of the Battle of the Boyne disturbs Moore and Millen who are particularly reluctant to participate in this re-enactment of cultural heritage since they are on the (defeated) side of King James.

Anderson, who serves as commentator, insists that both sides keep to the outcome, that is King James and his horse must go down. In the middle of the mock battle, Pyper as the horse trips causing Crawford as Protestant King Billy to fall to the ground. After this collapsing of the wrong side, there is grave *silence*. Pyper says, “I fell” (OTSOU, 189), but it is not clear if it was intentional. The messing with myths is not a good sign especially if one of the key foundational myths of Protestant unionist identity has been physically and psychologically overturned. After this blow to their shared culture and history, the men must gather up strength: they proceed to perform a series of rituals that will once again ground them, but in a transformed cultural identity. Together they sing a hymn with the refrain, “Heaven is my home”; they put on Orange sashes and instead of keeping their own, they exchange them with each other; and Pyper rather than the preacher Roulston is chosen to lead them in prayer. The soldiers prepare to go over the top by re-imagining the mythologies of cultural identity, and making them their own. The chant of “Ulster. Ulster. Ulster. Ulster. Ulster” (OTSOU, 196) or what may also be read as “Home. Home. Home. Home. Home” becomes their battle cry and their final act performed together.

The home/place and one’s cultural identity is commonly equated with comfort and security, but the ghost as absent presence perturbs these notions that then become unsettling and unsafe. The structure of cultural identity and heritage collapses under the weight of Pyper’s refusal, accidental or not, to play according to the rules of ancestry, which the men ultimately realize is “only a game” (OTSOU, 184). Pyper leads the men to believe in an Ulster identity but only insofar as, it will not exclude each man’s own uniqueness. He does this by enlisting them to imagine that they are indeed in their

home/place in the North while at the same time on the fields of France. Pyper disables the idea of a sense of home/place as inextricable to identity, heritage, and most important locale, and instead forges the idea of a newly constructed cultural identity by way of the imaginary. Moore and Millen begin remembering “the banks of the (river) Bann” as a “second home” while Crawford remembers the River Foyle and McIlwaine the River Lagan (OTSOU, 186-187). The source of the strange smell is the Somme but as Pyper says, “It carries for miles. It smells like home. A river like home” (OTSOU, 187). Pyper tries to inspire them, “It’s bringing us home. We’re not in France. We’re home. We’re on our own territory. We’re fighting for home. This river is ours. This land’s ours. We’ve come home. (...) It’s out there. It’s waiting for you” (OTSOU, 188). Pyper challenges the men by equating home as a place within the imaginary even while it can be conjured by images of rivers and specific locales in Ulster. The conceptualization of the home/place as that of the imaginary is a ghostly metaphor because it links what is known (past) with a present moment to guide them in battle (future): “We’ve come home...It’s out there. It’s waiting for you” (OTSOU, 188). Pyper also wants to suggest that the home/place of Ulster is always already in the present as “it surrounds you” (OTSOU, 188).

Craig however stops Pyper, dismissing him and his imaginary notions of home and cultural inheritance:

It’s too late to tell us what we’re fighting for. We know where we are. We know what we’ve to do. And we know what we’re doing it for. We knew before we enlisted. We joined up willingly for that reason. Everyone of us, except you. You’ve learned it at long last. But you can’t teach us what we already know. You won’t save us, you won’t save yourself, imagining things. There’s nothing imaginary about this, Kenneth. This is the last battle. We’re going to die (OTSOU, 188).

Craig says, “We know where we are,” which suggests that they are definitely not at home. Pyper’s home-coming for the boys – who begin to be taken with Pyper’s imaginings of home – is converted by Craig into a home-coming that is troubled since the impending reality of battle brings with it the knowledge that they will all die. As ghosts, the men always move towards but never arrive at home because the home/place of the imaginary does not resolve the issues of cultural identity, belonging, and heritage. Rather the home/place of Ulster persists as a continually shifting term, put in practice only by what it means to each man individually, and thereby destabilizing any notion of a singularized home/place of Ulster. When Pyper leads the men to chant Ulster. Ulster. Ulster. Ulster. in the moments before going over the top, he may edge closer to becoming a true loyal Ulsterman but only by way of an astute awareness of the plurality of meanings in such a term.

The Haunting of the Ulsterman

Elder Pyper is the summation of all of those pressures of heritage and ancestry that he rejected earlier in his life and that represent a part of each man he knew in the 36th (Ulster) Division. Pyper renounced his class, his Protestant faith, his unionism, and his duty as a good Ulsterman in the hope for death. He struggled against his personal identity and a collective identity that had been assigned to him. The individual men in the 36th (Ulster) Division, however, influenced him more than any conceptual notion of this collective identity. Each of the seven men, as representative of the various facets of the Ulsterman, is a psychic doubling of Pyper, continuing to haunt him. McGuinness utilizes seven characters (the friends) and one character (the younger self) to symbolize both the old conflicts within Pyper as well as the new conflict caused by war neuroses. As an old

man, Pyper is no longer in conflict with his cultural heritage as he acknowledges that even though the men died, he is invested in continuing “their work in this province” in the home/place and is determined that “the freedom of faith they fought and died for would be maintained” (OTSOU, 98). Through the course of the play, we have seen the men as representatives of varying strands of the Ulsterman challenge that identity after the trauma of war. No longer is that identity so easily claimed or wanted, especially after their deaths. The strong Protestant unionist identity was found to be fragile and breakable under the strains and horror of war. *Observe the Sons of Ulster* is a play of haunting and about the critical ways in which this haunting “mediates” between culture and individual.¹²⁶

At the end of the play Craig says: “Whoever comes back alive, if any of us do, will have died as well. He’ll never be the same...even to come through this will be the same as dying” (OTSOU, 188). This statement at the end of the play mirrors the play’s opening when the elder Pyper confronts the ghost of Craig: “You were right David. The last battle. I died that day with you” (OTSOU, 99). To an extent, all of the ghosts over the course of the play lament their own deaths before they happen. In the play’s final scene, Elder Pyper reaches toward the ghost of his younger self, not quite reaching him. Because Elder Pyper will always be haunted, the memories of the Battle will not vanish and the ghosts of the past will always try to return home. Pyper is bound to his dead comrades in what Dominick LaCapra calls a “fidelity to trauma.”¹²⁷ LaCapra argues that “one’s bond with the dead, especially with dead intimates, may invest trauma with value and make its reliving a painful but necessary commemoration or memorial to which one remains dedicated.”¹²⁸ As the men were once fiercely dedicated to history and heritage, Pyper is

loyal to the remembrance of his friends and their shared home/place. The loss for Pyper remains difficult: he loses his friends to death, and suffers the permanent loss of a unified self, leaving him not exactly at home, hovering in that space between the living and the dead and, inevitably, becoming one with the world of ghosts. Even as the men of the 36th Ulster Division continue to haunt the present, Northern Ireland does much to claim its past as evidenced by annual Remembrance Day ceremonies while alternatively efforts are only slowly being made in the Republic to restore Irish WWI soldiers to their rightful place in history.

BOY SOLDIER

Ireland, in many ways, has disremembered its own history regarding World War One, that is, blocked out those events that disagreed with a particular vision and perception of the 20th century following partition. From the 1930s through the mid-1980s, the Republic ascribed to a politically motivated official version of the past, which erased the historical event of World War I and Ireland's contribution and sacrifice. Interesting to note that on the website of the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), under "History of Government" and further under "Irish Soldiers in the First World War" it reads, "The virtual disappearance of the First World War from the version of Irish history taught to the first few generations of the new independent Irish state had the result that few are aware of the extent of the Irish participation in the actual fighting."¹²⁹ This statement acknowledges the disappearance of this historical event, but what is troubling is that there is no explanation of how it happened or more important, what the consequences are, and have been, of this silent erasure from the collective conscious of Ireland. Why are playwrights, political scientists, historians, and the State rehabilitating

the memory of the First World War now? Two factors may contribute to this historiographical phenomenon, which links the fraught issue of commemoration in the South with the success of the peace process in the North. Through much of the 20th century it was indeed difficult to hold WWI commemorations in the Republic because of the potential to cause offense or antagonize those who viewed Irish participation as a betrayal. Today with efforts towards more stabilization in the North, which began with the Good Friday Agreement (1998), there is the opportunity to recognize the sacrifices of Irishmen and Ulstermen in WWI without too much repercussion by means of culture, political history, and for purposes here, theatre.

Boy Soldier, the most recent of the plays analyzed in this chapter, was created by the Waterford-based Red Kettle Theatre Company. Written by artistic director Ben Hennessy, the play revolves around the story of John Condon, who at age 14 was allegedly the youngest Allied soldier to die in World War One.¹³⁰ In an interview, writer Hennessy acknowledged that one of his actors, while doing research on the Great War, stumbled across the story of Condon who, as it happened, was from their own Waterford-city. The accidental finding of the boy soldier was the germ of an idea for Hennessy's play. Red Kettle is a professional theatre company founded in 1985 and for most of their 20-year history has produced plays by established Irish and Northern Irish writers as well as international artists.¹³¹ *Boy Soldier* was a departure as it was the first time the company produced a devised piece of theatre made in collaboration with actors, writers, designers, choreographers, composers, and visual artists.

Boy Soldier had its premiere in November 2006 in Waterford, Red Kettle's home base and marked a significant cultural moment by its reclamation of a piece of Ireland's

history heretofore ignored. Since then the play has toured the Republic extensively and is noteworthy, because even in the 21st century the story of John Condon and Ireland's involvement in the war would *still* have been unfamiliar to many Irish audiences.¹³² In *The Steward of Christendom* the storyline of Willie is only one strand of the play's complex narrative and in *Observe the Sons of Ulster* the account of the 36th Ulster Division is a story specific to the North whereas *Boy Soldier* blends historic events and the actual words of John Redmond and Willie Redmond with the fictional imaginings of boys of the 16th Irish Division. Irish audiences had an opportunity to participate in the renewed historiographical interest in Ireland's contribution to WWI and in this shift in attention.

This analysis of *Boy Soldier* links haunting and cultural memory with the performative aspects of the play. First I examine how the performative aspects of haunting utilized in the play, actual speeches and images of war, objects associated with the dead, and the body of John Condon, become not only ways of knowing the past but also and simultaneously, as Alice Rayner puts it, "constitute a kind of living memorial in which the ghosts of history are animated."¹³³ Second I analyze the performative act of naming, also viewed as an act of ghostly recovery. Brogan asserts that the ghost is useful as a "literary metaphor" in the "larger process" of re-invention and the re-vision of history, but the ghost may be read as a performative, defined by its actions and by the way that, on the stage, memory is corporealized by the ghost.¹³⁴ I argue that it is this act of naming – which is also an act of re-membling – performed by the dead soldiers within the context of the First World War that allows each ghost to acknowledge an identity as Irishman in the British army, and consequently reclaims for those soldiers a

place in political and cultural memory and in the home/place of Irish history. The linkage of naming with knowing and recognition literally brings the ghost soldiers back home to Irish stages back from the fields of Ypres where they have been exiled since 1917. It remains a troubled home-coming because the positioning of John Condon and the WWI Irish soldier in Irish historiography and in public acts of remembrance continues to be a fierce subject of debate and even today not easily resolvable.

Boy Soldier follows in the footsteps of *Observe the Sons of Ulster* as members of Red Kettle were inspired by McGuinness' play after researching and rehearsing their own production of *Observe the Sons of Ulster* in April 1990, but differs from the other two plays in its form and how it was constructed. Since the theatre company members worked collaboratively with Hennessy in devising the piece, the play is not character-driven like *The Steward of Christendom* and *Observe the Sons of Ulster*, nor does it have these two plays' poetic lyricism. Rather *Boy Soldier* is a series of short scenes that blends documentary-like realism (projected images and historical footage) with physical theatre, and uses onstage sound effects and music, and a set comprised of "wooden bottle-crates and wooden planks."¹³⁵ Half of the action takes place in a variety of locales before the boys go off to war,¹³⁶ while the other half occurs during the boys' time at the Western Front, which includes a trench in Belgium and the floor of the British Parliament. One scene in the present-day (2006) is set at a forum discussion in Waterford to debate the case of Condon regarding the purported age of 14 at his death and his alleged burial place in Flanders, which according to Hennessy, is the second most visited gravesite in the world.¹³⁷ The play is not linearly constructed but rather jumps back and forth in time, including scenes where John Condon speaks "from the grave." Lastly, unlike *The*

Steward of Christendom and *Observe the Sons of Ulster* whose protagonists are haunted by the ghost of the dead soldier, the character of Condon does not haunt any one individual, but since he was a real person who once walked the streets of Waterford he haunts the nation more broadly.

The style of the play might be characterized as Brechtian, as one critic noted in his review,¹³⁸ by the way it deploys several strategies of defamiliarization: non-realistic scenic design, lack of sentimentality, and calling attention to the artificiality of performance. For example, one realistic scene takes place on the floor of the British House of Parliament with speakers Lloyd George and H.H. Asquith, among others, debating the pros and cons of conscription. This scene is immediately followed by a highly stylized one of soldiers running about the stage, getting shot, falling to the ground, and struggling to get up, only to begin to run again, get hit, and fall. Two “emotionless actors” create the sound effects of gunshots by pushing wooden planks to the floor (BS, 29). The scene is repeated until the actors have exhausted themselves, the soldiers only then realizing “that the ‘shots’ have stopped” (BS, 29). The structure of *Boy Soldier* may be described as Brechtian in the form of epic theatre but its dramaturgy lacks the materialist critique of social relations so identified with a Brechtian dramaturgy. *Boy Soldier* may serve as a social critique of Ireland’s long-standing neglect of its own but does not examine the material conditions of class or history for example, that made this exclusion possible. What we can draw out from thinking about Brecht and his dramaturgy is what Antony Tatlow describes as “the stress on the inseparability of life and death, almost an obsession in (Brecht’s) texts,”¹³⁹ which of course marks the landscape of ghosts.

The Fictional with the Historical

Boy Soldier combines the historical record (life in the trenches; historical figures; dates of death) with fictional imaginings to tell the story of John Condon. The play is historically situated between the years 1913-1915 from Condon's enlistment in 1913 to his death on May 24, 1915 at the 2nd Battle of Ypres, but the play opens with the death of the character "Redmond" on the battlefield, which occurred in June 1917. A prime example of Hennessy's fictional re-telling is the amalgamation of the historical figures John Redmond and Willie Redmond into the one character of Redmond. John and Willie were brothers, Members of Parliament, and gifted speakers dedicated to the fight for Home Rule in the Houses of Parliament and in recruitment rallies.¹⁴⁰ Howsoever problematic this dual character might be for historiographers, with research I found that their speeches are easily distinguishable, as John was known as the more eloquent speaker whereas Willie was the impassioned one. Similar to the play's content, the speeches of Redmond blend the historical record with the creativity of the writer. In the play, (John) Redmond uses the rhetoric of Ireland's interests in the recruiting speech he gave on September 20, 1914 at Woodenbridge, County Wicklow. The speech given in the play (below) is quite similar to the one given by the real John Redmond:

The interests of Ireland - of the whole of Ireland - are at stake in this war. This war is undertaken in the defence of the highest principals of religion morality and right, and it would be a disgrace for ever to our country and a reproach to her manhood and a denial of the lesson of her *history* if young Ireland confined their efforts to remaining at home to defend the shores of Ireland from an unlikely invasion and to shrinking from the duty of proving that on the field battle that gallantry and courage that has distinguished our race all through *history*... Go and account yourselves as men. Not only for Ireland itself, but wherever the fighting

line extends, in defence of right, of freedom and religion in this war¹⁴¹ (BS, 13).

Redmond's repetition of the word history is particularly interesting, as if he were already dead and looking back at how this critical point in time would be written about and remembered.¹⁴² Redmond's speech, nearly identical to the actual one, is an example of the performance of history, wherein such a ghostly moment can bring the spectator to an awareness of seeing oneself seeing the past.¹⁴³ While a spectator might not be aware of the theatrical construct of "Redmond," Redmond and his discourses nevertheless becomes a space for witnessing the "performance of history" and the reappearance of historical ghosts, thereby – as Freddie Rokem articulates it – "creating a bridge between performance and history" and between the ghostly and the real.¹⁴⁴ This bridging of performance/history and ghostly/real is also found in the use of stage objects in performance.

Objects of/in Performance

Objects in performance are a haunting notion. As Marvin Carlson has noted, "stage objects may well be signs of *absent* realities, values or concepts, but what is more interesting is that they are also *real* objects inhabiting the same space as the audience."¹⁴⁵ This absent presence of the object aligns with the ghost in more ways than one. For example, in *Boy Soldier*, the object of the soldier's boot is viewed as an extension of the dead person (sign of the absent) as well as a thing once worn (the real thing). And yet, a more intriguing notion of the representation of the thing onstage comes from Herbert Blau by way of his theory of ghosting. In *Take Up the Bodies*, Blau writes, "What seems true in the play of appearances...is that there is no way in which the thing we want to represent can exist within representation itself, because of the disjuncture between words

and things, images and meanings, nomenclature and being...¹⁴⁶ Blau seems to suggest that since theatre is all about appearances – things both are and are not what they appear to represent. This is due to the disjuncture between the thing onstage and how the thing is thought, described, and meant or not meant. This disjuncture seems to be the space between the thing (what it is) and its perceived significance (what it seems to represent) and, it would appear, this space between word and thing is a dynamic place for ghosts to reside. Thus the object or thing haunts because of the disconnect between the thing and its appearance on the stage. The appearance of things onstage, Blau seems to imply, goes beyond representation, or is outside representation, and therefore outside the structure of theater itself.

Two scenes in the play highlight the haunting nature of the soldier's boot, which can be linked to Blau's ideas on ghosting. During the forum discussion in Scene 15 that takes place in 2006, the dead body of Condon is situated downstage center, while a panel of contributors sit around a table to debate the truth claims about Condon's age and burial place. The nephew of the boy soldier, also (hauntingly) named John Condon, presents the panelists with the piece of his uncle's boot 6322 still in the family.¹⁴⁷ When the character of the nephew takes out the piece of boot, the object in one sense links the past with the present within the context of the play while at the same time denying any connection to history or the now because it is merely a piece of boot. There is no meaning attached to the piece of boot, and in another sense can only be looked at in its own terms – both within and outside representation. The idea that the boot piece may or may not have belonged to the boy soldier, as the boot stamping of 6322 4/R.I.R. was found to be ambiguous, the theatrical object nevertheless becomes a memorial to the dead – albeit an

ambivalent one. Similar to Willie's letter and uniform received by Dunne in *The Steward of Christendom*, this object is only a piece of John Condon that is left. The ghostly object of the boot piece persists as a meaningful representation of the political and the personal. The boot piece may have been sent back home to Condon's father from the fields of war, but it is also only a piece of material; a piece of something once worn by a now-dead son and soldier; and a piece that is now, not even verifiable. The piece of boot is at once historical and indeterminate (as to whom it belonged) suggesting a lack of closure to the circumstances surrounding the loss of the WWI soldier with which Ireland continues to grapple. The power of haunting is reflected in the power of the object that endures as a compelling yet difficult piece of one soldier's life.

Scene 18 wherein the soldiers speak directly to the audience is a short but dramatic scene as it incorporates the theatrical trope of the empty boots to represent the dead. Like the piece of boot, however, the boots defy and deny representation. The character of Soldier 1 describes the second battle of Ypres (April 22 – May 25, 1915) in much detail from the number of canisters of chlorine gas used (5,700) to the number of men who died in the first ten minutes (5,000) to the number of Allied soldiers killed (69,000). After Soldier 2 recites, "they didn't find John Condon's body until 8 years later – some farmer digging his field – they sent his father a bit of his boot," one boot falls "from above" to the floor. In the subsequent narration, twelve boots fall and by the end of the scene when Soldier 4 says nearly 60,000 Irishmen lost their lives, "an avalanche of boots fall" from the sky (BS, 43). Off stage these objects/boots signify very little other than they are objects once worn. Yet on the stage, they can be read as just boots but also as representation for all the dead soldiers. The effects of the thundering boots hitting the

stage floor and the subsequent tableaux of scattered empty boots achieve an indescribable potency, more than a reading of the boots as representation in and of themselves. The issue here then is the action of the boots rather than the object of boots. Hence, the boots occupy liminal spaces of representation, neither here nor there in terms of defining that representation. The ghostly Condon is one with the liminal landscape of boots, for amidst the slaughter of the boots strewn haphazardly across the ground, the (dead) boy soldier John Condon moves through the dead boots towards his father, becoming a living memorial to himself and to his fellow soldiers.

History, Images, and Thought

In *Boy Soldier*, the idea of loss itself may be understood by way of the various moving and still images projected onto a wall that then becomes both historical and theatrical background (BS, 1). Some of the historical images and footage projected at eighteen different points in the play include “men in civilian clothes after enlisting—August/September 1914,” “(p)rojected footage of soldiers digging and building,” “a slow scan over a photograph of a war-torn landscape with dead soldiers,” and “(p)rojections of gas clouds” (BS, 20, 24, 29, 36). Just these four images/projections tell a story of the Irish soldier during World War I: from his enlistment, to his digging and building trenches on the Western Front, to his death by poisonous gas. The images/projections are ghostly not only because of the technical aspect of projected images that dissolve in and out of view, but also because they invoke actual scenes from the past and suggest histories that have indeed been lost. These lost histories may return in *Boy Soldier* but their trait as being lost cannot be overcome for as Alice Rayner proposes the “lost history returns neither as the original nor as a duplicate, for the lost history has not gone anywhere from which to

return. It is already in place as a fault line or a fissure that shapes a psychic topography of history.”¹⁴⁸ In other words, because the historical event of World War I has been shaped by its erasure, this crack or absence in the nation’s historiography will hold sway as a presence in the nation’s consciousness.

All of the actors play multiple roles except for the actor playing Condon, thereby giving the boy soldier particular significance as a haunting presence because of a singularized identification within the historical past. The historical Condon may haunt *Boy Soldier* from its beginning, but the play’s fictional Condon only becomes a ghost in scene 14 when he is poisoned by gas. Rather than a realistic portrayal of the men’s suffocation, the stage directions indicate that “the men slowly begin to gasp for breath – craning their necks to the sky and with highly stylized ‘choking and gasping’ sink to the ground on their knees. John Condon...eventually falls to the floor – he is dead” (BS, 36). What follows next is that the rest of the men struggle to form a line together, but then immediately jump up into a rousing music hall routine, singing “We were gassed last night, Gassed the night before; Gonna get gassed tonight If we never get gassed any more” (BS, 36). The disruption of the death of Condon with the frivolity of a dance line suggests a performative strategy that haunts in its reliance on satirizing the moment of death and its refusal to invest it with sentimentality. From this point forward, Condon engages in a performance of haunting by the visibility of his dead body in subsequent scenes and by his ghostly direct address to the audience. His voice from the grave calls attention to remembering the “other fellas” who died:

They talk about my age now – Like it matters – Call me
the boy soldier – Like I’m more than I was and – I dunno –
less than I was as well – Like I should be remembered cos
of my age – ... A lot o’ youngfellas died – thousands – in

squalor – mud y’know and barbed wire and dead bodies and lice...Those of us that died in those first years – were sometimes buried and reburied – buried and then some shell would blast some other poor souls to pieces – *smithereens* – over 56,000 never found – some of them I knew – some from Waterford - even a few Ballybricken men - died same day as me – but never found – *smithereens* – in some farmers field – ...Waterford men – in *smithereens* and Cork men, and Dublin men and Sligo men and Galway men and Longford, Kilkenny – everywhere – all over here – buried in the air – *smithereens* – I mean all of them – they were all 14 once – Y’know – Nobody talks about them (BS, 40, emphasis added).

The repetition of the word *smithereens* suggests the trouble that Condon has piecing together the fragments of his friends. Moreover Condon’s re-membering is an effort to restore the parts of a body to its whole, if only in language. These men were scattered all over the Western Front, and Condon’s attempt to *re-member them is doubly difficult*: as an action to perform and an acknowledgement of the disremembrance of the Irish soldier, a conscious deletion from Ireland’s History or memory. To re-member is in many ways to come to terms with a past, while recognizing that as Brogan states, “remembering is not a simple or even safe act. (...) the ghost’s elusiveness conveys a past not easily accessible.”¹⁴⁹

Acts of Naming, Acts of Re-Membering

The name of John Condon reverberates throughout *Boy Soldier*, as does the connection between the act of naming and the act of re-membering. The end of the play mirrors the opening – a barrage of bullets, stop, silence, the men step over the top. Significant to the action is the reading of names albeit seven men among thousands killed:

THE MEN RISE AND AS ORDINARY MEN STEP ‘OVER THE TOP’. THEY COME TO A STANDSTILL FACING

*THE AUDIENCE. A LOUD BARRAGE OF MACHINE GUN FIRE. ... WITHOUT EMOTION THE MEN SAY THEIR NAMES – AS JOHN CONDON...MOVES ABOUT SLOWLY UPSTAGE.
(PROJECTION DEAD YOUNG SOLDIER)]*

Redmond: Willie Redmond,
Ballytrent, Wexford
Died 7th June 1917.
Tommy: Tommy Walsh
St. John's, Waterford
Died 16th August 1915
Sully: Joe Sullivan
Glasnevin, Dublin
Died 9th August 1915
John P: John Power
Ballybricken, Waterford
Died 27th December 1915
...
Martin: Martin Gaule
Ballybricken, Waterford
Died 24th May 1915
John: John Condon
Jenkin's Lane, Waterford
Died 24th May 1915

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK – END (BS, 48).

The Irish nation consciously participated in an act of disremembrance of its involvement in World War One: an omission of the narrative and names of the Great War in order to more favorably satisfy a political self-image of Irish nationalism. For Rayner, “The recovery of history and its evidence is an imaginative and performative act of naming...(o)nce named and staged...they are no longer simply real but ghostly.”¹⁵⁰ The dead soldiers actively re-member themselves and in the process bring themselves back home and back into history. The performative act of naming within the context of the First World War is the beginning of a dialogue of recognition amending past, present, and future histories. *Boy Soldier* opens a space for the narrative of the Irish soldier in the British army to be re-membered and the soldiers themselves to be re-named at home

rather than the bits of them (smithereens) left abroad. The act of naming is a type of home-coming thrust upon them by the performative act, but one that is also illusory, since the boys never experienced home leave, the home front, or coming-home.

Ghosts as a Force of Unforgetting

Rayner analyzes in her book how ghosts can be viewed as a force for unforgetting. This idea, and the perception of ghosts that becomes a way of re-knowing the past resonate with *Boy Soldier*, since the play's resuscitation of the life of John Condon and the Irish boys in British uniform assists the nation's effort against an intentional forgetting. Playwright Hennessy himself roamed with the ghost of John Condon, writing "that's what he (John Condon) said to me – remember them – Waterford fellas that walked the same streets as me – ordinary fellas that we've forgotten – remember them – give them back their Irishness – bring them back to Ballybricken."¹⁵¹ The call to give them back their Irishness is a call to restore their place within the pages of Irish history and like an echo of Hamlet's ghost, the call to remember them involves both a physical and a mental form of action. Rayner reminds us, "ghosts do not have the power of action," but rather they must "call upon the living to act for them."¹⁵²

Memory and remembrance play a significant part in piecing together the fragments (lives) of these men and their stories. For Michel Foucault, "memory is a very important factor in struggle. If one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. It is vital to have possession of this memory, to control it, administer it, tell it what it must contain."¹⁵³ It is not through the facts of historical events but rather through the interpretation of history and the exclusions and disremembrances that cultural perceptions of a society are formed. The memory of John Condon lives on in Hennessy's

drama *Boy Soldier* and in a recently published chapbook of poems dedicated to him.¹⁵⁴ In 2003, discussions began in Waterford to build a war memorial in commemoration of John Condon and the other Irish men who served in the war. Almost immediately there was opposition to the memorial as “offensive” and “very British,” by those who claimed that, “Condon had not fought for freedom but for British imperialism.”¹⁵⁵ A plaque dedicated to John Condon was unveiled in November 2007 at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Waterford and in November 2006, the Port of Waterford agreed to fund the memorial statute, yet as of this writing, no memorial has been built. The question is: what is Ireland’s responsibility to its war dead?

Conclusions

Ireland may very well have been on the brink of civil war if not for the outbreak of World War One. The anxiety over Home Rule had forced Ulster unionists to protect themselves from a possible separation from Great Britain in the form of the Ulster Volunteer Force. The UVF and the National Volunteers, both armed forces with over 100,000 members each were ready to fight to the death either for or against Home Rule. “To both sides,” David Harkness argues, “national allegiance was at stake and, to both sides, allegiance was possible only to one state.”¹⁵⁶ As it turns out, the world will never know what would have happened, if history had not intervened.

The policy of Home Rule in effect divided the island and if it had been implemented, Home Rule may have led the North and South down very different courses of history resulting in divergent notions about what the home/place might mean today. Historically linked to the outbreak of World War One, both Home Rule and the war were controversial subjects for a very long time. The Great War was a defining moment in the

island's history since thousands of men sacrificed their lives for the Allied cause: young and old, unionist and nationalist, Catholic and Protestant, working class and politician, all fighting side by side. David Fitzpatrick observes that, "Sadly it was simpler for Irish nationalists and loyalists to die together in war than to live together in peace."¹⁵⁷ Over the course of the war, the Irish question, that is the partition of the island, was settled. The specters of the First World War haunt both sides of the border – but for very different reasons. For the ghosts signal that the mourning process is not over, the enormous loss of life north and south not recoverable. The ghost is "a refusal to accept the acceptance of loss" and there is no closure to mourning.¹⁵⁸

In the South, the war haunts because it has been left out of Ireland's History: forgotten, erased, denied, and disremembered. The ghosts in Barry's *The Steward of Christendom* and Hennessy's *Boy Soldier* serve as reappearing reminders that the past is never past and that Ireland has responsibilities to that past. The past is continuing unfolding, like the present, like the future. In these plays, the ghost is not memory – it is a being of multi-temporality charging back and forth through time and space. The North is haunted by its myths, which often lead to fixed convictions, a stable cultural identity, and a deeply entrenched attachment to tradition. The ghosts in McGuinness' *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* are beings that cannot remain locked in static categories of identity. The trauma of war disallows any kind of stability or sure footing. And to be sure, in 1914 there was fluidity to national identity, and so to be loyal and Irish – to be an Irish soldier in British uniform – to be Irish and British – was not extra-ordinary. The either/or categories were not settled, just as the ghost upsets the either/or category. In the next chapter, we venture to the time of the Troubles wherein

identity politics and fixed categories of Catholic Nationalist and Protestant Loyalists had become a reality.

In Ireland, the question is not about how *not* to respond to loss but how to remain un-reconciled to that loss and how to be un-settled at home. To continue to mourn is in fact a kind of memorial to the dead or a commemorative act. While WWI was noisily blared in the North, which possibly led to a reification of cultural identity, it was silenced in the South and that “silence does not release grief.”¹⁵⁹ Reification leaves remains and silence only remains festering. In each case there is an attempt to retrieve and bring back home what was lost. In Ireland silence as well as reification “prolongs the trauma and exposes the unhealed wound of the people and the country.”¹⁶⁰ This silencing and the condition of reification are now re-surfacing – like the ghost – in the home/place of the South and the North and in the current historiography of the island.

Maybe the best way to honor the dead is to not let them rest in peace.¹⁶¹

CHAPTER THREE

Ghosts of the Troubles: Violence, Trauma, and the Politics of Haunting

Northern Ireland has never been either state or nation, nor has it ever had any consciousness of itself that has not been fundamentally beleaguered by the contrary consciousness that each of the different sects there know the other to possess, each knowing that this implied a belonging to others outside Northern Ireland which excluded such belonging to “others” inside it.¹⁶²

GRETA: (*reading*) “Graveyard Girls Greet The Ghosts. Three Derry women have solved those holiday blues by turning into ghostbusters. They are sitting in Creggan graveyard in Derry waiting for the dead to rise. A spokesman for the girls, Mr. Dido Martin, said, ‘They have seen a vision. Forget moving statues and Maggiagore, this is the big one.’”¹⁶³

In Frank McGuinness’ *Carthaginians*, the ghostbusters – Maela, Greta, and Sarah – reside in a graveyard along with their friends Hark, Paul, and Seph, all waiting for the dead to rise again. In this haunted in-between place of the burial ground, the characters alternatively experience delight and sorrow, laughter and tears. The public trauma of Bloody Sunday¹⁶⁴ is juxtaposed with the personal anguish of the characters, and thus given new significance in McGuinness’ drama. The play’s flippant relationship towards life and death reaches its apex with the performance of *The Burning Balaclava* the play-within-a-play, which mocks the violence of the Troubles and the representation of Irish stereotypes. McGuinness’ dramatic response to January 30, 1972 is neither one of historical reproduction nor memory, but rather he works with a dramaturgy of diversions

and disassociations that, placed alongside the painful inheritance of Bloody Sunday, speak to the disruptive effects of trauma and to the resilience of those who experience traumatic loss.¹⁶⁵ Significantly McGuinness disrupts the linearity of temporality and history by satirizing the representation of violence in the play-within-a-play and in so doing takes aim at the ossification of a violent history and the valorization of violence that was so prevalent in early Irish drama. The problem of representation, especially the representation of violence, connected as it is to haunted identities and the ghosts of Irish theater and history past, is a continuing issue on the island having plagued its dramatists for over a century.

This chapter examines the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in three contemporary Irish and Northern Irish plays through the lens of theories of violence, trauma, and the politics of haunting. As in the previous chapter, the focus of analysis is the figure of the ghost, which within these plays is always the innocent victim of violence, whether from sectarianism or the British state. The three plays I will analyze speak to the problem of representing the Troubles through the presence of the ghost and through fragmentary structures – both of which disrupt and haunt the idea of singular versions of the past. Located within the historical context of the recent Troubles from the 1960s to the present, these plays (I contend) pervert normative ideas about temporality and causality by arguing that sectarian violence and societal trauma, caught as they are in a web of history, are not cause and effect conditions. Rather they produce a crisis in historical narrativity that theatre, through the figure of the ghost, is able to stage by way of the absent and the unresolved. I argue the playwrights give these dead victims a fractured be/longing: fractured because their attempts to escape from the sectarian

identities history has ascribed to them is continually thwarted by violence, and be/longing because the desire to exist in a kind of placelessness located beyond exclusion and violence is both never-ending and never fulfilled.

I argue that the playwrights I explore here implement dramaturgical structures that fragment time, space, and character. These disruptive structures function similarly to ghosts – ghosts are anachronistic in that they appear from a past in a present where they do not belong – and are composed of temporally and spatially shifting scenes and images that reveal the nature of history as incomplete, disordered, and messy. Bliss Cua Lim describes the phenomenon of the “split experience of temporality on the part of the spectator,” and in the context of these plays in particular, the uncanny way space and time are fragmented:

(the) retelling of already accomplished events proceeds as an unfolding in the viewer’s present, the knowledge that a tragedy has already come to pass is combined with the urgent feeling that the past has yet to happen. Roland Barthes calls this feeling a “vertigo of time defeated,” an uncanny and conflicted sense of temporality...” prompting us to “shudder... over a catastrophe which has already occurred”; we feel, with a pang, that the dead have yet to die.¹⁶⁶

Barthes’ vertigo of time defeated melds past, present, and future in a description of that dizzying awareness located in the present moment of performance: when the past has both happened and is about to happen. The powerful dramaturgy of the plays and their carefully drawn characters make it possible for the viewer to feel that the dead may not have to die again, as the tragic events do not unfold but rather loop back in on themselves. The plays here question the relationship between their own fragmentary nature and the viewer’s desire to construct an interpretation that is more unified or whole.

In terms of character, the plays exploit the idea of anonymity that disorients the viewer by intentionally masking identity, by a lack of knowledge about identity, or by abandoning proper names for identities that are non-specific, which then rupture the very frameworks used to establish identity. None of the plays have a conventional protagonist – the collective becomes the central character – thereby disallowing viewer-identification with any one character. While the fragments are brought together through the shared experience of theatre as well as the boundaries of the play, their fragmentary nature also allows viewers to produce their own chains of thought and associations that contribute to new ways of knowing on both a personal and collective level.

The plays analyzed are Vincent Woods' *At the Black Pigs' Dyke* (1992), Brian Friel's *The Freedom of the City* (1973), and Michael Duke's *Revenge* (2004). They are best described as Troubles dramas, yet they can also be characterized as border plays, taking place either on the edges of the territorial border between North and South or the gap between the worlds of the living and the dead, between present and past. The playwrights here move beyond the borders of realism and tackle the problem of representation specifically by implementing non-linear narrative structures, divided stage spaces, doubling of characters, and the interweaving of natural and supernatural worlds. Using these differing modes of representation to perturb the viewer's sense of cause and effect as it relates to violence and trauma, the plays attest to the power and the obligation of remembrance within a trauma-inflicted society and pose both basic and profound human questions about living with violence that goes far beyond the boundaries of the North. The responsibility to these ghosts, the plays suggest, is not to stay affixed in the past, but to move towards engaged remembering, what Graham Dawson characterizes as

“an ongoing process of opening to that past,”¹⁶⁷ so that the dead are kept alive. Yet, as Eugene MacNamee points out in a review of *Revenge*, playwrights who grapple with the Troubles run the risk of having too much memory in “hostaging the future to the past.”¹⁶⁸ The ghosts then inhabit that precarious space between remembering and forgetting.

At the Black Pig's Dyke takes place on the border area between Leitrim (South) and Fermanagh (North) during several key historical moments in the 20th century. Told by way of flashback, fable, and the mummers' play, Woods' drama looks back at the cycle of violence as it affects three generations of one family when Lizzie, a young Catholic woman decides to marry Jack, a young Protestant man. The play begins with the murders of Lizzie, now a middle-aged woman, and her daughter Sarah, and unfolds from here in a dramaturgical mode of spatial and temporal shifts, highlighting the ghosts' return to sites of violence, and their desire to belong in a place beyond sectarianism.

The second play I analyze is based on only one historical event and takes place over the course of several weeks as opposed to Woods' play, which spans generations. *The Freedom of the City* is often viewed as Brian Friel's political (and contentious) response to Bloody Sunday due to the play's overt similarity to the events surrounding January 30, 1972. The fictional *The Freedom of the City* occurs in a different time (1970 vs. 1972) and space (an inside locale vs. outside on the streets) than the actual Bloody Sunday but revolves around analogous circumstances. The play opens with the “grotesque” display of three dead protesters from the Catholic nationalist community, who then return as ghosts to the Guildhall, the (Unionist) local seat of government, the place where they have temporarily escaped the violence of the streets, but where they definitely do not belong. Several narratives are juxtaposed in split time and space: one

strand follows the activities of the protesters; a second concerns the official inquiry set up to investigate how they came to be gunned down by British troops; and a third covers the conflicting reports regarding their “takeover” of the Guildhall.

Whereas *The Freedom of City* is linked to a particular historical event, and *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* is a kind of historical play, Michael Duke’s play *Revenge*, eliminates all specificity to time and place, and removes proper names from most of the characters.

Also, unlike the previous two plays, wherein either Irish republicans (*At the Black Pig’s Dyke*) or British forces (*The Freedom of the City*) are implicated in the violence, *Revenge* features victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of/to violence but none of them are culturally identified. Taking place on the festival of Samhain, when the worlds of the living and the dead collide, the play depicts the aftermath of a car bombing that destroys one family, whose Father and Mother nearly get caught up in the cycle of retaliation again. With no identifying cultural markers, the characters belong to neither community, yet the ghosts as powerful presences are marked as powerless victims of what can only be sectarian violence, whose only desire is to be/long to the living once more.

The three plays emphasize the effects of violence on the individual body (most expressly demonstrated in the maimed body of the Son in *Revenge*), while the playwrights also propose that violence leaves its ghostly effects on the social body. I argue that the plays offer a way to think about ghosts as sociological, rather than psychological, and as such disrupt deeply held notions about communal identity and trauma in the North and the South. The ghosts in these plays do not resolve the Troubles nor does any hope of an ending to the conflict mean imminent closure; rather I interpret the ghosts’ inability to die as attempts to undermine the cycle of violence while also

underscoring the importance of what it means to remember. As discussed in Chapter One, remembrance in Northern Ireland is fraught with the tension between two separate communities' sense of identity and belonging: what does it mean to remember and to whom is it significant? For the two communities, looking to the past means two different, but not mutually exclusive things.¹⁶⁹ Ultimately, I contend that to remember in the plays of Woods, Friel, and Duke does not allow one ideology or identity to claim victory over another but instead, with the presence of the ghost, to remember is to loosen the stranglehold of identity and the grasp of a linear temporality so that these conditions collapse into an "urgent responsibility" towards what Cathy Caruth refers to as an "ethics of memory."¹⁷⁰ The ghosts here belong to a fractured past but desire to be remembered as tragic victims caught up in the violence of the Troubles, a part of Northern Irish history that remains unsettled and seemingly irresolvable.

Historiography, Violence, and the Troubles

Over the past four decades, the Troubles have been well documented by historians and non-fiction writers alike. The Troubles refers to the conflict in the North that began in the 1960s escalated during the first civil rights marches in 1968, and led to the deployment of British troops to the province in 1969.¹⁷¹ For many, the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998 marked the end to the Troubles, yet killings, sporadic violence, and intimidatory tactics continue as of this writing. Conventional historical narratives of the Troubles rely on a linear-focused chronology of events, usually beginning in the mid-1960s through the mid-90s and today.¹⁷² For J. Bowyer Bell, these accounts soon prove to be insufficient, however, because there never seems to be a "formal or satisfactory stopping place," especially when "new facts about old troubles emerge."¹⁷³ Furthermore,

the complexity of the issues combined with the multiplicity of political and disciplinary viewpoints suggests the impossibility of a definitive account, and for some, even an ending date. Since historical narratives of the Troubles are neither singular nor complete, delving into some of the conditions that laid the foundation for this period of political upheaval allows a sort of framing to those fragments of history that come back to haunt the plays.

The act of partition created defined territories but also a sense of the uncanny, for it was now a strange yet familiar experience for those inhabitants who crossed the border. As Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs describe it, this uncanny experience is that “of being in place and ‘out of place’ *simultaneously*.”¹⁷⁴ In 1920 the Government of Ireland Act provided the constitutional framework of Northern Ireland by partitioning the island with both North and South under the jurisdiction of the British Empire.¹⁷⁵ According to Cathal McCall the Government of Ireland Act (1920) itself did not end the contentious relationship between North and South because “the distinction between the ethnic Ulster Protestant community and the Irish nation did not have a clear territorial boundary.”¹⁷⁶ This resulted for a time in a border that was unsettled and unclear. That changed with the negotiations between England and Ireland following the Irish War of Independence that led to the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in December 1921. To many however the treaty “resolv[ed] the colonial contradiction south” but institutionalized the dilemma north,¹⁷⁷ thereby instigating what could be called a sustained irresolvability. McCall contends that with partition in 1921, Northern Irish Catholics felt “cast adrift” and left in a situation that was “hostile to their identity” while the Protestant unionists “interpreted their identity in terms of citizenship and the modern state.”¹⁷⁸ Many in the unionist

community believed that Northern nationalists would be traitorous towards Britain, and thus they needed to exert hegemonic control over economics, politics, and territory as a necessary course for survival.¹⁷⁹ The nationalist community too feared for its very existence. The ongoing cycle of violence and retribution underscored in the plays and endemic to the conflict of the Troubles is, in many ways, the manifestation of these fears from the early days of partition combined with a mutual mistrust and the fight for survival by both communities. The border area as both a contested site and an uncanny space became even more threatening in what Gelder and Jacobs describe as an “unsettled settledness,” a haunting notion that centered on the crisis of belonging and national identity.¹⁸⁰

By the mid-1960s several factors were simultaneously taking place, including the launch of the civil rights movement, the year of notable anniversaries in 1966, and the formation of the loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) to counter a growing resurgence in IRA activities.¹⁸¹ Members of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, comprised of both Protestants and Catholics, demanded equal rights in housing, employment, and most important representation in local government for the minority Catholic community. The civil rights movement was a contentious political movement because the marches were often banned – and then the bans defied – many loyalist and unionist organizations held counter demonstrations, and the escalation of violence and riots soon became perniciously attached to what began as peaceful marches. Added to all of this: the widely held belief in the Catholic nationalist areas that British justice and law was selective and therefore prejudiced against them, (the policy of internment without trial was introduced in Northern Ireland in 1971) and the fact that

border Protestants feared retaliatory acts by the IRA on account of identity alone. The idea to suppress the violent, rough elements of the marches by using more violence supported military solutions that were more or less black and white, and yet it is here that history proves to be most disordered and messy due to the volume of competing voices rallying to be heard. From what perspective can the historical narrative of the Troubles be (justifiably) told? Is the idea of neutrality possible in such a narrative? What gets left out in historical narratives of the North is undoubtedly as potent as what gets left in. The complexity of the problems related to civil rights and the rise of paramilitary activities required complex solutions; pre-conceived notions about the civil rights movement as violent and about a situation many believed could be more or less resolved simply disallowed a multiplicity of strategies that might have led to new ways of thinking about civil rights, the relationship between the two communities, and the curtailing of violence at any cost.

The historical context of the Troubles is indeed extensive and complicated, but for Irish and Northern Irish playwrights the separation of events from historical context is often necessary in dramatic interpretations. Isolating and examining specific historical episodes of the Troubles requires an acknowledgement of the difficulty in doing so because these episodes are in no way singular but rather one of a series of events. While the Troubles spans over thirty years (and the historical context of conflict in the region goes back hundreds of years) it has too often been punctured by such violent turning points as Bloody Sunday in 1972 (also known as the Bogside Massacre) and the Remembrance Day bombing in 1987 (also known as the Poppy Day Massacre). In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in the world, events are taken over by other events,

inevitably overlapping and inextricably entwined. Important to mark then is the risk in analyzing these plays as discrete, which has the potential of distorting the complexities and nuances of the overall conflict, which in turn is an injustice to the situation. I view the plays here not as truth or reality or even in isolation; rather I examine them within a mode of haunting, first as *representations* of past and present events, and second, as *part* of the interconnected layers of history that comprise the Troubles; most important, however, I look at the plays as accounts of a past that is *incomplete* and *temporally chaotic*. As Derrida reminds us, “Haunting is historical, to be sure, but it is not dated, it is never docilely given a date in the chain of precedents, day after day, according to the instituted order of the calendar.”¹⁸² In other words, haunting disrupts chronological notions of history but ghosts do return from some point in history, unexpectedly in the present. The ghosts here, who have suffered violent deaths, demand to give voice to injustice, and by their reluctance to die, they deny giving any linearity to history.

AT THE BLACK PIG’S DYKE

At the Black Pig’s Dyke is an historical play of a kind: it makes reference to several actual incidents that occurred in the 20th century,¹⁸³ and the playwright remarked in 2001 that, “most of the stories [in the play] are based on real events.”¹⁸⁴ The first line of *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* is given by Lizzie to her granddaughter, “It was a long time ago, Elizabeth, and it was not a long time ago”¹⁸⁵ suggesting the legacy of the past is also the present moment, or even that time does not change. Furthermore, what was long ago has the potential to rupture time in the present, similar to the ghost’s return. In *At the Black Pig’s Dyke*, time jumps back and forth relentlessly, making it often difficult to discern where we are in history at any given point in the play.¹⁸⁶ The playwright seems to

be concerned only with historical traces, the effect of which is that the tragedy/violence of the North (in terms of time) folds in on itself, which affects how not only the characters experience time but also the audience. The catalyst for the play is the history of violence on the border and the idea that the long history is always already present within the characters, whether they have been traumatized or not.

The backdrop to the writing and premiere production of the *At the Black Pig's Dyke* is a microcosm of the Troubles. Woods' early life in Leitrim was deeply affected by violence in and around the border counties, and he was familiar with the many grievances of Catholics in Northern Ireland during this time. In talking about the play he has said,

Growing up in the 1960s in Leitrim, you could not but be aware of the injustices that were being perpetrated in the Six Counties. As the years went on, and I saw this cycle of horrific violence seeming to have no end...observing the brutality, the futility and the brutalization of people, I just began to feel more and more dubious about the worth of all this.¹⁸⁷

The injustices refers to those inequities in representation, housing, and employment for Catholics in the North, i.e., what propelled the civil rights movement in the first place; and the worth of all this suggests the republican violence that was done as a way to counteract the injustices and to renew its fight for a united Ireland. In November 1987, an example of horrific violence occurred in the town of Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, the site of one of the worst atrocities carried out by the IRA. Known as the Poppy Day Massacre,¹⁸⁸ the bomb was intended to kill military figures, but instead killed ten civilians and one RUC officer (all Protestants) and injured 63 local people. The fact that the bomb went off without warning combined with the death of innocent people generated outrage by politicians and the public and provoked profound discord within the

IRA organization. Unfortunately, the outrage did not stop the violence – what could be termed as a failure of history – and hostilities surged in the next few years. By 1993 the situation in the North was desperate.¹⁸⁹ *At the Black Pig's Dyke* opened in 1992 at a precarious time in the conflict, five years after the Poppy Day Massacre but in the midst of a relentless paramilitary campaign of violence.¹⁹⁰

The ghosts of *At the Black Pig's Dyke* return to sites of violence to confront the unresolved political conflicts of a sectarian society in which they have been trapped. The play revolves around three generations of the Boles family, the first of which consists of Lizzie Flynn and Jack Boles, the son of a shopkeeper. Lizzie and Jack are in love, but Frank Beirne a young man who is entrenched in Irish republican activities (although never explicitly stated) also pursues Lizzie, and when she rejects Frank especially in favor of Jack, a Protestant man, his already violent behavior intensifies. Lizzie and Jack move over the border to the North to Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, but trouble follows them. By the end of the play (some of which we know from the play's beginning) Frank Beirne and his family have the blood of six people on their hands: Jack Boles; Lizzie Boles; Lizzie and Jack's daughter Sarah; Sarah's husband Hugh; and Jack's father and brother. At the heart of the play are sexual jealousy and a deeply held hatred of the other by Irish republicans, the other in this case being Protestant, and those who associate with them. Familiar in its telling of the age-old difficulties that befell Protestants and Catholics who intermarried, the play is unfamiliar in its interweaving of the ancient custom of mumming, seasonal folk plays that depict a ritual of death and miraculous resurrection in the fight between good and evil. The mummer's play is used by Woods as a distancing technique to mask the perpetrators of violence, as a social critique about living in an

environment of fear, and as a haunting metaphor about the dead who rise again. I argue that the ghosts of Lizzie, Jack, and Lizzie's father Michael Flynn, caught up as they are in the cycle of violence, disrupt the linear history of their past by imagining an alternative future outside the delimited borders of temporality and the self. Their failed attempts to reject their fixed identities only confirm the powerful influences of a violent history already deeply embedded in the political and cultural consciousness of the region. Thus Lizzie, Jack, and Michael's ghosts live in a state of fractured be/longing to their bifurcated society – never completely belonging to either community, and always desiring to be free from the sectarian violence of the past, present, and future.

The play is an unsettling look at republican violence on the border that some audiences found offensive because of what they believed was a representation that deemed the struggle for a united Ireland as pathological. *At the Black Pig's Dyke*, commissioned and produced by Galway's Druid Theatre Company, began its tour of the island in the fall of 1992. In the North critical acclaim was mostly unanimous with Angela Kerr in *The Irish News*, a Belfast-based Irish nationalist newspaper, stating “an unnerving evening...gripping drama...the play addresses what we'd rather not hear”¹⁹¹ and with Grainne McFadden writing in *The Belfast Telegraph* (moderately unionist in outlook), “powerful...a play with a conscious, which articulates contemporary issues through traditional idiom.”¹⁹² There were others however particularly in County Derry, who found the depictions in Woods' play more troubling particularly the character of the militant Irish republican Frank Beirne. He provoked the most anxiety because of the idea that the personal gets intertwined with the political: Frank's profound distrust and hatred for Jack “and his kind” turn into a righteous cry against “plantation settlers” (Protestants)

who took land from Catholics centuries ago. Ruairí Ó Caomhanach believed when the production moved from Galway to Derry:

...it caused great offence to many people within the Nationalist and Republican traditions in Northern Ireland. They felt that the play depicted IRA resistance to British rule and Nationalist communities as being tainted by a kind of endemic pathology which was very much linked in with atavistic rural traditions expressed most obviously through mummung. There was a sense in which this play was regarded by Northern Irish Republicans as undermining and delegitimizing the validity of their whole struggle.¹⁹³

The sensitivities surrounding what Ó Caomhanach calls the reappearance of a primitive type of rural Irishman with deviant behavior is a similar kind of aversion to representation seen in the Playboy Riots in the early 20th century and the Abbey Theatre's rejection of Thomas Murphy's play *A Whistle in the Dark* in 1960.¹⁹⁴ During the tour in Coleraine (1993), a group of activists protested the play's politics by taking the stage and offering an alternative ending to the First Mummung's Play that is performed within Woods' play. The surprise intervention overwhelmed the real actors, many of whom left the stage afraid they were under attack. Much was written about the incident in the national press, and local debate continued for long after, mostly concerning the border between politics and theater and the relationship between them.¹⁹⁵

With its incessant brutality, *At the Black Pig's Dyke* plays on the problems surrounding the representation of violence, an idea Diana Taylor addresses in *The Archive and the Repertoire*. On the ethics of representation, she pointedly remarks that the act of violence "physically places the spectator within the frame and can force the ethical question: ...What is our role "there"?"¹⁹⁶ In the stage takeover in Derry, the spectators/protesters physically placed themselves within the frame of theatrical

representation, gave themselves roles there, and challenged the representation of violence in terms of the character of the Northern Irish republican. The protesters were not able to be within but outside the frame of theatrical representation to see beyond the sectarian labels and non-singularized versions of the past Woods was attempting to put forward, but instead forced the discussion back to the us/them dichotomy of sectarianism while simultaneously continuing to raise relevant questions over representation.

Ghosts and Borders

Ghosts and borders have a lot in common in that the ghost disrupts the living/dead binary just as the border region disrupts the North/South divide. Furthermore, as Roger Luckhurst states, “(g)hosts haunt borders” and breach boundaries.¹⁹⁷ Thus, the playwright plays with the notion of bifurcation – in terms of territory (North/South), cultural identity (Protestant/Catholic), and the body (living/dead) – by situating his play on the Fermanagh/Leitrim border, the no man’s land of the Black Pig’s Dyke. The border region as in-between space allows ghosts to linger but it also becomes a contested site that must accommodate the mutable positions of its residents, both living and dead. The play suggests this North/South border is the site where sectarian feuds are passed down from generation to generation yet the border itself ruptures its fixity as a strict North/South divide because of the fluidity of movement and identity. The ghosts of Lizzie and her father Michael Flynn return to the border area but are forced back into a condition of fractured be/longing due to an outlawed identity (Michael) or a violent history’s grasp on her (Lizzie).

The ghostly Elizabeth, the granddaughter of Lizze and Jack, is positioned in an alternative future in an in between space of identity and place. In this space, she looks

back on a traumatic *familial* history while also telling a fable of Ireland's *political* history. The play, opening in the present day of 1992, begins with Elizabeth aged early 20s hovering over the action of the play, similar to the Croucher in *The Silver Tassie*. Elizabeth was only a baby when her mother and grandmother were murdered – the only member of her family spared from the violence of the mummers – and it is through her now adult perspective that the legacy of the past is witnessed. In the play's short prologue, the stage directions read, "*Out of darkness – suspended at a higher level – the adult Elizabeth is seen. She is wearing a white coat with a poppy in her lapel and a clutch of poppies in her hand. The effect is ghostly, unreal*" (ABPD, 3). With the white costume (ghostly), the blood red color of the poppy (symbol of death), and her suspension above the action of the play (hovering), Elizabeth represents a ghostly figure of the future, overlooking scenes from the past as she gives an account of the Strange Knight, the harbinger as well as the executor of violence. The fable of the Strange Knight is located in a timeless space, where he belongs to no one or no thing but himself: his desire for more and more land with less and less inhabitants propels him to kill everyone who comes in his path. The fictional violence of the Strange Knight is reflected in the real violence of the mummers on the stage, both of which are fueled by a vengeance that knows no end. This vengeful violence leads Lizzie and Michael to experience a fractured be/longing, which forces them into dangerous spaces between two communities and between the North and the South.

The ghost of Michael Flynn, similar to the ghosts in Chapter One, cannot find a place for himself in Ireland due to his WWI service as an Irishman in British uniform. He is continually harassed by the likes of those who believe he was treasonous towards

Ireland. Act I, scene 8 features Flynn, taking place in the 1930s,¹⁹⁸ in the border county of Leitrim on the occasion of the Fools' Wedding, an evening's entertainment of mummers and merriment. Flynn did not go to fight in the war for Home Rule or ideology, but rather for economic reasons: "England gave me a good livin'. It put clothes on my family's backs and mate on their bones" (ABPD, 26). He feared for his life when he got home and was forced to cut the buttons off his army jacket:

Michael Flynn: And what did I get when I got home?
Frank Beirne: What did ye want? A hero's
 welcome?
Michael Flynn: Hero's welcome, me arse. I got a
 pack o' bastards stickin' a gun in me
 back and tellin' me I was lucky I
 wasn't shot for fightin' with the
 enemy.
Frank Beirne: And right they were too (APBD, 26).

To Beirne, Flynn is a kind of living ghost, better off dead than alive because his identity as a Catholic and collaborator upsets not only the bifurcated society but also nationalist versions of Irish history. Furthermore Beirne interrupts the festive atmosphere by charging that Flynn's role in the war was a political act. In *Blood and Belonging*, Michael Ignatieff suggests that one notion of belonging, primarily "national belonging," is "first and foremost protection from violence. Where you belong is where you are safe; and where you are safe is where you belong. If nationalism is persuasive because it warrants violence, it is also persuasive because it offers protection from violence."¹⁹⁹ In Beirne's eyes Flynn betrayed Ireland and no longer belongs to the nation, and thus he is no longer safe. Violence against collaborators is thereby justified.

Ghosts and Be/longing

The ghost “invisibly occupies places” to which it does not belong,²⁰⁰ as Derrida proposes, and it is this notion of not belonging to a place that one occupies which is the crux of the problem in the play. For in the North, traditional ideas about belonging, cultural identity, and place are expressed in terms of an “‘either/or’ model of social and political relations” and are hence used to rationalize violence.²⁰¹ This fixed category of either/or might be better understood in light of Seamus Deane’s idea of a contrary consciousness from this chapter’s introductory quote. Deane, a Catholic from a strongly nationalist background, believes that Northern Ireland is neither state nor nation, thus for him there is no sense of unifying national identity within its borders; rather, the identity of the citizens of the North revolves around an identity outside of Northern Ireland, that is, one linked to Ireland or Britain. The consciousness that Northern Ireland has of itself is not a collective or unitary consciousness but rather one that is split: one consciousness that is anxious over an opposing one and each consciousness that has a sense of belonging to others outside its borders. Writer John Hewitt, an Ulster Protestant, spoke of a similar condition to that of a contrary consciousness, “In my experience, people of Planter stock often suffer from some crisis of identity, of not knowing where they belong. Among us you will find some who call themselves British, some Irish, some Ulstermen, usually with a degree of hesitation or mental fumbling.”²⁰² Hewitt and Deane both express a sense of anxiety over what it means to belong, which involves feeling closer to a group identity and ideology beyond the North’s territorial borders. However it must also be remembered that, as stated by Michael MacDonald, “the communal identities of Protestants and Catholics are formed through interaction with, and not in isolation from,

each other. That is, unionism and nationalism are not just pulled in different directions by Britain and Ireland; they also push against each other.”²⁰³

The push against the other is a historical violence that rouses the ghost, as the violence represents past and present structures of power that remain unresolved. The literal push against the other is made visible in the First Mummer’s Play performed in Act I, scene 2 wherein two Heroes must fight each other: one of them a Green Knight signifying Ireland and the other an Orange Knight representing England. The mummer’s play is fragmentary in form and consists of three parts – first, the request for “room to perform,” second, the primary action of duel, death, and resurrection, and third, the appeal for money followed by music and dancing – none of which are connected to the other.²⁰⁴ Henry Glassie writes that mumming in Ireland, “was but a fragment of spatial, temporal, and mental continuities”²⁰⁵ which led to an intertwining of ritual and history. Through the language and antics of the form of mummer’s play known as the Hero-Combat Play, England and Ireland are always at war:

First Hero: Here come I, an Orange Knight, a Hero
Brave, From England I have come:
I have cleared the fields and houses
And cut down native scum. (...)
Second Hero: I’m the man who dares you stand:
A Green Knight, a Hero Grand.
I’ve defended ditches, gripes and drumlins
From foreign tyrants and their foreign
mumblin’s. (...)
First Hero: Take out your sword and fight, sir!
Second Hero: I’d see you up to your eyes in shite, cur!
(APBD, 7).

As the two Heros come forth swaggering, their bravado provokes them to duel, and one of them is instantly killed; within seconds the Doctor arrives on the scene to restore the dead person back to life. The mummers perform the Hero-Combat play

according to the cultural identity of the home – for example, the First Mummers’ Play in *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* is performed in a Catholic household therefore the Green Knight slays the Orange Knight. Through the performance of the First Mummers’ Play, the concept of belonging only to one community or the other, and of one community pushing up against the other is continually replayed.

Breaking the Cycle of Historical Violence

The ghosts Lizzie and Jack look to break the cycle of historical violence, wanting to belong outside of either community and imagine a different future for themselves. The idea of longing to belong to a place without violence and beyond one’s cultural identity is a catapult for the young lovers in the play. Jack envisions a placeless space, one where he and Lizzie can be free from sectarian strife. Act I, Scene 6 takes place in the border county of Leitrim in the late 1930s wherein the two begin to imagine a future for themselves. Lizzie asks:

Older Lizzie: What can you see on the lake, Jack?

Jack: I see us in a boat – it’s a fine boat like the *Lady Spencer*. We’re sailin’ along...past the town where it’s Sunday mornin’ and the bells of the two churches is ringin’ – mine up on the hill and yours below in the hollow...We sail out to sea...– into the sun – to the new world.

Older Lizzie: Are we happy, Jack?

Jack: Happier than anyone could ever ask to be (APBD, 17).

This is the first scene we see the split consciousness of Lizzie, one more haunting notion, in the two characters of Older Lizzie and Young Lizzie. As Young Lizzie sits next to Jack, Older Lizzie looks on. Several ideas are present in this short, but provocative exchange. First the ghost of Older Lizzie is from both the future (Older

Lizzie is looking back on Young Lizzie and Jack, knowing what will become of them) and the past (the audience knows Lizzie is dead). Second, it is Older Lizzie (from both future and past) who questions Jack about what he sees on the lake suggesting a temporal disturbance in history and family legacy, something that Jack fails to recognize since he does not see Older Lizzie only hears her. Third, Jack expresses the idea that on the journey towards this imagined future the bells of the Protestant and Catholic churches ring together as one even if the buildings themselves remain spatially distinct. Fourth, Jack sees their future existence in neither the territorial landscape of the North or South, but rather in the placelessness of the sea. In this exchange the ghosts of Jack, Young Lizzie, and Older Lizzie may be viewed as what Carla Jodey Castricano describes as “both a legacy and a promise” since their haunting “points towards a past and a future.”²⁰⁶

The longing of a utopian elsewhere is radically other to the one already charted out for Lizzie and Jack. In this imagined future the Young Lizzie poses a vital question about their alliances: “Have we a flag up so?” Jack expresses his allegiance to no one or group; his flag is, “The white hand of nowhere. A nice, neat, white hand. The pirates will never take it down” (APBD, 17). Mocking the Red Hand of Ulster, a famous symbol of loyalist affiliations, Jack also shows contempt for all flags insisting that his white flag/hand represents a surrender of sorts and a sign of negotiation of identity that no one, not even pirates, will disallow. Nervously, Young Lizzie believes they better have a few flags with them: “A green one (representing the Irish tricolor) – and an orange one (representing the Orange Order) in case the wind changes” (ABPD, 17). This suggests the slippery slope of identity on which they will navigate their married life. Jack rejects fixed

identities steering clear of the sectarian labels (by way of flags) that have been culturally, historically, or politically assigned to him.

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha makes a case for the importance of thinking beyond the boundaries of identity and the significance of a liminal space where negotiation can take place, negotiation that champions Difference. These in-between spaces – like the placelessness of the sea – can be innovative “sites of collaboration and contestation” where cultural differences and individual (non-fixed) identities can be articulated.²⁰⁷ This space, as articulated by Jack, is an imagined place of peaceful existence that becomes “the third space” of which the fixity of identity is “untenable.”²⁰⁸ External to a bifurcated society, Jack and Lizzie can position their white flag of nowhere in a site of placelessness where an ongoing negotiation of identity can occur.

The ghost of Young Lizzie perturbs the vision of the utopian sea as she conjures the ghosts of history, which reflect a colonial relationship between master and servant. When asked by Jack what she sees on the lake, Young Lizzie can only see a future as it relates to the past – a history of violence between Catholics and Protestants. The idea of viewing a future of the past in the present moment is a jumbling of temporal distinctions and a messing with the causality of history. This history of violence is illustrated by a remembrance by Young Lizzie, something she still sees on the lake even though it happened before she was born: “I see – what happened...The two of them drowned” (ABPD, 18). In the play, the two of them are Protestant landowner William Clements and his Catholic manservant John Brolly, who in the mid-19th century struggled in a boat on the lake causing it to tip over, but when Brolly began to swim to safety, Clements drowned him because he couldn’t bear to be survived by his servant.²⁰⁹ On the lake,

Young Lizzie sees the vision of a future that mirrors the past: “You asked me what I saw on the lake. That’s what I saw. And that’s what some will see if the two of us gets married. Master and Servant, Protestant and Catholic, Boles and Flynn. They still see it, Jack – after near a lifetime – they still remember every little thing” (ABPD, 19).

Here, Young Lizzie is haunted by the past – of master and servant – her future only able to hinge on what I saw because of what others will see. Lizzie’s fractured be/longing is linked to the many codes of identity in force within Northern Irish society (religion, politics, community) and with each act of violence and its resultant trauma, borders around identity are re-enforced and community bonds tightened. Haunted by the legacy of sectarianism, her fractured be/longing translates into an unsettling inability to escape the oppression of fixed identities (*they* still see it; *they* still remember) and yet alongside this, is her search, along with Jack, for a new world to belong, amidst an ever-shifting border space of division and dispute. Older Lizzie still wants to believe in a future of the imaginary, as her questions to Jack attest, but Young Lizzie seems only able to see a future that re-inscribes a haunted past.

The Haunting Double

The device of the double is used as a haunting trope as well as a way to demonstrate Lizzie’s fracturing be/longing. Two actors play the character of Lizzie: throughout Act I Older Lizzie and Young Lizzie often speak or sing simultaneously suggesting the concept of the uncanny double as complementary rather than opposing forces. Older Lizzie remembers along with her Younger self, the life she had with Jack before their wedding:

Older Lizzie: I never did forget me father talkin’ about it,
about how the Boleses were the finest

people about the place...He was as happy as could be when I went to work in the shop: 'You couldn't ask for better employers, Lizzie - you be as straight with them as they are with you and ye'll be all right.'

Young Lizzie: And so I was.

Older Lizzie: And so I was (ABPD, 20).

The repetition of the phrase And so I was and its insistence on what is no longer, points to both an anticipation of death and a speaking from the grave. Following Otto Rank, the concept of the double here is viewed as "a reminder of the individual's mortality, indeed the announcer of death itself" because time has stopped²¹⁰ (again, because we know Lizzie has been murdered). Young Lizzie's fractured be/longing involves her relationship to the place of danger outside the borders of her (Catholic) community by associating with (Protestant) Jack, and that she will be viewed as a traitor to her nation and her culture. Like her father Michael, she lives in a place of danger located outside the boundary lines of both communities. In this way, they straddle the border by their divided allegiances, in a space of the in-between, where ghosts also live.

Older Lizzie may be a ghost that haunts, but is also haunted by what she knows will be her future. Older Lizzie and Young Lizzie attend the Fool's Wedding, which brings together both communities. While Young Lizzie is dancing with Jack, Older Lizzie speaks of the piercing fear in her gut, the fear of her own community if she dares step outside of it:

I was dancin' like I had five legs and a heart like a daisy.
But there was a knife of fear inside me for all me gayness. It kept twistin' and cuttin' me – jabbin' at the edge of me heart or me soul. There was pigs' ribs goin' round and I minded of the day I saw Frank Beirne's father killin' pigs in the market yard...auld Beirne flung the pig down and kicked him on the head with his hobnailed boot; and he held him down with his own weight before he cut his throat – I was

lookin' at those boots with spatters of blood on them – and I knew as well as everyone that they were stolen out of Boles's shop the day they shot Jim Boles and his son for being Protestants and shopkeepers and decent people (APBD, 30-31).

While Young Lizzie and Jack dance in a “*strange slow motion*,” Older Lizzie remembers that, in her body she was at ease and felt like she belonged (“dancin’ like I had five legs”) but in her gut she is aware of the menace of the past and what she knows will be her future (killin’ and blood) when she marries Jack Boles. By the end of the dance, Jack is determined to leave the border county of Leitrim “to make a better life of it” (ABPD, 21), and decides they must move to the border county of Fermanagh in the North: “We’re goin’. It’ll be our new world, Lizzie. For better or worse –” (ABPD, 31). While not the liminal space of the sea, Jack believes Fermanagh offers freedom (from the past, from violence, from sectarian identities), which is its own type of placelessness. Young Lizzie agrees to marry Jack and to remove herself from the life she knows, not even letting her father know except through “a note he’d be able to read,” as she also looks forwards to a different life (ABPD, 31). Young Lizzie’s fragmented be/longing is due to these numerous displacements: from her family, her community, and the South but also as a result of a past she believes will always separate her from the other community.

Ghosts and Violence as Disruptive Forces

Ghosts are forces that interrupt the present, and in the play violence is an analogous disruptive force, and becomes one of its central themes. David Riches in his essay “The Phenomenon of Violence” proposes a theory of violence that involves the idea of ambiguity that surrounds both the act of violence and claims of legitimacy.²¹¹ Since conflicting narratives often follow violent acts, the legitimacy of the act or its

justifiability is questioned. In Northern Ireland it would seem, acts of violence are bifurcated in terms of their legitimacy: the justification of an armed struggle for a united Ireland versus the justification of an armed struggle to remain in union with Great Britain. Riches expands on his theory of violence by his proposal of a triangle of violence involving performer, victim, and witness: one/s who commits an act of violence, one/s who experiences an act of violence, and one/s who observes any part of an act of violence. A violent act can be more easily analyzed in terms of legitimacy if the delineation between performer/victim/witness is more or less stable. What happens, however, when the lines that border the identity of performer/victim/ witness are blurred or non-distinct? According to Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, Riches' theory on violence, in particular his triangle of violence, is practical and rational, a point they make clear in *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*; yet they challenge his theory by posing a question about the unreasonable elements that might disrupt the notion of a triangle of violence, and about what happens when emotions or irrationality become instigators or components of violence. Further Stewart and Strathern are led to claim that when it comes to linking the triangle of violence with issues of legitimacy and the situation in Northern Ireland, "all witnesses are also potential victims and everyone may be suspected in some sense a performer, causing Riches's triangle to implode on itself."²¹² The idea of a violent collapse of categories in the triangle of violence suggests another fractured be/longing for the dead victims because they cannot even claim the category of victim, if the victim can at the same time be implicated as performer or witness. The category of victim itself becomes a non-stable identity.

The slippage of borders between performer/victim/witness invites ghostly consequences. Furthermore these porous borders allow misleading allegations about past murders to stand, for the most part, unchallenged. During the Anglo-Irish war (1919-1921) circumstances in the play suggests that Irish republicans shattered the Protestant family of Jack Boles – Jack’s father and brother were shot and the family shop raided – but no proof exists. Jack, who was only ten years old in 1921, remembers his “brother Tom’s face half gone from a gunshot and me father’s corpse bleedin’” (ABPD, 19). He accuses Frank Beirne: “Tell me so – did they do it? Did your father and brother kill mine?” to which Frank replies, “How would I know? How would I know who shot them? Maybe it was the Tans; they shot a lot” (ABPD, 29-30). Jack was witness to the aftermath of violence but not to the act itself while Frank is evasive, laying the blame on a notoriously violent force, the Black and Tans. The brutal activities of the Black and Tans included retaliatory acts against the IRA in addition to the murder of civilians; but it was Irish Catholic civilians who were targeted, not members of the Protestant community because the Black and Tans were aligned with the British army. Beirne’s accusation of the Tans complicates this historical narrative because he knows he can use history as a pawn to manipulate the truth, due to a lack of evidence. The concept of causality is disrupted by the implosion of the triangle of violence, the result of which is a shadowy existence for the performers, witnesses, and victims who are all masked within the world of the mummies.

The Mummer’s Play

The ghostly re-iteration of the performance of the mummer’s play – a centuries old tradition – is used to underscore a persistent sectarianism energized by republican

fanaticism and revenge. Woods' use of the mummer's play-within-the-play allows the performance of violence to enter the everyday without consequence. The mummers carry weapons such as clubs, swords, daggers, and blackthorn sticks;²¹³ the plays have lines such as: "I'll hack him to pieces as small as a fly"; "I'll cut you and slash you"; and "'Tis with my steel your blood I'll spill";²¹⁴ and the plays involve a combat between two antagonists followed by bloodshed and slaying. The violence of the mummer's play is traditionally part of the entertainment, but as Glassie contends, "Rhyme and action render it all humorous, but the words are clear. There are many young men, armed with sticks, standing around your kitchen who would like you to give them some money."²¹⁵ In Woods' play, the transformation of mumming into violence is not only the transformation of a festive ritual into ritualized violence, but also the transformation of a social act that once bonded communities into shadowy acts of violence that now destroys them. Similar to McGuinness' play-within-a-play *The Burning Balaclava* wherein the ghosts of Bloody Sunday are conjured – here the mummer's play-within-a-play is the site where the ghosts/victims of sectarian violence are made visible by way of a violent history that dates back to before partition.

The performance of the mummer's play mirrors the play's action by the repetition of the trope of death and resurrection and the ghostly return of dead victims. By the masking of identity and the show of intimidation and bravado, the mummer's play exposes the ways sectarian violence is carried out on the border. In Act I, scene 3, the mummers arrive at the home of Lizzie and Sarah, but are startled to see their dead bodies "[s]hot this midwinter's night when the mummers were jolly" (ABPD, 13). Captain

Mummer,²¹⁶ still in partial costume, but without his mask and out of character points to each mummer, asking in turn if they know what happened:

Is there anybody here knows anything about this?
Is there any of ye had a hand in it?
Do you know anything?
Or you?
Heroes?
Doctor?
And you, Miss Funny?
And what about him who'd gone for help?
What do I know myself? (ABPD, 13-14).

The accusation made by Captain Mummer is outside the parameters of performance – at this point all of their masks have been removed – but he still uses the mummer character names to identify each person: Hero, Doctor, Miss Funny. By pointing to each character, Captain Mummer proposes that any member of a social group is potentially guilty as performer of violence, and that any witness can be implicated as well. No one answers Captain Mummer because the heretofore-masked identities were able to obscure identities that could be marked as belonging to one community or the other if made visible. Consequently society at large – by way of the group of mummies – becomes complicit. The subjugation of individuality to the group and the preservation of group identity destroy the necessary role that witnesses play in that society.

The masks in the mummer's play are both psychological and physical masks of the self and as such produce only a phantom persona. In Northern Ireland the “vocabulary of the mask” becomes a tool used against the “ostentatious trappings of identity.”²¹⁷ At the end of Act I, several men disguised in the mummer's straw costumes have come to murder Jack Boles, evoking the complexity of identifying those involved vis-à-vis the triangle of violence. As the mummies circle Jack, Older Lizzie narrates: “Men with

masks, men with sticks, men with their mouths full of rhyme, men with their hearts full of hate, men with their minds stained with blood...men out searchin' for their own shadows" (APBD, 33). Lizzie's men are identified as hunters of men: by what they wear, what they carry, and what they believe. Further the line men out searchin' for their own shadows suggests that the men want to destroy that part of the self they do not want to face, thus also killing off any possibility of change. Writing about forms of violence in Northern Ireland Allen Feldman maintains that, "(T)he paramilitary is concerned with the anonymous collectivization of violence – the subordination of the self by acts of violence to historical generalities. (...) The masking of the agent of force, his depersonalization, identifies this agency with the trajectories of history as generalized forces."²¹⁸ Masked men that commit collective acts of violence, here through the costuming of the mummies, allow the performer of violence to eject the self from culpability. By performing violence as a collective rather than as individuals, a level of secrecy is maintained. If the self is subordinated into the collective for the good of a cause (e.g., a united Ireland) this too drives the justification for the performance of violence. Within the play, any kind of stability to identity is always disrupted when the performers are masked through costume and the performance of mumming. The depersonalization of the performer of violence reveals him as synonymous with the generalized forces of history, which means that within the political context of Northern Ireland, identity is made visible to the extent that acts of violence are most often performed not by individuals, but by one of the paramilitary organizations that then claims responsibility.

Violence in/of the Everyday

In the play, the return of the ghost is one marked by violence, but performers/perpetrators of violence also cast a ghostly shadow. In this way, violence in the mummer's play and in Northern Ireland becomes the continual re-iteration of "cultural expression and performance."²¹⁹ Violence is viewed as performance in *At the Black Pigs' Dyke*, highlighting what it means for a society that endures routinized assault by physical acts or visual images. Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schröder discuss the performative quality of violence in the role of the everyday:

Violence without an audience will still leave people dead, but is socially meaningless. Violent acts are efficient because of their staging of power and legitimacy, probably even more so than due to their actual physical results... Also, its performative quality makes violence an everyday experience (with all the consequences to society) without anybody actually experiencing physical hurt every day.²²⁰

The performance of violence, even if in the everyday, remains an extra-ordinary event in its ability to stage power and legitimacy. In Northern Ireland, if violence has no audience or if it remains hidden, then the cause for which either side is fighting also has the potential to remain invisible. What is significant is that the fear of violence, due to its performative qualities, can be just as disturbing as the actual violence itself. The visibility of the performance of violence (along with the visibility of such abstractions as power and legitimacy) is juxtaposed with the invisibility of the performer/s of violence. The IRA and the UDA are both known to conduct business using masks and stealth: the familiar black pullover facemask of paramilitaries, the balaclava, is the costume for the performance of power and violence in the North. Like the mummer's performance of fictionalized staged violence, Northern Ireland becomes the stage for the phantom persona who only materializes as a performer of violence.

In the ghost traditions of Ulster, violent death is most often followed by “ghostly manifestations.”²²¹ Since the violent deaths of Lizzie, Sarah, and Jack are unavoidably linked to the political unrest in the region,²²² their ghosts too come back to settle unfinished business. Feldman connects the often arbitrary though recurring acts of sectarian violence with a community’s sighting of ghosts, but also puts forward the idea that, because space and time are interrupted by violence, ghosts return by also defying linear time and space:

...the intensified presence of ghosts since the advent of the Troubles is attributed to the sheer frequency and randomness of violent death within a limited space and time...ghosts are the inevitable excess of the defilement which emerges from the flooding of social space with death...(T)he disordering of space is registered in its divorce from linear time...(T)he ghost that reappears at the place he/she died establishes a synchronized continuity of defiled space that collapses diachronic difference.²²³

For Feldman then, not only do ghosts disrupt time, they return as a result of a space that has been defiled by violence. Furthermore, the ghost as the excess of that defilement suggests that both violence and ghosts are in excess to a more or less ordered social space, possibly also signifying an excess of history. This idea of an excess of history as it relates to ghosts is about releasing the firm grasp on the present in order to allow a haunting that reveals a “history of the present” in its re-structuring of the here and now.²²⁴ The ghosts of Lizzie and Jack do not belong to history nor do they belong to the present moment; if anything, these ghosts belong to the future. Yet it is a fractured be/longing to past, present, and future because in their voicing of trauma and violence, their identity as Catholic or Protestant will always already precede their stories, making it

impossible to exist in a site of placelessness or to raise their white hand of nowhere without the markings of cultural identity.

The story of the Strange Knight, the performance of the mummers' play, and *At the Black Pig's Dyke* itself are sites of violence and ghosts: where the ritual of everyday violence is performed, where violence is fueled by historical revenge, and where ghostly victims come back to haunt the living. (Older) Lizzie laments towards the end of the play, "Revenge is the longest road. Revenge doesn't know when to stop. And there's some don't want it ever to stop. There's some men and they're only happy if there's smell of blood on the wind" (ABPD, 51). Yet the Strange Knight changes his ways and the Second Mummers' Play is modified in Act II, scene 3. In the second act the two Heroes are no longer antagonistically (or culturally) identified as the Green Knight or the Orange Knight but instead are called a Hero Bold and a Hero Brave suggesting that the mummer's play can be a site of negotiation rather than one that reifies sectarian division. And Woods' play itself ends on a note of the possibility of a new beginning. The playwright attempts to think beyond revenge, sectarian identity, and the linearity of history by overturning the fable of history and the tradition of the mummer's play.

The ghosts of Lizzie and Jack, representing Catholic and Protestant communities, do not seek revenge as many ghosts of violent deaths might, but rather desire to exist in a place outside fixed boundaries, which becomes evident in the fable narrated by their daughter Elizabeth. The play ends as it begins with Elizabeth describing in the epilogue how the Strange Knight "fought till there was no one left alive" but him (ABPD, 35). The once violent Strange Knight however "came to be filled with sorrow" and "begged to be forgiven" for the killings and the usurpation of land (APBD, 59). Wood's play – and the

fable – ends with the tears of the past causing the dead to rise again: the Strange Knight’s “tears fell like rain on the soil and the water soaked down, down into the heart of the dead woman” and new life is produced by way of the flower of the blood-red poppy (ABPD, 59). Elizabeth says that “the Strange Knight plucked (the blood-red poppy) and when he did it fell asunder...Petal after petal drifted to the ground and out of each sprang a dozen women with hooks and seeds and implements to sow and harvest” (ABPD, 59). Ghostly women return from the dead/earth, overcome the once violent past (represented by the Strange Knight), and rebuild the land. The play/fable ends with the “beginning of happiness” – what Jack saw on the lake as a future for Lizzie and himself – but it is also clear that “restoring the land to life” and defeating violence will be long, arduous, and “endless” (ABPD, 59). The task of mending the fractured be/longing of the North’s inhabitants will be forever ongoing. A long violent history may very well persistently haunt the present but when violence and death are connected to an especially public encounter, as we see in the next play then the ghostly remains of the innocent victims are also caught up in the post-trauma discourses that revolve around truth claims and what really happened.

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY

Writers are not immune to the conditions under which they live, especially if that place is Northern Ireland during the past forty-five years. Brian Friel asserted in 1973 that in Northern Ireland there is “no Irish writer who is not passionately engaged in our problems” but more important “he must maintain a perspective as a writer.”²²⁵ Seamus Deane in his 1974 essay, “The Writer and the Troubles” contended that writers on the island are ideological – “He (sic) cannot but be”²²⁶ – but when representing the Troubles,

it only becomes problematic when that ideology turns into a form of passing judgment. For Deane, a problem of representation in Troubles dramas is when an author's politics or ethics take over from the personal concern of the characters. Stephen Watt in his recent essay on Friel and Troubles drama offers a contemporary approach to the problem of writing the Troubles that both Friel and Deane expressed in the 1970s, but one that is still, as Watt writes, "both so straightforward and so mired in complexity."²²⁷ A key problem involves terminology, such as Northern Ireland, the North, the Troubles and what it means, to name. For example Watt believes the term the Troubles too often implies "sporadic" violence and sectarianism, fails to signify "a sense of Unionist outrage," and does not bring to mind the root of the conflict, which had to do with discrimination, marginalization, and deficient political representation.²²⁸ Ultimately Watt concludes that these terms are "failures" on both sides of the sectarian divide and thus, "lacking a better alternative," he proceeds (as I have done) to employ them all.²²⁹ This is all worth mentioning because inherent in writing the Troubles is the difficulty in distinguishing truth claims of history, truths in/of representation, and the writer telling the truth/s.²³⁰ Writers such as Friel, who are intimately connected to events in Northern Ireland, may seek a kind of truth in artistic dramatic form, but due to the historical political quagmire, questions arise as to what it means to talk about truth in representation. Writers turn to the trope of haunting because ghosts demand, as Avery Gordon reminds us, "a different kind of knowledge."²³¹ The ghost's ability to traverse temporal and spatial boundaries allows them an access to knowing that is not bound to historical events or publicly-held truths that have been commonly accepted as true. The play is the space where ghosts and truths meet, but in the end, neither stakes a claim on

knowledge over the other. The space of knowledge, truth, and ghosts remains that of the in-between.

Friel's *The Freedom of the City* attempts to get to the core of a violent event by messing with what constitutes truth, fact, and interpretation and by juxtaposing time and space. The ghosts appear because the violence has happened but is also about to happen at the same time and therefore are able to speak to truths that have not yet been accepted as true. The play – based on the aftermath of Bloody Sunday that was the Widgery Tribunal (April 1972) – is a searing indictment of what many now believe to be an exercise of injustice. The Widgery Tribunal was the official inquiry established to determine the facts of Bloody Sunday but which mostly absolved the British soldiers of any wrongdoing. “The Widgery Report had a devastating impact upon those people,” Graham Dawson maintains in his book on memory, trauma, and the Troubles, “The traumatic impact of the shootings and deaths was compounded by its exoneration of the soldiers and slandering of their victims as gunmen and nail-bombers.”²³² The outcome of the Widgery Report had long-term effects on both nationalist and unionist communities, as it only intensified the Provisional IRA campaign against British forces, which in turn led to nationalist hostilities towards them and to bitter antagonisms between the two communities. While the play does skew towards nationalist sympathies, Friel takes aim at everyone except the three ghosts/protesters – from the violent forces of the British Army to the British government, the press, the clergy, and hard-line republicans as represented by the Balladeer. Thus Friel's indictment is for all of those who contributed to what one critic calls those “distortions of discourse” that not only surrounded the tragedy, but also played a substantial role leading up to the deaths.²³³

Friel was amongst the civil rights protesters on Bloody Sunday, and while he did not witness the shootings, he shared the outrage over the trauma inflicted upon the nationalist community. Concerning *The Freedom of the City*, Friel's views are well known: he believed it might have been a better idea to have let some time pass before writing, characterizing it in a 1986 interview as an "ill-considered play because it was written out of the kind of anger at the Bloody Sunday events in Derry."²³⁴ Yet what some critics and scholars have noted since 1973 is that opposed to a representation of a real event, the play was energized by the events of Bloody Sunday. Tom Herron and John Lynch eloquently explain:

This is a play that is not about Bloody Sunday, but yet Bloody Sunday inhabits it; as Pablo Picasso was reputed to have said following the liberation of Paris in 1944, 'I have not painted the war...but I have no doubt that the war is present in the painting.'²³⁵

Friel's closeness to the event and his association with the Catholic nationalist community enabled him to transform the events of Bloody Sunday and its aftermath into *The Freedom of the City*. The play is an example of what Dominick LaCapra calls "traumatic writing or post-traumatic writing in closest proximity to trauma," what he argues has produced "some of the most powerful forms of modern art and writing."²³⁶ LaCapra defines traumatic or post-traumatic writing as an acting-out or working through of trauma, but which also has the effect of an *aporia*, or impossible mourning, that cannot be resolved. Thus, Friel's play poses more questions than it answers, not only about the (historical) relationship between the British government and the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, but also about the consequences of immediately broadcasting events as they are happening (from the media, from officials), which triggers the propagation of

erroneous information and reinforces fixed beliefs and narratives. Thus Friel uses the mode of haunting to disturb the steady (linear) stream of information and to continually question the ways in which truths come to be known.

The fictional *The Freedom of the City* takes place in Derry City²³⁷ and revolves around the gunning down of three civil rights protesters – Lily, Michael, and Skinner – and the various explanations brought forth to determine how and why they came to be killed, and ultimately if their deaths were justified. One focus of Friel’s play is the relationship between the British state (represented by the Judge, the Police Constable, the Soldiers, and the Army Forensic Expert) and the Catholic nationalist community (represented by the Priest, the Balladeer, the RTE journalist, and the three protesters) and the unsettling truths that occupy the liminal space between them. For example, Friel uses parody to highlight the outrageous claims made by the Balladeer that the protesters deserve the status of republican martyrdom; and he subtly mocks the haste of the Catholic clergy to claim its victims and to righteously declare that they died “for their beliefs, for their fellow citizens.”²³⁸ Also weighing in on the tragedy is Dr. Dobbs, an American sociologist, who lectures on the plight of the poor, assessing that those who live in poverty have “very little sense of history” and since they possess only a “strong, present-time orientation,” they are unable to look to the future (FOC, 13, 38). Watching and listening to the protesters as they narrate their own histories contradicts the assertions made by the Balladeer, the Priest, the Sociologist, and others. I argue that the ghosts of Lily, Michael, and Skinner as part of the traumatized community of Catholic nationalists, also desire to belong to something larger, whether the body politic of Northern Ireland or a community of the world. The space of discrimination, the Guildhall, shifts into a space

of freedom for the protestors where they can make themselves at home, but which also becomes a disruptive temporal space to the historically linear narrative of the Troubles, continually invoking the tragic events that have yet to happen and already happened. Thus their fractured be/longing to the site of trauma is both predictable and revelatory. The play seeks many truths, but they hover around the stage mirroring the ghosts of the protestors, who must return to the site of trauma to act out again the mistake of their deaths.

The Ghostly Return to the Site of Trauma

The idea of the dead coming back to the site of trauma, to those moments in life that most deeply affected them is essential to an understanding of the theory of dreaming back, conceived and developed by W.B. Yeats in the early 20th century.²³⁹ The dead victims in *The Freedom of the City* are now ghosts, thus the Guildhall becomes a haunted space to which they must return to work through the trauma of their deaths. In *A Vision*, Yeats outlined the three-stage process he thought the spirit undergoes after death.²⁴⁰ The first phase is dreaming back, a central idea:

In the *Dreaming Back*, the *Spirit* is compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it; there can be nothing new, but the old events stand forth in a light which is dim or bright according to the intensity of the passion that accompanied them.²⁴¹

The use of the word compelled suggests that a person's ghostly spirit has no choice but to come back if it experienced an incident of great emotional impact. Also important is the idea there can be nothing new about the old incident. While for Yeats the living can aid the dead,²⁴² the ghost does not come back to address the concerns of the living, as Old King Hamlet's ghost does in *Hamlet*; rather the ghost re-experiences

previous events so that the transgressions or traumas of the past can be worked through by re-living them. Dreaming back gives the ghostly spirit the potential to overcome its distress in the afterlife. In one of Yeats' plays, the character Dr. Trench provides a useful description of dreaming back: "Some spirits are earth-bound – they think they are still living and go over and over some action of their past lives...For instance, when a spirit which has died a violent death (...often comes to) where the event took place."²⁴³ Yeats' idea of dreaming back is important for several reasons: first it is a very Irish notion of the ghost's return, caught as it is in timeless trauma;²⁴⁴ second it illustrates the three protesters' return to where the event took place and that the ghosts do not know they are dead; and third, the deaths of the three protesters is linked to the space of trauma, the Guildhall, which represents a site of power and a history of injustice.

The play opens with the "grotesque" display of three dead bodies, where the Photographer out of fear of being shot "very hastily and very nervously" takes photos of the corpses (FOC, 8). The victims, Michael Hegarty aged 22, Skinner (Adrian Casimir Fitzgerald) aged 21, and Lily Doherty aged 43 are all thought to be armed gunmen, or terrorists. Similar to the display of dead bodies at the opening of *At the Black Pig's Dyke*, the audience knows that "before any words are spoken" Michael, Skinner, and Lily are "already dead."²⁴⁵ After the Photographer takes his final shots and the Priest quickly gives the last rites, the dead bodies are dragged one by one – by the hands, by the coat collar – to an offstage area by soldiers. Time is suspended and then re-figured when in the following scene the three figures make their ghostly appearance through the fog of CS gas into the space of the Guildhall.

Friel ups the ante in his choice of safe haven since the Guildhall as the local seat of government was often charged during this time with discriminatory practices against the Catholic nationalist community. Trying to escape the chaos of the march that involved not only CS gas, but also rubber bullets and a water cannon, the three protesters accidentally enter the building. Skinner, caught by the water cannon, is completely soaked and Michael and Lily are still struggling with the effects of CS gas, none of them aware of the place they have safely landed. As the first one to discover where they are, Skinner “*bursts into sudden laughter – a mixture of delight and excitement and malice*” and over the course of the play proceeds to wreak havoc in the space, playing with a “14th century ceremonial sword,” drinking the “municipal booze,” and trying on the Lord Mayor’s robes (FOC, 18, 23, 33, 40). Skinner convinces Lily to join him in the antics, which also involves play-acting as the “lord and lady mayor of Derry Colmcille,” making light of the absurd situation in which they find themselves (FOC, 40). The relentless mocking gestures of Skinner is a social critique but runs deeper than mere flippancy, e.g., a commentary about the injustices that have been played out since partition in a place “regarded by the minority as a symbol of Unionist domination” (FOC, 20). For the nationalist community the Guildhall is a place where the protesters know they should not be, and know they do not belong.

A Fractured Be/longing

The fractured be/longing that each must negotiate has to do with their place within the Guildhall. In this historically and politically potent space, the flippant Skinner feels entitled to drink the whiskey, smoke the cigars, and wear the robes of the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and councilors; Lily feels at first that that it is “no place for us,” but

then settles in to feeling at home, even giving details how the décor should be changed (“nice pink gloss paint that you could wash the dirt off” (FOC, 24)); and Michael is at first overwhelmed by its beauty:

Michael: Christ Almighty – the mayor’s parlour! (...)
Lily: We shouldn’t be here.
Michael: God, it’s very impressive.
Lily: No place for us.
Michael: God, it’s beautiful, isn’t it?
Skinner: (*To Lily.*) Isn’t it beautiful? (FOC, 22).

The Guildhall becomes a place of entitlement for all of them, albeit reluctantly for Michael who tries to enlist the others to be respectful of where they are – “this fooling around, this swaggering about as if you owned the place, this isn’t my idea of dignified, peaceful protest” (FOC, 42). The fractured be/longing of the three protesters begins with their identity as the most disadvantaged members of the minority nationalist community, the unemployed (Michael), the homeless (Skinner), and the poverty-stricken (Lily). Through the course of the play, the audience comes to know Michael, committed to a peaceful civil rights movement but who also shows an extreme naïveté toward the forces of power; Lily, mother of eleven children, who constantly puts herself down as stupid, but who has a keen awareness of herself that she must keep hidden from ridicule; and Skinner, who seems to be one of the hooligans that often turn up at banned marches, but who proves to have a profound sense of justice. Paradoxically, the place that has historically discriminated against them as representatives of the minority Catholic nationalist community is now a space of protection (from CS gas and rubber bullets) as well as space with no restrictions – at least for Skinner and Lily – to behave however they like. Only when they step outside the confines of the Guildhall are they brutally gunned down.

Because of the dramaturgical structure of the play, we are not only continually reminded of the violence and trauma of their death, but also brought back to the awareness of their ghostly presence. In Act I, scene 4 Michael just wants to leave, “Now give me one good reason why I can’t walk straight out of here and across that Square” to which Skinner replies, “Because you’re presumed, boy. Because this is theirs, boy, and your very presence here is a sacrilege.” He also warns Michael that “they” could do “terrible things to you (...) Or shoot you” (FOC, 45). Skinner takes on the power of authority and prescience by calling Michael “boy” even though they are the same age and by predicting the manner of their deaths. The pervasive outside world continually invades the interior space of the Guildhall, disrupting temporal and historical linearity.

Immediately following this scene in Act I, scene 5-A, the Judge struggles with the conflicting testimony of the civilian witnesses and the security forces, and asks, “Who fired first? Or to rephrase it – did the security forces initiate the shooting or did they merely reply to it?” (FOC, 46). The juxtaposition of Skinner’s declaration that they will shoot you (signifying both present and future) with who fired first (the past) is a ghostly repetition of violence that haunts. The ghost’s return, according to Sylvia Soderlind, is “invariably prompted by a sense of injustice; as Derrida has pointed out, ghosts always have an argument with the living; they speak to our conscience.”²⁴⁶ The plight of those wronged by the many injustices is brought to consciousness through the ghosts’ return in *The Freedom of the City*. The spectral voices of Lily, Michael, and Skinner contend with the violent history of the North by making visible the psychic strife of the region.

Haunting in Ireland

Haunting is a productive way of looking at Ireland's past because it allows for a diversity of voices to be heard, and it opens up a conversation that goes beyond polemics or political biases. Additionally, haunting and being haunted expands any narrative of the Troubles to include new understandings of the social world through an engagement with sites of power, exclusion, and loss, which is exactly what the Guildhall represents for the Catholic nationalist community. In a recent essay, Eugene O'Brien illustrates two kinds of haunting in Ireland. The first kind revolves around what he calls the reified ghost of the nation and nationalism, which takes the form of "myths, misrecognitions, and identifications."²⁴⁷ This state-sponsored haunting, with its dead heroes and martyrs, is handed down from generation to generation in a temporal linearity wherein the past becomes fixed and stagnant. In *The Freedom of the City* Friel mocks the reified ghosts of Irish nationalism through the character known as the Balladeer, who by the play's second scene has already composed a song about the takeover of the Guildhall by "100 Irish Heroes." As a gross representation of cultural nationalism and Irish republicanism, the Balladeer sings of the one hundred armed gunmen now occupying the Guildhall who, even though still alive, are counted among the dead Irish heroes who have gone before:

Three cheers and then three cheers again for Ireland one and free.
For civil rights and unity, Tone, Pearse, and Connelly.
The Mayor of Derry City is an Irishman once more.
So let's celebrate our victory and let Irish whiskey pour (FOC, 21).

By invoking the ghosts of Tone, Pearse, and Connelly, the Balladeer projects a linear historical trajectory: from the Irish Rebellion of 1798 one of whose leaders was Wolfe Tone through to the Easter Rising of 1916 led by Padraig Pearse and James Connelly and now in the present, to the "100 Irish heroes" who "one February day Took over Derry's Guildhall, beside old Derry's quay. They defied the British Army, they

defied the R.U.C. They showed the crumblin' empire what good Irishmen could be” (FOC, 21). In equating the takeover of the Guildhall with two defining episodes about the fight against British rule, which are located within the larger narrative of Irish nationalism, the Balladeer is solidifying the firm grasp that Irish nationalism has on Irish History. By misinformation, the Balladeer attempts to write his own historical account according to the rumors swirling about to which he adds his own embellishments. At the top of Act II, the Balladeer is now aware that there were only three protesters involved, who have been shot and killed, and so he propagates the story about three bold civil rights marchers who “gave their lives for their ideal – Mother Ireland, one and free” (FOC, 53). The often drunken Balladeer conjures ghosts of the political past for an Irish nationalistic agenda in the present. Friel inverts the state-sponsored haunting by contrasting the Balladeer’s absurd conjuration with who the three protesters really were, which then serves as a way to de-mythify Pearse, Connelly, and Tone and to deride those who hold such narrow views of Irish nationalism and republicanism.

The second type of haunting O’Brien discusses invokes Derrida’s concept of hauntology, which seeks those alternative meanings that might be found in the traces of ghostly hauntings. A hauntology – with the signifying “h” floating around the concept of ontology – unsettles the nature of being. Yet as O’Brien maintains, Derrida’s hauntology not only disturbs the self, it also “acknowledges the Other that haunts the self.”²⁴⁸ This notion of haunting, in terms of the relationship between self and Other allows for more complex readings and re-readings of Ireland’s past. He argues for this second emancipatory approach to haunting that seeks to have a dialogue with the alterity of the Other. The others in Friel’s play are the poor (Lily), the unemployed (Michael), and the

homeless (Skinner), who speak and act from beyond the grave in the haunted space of the Guildhall.

“Freedom” in the Guildhall

As previously mentioned, the Guildhall becomes a space of safety and autonomy, but more important it becomes a space of empowerment to articulate the ghosts’ hidden truths. The Guildhall is an in-between space: a place of power and authority as well as an other scene of “fixations and phantoms.”²⁴⁹ For the first time, they are able to articulate to others and themselves why they march. Their cultural and social identity as members of the minority and the disadvantaged class is no longer a hindrance to this articulation, which also can be viewed as a kind of freedom:

Lily: I told you a lie about our Declan. He’s a mongol....And it’s for him I go on all the civil rights marches. Isn’t that stupid? You and him (Michael) and everybody else marching and protesting about sensible things like politics and stuff *and me in the middle of you all, marching for Declan*. Isn’t that the stupidest thing you ever heard? Sure I could march and protest from here to Dublin and sure what good would it do Declan?...But I still march – every Saturday – I still march. Isn’t that the stupidest thing you ever heard? ... That’s what the chairman said when I – you know – when I tried to tell him what I was thinking...And that day that’s what he said, “You’re a bone stupid bitch. No wonder the kid’s bone stupid, too.” The chairman – that’s what he said (FOC, 61, emphasis added).

Michael: What I want, Skinner, what the vast majority of the people out there want, is something that a bum like you wouldn’t understand: a decent job, a decent place to live, a decent town to bring up our children in – that’s what we want. (...) And we want fair play, too, so that no matter what our religion is, no matter what our politics is, *we have the same chances and the same opportunities as the next fella*. It’s not very much, Skinner, and we’ll get it. Believe me, we’ll get it, because it’s something every man’s entitled to and nothing can stop us getting what we’re entitled to (FOC, 67, emphasis added).

Skinner: Because for the first time in your life you grumbled and someone else grumbled and someone else, and you heard each other, *and became aware that there were hundreds, thousands, millions of us all over the world*, and in a vague groping way you were outraged. That's what it's all about, Lily. It has nothing to do with doctors and accountants and teachers and dignity and Boy Scout honor. It's about us – the poor – the majority – stirring in our sleep. And if that's not what it's about, then it has nothing to do with us (FOC, 60, emphasis added).

Lily's desire is freedom from a critical husband; Michael's desire is freedom from the hierarchy of the political structures; and Skinner's desire is freedom from the collective mixing of lower, middle, and upper class aspirations. Despite her husband's cruelty, Lily marches in the midst of everyone for the rights of her Down Syndrome son who is an even more stigmatized member of society; Michael marches for equal opportunities in jobs, homes, and towns for the minority community; and Skinner marches for the impoverished in Northern Ireland but also for the millions of poor worldwide. These enunciations are revolutionary for the characters, becoming a first step towards belonging to that liminal space of freedom. However, the characters also remain impotent because no one outside the Guildhall can hear them. As Herron and Lynch acknowledge, "We, the audience, observe them speaking to each other, but their speech remains unregarded and, as they are dead, unregardable by the powerful voices in the play."²⁵⁰ These voices of the other may not be regarded by the voices of power; yet in the space of representation the other not only insists on the right to be heard, but also challenges the powerful discourses by reconstituting what it means to belong to family, community, and the world.

The fractured be/longing they experience in the Guildhall (in spite of or because of its symbolic power) is in the form of both a real and imagined freedom, which as mentioned above is a type of placelessness. Lily has the freedom to declare that she marches for Declan but also, here she has freedom from the concerns of children, husband, and financial worries; and Michael has the freedom to express a desire for fair play in society but also the freedom to exist for a time in the midst of the awe-inspiring structure of power. It is Skinner who takes it upon himself to bestow freedom – the “freedom of the city” – on Lily, Michael, and himself, an honored status within Derry City. The formal announcement begins with putting on the robes of power:

(Skinner (is) dressed in a splendid mayoral robe and chain with a ceremonial hat on his head.) (...)

Skinner: Mayor’s robes, alderman’s robes, councillor’s robes. Put them on and I’ll give you both the freedom of the city.

Lily: Skinner, you’re an eejit!

Skinner: The ceremony begins in five minutes. The world’s press and television are already gathering outside. “Social upheaval in Londonderry. Three gutties become freemen” – Apologies, Mr. Hegarty! “Two gutties.” (...)

Don the robes, ladies and gentlemen and taste real power.

(Lily puts on her robe; as does Michael, reluctantly. Skinner takes the flagpole and begins waving the Union Jack through the air) (FOC, 39-40).

The idea of the freedom of the city, and particularly the role-playing of it, implies a sort of placelessness in which to physicalize – by way of costume, flag-waving, and their movement through the space of the Guildhall – their inclusion *in* Londonderry society and *alongside* the majority Protestant unionist community. While the performance of power is an illusion for them, Friel is aware that in the power of performance, there remains the power of language and the power of symbols. Skinner,

Lily, and Michael experience for a brief moment a sense of fractured be/longing in the placelessness of performance even though their freedom is ironically played out in the Guildhall. They all desire to exist in a place free from the exclusionary and traumatic encounters they experience as part of the marginalized (poor) and minority (Catholic nationalist) communities.

Communal Trauma vs. the Traumatized Community

In Northern Ireland, the term community is bound by the island's History and thus the history of the Troubles becomes a space to think about the traumatized communities of Catholic nationalists (*The Freedom of the City*) and border Protestants (*At the Black Pig's Dyke*). A traumatized individual, whether by way of the physical, emotional, or psychic, can be considered correspondingly to that of a traumatized community if that community can be thought of as a "damaged social organism."²⁵¹ In her essay on trauma, however, Kai Erikson makes clear that the traumatized community is distinct from an assemblage of traumatized individuals.²⁵² When an individual has been traumatized, it often suggests that the person has experienced the traumatic event firsthand; a community that has been traumatized implies that members of the community have experienced the trauma either directly or indirectly, through witnessing or proximity. The term collective trauma is often used interchangeably with that of traumatized community, yet I would suggest a subtle yet significant difference. The word collective suggests a thing that is whole, or that has a shared or joint identity. While experiences of a trauma can be varied and wide, the idea of collective trauma (as one experienced by a group of people) suggests a trauma that can be felt or shared by the whole or used as a means of identifying the group that has experienced the trauma. In other words, the term collective

trauma suggests that it is the *trauma of an event* that binds the collective, and not necessarily anything else.

A traumatized community is slightly different because the term community indicates a group of people already bound in terms of common history, interests, identity, location, culture, or all of these and often has a sense of “coherence and continuity.”²⁵³ Thus the trauma to a community has the potential to isolate and bind one community while at the same time excluding and resisting another community. Moreover the trauma to a community has the potential of a double binding of experience: that which the community experiences by their commonality and that of the trauma itself. The conflict of the Troubles is embedded in the social psyche of the province, that is, both communities have suffered the consequences of violence and trauma, but because each has a distinct cultural heritage and set of traditions, how they make meaning out of their traumatic experiences remain distinct. To speak of a collective trauma in terms of Northern Ireland is do something somewhat radical, for it binds the experience of a province that has historically been divided into two communities. To think of the body politic of the North as experiencing collective trauma, as opposed to one community’s experiences of trauma over the other, becomes a way to think about the mutually shared societal traumatic experience. In *The Freedom of the City*, the trauma and violence perpetrated against one community not only indicts this same community by way of the distortions of discourses (the Priest, the Balladeer) but also links professions (academia, religious, political, cultural) and power structures (British government/forces and minority community) in a binding of traumatic experience that remains distinct for each community or group while at the same time is always in relation to the other. By its

numerous indictments, *The Freedom of the City* becomes a radical formation of the collective trauma experienced by the body politic of Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland is unlike many places of struggle in the world, yet the universality of the situation lies within the experience of the traumatized body politic and the traumatized body, caused by daily exposure to violence, its images and effects. Cathy Caruth posits in her study of trauma that, “The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.”²⁵⁴ Caruth is writing about the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder whereby the trauma produces its own symptoms or pathology but also by which the trauma is re-lived *literally* (as opposed to the symbolic) by the traumatized body in the way of dreams and flashbacks. This literality, she asserts, illustrates the idea that the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are not of the unconscious, but rather “of history”; i.e., the symptoms come from a real traumatic event in space and time. The impossible history the traumatized body carries within is that of a non-linear and interrupted past, parts of which come back repeatedly in “overwhelming immediacy.”²⁵⁵ Opposed to the individual who is able to possess one’s own history, that is, has an understanding of the events of one’s past, the traumatized body is possessed by history itself; that is, traumatic history (as disease) takes hold of the traumatized body (as symptom).

The Freedom of the City incorporates two ideas from Caruth: first, the impossible history carried within (the traumatic history that possesses the traumatized body) and second, the literality of the flashback (the re-turn to history), which is the site of the traumatic event. The traumatized body cannot successfully possess a history but rather,

they are possessed by it. To possess one's history is to own it, control it, act upon it, and pass it on whereas to be possessed by history is to be acted upon, to be its pawns in someone else's narrative. By the fragmentation of time and space, the dramaturgical structure of *The Freedom of the City* exposes this very idea, that the protesters are, more or less, held hostage by the swirling discourses occurring outside the Guildhall. For example, in Act I, scene 2 after the three realize where they are and have absorbed the grandeur of the Guildhall, Skinner hands drinks all around – sherry to Lily, a “very small whiskey” to Michael, and something for himself. The scene ends with them toasting civil rights and wishing each other good luck:

Michael: Well. To civil rights.
Lily: Good luck, young fella.
Skinner: Good luck.
Michael: To another great turnout today.
Lily: Great.
Michael: Good luck (FOC, 28).

The repetition of good luck suggests they are somehow aware of their precarious situation. Because the phrase remains ambiguous as to what exactly it is referencing (to civil rights; to Michael's prospective job; to Lily's eleven children; to Skinner's health) – good luck signifies that something is being left to chance, beyond their control.

Following this scene the lights shift to the Priest, where he is seen on “*the battlements above them*” addressing the congregation: “At eleven o'clock tomorrow morning solemn requiem Mass will be celebrated in this church for the repose of the souls of the three people whose death has plunged this parish into a deep and numbing grief” (FOC, 28). This dramatic temporal and spatial shift disrupts our notion of whose narrative this is, since directly after watching Michael, Lily, and Skinner hoist a drink, we are plunged back into the reality of their deaths, their narrative taken over by the Priest: “They died

because they could endure no longer the injuries and injustices and indignities that have been their lot for too many years” (FOC, 28). The narrative of the protesters, which does not involve dying for their beliefs, continues to be wrestled away from them, such that it is no longer their narrative or even their history.

Moments of Truth

Other discourses that seek to undermine the narrative of the protesters, and thus their histories, include those of the American sociologist and the Judge. In Act I, scene 1-A, Sociologist Dr. Dobbs tells the audience how “people with a culture of poverty” cannot see beyond their own neighborhood and set of circumstances: “they don’t have the knowledge or the vision or the ideology to see that their problems are also the problems of the poor in the ghettos of New York and London and Paris and Dublin – in fact all over the Western world” (FOC, 13). Later in the play, in Act II, scene 6, we learn that Skinner is not only aware of the millions of poor worldwide, but also that it is for them that he marches. Likewise the Judge as representative of the British government concludes the inquiry by stating the evidence supports that “the three deceased were armed when they emerged from the Guildhall, and that two of them at least – Hegarty and the woman Doherty – used their arms” (FOC, 76). This falsity perpetuated by a discourse counter to that we witness as the truth in the Guildhall neutralizes the effect of the violence committed against the protesters. Throughout *The Freedom of the City* the government’s handling of the inquiry is condemned, but those individuals who exploit the facts and use them as truth for their own benefit are also denounced. “In a conflict zone,” according to Graham Dawson, “there is always more than one truth, and more than one conception of justice.”²⁵⁶ And yet the impact of their traumatic deaths on the

living in terms of those many truths becomes a grave distortion of how they lived and died. The commentators usurp the language of trauma – most commonly employed by victims to describe and to testify to the violence used against them²⁵⁷ – and in so doing not only take over the protestors' history but also attempt to possess it for their own religious, academic, political, or cultural agenda.

The literal re-turn to history is evidenced each time the action shifts to the interior space of the Guildhall. The most significant re-turn though is located in a placeless space, as the victims re-turn to the traumatic moment of death. Act II opens with a dark stage, and the three ghosts. "*They are barely illuminated by head spots. They do not move*" (FOC, 53).

Michael: We came out the front door as we had been ordered and stood on the top step with our hands above our heads...there was no question of their shooting. *I knew they weren't going to shoot.* Shooting belonged to a totally different order of things. And then the Guildhall Square exploded and I knew a terrible mistake had been made (...) And that is how I died – in disbelief, in astonishment, in shock. It was a foolish way for a man to die.

Lily: *The moment we stepped outside the front door I knew I was going to die, instinctively, the way an animal knows. Jesus, they're going to murder me....*

Skinner: A short time after I realized we were in the mayor's parlour I knew that a price would be exacted. *And when they ordered us a second time to lay down our arms I began to suspect what that price would be because they leave nothing to chance...* (FOC, 54-56, emphasis added).

The moment they step out of the security of the Guildhall, Michael knows absolutely the soldiers will not shoot; Lily knows instinctively she is going to die; and Skinner pauses to take in the situation before he surmises they will be shot, knowing their good luck has just run out. While all of their speech is spectral, at the moment of death,

the three victims literally speak from the grave about what they experienced before, during, and after the barrage of bullets. Describing their deaths, these silenced voices speak to the tragedy of their lives: for Lily, sadness over her realization that at no time in her life had any experience been “isolated and assessed and articulated”; for Michael, incredulity over his naiveté about the violent forces he was up against, since he wanted desperately for “this terrible mistake (to) be recognized and acknowledged”; and for Skinner, conviction in the face of death that he wanted to die as he lived, “in defensive flippancy” (FOC, 55, 56). At the moment of death, the three protesters speak the language of trauma by way of their individual experiences of violence and suffering and in the process offer a shared historical trauma, one in which impacts the community and the North’s larger collective body.

The Disruptive Historical Past

In awaiting their deaths again the ghosts of Michael, Lily, and Skinner, seen murdered at the play’s beginning, are part of the disruptive historical past. Steve Pile writes, “ghosts are not caught up in the smooth flow of history, but have one foot in a particular moment or age. They cut across history, jump times, exist in a history of their own.”²⁵⁸ Friel exploits the idea of crossing time in the way he dramaturgically opens the play with three dead bodies, opens Act II with their speaking from the grave, and closes the play with the sound of gunfire bursts. The ghosts exist in a history of their own but it is a history they do not own, as the playwright via the discourses of official History (sociology, religion, nationalism) more or less effectively wrests it from them. As victims to that History, “Skinner, Michael and Lily never really have a chance.”²⁵⁹ Their fractured be/longing includes a longing to be/long to a history that they own, rather than part of a

narrative that hinges on the power of authority, the power of violence, or the powerlessness of the victims. Thus in writing the Troubles, Friel distorts the discourses of power by focusing on the three protestors as part of a traumatized society that has endured the “persistence in the present of a harmful social past with disturbing legacies” giving a spectral voice to the powerless through the language of trauma.²⁶⁰ Dawson explains that the language of trauma “points to the necessity of remembering in order to go forward to any viable alternative future, while acknowledging that traumas are remembered only in the face of powerful pressures to forget.”²⁶¹ The driving force of Friel’s play is to get to the truth of the event – through the perspectives of the performers (soldiers), victims (protesters), the many witnesses, and those with their own interpretations. The language of trauma in *The Freedom of the City* is connected to the characters’ fractured be/longing to a liminal space of freedom and injustice and to the remembrance of violence, which attempts to balance what it means to remember and what it means to forget. For Friel the truth is devastating, but until it is willingly acknowledged and accepted as traumatic truth, the haunting of the Troubles will continue.

The traumatic event of Bloody Sunday has had a persistent presence in Northern Ireland since the premiere of *The Freedom of the City* at the Abbey Theatre in February 1973, less than a year after the Widgery tribunal. The Saville Report, the findings from the second Bloody Sunday inquiry that began in 1998 and presented in June 2010, offered some kind of justice for the victims’ families. For others, however, it “fell short” in that it was believed to have created a “hierarchy of victims.”²⁶² The idea that the trauma of nearly 40 years ago would finally be mitigated by the results of the Saville

Report is counteracted by the idea that the event of Bloody Sunday 1972 will remain a chaotic, unsettling moment of the Troubles, and will almost certainly never be forgotten or resolved. The notion of moving on from the violence of the Troubles is a precarious proposition, an idea the next play confronts, as it will require an acknowledgment of the past and of the survivors' debt to the dead as well as a consideration of what a future in Northern Ireland can really look like haunted as it is by the ghosts of both communities.

REVENGE

In his study of the relationship between history and trauma, LaCapra contends that if ghosts haunt the post-traumatic world, they belong to no one person or group and therefore haunt everyone. He writes, “ghosts of the past...roam the post-traumatic world and are not entirely 'owned' as 'one's own' by any individual or group. If they haunt a house (a nation, a group), they come to disturb all who live – perhaps even pass through – that house.”²⁶³ LaCapra infers that the post-traumatic world produces ghosts that are sociological rather than psychological, which means they collectively haunt and become part of the social memory of a place. Additionally LaCapra writes that the term victim also – “is not a psychological category. It is, in variable ways, a social, political, and ethical category.”²⁶⁴ With this idea, rather than focusing on a victim's individual experiences, he suggests the importance of wrestling with the political and ethical realms of what it means to be a victim within, and as part of, a post-traumatic society. To name someone as victim does not necessarily mean violence has been experienced firsthand; instead the ramifications of victimhood sheds light on the culpability and responsibility of the violence on society itself, as anyone who passes through that world experiences its traumatic effects.

Michael Duke's *Revenge* is about the ghosts who haunt Northern Ireland by imploring its citizens to remember them, and the implications of what it means to be a victim in a post-traumatic society. The play revolves around one family affected by a car bombing – a young woman Mae was killed and her fiancé David was blinded, lost one leg and the use of an arm – but the violence and its traumatic effects have wider repercussions for the living and the dead. The ghosts that inhabit the world of the play – the explicit and implicit victims of violence – include the former bride-to-be Mae; Mae's mother Angela; the former best man Peter; the now able-bodied David; and the Chorus of the dead. The living victims are the characters of the Father, Mother, and the now-disfigured Son, all of whom have trouble dealing with the enduring consequences of the violence. In the play, two actors play the character of the son: David is the ghost of his former self, who appears as he did before the bombing – handsome, athletic, and strong; the Son is disfigured and blind, a physical state his Father will not accept. The death of Mae and the disfigurement of David persistently live within the Father, his life centering only on the tragedy and what might have been. As opposed to the Father's persistence in living in the past, the Mother has her sights set on a premeditated act of vengeance against the character of the Bomber. The Father and Mother – as representative of those lives traumatized by violence – live by the what ifs of the past or on an insistence of a future entrenched in bloody retribution. The play asks numerous questions: What is the role of the individual or society in ending the cycle of violence and revenge? What is the obligation of the living towards the dead or damaged in a post-traumatic society? What does it mean to remember, or to have an ethics of remembering? How can a divided society “be expected to unite through a shared remembrance of those lost?”²⁶⁵

Set in the present day of 2004, *Revenge* opens on the eve of a new wedding to take place between the Son and the character of the Bride, a compassionate counselor whom he met while recuperating in the hospital. The Son fell in love with the Bride's kind voice and her vision of a new future for him, but the Father will not sanction the union. He believes that the past can return, the way things were supposed to be for David and Mae before the bombing; thus he makes a deal with the character of the Old Woman who has the power to bring back the dead. The Mother is included in this bargain, for she is also obsessed with the tragedy, but wants only the blood of the Bomber. Significant is that the eve of the new wedding is October 31, the Celtic harvest festival of Samhain when the borders between the living and the dead collapse. The Old Woman, along with the First Woman and the Second Woman, together represent the supernatural figure of the Morrígan, a triple goddess also known as the "phantom queen."²⁶⁶ There is no mention of the word Morrígan in *Revenge* but it is a figure associated with vengeance, and the play makes reference to the collective self of the Old Woman, First Woman, and Second Woman, and to their escorting the dead between worlds. The First Woman and the Second Woman often accompany the Old Woman, but she is the dominant phantom force who vengefully persuades the Father to choose to set the dead free – his beloved Mae and an able-bodied David – in exchange for allowing his door to remain open to "whoever comes." In Act II, the action shifts to a wedding of the dead, between Mae and David, with family members and the ghosts of friends as wedding guests. In choosing a reconfigured past, however, there are grave consequences for the family: not only must all the dead be welcome to the otherworldly wedding but the Bomber must also be welcomed, who then must be assassinated by the character of the Boy, the ten-year-old

son of the Father and Mother. This act of revenge would not only hostage another generation to violence, but also destroy two more lives, the Boy and the Bomber. Mae might be alive again, but the Father and Mother realize that their bargain – at once merciful and vindictive – would only prolong the cycle of violence, leaving more victims in its wake.

Revenge opens a new page to the chapter of post-Troubles drama by its erasure of identity and its focus on all who have suffered over the past thirty years. The playwright eliminates cultural and national signifiers used to establish identity, thus the play's characters become a part of the body politic of the North rather than members of any identifiable community. Because the Troubles literally separated people on the basis of their cultural and national identity, *Revenge* is distinct in that it separates and excludes that between the living and the dead. The four ghost characters (Mae, Angela, Peter, and David) have the only proper names in the play suggestive of the importance of remembering the names of the dead or damaged while the living characters are listed by their relational names Father, Mother, Son, Bride, Boy, Grandfather, and Bomber. The characters of the Old Woman, First Woman, and Second Woman are also dead but not given proper names because they represent the more sinister figure of the Morrígan. I argue that even though the codes of identity have been removed from the play the ghosts of Mae, David, Peter, and the others have not escaped the violence of sectarianism, so must still contend with a fractured be/longing. Their desire to belong to the collective and social memory of the North translates as a longing to be remembered as part of the legacy of its traumatized body politic, but that longing to belong to something larger – to the placelessness of memory – diminishes the significance of the individual victim's

experience. I contend that these ghosts might exist beyond exclusion from either community, but also be/long to that tenuous, unsettling space between remembering and forgetting.

The ongoing legacy of the Troubles is a focal point of *Revenge*, in which dozens of ghosts literally roam the theatrical space of the stage. In the premiere production at Tinderbox Theatre Company in Belfast (2004), three choruses of ghosts were enlisted from the areas of Belfast, North West, and Mid-Ulster (36 actors in all) to play the roles of the dead. As the play's resource packet states, "All chorus members knew that their characters inhabit the spirit world only to be conjured by the Old Woman to appear at the wedding staged in the play. Each character, if they had been alive, would have been a guest at the original wedding of David and Mae."²⁶⁷ Another ghost is Mae's mother Angela, who as one character explains, died from grief, "the doctors can call it whatever they like, it was losing her daughter that finished her off. Living in the past."²⁶⁸ David's best man Peter appears as yet another ghost who, at one moment, is at David's bedside and a few months later, is dead. The ghosts are conjured by the supernatural figure of the Old Woman but they are also summoned by the living to come back. The ghosts of Mae and David reluctantly confront a fractured be/longing – Mae pleads with the Father to let her come back and belong to the world of the living because, she argues, he kept her spirit alive by remembering her exclusively; if she is sent back she fears that, as the Old Woman alludes, she will be forgotten. The character of David is split into two characters hence he is a manifestation of the traumatized and fractured body. David as the former self is a literal ghost while the disfigured Son is a metaphorical ghost of his former self,

both of whom struggle with belonging to their respective communities of the dead and the living.

The Traumatic Split

After a traumatic event, the suffering body can be split in two – pre-trauma self and post-trauma self – either by the victim himself or by others. In the play, the division of David into two characters is similar to the split character of Lizzie in *At the Black Pig's Dyke* and once again evidence of the device of the double, a haunting concept. The double here is a provocative illustration of the fractured self: by the doubling of character and the Son's shattered body. David and the Son are on stage together only once towards the end of the play, suggesting the idea of the uncanny double as rival forces especially since David is the socially acceptable whole self (athletic, handsome) while the Son is a damaged broken self (limping, blind). The Son and David both suffer a fractured be/longing to their respective worlds resulting in a loss of place, of where they fit in. At the beginning of Act II the Son wanders in the liminal space between worlds, looking for his Father:

Da! Answer me. Da! Am I home? Da – do you hear me?
Did I get out? Tell me...I don't know where I am Da. I can
hear them again. They're back. In the hospital – when I
slipped away, into sleep – I'd dream...I'd dream of the
dark. Of the dead. There were people screaming – and then
I'd wake – I'd wake up – ...But it was still dark. The people
about me were moaning. I just went from one dark to the
other. Sometimes I was in both...I'm drifting Da – I'm lost.
Tell me (RV, 58).

In this in-between space, the Son is hovering on the verge of death, drifting, lost. He accuses the Father of keeping him alive in the hospital, “in that dark, you wouldn't let me go”(RV, 58). Once he comes home, the Father ignores the conditions of his suffering

Son, and instead focuses on remembering the dead. The Son does not belong to the living for he wishes he had died with Mae and does not belong to the dead as he has to ask, “Did I get out?” Both the Son and David attempt to construct a sense of belonging, within a post-traumatic society and within a context of violence. The ghost of David can only think about “everything, forever, always” because his Father remembered: “I lost Mae once – you know yourselves – and I clung on, I clung on alright. But if it wasn’t for my da – there’d have been no big day. He remembered. (...) I knew whatever happened you’d stand by me” (RV, 66). This last statement is in opposition to the Father’s treatment of the Son for the audience knows that he has neglected him for the dead. Both David and the Son are stuck in the “inbetweenness of belonging,” what Elspeth Probyn describes as “belonging as threshold” and “belonging in constant movement, modes of belonging as surface shifts.”²⁶⁹ What this suggests is that belonging for David and the Son is not connected to place, but rather to a condition of flux between the living and dead, further highlighting the idea that both characters are unsettled where they find themselves.

Temporality Disrupted

The play highlights the theatrical convention that the dead can come back, urging an audience to consider what that would be like if it was possible. The ability to choose between past, present, and future as well as the condition of the Old Woman’s proposition are made manifest by the world created by the playwright and his disruption of temporality and the linearity of cause and effect. The cause of the violence remains, the bombing, but its effect is reversed by the Old Woman’s provocation to the Father “It’s what you want. What you wish for. Always wishing, for the day history stole from

you. (...) Whoever you want. You choose. Who lives, who dies” (RV, 2-3). The idea of history being stolen suggests a history of a future that has been cut short by violence. To think further, if the Old Woman’s proposition is implemented, then cause and effect is completely overturned. Mae, David, and the rest have been allowed to briefly come back, but if Mae is allowed to live and the Bomber is allowed to die at the hands of the Boy (causing the Boy and Bomber to accompany the Old Woman on her journey back to the world of the dead), then was there violence in the first place? The convention of theatre is able to stage alternative realities while also juxtaposing and disordering temporal spheres.

In *Revenge*, temporality is disrupted both by the traumatic event and by ghosts. The idea that trauma stops the chronological clock is attributed to L.L. Langer, who wrote that trauma “fixes the moment permanently in memory and imagination, immune to the vicissitudes of time.”²⁷⁰ *Revenge* plays with this conceit by fixing the trauma in the minds of the Father (who only saw the bomb’s after affect), the Bomber (who witnessed the explosions) and Mae and David (who were torn apart by the blast). The Father can think of nothing but Mae, and keeps replaying the incident in his head, going “over it and over it – trying to change it” (RV, 28). The Bomber believes that all of their “nightmares bleed into one” binding together perpetrator, victims, and witnesses “like the skin and blood and hair in that carnage” (RV, 85). The Old Woman reverses time as well as re-starts the chronological clock by bringing Mae and David back and making things right. Similar to a trauma that can stop the chronological clock, the ghost can only be grasped “in a dislocated time of the present, at the joining of a radically dis-jointed time.”²⁷¹ On Samhain, time stands still as exemplified by the Old Woman’s response to the Father’s comment “Time flies” in which she says, “Not tonight. Tomorrow again” (RV, 1). When

time flies, it moves forward, goes quickly, and is often unobserved. For the Old Woman and her ghosts, time stops for the evening or rather it enfolds back in on itself – and past, present, and future exist in the same temporality. For Derrida, “A spectral moment (is) a moment that no longer belongs to time.”²⁷² The ghost does not belong to past, present, or future but rather upsets the limits of time by inhabiting all time.

Another example of disrupted temporality is the scene in Act II when Mae and David speak about the exploding bomb that pulled them apart. As in *The Freedom of the City*, these ghosts have the ability to enunciate the moment of death. “Speaking from a site of trauma,”²⁷³ they describe to their wedding guests, both living and dead, what happened when they were in the dress shop as Mae was trying on her wedding gown:

Mae: The last moments – they stay with you. (...)
Father: We should be toasting you.
The Father lifts glasses of wine for Mae and David, the Mother, Angela, Peter, and himself. He begins to hand them round, desperate to stop the talk of Mae’s death. (...)
Chorus: Remember.
Mae: I felt it. I felt it pull us apart.
David: I tried to hold onto you.
Mae: I know. I saw in your eyes you were scared.
David: I just felt myself go across the room. I got thrown back.
Father: Come on –
Mae: It was dark.
David: I couldn’t get up.
Mae: You wondered how I felt, what I was thinking, who I was thinking of.
Chorus: Remember.
Mae: People who didn’t even know me were the last to touch me and see me, it was strangers heard me cry out, strangers tried to give me breath. (...) I wandered the darkness looking for you David. Aching for you.
David: I tried.
Mae: I knew you weren’t with me, but I wandered all the same. You know when they take the young off an animal, when they’re nursing,

and she just keeps looking –
Father: Mae!
The Father pulls Mae away from David, trying to embrace her, to quieten her. He holds her for a moment, then slowly releases her. She steps back. Red wine has spilled down the front of her dress. Mae looks at the dress and touches the stain (RV, 70-72).

Mae and David re-tell the past but in a changed future in the present, exemplified by the Father's attempts to stop the discussion of death and comfort Mae, causing her to spill the red wine (symbolizing the spilt blood) on her wedding gown. When her ghost mother Angela laments that the dress is ruined, Mae calms her by saying that everything is fine, she will not have to wear the dress again. At this moment, temporality implodes – a ghost speaks about a future that will not happen, already aware that her first wedding did not happen.

In her sociological study of ghosts, Gordon contends that the experience of haunting warps time, in that it “alters the experience of *being in time*, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future.”²⁷⁴ Act II's long continuous wedding reception for Mae and David is happening (in the present), but never happened, and should not be happening (future), even though Mae says, “It was a long time coming” (RV, 62). The ghosts are experiencing a wedding that might have been existing in a kind of present/future.

An Impossible Future

The dead know they are ghosts throughout the play, unlike *The Freedom of the City*, whose victims only know they are dead when they speak from the grave. The ghosts in *Revenge* do not re-live or reenact traumatic scenes from the past (contrasting to Yeats' concept of dreaming back) but rather live (in the present) what might be described as a

potential future; and yet it is also an impossible future. The Father attempts to encourage Mae and David to re-write the future, not by going back to the past, but by re-conceiving what it could be:

Father: Let them be together
Angela: There's time enough for that.
Father: Start their lives here. Tonight.
Mae laughs.
Mae: That's what we're doing sure.
Father: Make a future Mae. David.
Mother: What are you saying?
Father: You'll consummate.
A laugh goes around the CHORUS.
David: Da –
Mae: No pressure like.
Father: – a future – come on, so there's no going
back. What's wrong with you son –
(RV, 73 – 74).

The idea of ghosts having sex may be humorous, but the nature of the ghost, as out of time precludes the break down of temporality in such a way as to make it possible to conceive of a future from a destroyed past in the present moment. The ghost as past, present, and future is not only able to re-conceptualize the future, but also to be actively engaged in that process. That future however will have to wait since the ghostly Mae wants to enjoy the actual present: “I waited this long. I waited to hear his laugh. To smell his skin, the way it was, to feel the strength of him. We're here now. We'll wait” (RV, 75). Mae takes pleasure in the moments of a future she never had, but soon those moments are again taken away from her.

The ghosts here not only want to be remembered – believing that the living owe a debt to the dead – but also desire to physically exist again. Mae's fractured be/longing is due to her limited return from the dead. “I thought we'd all the time in the world,” David says, to which Mae replies, “You do, don't you but” (RV, 68). Their comments reference

the bombing (past) as well as the here and now (present). Mae's use of "but" is a recognition that her time is running out, unless she can persuade the Father to choose any other person to go back to the dead. "Any of them, just not me," she pleads, regardless of the fact that the Boy would have to die (RV, 89). Mae desperately wants to belong to the present, and to disengage herself from the world of the dead and forgotten, counting on the Father's remembering and never giving up on her. Not worried about the future, the past, or anyone else, she longs to exist in the time of the now. As a ghost, though, temporality is both expansive and limited. Gordon insists that, "haunting...best captures the constellation of connections that charges any 'time of the now' with the debts of the past and the expense of the present."²⁷⁵ To speak of haunting in terms of currency suggests the possibility that the debts of the past – violence, trauma, victims – may be transformed into investments for a future that includes a memory of that past but also progress towards some sort of reconciliation. In her desire to belong to the living, Mae does not want to exist in the memory of the past, which is random and placeless, often left to the forces of fate and chance.

The Impact of Trauma

Everyone in the play is a victim, not just the dead or disfigured. The impact of trauma on the living victims can be seen through the language (and actions) of the Father and the Mother, by the Old Woman's proposition, and by the disfigured body of the Son. The Old Woman and her two associates appear because they were requested but also because of something more menacing. The Father is tormented by the First and Second Woman to change the past, and by not doing so, they tell him, he betrays the dead. A post-traumatic society, the play at first seems to suggest, must choose between the future

and the past, between its children and its dead. The Old Woman says as much to the Father, as she caresses Mae's head: "I took who I chose, to death. You didn't approve. So. You choose. I'll take only who you give me. (...) Betray your children, or betray your dead" (RV, 88). Throughout the play, the ghostly Chorus' repetition of "Remember" invokes an action that must be taken following a traumatic event. Haunting though is not the same as trauma, for as Gordon writes, "haunting...is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done" on the individual, social, and political levels.²⁷⁶ The something-to-be-done here, the ghosts and the Old Woman implore, is to remember all the victims and always remember the past.

The Father continually brings up the past because it distressed him greatly and also because he believes he has a responsibility to remember that past. For the upcoming nuptials between the Son and the Bride, he has made place cards for all the dead who will not be attending but who, by remembering their absence, will be present.

When we sit down at the top table tomorrow, as if nothing had happened, and we look out across the room there's going to be a lot of absent friends. There's hardly a table without somebody missing, without some loss, every year, every town, some blood, somebody killed. We should leave their seats empty. Give them place cards like everyone else, at least remember their names (RV, 8).

The Father solemnly expresses the collective trauma of Northern Ireland by emphasizing the fact that every town and every family's table has been touched by some loss of life due to the Troubles. Rather than one community's status of victimhood over the other, the North's shared experience of violent acts "becomes almost like a common culture, a source of kinship."²⁷⁷ For the Father, remembering the dead also becomes part of the region's common culture, "not a big lot to ask that," he says, "to remember their

names” (RV, 11). If, as mentioned earlier, looking to the past in Northern Ireland means two different, but not mutually exclusive things, what does it mean to remember when communal identity has been erased? Does this speak to a new space in which to remember the past or to re-think the whole notion of memory in the North?

A Balancing Act Between Remembering and Forgetting

The space between the future and the past is the present moment, which resembles the space between too much memory and too little memory. In his book *Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence*, Andrew Rigby writes of the dangers of too much memory, which can only be crippling for the future:

Of course one should honor the memory of victims of the past, but one could argue that you can have too much memory. Too great a concern with remembering the past can mean that the divisions and conflicts of old never die, the wounds are never healed. In such circumstances the past continues to dominate the present, and hence to some degree determines the future. How to move on? How to address the past in constructive future-oriented manner? This is a crucial issue, not just for individuals, but for societies and communities emerging out of division, bloodshed, and collective nightmare.²⁷⁸

Yes, the question is how to move on when then enduring wound of sectarianism remains – one that is physical, emotional, and social. By not tethering the narrative to a specific event or situation *Revenge* offers a universal meditation on what it means to choose to live in the present/future and not in a past filled with a legacy of grief and revenge. Only when the labels of sectarianism are eliminated can there be talk of a common humanity of the victims of violence. Here the importance is to move beyond, or away from, codes of identity and move towards codes of belonging, as Rigby states, “be

it to other people, places, or modes of being...wanting to become, a process fueled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state.”²⁷⁹

The play is careful to remind us of the importance of the act of remembering, but it must be a balancing act between too much and too little memory. The Old Woman laments at the end of the play, but her warnings of remembrance hostage the North’s past to the future:

Who’d betray their dead, and expect life in return?...Every day they’ll get a message to you.... We don’t recognize you. We forget. We vow to forget. Every generation will learn the songs of those who slaughtered and were slaughtered, who made history a sea of blood....Your dead know you only as traitors and tormentors. Don’t look to me for comfort. I’ve none to give you. Hearts were nailed on the trees of every roadside in Ulster, and nobody remembers (RV, 97).

Revenge is not about an individual’s experience of losing her life due to sectarian violence; rather the tragedy of the car bombing represents only one of the many injustices committed against thousand of victims from both communities across the North, for which the significance lies in what it means to remember their traumatic experiences, their lives, and their names. Duke’s play was hailed as a theatrical achievement in the North precisely because it did not distinguish its victims, perpetrators, or witnesses by cultural or national identity nor did it further condemn either community or the government for the violence. Rather, the play sought to grapple with the trauma of irrational violence and its cultural and societal consequences in the North. The challenge for the collective community is to open up new avenues of understanding, to heal the wounds of the past by way of forgiveness, and to dignify the life of the dead by remembering them. The Old Woman insists, “you have an obligation” to remember (RV,

64). The concept of forgiveness and the myriad contextual contours in the post-ceasefire *Revenge* are given space for thought. Yet to forgive in this instance is not to forget, nor is it an ending in itself, but rather suggests a beginning of a different sort.

The Failure of History

When history “fails” as it does for the victims of the Troubles due to repeated acts of violence, theatrical intervention gives voice to the ghosts.²⁸⁰ The Troubles plays analyzed here end tragically, with *The Freedom of the City* concluding most shockingly: “*Michael, Lily and Skinner stand motionless. Pause. Silence for 15 seconds. Then the air is filled with a 15 second burst of automatic fire and the spotlights snap on. The gunfire stops. The three stand as before, staring out, their hands above their heads. Blackout*” (FOC, 76). The other two plays however offer at least a glimmer of hope for a better future amidst the tragic. The final image of *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* is Elizabeth letting “*poppy petals in her hand drift to the ground*” while also gesturing towards the “beginning of happiness” (ABPD, 59). *Revenge* ends with the Father saying to his ten-year old Boy, “Go on son. Go and see what’s ahead of you,” a clear nod to the future and future generations. When the Father’s lips begin to move feebly to a song “*without any sound emerging,*” the stage directions continue, “[*The Father and Mother*] are *desperately alone. The Mother takes his hand, and they stare ahead as the lights fade, and the song finishes*”(RV, 99). While *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* appears a little too optimistic for all the butchery that has gone before, Elizabeth’s red poppies do signify remembrance. *Revenge* strikes a more realistic tone in its hesitancy, uncertainty, and anxiety, as it cautiously asks, where do we go from here?

The history of trauma in Northern Ireland as suggested in *Revenge* runs parallel to the idea that if the Troubles have indeed ended, what is to be done with the absence and loss that remain. As the two old women state, “Ah but Ulster’s getting quare and comfortable now. Settling back down. You can tell yourself it was just a bad dream” (RV, 29). The old women’s ironic comment that the past thirty years of the Troubles can be called just a bad dream suggests that those inhabitants who choose not to sufficiently remember the violent past will be able to just get over it like they would a nightmare. Yet like a nightmare, their remark is provocative and haunting. For a province the size of Northern Ireland, the loss of life from the Troubles is significant. The traumatized communities come together in *Revenge* as one nameless collective of the traumatized, who must now sort out where to go from here. Caruth following Freud argues, “that history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas.”²⁸¹ The history and trauma of two communities intertwine in the play, which has something to tell us about the nature of collective trauma. By allowing the dead to speak, their hauntings encourage a kind of healing.

Conclusions

Haunting occurs, as suggested by Pile, on account of “a tragedy for which there is not yet a history.”²⁸² A tragedy with not yet a history implies two things: an awareness of a tragic event (by knowledge, by witness) and an unintelligibility to that tragedy to make or become history. For regions of conflict the tragedy for victims of sectarian violence is doubled: the tragedy itself and a history not written. Thus in terms of these three plays to haunt can be thought of as at least one way in which to re-imagine history. This is not the same as historical recovery (the erasure of history is not at issue here), but haunting can

be viewed as its own act of historical re-imagining. As such the ghosts analyzed here linger to give voice to injustice and brutality through the trope of haunting by calling attention to the necessity of putting an end to the cycle of violence and trauma and returning to an active and engaged remembrance.

As we know, the ghost *begins* by coming back. This is a repetition, but a beginning nonetheless. The victims in the plays have been traumatized, but their ghosts come back – they will always return – in the possibility of altering the future. The past history of violence seems to hold hostage the present, for as Ignatieff has written, “it is not how the past dictates to the present, but how the present manipulates the past” that can consequently lead to narratives of justification on both sides – of violence, of hatred, of divisiveness.²⁸³ Because there is no closure to the ghost (they cannot rest for they will always return) there is no resolution to the ghost nor is there resolution to the Troubles. There is no ending to the conflicts of the past because the haunting of history continues to resonate in the present.

The past continues to haunt because it is never over or complete; it “permeates the social and psychic realities of everyday life in the present.”²⁸⁴ In Northern Ireland the past is, in many respects, like the ghost, unresolved just as the legacies of partition are unresolved. In his essay on traumaculture and Irish studies Conor Carville asks, “whether ‘history’ can ever be ‘resolved.’”²⁸⁵ The critical importance of unresolved history is that it yields to further dialogue and conversation. In *Revenge* because all cultural, political, temporal, and otherworldly/worldly distinctions collapse, the past does not return in an obsessive repetition of the trauma: the future, rather than being blocked, is wide open. The ghost – as past, present, and future – allows for “an ongoing process of opening to

that past” with the tiniest flicker of hope that fresh and creative approaches will be found “to reconstruct the conflicted past in ways as yet unimagined.”²⁸⁶ To imagine a life with ghosts is to imagine a future unresolved, but always to come nevertheless.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mother Ireland Is Dead

Ghost Mothers of the Late 20th Century: Haunted Women, Haunted Spaces

The personification of Ireland as “Woman” and “Mother” necessitated that the purity of that image was maintained on all levels for, in order to maintain its mobilizing force, “Woman” could only ever be an eternal essence beyond the physicality which suggested other, darker, demands and desires.²⁸⁷

M: The semblance. Faint, though by no means invisible, in a certain light. [*Pause*] Given the right light. [*Pause.*] Grey rather than white, a pale shade of grey. [*Pause.*] ... Watch it pass - [*Pause.*] Watch her pass before the candelabrum, how its flames, their light - ... Soon then after she was gone, as though never there, began to walk, up and down, up and down...²⁸⁸

The ghostly condition of the protagonist May in Samuel Beckett’s *Footfalls* (1976) is emphasized by the pale grey color that is her skin, her hair, and the wrap that hides her feet, trailing behind her. She is also the embodiment of memory, signaled by the third person narrative of something unsettling but unspecified in her past. May is a figure that haunts and is haunted. Beckett’s short work features a daughter obsessed, relentlessly pacing nine steps back and nine steps forth in a narrow, once carpeted space, while the disembodied voice of her invisible mother asks her if she won’t “try to snatch a little sleep” or if she won’t ever “have done – revolving it all?”²⁸⁹ Stuck in what could be called a psychological stasis, May goes over and over again in her poor mind the enigmatic “it” of the story, knowing the motion of walking is not enough, since she must also hear the faint sound of her own footfalls. An/other sound, that of her mother’s voice,

may or may not be real, possibly also part of the ghostly world of memory and the past, and yet by play's end, there is "*No trace of May*" either, as if she had never been. May is visibly and audibly present on the stage; however the play proposes that both mother and daughter are absented, existing only in their own purgatorial spaces.

Beckett's works have most often been evaluated in terms of post-modernity and the European avant-garde, but in the last few years the critical landscape has dramatically shifted to focus more intently on the "problem of Irishness" in his work.²⁹⁰ Even if we begin to ponder the absent presence of an Irish consciousness within Beckett's *Footfalls* with its focus on a ghostly mother and her tormented daughter, we are also keenly aware of assertions such as those made by Anna McMullan, "there are no Kathleen ni Houlihans or Mother Irelands in Beckett's theatre."²⁹¹ Yet if the representation of the invisible mother in *Footfalls* produces a trace of "some archetypal image of the mother,"²⁹² then it is also possible to think about this archetypal image in terms of the *Irish* mother who beseeches her daughter to have done with it all, broadly read as the past. McMullan continues, "Beckett's staging of maternal or matronly figures exposes a deep-rooted anxiety around questions of embodiment ... which can be related to tropes of femininity and the mother in the Irish theatre canon."²⁹³ Considering Beckett's *Footfalls* in relation to late 20th century Irish and Northern Irish drama allows two under-considered narratives to be made visible: that of the relationship between mother and daughter and that of the restless woman trapped in repetition and inside the house. The play specifically brings into focus those underlying anxieties regarding embodiment, inheritance, entrapment, and the home as well as the powerful spectral hold of the dead or unseen mother (Mother Ireland?) on successive generations of women.

This chapter examines the haunted female psyche in three contemporary Irish and Northern Irish plays by way of memory, the home/scape, and the ghostly maternal. As in the previous chapters the focus of analysis is the figure of the ghost, which within these plays is always the dead or missing mother, or the one who signifies her. Whereas the previous two chapters focus on the ghost by way of key moments in the island's history, this chapter considers the ghost in a broader historical context based on a long cultural tradition that, as Eavan Boland characterizes it, "feminized the national and nationalized the feminine."²⁹⁴ I examine the plays' challenge to narrowly constructed views about the representation of Irish and Northern Irish women by way of their re-framing of the history and set of gender relations that erase dissenting women from the genealogy of Irish nationalism, and in the North from the sectarian (and male) dominated discourses of the Troubles. The three plays that I will analyze resist the restrictive political and social policies of the 20th century that held a woman's role as that of mother and a woman's place as within the home. Conventional notions of motherhood are collapsed by the plays' depiction of atypical mothers who no longer want to be physically or emotionally contained, thereby removing themselves from the domestic space as well as the social order of the nation or province. I contend that the playwrights give these dead m/others a tormented home/scape: tormented because their psychological conflict is due to a belief in traditional notions of marriage and motherhood derived from patriarchal-based narratives North and South; and home/scape because their ongoing desire to escape a confining home results from being abandoned as well as no longer feeling at home in the nation/province. The representation of non-idealized mothers who seek death in contrast to images of idealized womanhood in Mother Ireland or Orange Lily²⁹⁵ permanently

fractures the entrenched linkages between mother, woman, and nation/province even as these irresolvable images continue to haunt.

The plays analyzed are Marina Carr's *The Mai* (1994), Stewart Parker's *Pentecost* (1987), and Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998).²⁹⁶ The playwrights displace the moral codes of society (which have traditionally come from both Catholic and Protestant churches and the state) by upsetting the sanctioned constructs of mother and family. Often the characters have unconventional family structures, or could be viewed as unfit mothers, representations that clearly contrast to that of the ideal Irish or Northern Irish woman of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and even 1960s as that "self-sacrificing mother whose world was bound by the confines of her home, a woman who was pure, modest...who knew and accepted her place in society."²⁹⁷ All three plays focus on the woman who has been abandoned and who tries to find her place within outmoded ideas of marriage and motherhood that belong to previous generations. The women wrestle with fixed identities, but since they are often trapped in societal and cultural expectations, they are therefore destined to repeat the past. Like May in *Footfalls*, Carr and Parker's female protagonists not only haunt but are haunted by fragments of a past unresolved, which concerns an absent/dead mother or an absent/dead child. In other words, the absent m/other is a legacy (or future) that haunts. Rather than an act of powerlessness, the women's desire for death is a conscious act outside the boundaries of normative society. Their deaths or near death experiences may be read as radical re-inventions of the self, yet they also signify that which is unendurable in women's historical experiences in Ireland, and therefore contribute to an unsettling future.

Feminism and the woman's desire for death are not easily reconcilable since suicide is often read as an act of powerlessness. In the plays, however, the female suicide or attempted suicide may be viewed as a radical act of self-actualization or a denial of the patriarchal order. More important the female suicide signifies the inability of the women to live in an untenable situation: the reality of their condition as abandoned, haunted women. These abandoned women are "both physically deserted by a lover and spiritually outside the law."²⁹⁸ Looking at the etymology of the word abandon, Lawrence I. Lipking contends that the abandoned woman signifies "submission to power" ("given up *by*") but also "freedom from bondage" ("given up *to*"), thereby having the ability to "make her own laws,"²⁹⁹ which in the context of the plays is through the act of suicide or attempted suicide. In *Over Her Dead Body*, Elisabeth Bronfen describes the act of suicide as the moment between creating the self and ending the self that becomes a liminal space of writing the self. For the woman who commits suicide, Bronfen argues, it is this kind of strategy that allows her to write the self over and against the patriarchal structures in which she lives:

For suicide implies an authorship with one's own life, a form of writing the self and writing death that is ambivalently poised between self-construction and self-destruction; a confirmation that is also an annihilation of the self, and as such another kind of attempt to know the self as radically different and other from the consciously known self during life....The choice of death emerges as a feminine strategy within which writing with the body is a way of getting rid of oppression connected with the feminine body. ... Feminine suicide can serve as a trope, self-defeating as this seems, for a feminine writing strategy within the constraints of patriarchal culture.³⁰⁰

To know the self in death is to understand the self in a mode completely distinct and other from the knowledge of the self that is understood in life. In the plays the suicide

or attempted suicide of the abandoned woman who is also a m/other becomes “utter surrender...(but also)...utter freedom”³⁰¹ to/from a deep-rooted patriarchal and religious culture. In choosing to absent herself from the home and the self, I argue that the mothers engage in an act of self-negation as well as an act of self-creation in a radical release of the past in which women have been culturally, politically, and historically marginalized.

The Mai revolves around the troubled relationship between the ghostly 40-year-old Mai and her husband Robert, told from the present perspective (1994) of their 30-year-old daughter Millie. Five generations of the Mai’s family are featured, wherein the women are keenly tied to their men, whether married or not.³⁰² The play opens in the summer of 1979 on the day Robert returns home after having left the family five years previously. Caught between her desire for true love and a husband who continues to be unfaithful, The Mai haunts her daughter Millie because The Mai is unable to reconcile the fairy-tale (or, traditional ways of thinking about marriage) with reality. Millie remembers those two summers of 1979 and 1980, which culminates in the death of her mother. Yet because of the play’s disruptive dramaturgy and the visibility of The Mai’s dead body at the play’s midpoint, the mother’s suicide haunts before it happens.

Millie re-members her mother/ghost’s story just as in *Pentecost* Marian re-constructs the life of the ghost Lily, a mother figure to her. *Pentecost* was first produced in 1987 but is set in the early months of 1974 in Belfast and is a complex play weaving the personal, the political, and the historical. The narrative of the personal involves Lily and Marian – childless mothers who have given birth but are no longer with child and who still mourn their loss and their future. What also unites the staunch Presbyterian Lily and the Catholic Marian is that they were both involved in illegitimate unions wherein

female desire was expressed outside the law of religion and the land. In *Pentecost* and *The Mai*, the passion of the female body and the woman's desire to escape the home – anathema to the religious and patriarchal precepts of the proper Northern Irish Protestant or Irish Catholic woman – often lead to devastating consequences.

Whereas *The Mai* and *Pentecost* are set entirely in the familial space of the home, *By the Bog of Cats*... is predominantly set on the actual landscape of the Irish midlands – a place caught between the worlds of the living and the dead.³⁰³ The play is Carr's version of Euripides' *Medea*, but the narrative is expanded by the psychological condition of the protagonist Hester Swane, who must contend with the abandonment not only by her mother when she was seven, but also by her former lover Carthage. Hester is haunted by two figures: her mother Big Josie, whose presence permeates the play, but who never appears, and by the ghost of her brother Joseph, who does. In all three plays, the narrative of the motherless daughter or the childless mother is undeniably a ghost story, for the absent mother/child becomes a shadowy figure, illusory and unreal. Despite illegitimate unions, abandonment, and the missing m/other, Millie, Marian, Hester, and to an extent *The Mai* attempt to negotiate a socially constructed place for themselves in the male-dominated environments of church and state. Due to the powerful and persuasive narratives of Irish Catholic nationalism and Protestant unionism or loyalism, mother's stories and histories in 20th century Irish and Northern Irish political, social, and cultural contexts have been neglected or mythologized. Similar to WWI soldiers and victims of the Troubles in the previous chapters these mothers are compelled to haunt, as they are fragments of a past unresolved.

To think of haunting as a way of knowing is a way of opening up the past, rather than shutting it down. If identity and the legacy of the past get passed down from generation to generation, as we see evidenced in the plays, the ghost is the thing that interrupts that linearity in such a way to allow for what Gordon calls a “transformative recognition.”³⁰⁴ In the plays, illegitimate unions and expressions of female desire outside the law and often with outsiders, produces a crisis of succession in which the patriarchal social order is based. Further, the desire for death has the potential of also rupturing the women’s inheritance and histories. The mother’s suicide or attempted suicide – and the hauntings that announce and accompany them – is the dramatic response to the impossibility of the feminine role in Irish and Northern Irish histories.

Historiography and Images of WOMAN North and South

From the long history of England’s feminization of Ireland to political songs of past centuries to the play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, the ideological specters of Mother Ireland and Woman-as-Nation continued to haunt the island through much of the twentieth century.³⁰⁵ The “allegorical configuration of Ireland” as Woman or Mother was reinforced by W.B. Yeats and Augusta Gregory’s 1902 play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*.³⁰⁶ Yeats and Gregory sought to encourage the nationalist struggle for independence from Great Britain with the symbolic character of Cathleen. The short play, set in 1798, features a poor old woman who travels from house to house beseeching young Irish men to fight for her against British dominion. At the home of the Gillanes, the old woman succeeds in persuading young Michael to join the struggle, even though it is the eve of his wedding day. The decision to postpone his wedding indefinitely in order to fulfill an act of service/sacrifice to the woman/Nation leads to the miraculous transformation of the

old woman into a young girl, “with the walk of a queen.”³⁰⁷ First staged in 1902 as a call to arms, the play solidified the coalescence of woman with Ireland and the dominant relationship between mother figure and sons of Ireland that was yet one more potent extension adding fuel to the flame of nationalist fervor.

Cathleen ni Houlihan revolves around numerous representations of woman. The play’s famous ending, for instance, brings into focus three distinct female images: old woman, young girl, and queen. This may be a ghostly condition of three women in one, and yet another image of woman often overlooked is that of the women left behind. The play is allegorical in its construction of woman in early 20th century Ireland as symbol and muse, but the idealized woman or mother is also contrasted with suffering women, namely Michael’s mother and his fiancée. In the play, woman represents domestic life in the character of the mother Bridget, one who can fulfill the necessary work of the household while woman also represents the ideal, the character of Cathleen, the one *to* whom, rather than *of* whom, sacrifice is made.³⁰⁸ Susan Cannon Harris argues in her book *Gender and Modern Irish Drama* that the Irish male is compelled towards what Cathleen/Ireland can offer him:

One thing Cathleen does, then, is ratify, mystify, and calcify the opposition... between the material/domestic world embodied by the mortal woman (Bridget) and the visionary world represented by the feminine ideal (Cathleen)...it is clear that the Irish man *really* belongs to the idealized world of Cathleen – just as it is clear that the mortal woman is structurally prevented from following him there.³⁰⁹

Harris contends that the whole concept of Irish nationalism combined with the opposition between the two represented women and their duality necessitates the Irish woman to be in two places at once – the human/domestic and the

spiritual/otherworldly.³¹⁰ Actual women may aspire towards this otherworldly space but they always remain mired in the real world. Ultimately, the play presents what could be termed an irresolvable problem between the ideology of nationalism and the representational construction of woman within nationalism.³¹¹

Thirty-five years after the first production of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and twenty years following the fight for independence, the guardians of the Irish Free State took inspiration from the various haunting incarnations of mother and woman in relation to Ireland, and in particular, those things that contribute to a strong, healthy nation. The head of government of the Irish Free State from 1922-1937, Éamon de Valera firmly believed that the family and the role of mother were fundamental to the existence of Ireland.³¹² Thus the new 1937 Constitution of Ireland proposed, among other things, to change the name from Irish Free State to Éire (or Ireland) and to dictate as law the position of the ideal Irish woman within Irish society, outlining her place as within the home and her role as that of mother. For the common good of the nation, women were entrusted to uphold the moral institution known as the family. Debates began in Dáil Éireann (of the Irish Free State) in May 1937 wherein several women's organizations campaigned against the proposed constitution,³¹³ arguing that if it passed it would severely restrict the rights of and opportunities for women.³¹⁴ The article at issue (41.2) was titled "The Family" and outlined women's social and moral function:

- 2.1 In particular the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support within the home without which the common good cannot be achieved.
- 2.2 The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.³¹⁵

Even though the women's suffrage movement had been in full swing from the early part of the 20th century to the mid-1930s, and dozens of groups had been organized to fight for women's rights, the new Constitution narrowly passed by popular referendum in July 1937. This was a brutal blow to women, especially for those who had fought alongside the men in the struggle for independence; adding insult to injury, Jennifer Molidor proposes that these women had fought and suffered "amid gendered discourses of sacrifice" as reflected in the myth of Mother Ireland.³¹⁶ The momentum gained from the thirty-plus year suffrage movement came to an abrupt halt with the advent of the sovereign state of Ireland on December 29, 1937, the date the new constitution came into effect. The representation of woman as Ireland was already firmly tied to Irish national identity, and now the new Constitution explicitly sanctioned the political and cultural notion of Mother Ireland thereby implicitly establishing more severe gender boundaries "in the building of the Irish nation."³¹⁷ What remains irresolvable is that today Irish women are visible outside the home in all aspects of social, political, and cultural life and yet Article 41.2 remains the law of the land.³¹⁸ Consequently Mother Ireland continues to haunt Irish women, making her presence felt throughout society.

If the Irish Catholic nationalist woman was explicitly reflected in images and iconography, the image of the Protestant unionist or loyalist woman was barely visible. Despite the fact that the character of The Orange Lily is known within Ulster enclaves, there is little very information about her outside them. Orange Lil, as she is alternatively called, "featured in Twelfth of July Parades in Belfast, decked out in Union Jack regalia" and was "one of the few female personalities associated with a male-dominated organization."³¹⁹ Yet Edna Longley maintains, "'Orange Lil' is not the whole story"

because unionism is a “coalition of sects, interests, loyalties” and since “no totalizing philosophy covers the whole coalition (...) (unionism) has never developed into a comprehensive symbolic system. You can’t personify unionism.”³²⁰ In a similar vein, Ruth Moore writing in the mid-1990s speaks of the additional burden of the Protestant woman to keep silent about her duty of loyalty to the Crown and to men, insisting:

The domination of loyalist ideology in everyday life extends also into the expectations of women. Protestant women are supposed to be either “the proper wife” or “The Orange Lily”...Loyalist women, like their men are supposed to be loyal to the throne... but in addition they must be loyal to the male head of the household – the proper wife, the working companion, the helpmate, the silent support and drive. And loyalism means containing the intense frustrations which arise from meeting these expectations.³²¹

The expectations of Protestant women in the everyday life of male-dominated structures of politics and paramilitaries are for them to assume traditional, subservient roles. Because of the phallogentric discourse of the Troubles, playwright Christina Reid argues that there is negligible difference between the societal struggles of Catholic women and those of Protestant women in the North, because these discourses emphatically position all women in the home and as caretakers: “The public faces of the Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries are men...the people who talk about religion and the Church are men. The politicians are men...Ian Paisley and the Pope are basically in total agreement over what a woman’s role in the home should be.”³²² The Northern Irish Protestant woman then is either Orange Lil, a caricature of a woman or she is absent from the North’s political structures and the dominant cultural narrative of unionism or loyalism. The exaggerated Orange Lil or the shadowy, silent Protestant woman haunts the North in a different way than the overexposure of the image of Mother Ireland on both

sides of the border. The imagery of Mother Ireland and the proper wife and mother is pervasive (and at times pernicious) and thus a vestige of its dominance remains in the unconsciousness of Irish and Northern Irish culture.

THE MAI

The history of gendered iconography of woman/Nation and mother/Ireland is linked to the home by the way that women become symbols of that space. In Marina Carr's *The Mai* the home/space becomes a space that overturns this gendered construction since the female protagonist walks away from domesticity and her role as mother and wife. The irresolvability in the nationalist construction of gender (the reality of women's lives vs. their representation within nationalism) comes here in the form of haunting and an interruptive dramaturgical structure, both of which upset the inherited effects of mother/Ireland. The most profound aspect of Carr's work is its specificity to real experiences of Irish women in the late 20th century even while some critics would argue that her female characters "bear little relation to their counterparts in contemporary Ireland."³²³ The patriarchal symbols of church and state, which here involves the idealization of marriage and motherhood from previous decades, are truncated by Carr's pursuit of a truth about Irish women's lives. *The Mai* also subverts the notion of the ideal mother by proposing that not all women who give birth are natural mothers. Adrienne Rich dismantled the myth of the natural mother long ago,³²⁴ but Carr continues to overthrow the simplified myths of Irish motherhood and marriage in her representation of complex yet problematic mothers who do not fit easily into Ireland's national narrative. Since these mothers have been left outside nationalist discourses, they come back

“through the agency of the ghost” in order for their narratives to be “recuperated and revised.”³²⁵

At the heart of *The Mai* is a 20th century genealogy of Irish women as is illustrated by an abundance of female characters. The strategic positioning of so many women on the (Irish) stage with their identity as mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers is contrasted with the absented woman from the narrative of Irish nationalism or even Irish theatrical representation itself. By focusing on the personal – mother/daughter relationships, illegitimate unions, abandonment – *The Mai* calls attention to the political, that is, women who have the “historical experience of being left outside the Irish ‘national body.’”³²⁶ Yet, critics such as Gulsen Sayin have argued recently that Carr’s plays are “divorced from Irish nationalism and national identity.”³²⁷ Furthermore, they show little evidence of Mother Irelands or Cathleen ni Houlihans. I would argue however that Carr’s plays, and particularly *The Mai*, are inextricably linked to national identity and the Irish nation because the traditional concepts of motherhood – and perceptions about where women belong – were fundamental to the story of the building of the Irish nation especially in the twentieth century. Thus it is important to recognize that by Carr’s disrupting of those traditional ideas that tied Irish women to motherhood, the home, and marriage, she re-visions women’s stories and by extension upsets the narrative of Irish nationalism and the patriarchal order. Historically, the overwhelming identification of the Irish stage with nationalism and its gender dynamics indicates that it is nearly impossible to think about gender theatrically in Ireland without confronting those mythoi. I argue that the ghost of *The Mai* has a dual identity: as a tormented mother/wife dependent on the traditional precepts of the nation state that have

fostered unattainable notions about the idealized marriage, motherhood, and home; and as a woman who desires to escape from these trappings thereby becoming an independent subject of her own history. If women have historically been left out of the nationalist narrative, then problematic women – those who engage in illegitimate unions; express sexual desire; commit suicide – are not only absented from, but also deemed unacceptable to, the Irish nation. I contend that *The Mai*'s ghost opens the door for the imperfect (as opposed to *idealized*) ghost/mother of the past to return, and in so doing revises the nationalist narrative by highlighting female experiences both within and outside the discourses of women and the nation.

“Haunting of Historical Consciousness”

Just as the iconic images of mother/Ireland and woman/Nation persist, *The Mai*'s characters' compulsion to repeat the legacy of absence and abandonment is indicative of the past's firm grasp on them. Yet the ghost is the thing that interrupts that legacy, to allow for this “transformative recognition.” In the play, the repetition of the past may be viewed as the “haunting of historical consciousness, an awareness not just of the pastness of the past but of how the past lives on in the present.”³²⁸ Kathleen Brogan's theory of the haunting of historical consciousness is a History that makes its absent/presence felt in the here-and-now by addressing the relevance and injustices of the past while looking towards a future of social and political possibilities. Important in Brogan's observation is the first word of the phrase *how* the past lives on for it is the ways in which those images of woman/Nation and mother/Ireland were utilized to project nationalist ideas that led to their reification and to the severely limited roles for women in the development of the nation. Jörn Rüsen has conceived of four types of historical consciousness, one of which

he calls the “critical type.” As briefly summarized by Peter C. Seixas, Rūsen’s critical type suggests an historical consciousness that “can turn towards the past in order to break from it, as in women’s history that helps to undo the past’s oppressive gender relations.”³²⁹ The play’s focus on the mother/daughter relationship and the relationships between women highlight “the construction of a feminist genealogy”³³⁰ that breaks with the nationalist narrative bound in patriarchal ideology and suggests an historical consciousness that comes to terms with the relationship between the ongoing recurrences of women’s abandonment and loss and exclusionary policies of the state. *The Mai* then underscores a nation’s troubled past brought to consciousness, and reconstituted as a woman’s tragedy.

In *The Mai*, the process of verbalizing memory becomes a means of identity within a specific time and space - always in the past and always in the presence of ghosts. Thus Millie’s act of re-remembering and the processes of memory and forgetting – a circularity that aligns with the ghost – are critical in her attempts for a temporal and spatial re-conciliation with her haunted past. Breaking the convention of realism with her direct address, Millie also attempts to fill the gap left by the absent mother. The ghostly mother is associated with an unresolved past that places her on the periphery of the Irish nation but also side by side with the looming mother/Ireland and the haunted daughter in trying to create an identity in the midst of all that history. In Ireland, “maternal politics has (historically) been subordinated to nationalist political agendas.”³³¹ By re-remembering the story of her maternal family, Millie re-members the nation – but she does so only by overturning the historical equation of womanhood with nationality. Giving her account of the past, Millie is able to re-member “that house of proud mad women” – the ghosts of

her family spanning over one hundred years and five generations – who are put on display as a microcosm of women’s lives previously unobserved. These women disturb the Irish nationalist narrative because they represent those outside that narrative: pregnant but unmarried (The Duchess, Ellen, and Millie) and conceived out of wedlock (Grandma Fraochlan and The Mai). The play overthrows what Gerardine Meaney calls the historical “repression of the maternal body” and in turn “that body (becomes) a specter, haunting national consciousness.”³³² The very real presence of these problematic women may be read as an historical ghosting, and as such they come back to stake a claim to a sense of their own national belonging. Naturally, the place where staking that claim begins is the domestic sphere of the haunted house.

The Haunted Land and Home/scape

The relationship between land, place, home, and belonging is a mainstay of the nationalist symbolic in Ireland. Irish nationalism identified the issue of land and land ownership as a basis for the Irish Republic’s 1916 declaration, “We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland,”³³³ the implication of course being that of male ownership. In Carr’s play, land ownership becomes particularly pertinent since it is The Mai who buys the land at Owl Lake, winning out over other (male) bidders – owner Sam Brady refused all other offers and “gave it to The Mai for a song” – in an act of self-determination and gender reversal. Even though the land was “the most coveted site in the county,” The Mai knows the place is haunted by the legend of Owl Lake.³³⁴

The Mai tempts fate by building her house there, as Millie recalls:

A tremor runs through me when I recall the legend of Owl Lake. I knew that story as a child. So did The Mai and Robert. But we were unaffected by it and in our blindness moved along with it like sleepwalkers along a precipice and

all around gods and mortals called out for us to change our course and, not listening, we walked on and on (TM, 148).

For The Mai, the suicidal pull of the dark mournful landscape of Owl Lake began with purchase of the land, and continues until she too walks into her own lake of tears.

The landscape is already haunted, but soon the house itself becomes a haunted site. The Mai's positioning at the liminal space of the window where she continually looks out on the hypnotic Owl Lake is illustrative of a longing for her husband Robert but also of a feeling of death, since the lake is where she takes her life. The play opens with the entrance of The Mai, passing outside a "*room with a huge bay window*" with a handful of books when, as the stage directions read, she "*decides to look out on Owl Lake.*" She comes into the room, but once again The Mai is "*(d)rawn to the window, she looks out at the lake, waiting, watching. She places a few more books, then moves again to the window* (TM, 107). As the play is Millie's re-membering of the past, the idea that The Mai is drawn to look out three times in the play's first few moments connects waiting for Robert with Owl Lake. Is Mai waiting for her husband and longing for death or is she longing for her husband and waiting for death? Either way, the ghostly Mai anticipates a future that never really arrives. The vision of The Mai repeatedly looking out from inside the home suggests a kind of domestic captivity, an irresolvable condition since The Mai actually has the freedom to come and go as she pleases.

The play overtly elaborates the home as a metaphor for the failed ideal of motherhood and wifedom, and as such it becomes haunted. Through the course of the play we watch how a traditional home is transformed into a home/scape, which is a place of confinement from where women want to escape. The Mai built the house at Owl Lake so that Robert might return and their new home could be then be a space of possibility.

According to Millie, Robert abruptly left the family, “No explanations, no goodbyes, he just got into his car with his cello and drove away” (TM, 110). Soon after, Millie remembers, “The Mai set about looking for that magic thread that would stitch us together again and she found it at Owl Lake” (TM, 111). The Mai scraped money together, bought the site, had the house built, and then sat at the window, “her eyes closed tightly, her lips forming two words noiselessly. Come home – come home” (TM, 111). The Mai says to Millie that when Robert comes home, “(W)e will have the best of lives,” a statement that evokes a dreamy ideal of marriage and home life (TM, 110). From her family’s point of view the new house is “amazing,” “incredible,” “lovely,” and “beautiful,” and the magical thing is, her husband does come home. For The Mai, her new home is now truly a dream space in which she can hold onto her seventeen-year old marriage. Soon after Robert comes home, though, he returns to his philandering ways. The Mai is devastated over Robert’s neglect but she is resolved that he will (once again) come back to her. In a sense, Robert’s repeated abandonment produces a ghostly wife, as she is there/not there when it suits him. The Mai waits and waits, fixated as she is at the window staring out at the expanse of Owl Lake, stuck in a psychological stasis, but knowing on some level her death is near.

The domestic home is transformed into the more sinister home/scape by the way that Robert continually leaves and The Mai feels trapped. The domestic space of the home may not be inherently political but when a woman’s place is dictated as the home as in Ireland’s 1937 Constitution then it does indeed become a political space. For Patrick Bixby, de Valera’s home was one of fixity: “Through his appeals to this vision of Ireland, de Valera defined home as a site of ideological closure, of fixed origins and authentic

identities, of a celebrated pre-colonial history and pure national traditions.”³³⁵ Heather Ingham emphasizes the idea that the home as outlined in the Constitution was the only place for women to play the part of wife and mother, and thus was one of constraint.³³⁶ In the play once the home shifts into a home/scape it becomes a purgatorial space because of the presence of the ghost of The Mai and because it is a place of both familial sanctuary and entrapment. Looking around the house, The Mai sorrowfully admits:

This house – these days I think it’s the kind of house you’d see in the corner of a dream – dark, formless, strangely inviting. It’s the kind of house you build to keep out neuroses, stave off nightmares. But they come in anyway with the frost and the draughts and the air bubbles in the radiators. It’s the kind of house you build when you’ve nowhere left to go (TM, 158).

The image of something that is dark, formless, strangely inviting suggests the uncanny. In the form of vaporous mist and bubbles, psychological terrors seep in slowly, infecting the house and its inhabitants. The Mai’s home at Owl Lake may have started as a dream house but now appears only in a corner of a dream. It was once a place of protection – to keep out neuroses, stave off nightmares – but now The Mai needs to be shielded from those self same nightmares. What does this mean for a family or nation when the home becomes a space oozing with anxiety and neuroses? The Mai does not just feel trapped in the home/scape but also is “imprisoned in stereotypes of Irish womanhood not of (her) making.”³³⁷ The home/scape is a last resort, a prison that The Mai unwittingly built for herself and her children.

Maternal Absence

The house may be haunted by nightmares and neuroses and by the legend of Owl Lake, but the space becomes once more haunted by the persistent interruption of the

absent mother. The absent mother haunts each and every generation of The Mai's family beginning with the matriarch, The Duchess. The Duchess, who is not seen but is a hovering presence, was from the tiny island of (the fictional) Fraochlán located on the west coast of Ireland. The Duchess lived on the margins of the land, and as such lived a marginal existence in the national imaginary. A spinster at age 43, The Duchess had a brief tryst with a Spanish or Moroccan sailor ("no one is quite sure"), an outsider from another land who abandons her immediately after their one night together (TM, 115). Their affair produced a bastard daughter, who grew up to be Grandma Fraochlán. In 1879, the "stigma" of having "tha only bastard on Fraochlán in living memory...must've been terrible for her," says Grandma Fraochlán. Possibly to make it better for her daughter, The Duchess invents the story that the girl's father was the Sultan of Spain and that he had hidden The Duchess and her daughter on the island, as Grandma Fraochlán relates, "because we were too beautiful for the world. But in the summer he was goin' to come in a yacht and take us away to his palace in Spain" (TM, 169). The Duchess held onto the belief that one-day soon, they would be a family, while in reality her child was left alone to wait on the cliffs of Fraochlán for a father who never returned.

In the eyes of the Irish nation, The Duchess' fling with a foreigner and its accompanying immorality had the potential to pollute her daughter and that of her descendants. When Grandma Fraochlán's own daughter Ellen gets pregnant "be a brickie" in 1938, Grandma Fraochlán forces her to marry him, explaining to her granddaughter, "Beck, I was afraid what everyone'd say, afraid they'd blame me and say it was The Duchess' blood that made her wild and immoral" (TM, 170). The immoral blood of the foremother (and the foreign blood of the forefather) infects (and haunts)

subsequent generations. A cycle of misfortune stems from this maternal inheritance. Ellen gives up the pursuit of her medical degree and gets married, but dies at the age of 27, worn out as Grandma Fraochlán says, “from all them miscarriages and pregnancies” (TM 139). She died giving birth and as such the fertile Ellen leaves the world reeking of afterbirth while The Duchess is left decaying with only her delusions of sailing to Spain. The Duchess and Ellen hold onto the fantasy of their men’s return, but are both abandoned “on Fraochlán to rot” (TM, 145). The Mai hopes for her husband’s return, influenced no doubt by a childhood dream in which a “dark-haired prince” would take her away (TM, 262). The absence presence of The Duchess and Ellen lives on in the ghostly gesture of waiting, rotting, languishing that is the life of the descendant, The Mai.

Grandma Fraochlán’s children, even as adults, suffer from the painful inheritance of previous generations and the gap left by the absent mother. Appearing to be no mother at all, Grandma Fraochlán haunts her children by the way that she was there but not there for her family especially after her husband died. Her daughter Julie laments:

She had little or no time for her children except to tear strips on us when we got in her way. All her energy went into my father and he thought she was an angel. And then when she was left with us and pregnant with Ellen, she was a madwoman. Mai, I’m not makin’ it up. She spent one half the day in the back room pullin’ on an opium pipe, a relic from an unknown father, and the other half rantin’ and ravin’ at us or starin’ out the window at the sea. (...) I’m seventy-five years of age, Mai, and I’m still not over my childhood. (TM, 145-146)

A generation still sorely affected by the absent mother suggests a generation holding onto the past, unable to develop into adulthood. As Mai’s sister Beck says at one point, “Ah the past, the past, the past – just forget it” but unfortunately everyone in this family including Beck is chained to the past (TM, 170). Grandma Fraochlán even holds

on to the living remains of her dead husband, the 7-foot long oar that she takes with her wherever she goes, even “in the bed beside her.” She bewails, “It’s all I’ve left of him now” (TM, 113). Grandma Fraochlán repeats sitting at the window “pinin’ for the nine-fingered fisherman,” just as she watched her mother and her daughter wait, and just as she now watches The Mai.

The Mai’s family represents a history of unmarried and sexualized mothers, and children who are haunted by the absent mother. These take on the form of a transgenerational haunting, a term conceived by Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok to describe a traumatic situation wherein unresolved issues in a family narrative are transmitted by a phantom that haunts by way of inheritance, secrets, and the bodies of others. The image of The Duchess, Grandma Fraochlán, Ellen, and The Mai waiting for men to return is suggestive of the picture of the patient, long-suffering (asexual) Irish mother that goes back generations. All the women except Ellen though pervert this feminine ideal by seeking sexual pleasure or wishful fantasy rather than any kind of normative familial or maternal fulfillment. The Mai would rather sleep with her returned husband than tell her three other children that their father is back:

Millie: Mom, will I get the others?
The Mai: Not yet, in a little while (...)
– have a spray of perfume. And don’t tell the
others yet. I want it to be a surprise for them.
Robert and The Mai exit hand in hand to the bedroom
(TM, 109).

For The Mai, sexual satisfaction trumps the maternal instinct. Grandma Fraochlán voices a similar sentiment, “I would gladly have hurled all seven of ye down the slopes of hell for one night more with the nine-fingered fisherman and may I rot eternally for such unmotherly feelin’” (TM, 182). Grandma Fraochlán places a divide

between women who are mothers and those who are lovers, signaling there is no commingling of the two. The Duchess fabricates a story for her daughter telling her that one day, they would live in a palace. The Duchess even refuses to let Grandma Fraochlán call her Mother. Her insistence that she be called only The Duchess suggests her renouncement of the role of mother as well as her desire for some piece of autonomy. The Duchess' and Ellen's pregnancies before marriage were disruptions to the sanctity of the family and therefore to the nation's identity. Their indiscretions also marked what would have been an even more marginalized position than that of island women: the irresolvable position of unmarried mother.³³⁸ Grandma Fraochlán and The Mai choose their lovers over their children. They too occupy an irresolvable position in the Irish nation, that of the sexualized mother.

Trans/Generational: An Irish Haunting

Entrenched notions of motherhood, marriage, and mother/Ireland continued to dominate the social and political landscape even though the 1960s and 70s were periods of enormous change. Diarmaid Ferriter argues that this period was filled with “female anger (which) involved closely observing the previous generation of mothers and a determination not to repeat their perceived mistakes.”³³⁹ Even if women were out in force fighting for change, prevailing attitudes such as those that conflated women, home, mothering, duty, religion, and the nation do much to suggest a conjuration of mother/Ireland, the effects of which were women still belonged in the home.³⁴⁰ Unfortunately, this sense of belonging to marriage, maternity, and the home permeated the deepest level of the female Irish psyche. The Mai may be viewed from the outside as an independent woman – she occupies the Principalship at the local school; she raised all

the money herself to build a house on the lake for Robert; she is raising four children on her own – but she is stuck in the psychological stasis of past generations that expected women to stay married to husbands and devoted to children even if circumstances dictated otherwise. For Brogan, ghosts can “represent continuity with the past.”³⁴¹ And yet, this is not always a good thing. In Carr’s play, we are constantly reminded of the ghosts of The Duchess and Ellen, who represent this self same continuity with the past. Robert is always leaving, but The Mai will not leave him. Moments before walking into the lake, she explains to her daughter, “Millie, I don’t think anyone will ever understand, not you, not my family, not even Robert, No one will ever understand how completely and utterly Robert is mine and I am his – no one” (TM, 185). The Mai’s mother Ellen and her great-grandmother The Duchess were also women disallowed to thrive in a society built on conformity, ultimately destroying them. Since wife and mother were prescribed roles for women, even as late as the 1970s Irish women were often driven to model their lives on these roles. Those women who were openly sexual, unmarried and pregnant, or desired to abandon these roles were marginalized from the nationalist state.

Seventeen-year-old Millie represents the final generation and her observations as a thirty-year-old relate the way she has inherited and is haunted by her past. The Mai is fully aware that her children are haunted – as she screams at Robert: “How can you do this to your children! They’re haunted! Do you know that! Your children are haunted. And you don’t give a fuckin’ damn!” (TM, 156) The fact that The Mai’s children are haunted by Robert’s abandonment reiterates an idea from Chapter One that Millie’s inheritance of the past is a “haunting imposition.”³⁴² Millie also got pregnant outside of marriage by her married lover who soon leaves her. Her five-year-old son Joseph knows

that his “daddy is an El Salvadorian drummer who swept [her] off [her] feet when [she] was lost in New York” (TM, 165). Millie’s sexual, illegitimate relationship with an outsider mirrors her great-great-grandmother’s relationship with the Spanish sailor both of which may be read as transgressions of nationalist sanctioned womanhood. It is the late 1980s when Millie chooses to get pregnant, and her lack of concern over stigmas or patriarchal pressure shows how far Irish society had progressed. Yet the images of mother/Ireland and woman/Nation persisted. In 1990 Edna Longley espoused that, “Even on her death-bed, Cathleen-Anorexia exerts a residual power over the image and self-images of *all* Irish women.”³⁴³ Longley’s notion of Cathleen-Anorexia combines Cathleen Ni Houlihan (the embodiment of woman/Nation) with Anorexia. She writes, “‘Anorexia’ is thus Cathleen ni Houlihan in a terminal condition. Anorexic patients pursue an unreal self-image – in practice, a death-wish. Similarly, the Irish Nationalist dream may have declined into a destructive neurosis...So perhaps Anorexia should, rather, personify Irish women themselves: starved and repressed by patriarchies like Unionism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Nationalism.”³⁴⁴ Millie is tired of the pressures of her family heritage and the controlling images of woman/Ireland. She does not tell her young son that she tricked his daddy into conceiving him, so that she could have something for herself “that didn’t stink of Owl Lake” (TM, 165). A nation espousing marriage and motherhood for women – in that order and at all costs – had certainly taken its toll on her family. Millie’s deviant choice of motherhood is a way of abandoning Ireland, the home/scape, and the tyranny and stink of Owl Lake whereas Mai’s choice of suicide as a self-destructive yet creative act may be read as an over-investment in abandoning Ireland, resulting in all-out escape.

Suicide as Disruption of Matrilineal Heritage

Since mother/Ireland is an image that signifies land/home/nation, The Mai's suicide may be read as a denunciation of societal and cultural pressures to conform, to be that idealized, perfect mother/Ireland that was impossible to sustain. Mai walks away from the house she constructed suggesting a rejection of the marriage and family she also helped to build. It is a common enough notion that "[the] trope of the nation-as-woman of course depends for its representational efficacy on a particular image of woman as chaste, dutiful, daughterly or maternal."³⁴⁵ In *The Mai*, this image translates as goodness and beauty when Robert mocks The Mai: "Just look at you, my good wife. You're so fuckin' good, Mai, you even look good when we have a row in public...My beautiful wife with her beautiful body and her beautiful face and the goodness shining out of her" (TH, 174). Robert sarcastically equates beauty with goodness with wifedom. After this bitter and emotional scene, the climax of the play, The Mai chooses to no longer live in a world where women have to hold onto notions of the perfect wife and mother that were for so much of the 20th century a part of Irish society and culture. Mai commits suicide thereby escaping the nets of home, nation, and the past.³⁴⁶

Rather than stopping the narrative, The Mai's suicide continually ruptures it. The play is structured such that the linear chronology of events is disrupted by Millie's pronouncement of The Mai's death mid-way through the first act, by the revelation of The Mai's dripping wet dead body at the end of Act I, and The Mai's movement towards the lake at the end of the play. The materiality of the lifeless body at the end of Act I is juxtaposed with the energetic but perturbed body on view in the following scenes. The rupture of the narrative coincides with the rupture of the concept of the idealized mother

and wife. For Margaret Higonnet, suicide “ruptures the social order and defies sovereign power over life and death”³⁴⁷ which not only threatens political and religious authority but also destabilizes temporality (the continuum has been broken) so that the present can no longer reflect the past. By her suicide, The Mai ruptures the familial unit, a fundamental component in maintaining stability of church and state. The Mai interrupts the legacy of the past – of waiting, of mother/Ireland – that has been handed down from generation to generation from her foremothers.

The Mai is the central ghost/mother in this story, and by her suicide she rejects her “sham of a fuckin’ marriage” (TM, 156) and motherhood, and in one way sacrifices her life for the nation. Except rather than in defense of Ireland, her sacrificial offering is an attack on its iconic nationalist images of women and mothers. Frustrated to the point of despair, The Mai lashes out at her sisters Connie and Beck:

Connie: You’ll be all right, *a stóir*.³⁴⁸
The Mai: For once in ye’re lives, will ye stop this
 family solidarity shite! You’ll be all right *a*
 stóir! Well I won’t be all right! I’ll never be
 all right and neither will ye!
Connie: Ara will you stop it. You’re drunk!
The Mai: I’m not drunk! I’m trapped.

The condition of feeling trapped points to the lack of options for The Mai. Noteworthy is her resignation with the line, I’m trapped as it does not end with the exclamation point that ends every other sentence in her exchange with her sister Connie. I’m trapped! with an exclamation point might signify a cry for help, a call to action. Instead, I’m trapped. with its definitive ending not only foretells The Mai’s own end, but also suggests that she believes there is indeed no way out of her situation.³⁴⁹ The paradox of The Mai is that she lives a well-educated and financially independent life, but is driven

to distress by her love for a philandering husband, and outdated ideas about marriage. In the late 20th century, the ideological phantoms of mother/Ireland and woman/Nation persist in haunting the nation and yet The Mai's suicide and subsequent haunting may be read as "disrupting the function of the maternal in nationalist iconography,"³⁵⁰ overturning the myth of Mother Ireland, and re-constructing the narrative of the nation. Her personal rejection of hearth, home, and husband – The Mai becomes the actor rather than the acted-upon – may be read as a political act of feminine agency because her suicide defies the familial/political stereotype of the abandoned woman that has been stuck in repetition and in representation. The suicide may not be proper to a woman's prescribed existence of suffering located within the traditional nationalist imaginary, but The Mai stops waiting and suffering, and walks out of the house.

Watching the 1995 touring production of *The Mai*, Shonagh Hill suggests that The Mai's walk to her suicide was emphasized as an act of agency by her position outside the window, deliberately looking back into the space where she was formerly trapped.³⁵¹ Important to point out here is the time period of 1979 and 1980 when Millie looks back on The Mai's life. Since the 1970s, writes Pat O'Connor, "Irish women have challenged the dominant discourses" in very public forums and yet it was not until "the late 1980s and especially in the 1990s that the public emergence of individual women...shattered the silence surrounding various aspects of patriarchal control (including legal, sexual, physical, familial and moral control)."³⁵² The pressures of a patriarchal society in which women are marginalized and their roles as mothers and wives undervalued are difficult to eradicate. In this way, the finality of The Mai can be read in a number of ways since suicide is "an ambiguous kind of text" which requires those left behind to "interpret its

meaning.”³⁵³ Proposing that her suicide represents an indictment of patriarchal culture is reasonable enough, since the (fictional) narrative of her family is located in the (real) narrative of the nation, both of which demand a rupture to shatter the order of things. “Because a suicide defies our understanding and eludes the social order,” according to Higonnet, “narratives of suicide are sites of social reconstruction.”³⁵⁴ *The Mai* questions national identity by making visible those women who have been usually left out, or placed in domesticity or the home, and thus becomes exactly that type of cultural and social re-construction.

Abandonment and Ghostliness

In the play Millie re-constructs many familial narratives, but the core remembering is the life and death (and life again) of The Mai. Millie enacts the talking cure by way of her six monologues that reflect the circumstances of her parents’ relationship that drove her mother to suicide. The act of suicide may be an act of writing the self but Millie’s monologues become a way to narrate the self, deal with the aftereffects of her mother’s suicide, and come to terms with the ghostly maternal. The idea of ghostliness is linked to abandonment in that they are both conditions marked by someone/something no longer there. Whether she is abandoned or haunted, the self (daughter) yearns for a phantasmatic connection with the m/other who in turn is unavailable or gone. The notion of ghostliness is not just representative of *The Mai*, but may also be used to describe the condition of the Irish women in the 20th century – abandoned to a state of absent/presence in the nationalist narrative. By her position as an outside observer, Millie attempts to break from the past – similar to her mother – even while she remains haunted. At the end of the play, Millie concedes:

Sometimes I think I wear Owl Lake like a caul around my chest to protect me from all that is good and hopeful and worth pursuing. And on a confident day when I am considering a first shaky step towards something within my grasp, the caul constricts and I am back at Owl Lake again. Images rush past me from that childhood landscape. There's The Mai talking to the builders... There's The Mai again adding up the bills... The Mai at the window, Grandma Fraochlán's oar... The Mai at the window again. The Mai at the window again, and it goes on and on...(TM, 184).

The Mai at the window is the repetition of the ages, but she is also the ghost that interrupts repetition and linearity. The transformative recognition for Millie is a (unconscious) realization of the disconnect between the image of The Mai waiting and The Mai that refused to wait. The Mai, as the absent mother, may have produced a lack of a sense of self in Millie as she struggles to cope without her. Millie's awareness that she is not very strong and that she teeters "along the fringe of the world with halting gait, reeking of Owl Lake at every turn" (TM, 184) aligns with an inability to develop a "separate or secure sense of self" apart and away from the trauma of the past.³⁵⁵ And yet by Millie's re-membering of fragments of a personal history, she pieces together a genealogy of Irish women in the 20th century that attempts to reconcile the unresolved issue of a woman's place in society and the world. Millie's re-membering suggests control of a history that chronicles women's struggles with being abandoned and haunted by mother/Ireland and that rejects the nation's expectations of women that had suppressed their voices and experiences for a very long time. In the next play analyzed, women in the North also attempt to break out of the normative roles prescribed for them in the late 20th century but find they are haunted by a history of sectarianism, bigotry, and strict gender roles.

PENTECOST

Northern Ireland is a society divided by geography, religion, political affiliation, and gender. Women are divided from men as a result of the patriarchal structures of politics, sectarianism, and the church, and Protestant and Catholic women are divided from each other by way of community lines.³⁵⁶ Since the outbreak of the Troubles in the late 1960s, Northern Irish women have been marginalized by these same patriarchal structures because their relationship to the conflict has mostly been that of an outsider and from their position inside the home. Historically the dominant role for women in the North, similar to what we have seen in the Republic, has been that of mother. Indeed in the 1990s, Lorraine Dowler argued that this was still the case, “In Northern Ireland today the primary role of women remains that of the reproduction of the body politic.”³⁵⁷

Marysia Zalewski further argues that nationalist women in the North are often represented in a “traditional feminized supportive role...which reif[ies] women’s conventional mission of reproducing the ideologies of nations, particularly through their role as mothers.”³⁵⁸ Women in the North whether Protestant (loyalist, unionist) or Catholic (nationalist, republican) have been contained within patriarchal and sectarian discourses that have led to idealized images of mother/wife and used to reify the past.

Playwright Stewart Parker believed that the past is a potent force in the present, and often used the figure of the ghost to illustrate this idea. In the Foreword to his *Plays 2*, he wrote that ancestral ghosts inspire his playwriting, and that it is the history play that benefits most from this dance with ghosts: “Plays and ghosts have a lot in common. The energy which flows from some intense moment of conflict in a particular time and place seems to activate them both.”³⁵⁹ His most famous plays are what he called a triptych:

Northern Star (1984), *Heavenly Bodies* (1986), and *Pentecost* (1987). These plays seem to bear little resemblance to one another, other than their high theatricality and their representation of ghosts from historical moments of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Yet what also draws them together is their emphasis on the personal stakes involved in stories of history. In an *Irish Times* article from 1970, he wrote how the past is always personal:

Nearly every day now in the North, the plea goes out to “forget the past.” Such advice is both impractical and pernicious. On the one hand, you can’t forget a nightmare while you are still dreaming it. On the other, it is survival through comprehension that is healthy, not survival through amnesia. Besides, the past is not a dead letter. The past is explosive cargo in everybody’s family dresser.³⁶⁰

The idea that the past is personal highlights the way that politics, history, and the individual are all bound up with each other in Northern Irish society. In Parker’s plays the past continually seeps into the present by way of engaging with that explosive cargo (ghosts, in this case) so that a space may open for a dialogue with the future.

When Parker’s play *Pentecost* premiered in September of 1987, the Troubles had been ongoing for nearly twenty years. Produced by Field Day Theatre Company, *Pentecost* opened at the Guildhall in Derry City, Northern Ireland. The show’s run, in the midst of the dark days of the peace process, was situated between two violent events that year, the Loughhall Ambush in May 1987 and the Remembrance Day bombing in November 1987.³⁶¹ The political backdrop to *Pentecost* however occurs thirteen years earlier during another particularly dark moment in the region’s history. The play’s setting is Belfast in the early months of 1974 when the North sought to challenge sectarianism and history by the initiative of a power-sharing executive. In December 1973 the Sunningdale Agreement was signed, approving for the first time the establishment of a

governing body of British, Irish, and Northern Irish representatives to jointly share the power of local political authority in Northern Ireland.³⁶² The Northern Ireland Assembly, as it was called, included members from both the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority, and took office on January 1, 1974. The Assembly was only in office for a few months when the powerful Ulster Workers' Council (UWC), made up of hard-line loyalists and unionists, staged a strike in early May 1974 in defiance of the newly formed executive. The strike, which caused power outages and food shortages, went on for two long weeks, and eventually put an end to the power-sharing executive. Direct rule from London was resumed. Parker remembered the UWC strike as "one of the most hopeless moments" in recent Irish history, and so the event of that momentous two-week strike swirls in and around the play.³⁶³ The political specters of 1974 including intolerance, sectarianism, and violence come back to haunt the world of *Pentecost*.

The trauma of the unionist strike and its resistance to any kind of political change is integral to understanding the play's focal point, which is the personal trauma of its female characters, who, at first, are also opposed to change. Marian Harrigan, Ruth MacAlester, and the ghost of Lily Matthews all represent the female other in a world dominated by male sectarian violence and a patriarchal political system. The three women are additionally connected by their status as childless mothers – each woman having been denied or having declined motherhood. Marian's infant son died in his crib when he was five months old; Ruth, Marian's girlhood friend, has thrice miscarried due to her physically abusive policeman husband; and Lily the ghost abandoned her illegitimate baby boy on the porch of a local Baptist church. The unresolved trauma for each revolves around issues of the body, loss, and shame as they share the condition of

the childless mother with its unique position on, what Elaine Hansen calls, the “border of motherhood... neither fully inside nor fully outside some recognizable ‘family’ unit.”³⁶⁴

Marian is unable to move forward as she is having trouble coming to terms with the death of her son. The presence of the ghost of Lily allows for a theatrical working-through of Marian’s personal trauma just as the play illustrates a working-through of a collective trauma that inhabits the troubled landscape.

Lily is a ghost, and yet she along with Marian is haunted by absent children and a past that torments her. Lily, a Free Presbyterian and Marian, a Catholic had illegitimate sexual relationships outside of marriage, which resulted in their pregnancies. Lily’s lover Alan Ferris was a British airman, an outsider who came from across the water and abandoned her after their brief affair. Lily never fully recovered from the loss of her child or the airman. When Marian found out she was pregnant by her boyfriend Lenny, they decided to get married, a choice neither of them had planned on. Inevitably the death of their baby caused the demise of their marriage. The two women, with their mutual indiscretions, go against the strict gender codes of behavior in place at the time, but suffer from guilt, shame, and anger as a result of not living up to the idealized roles of wife and mother. I argue that the ghost of Lily, having relinquished her child but not her identity as mother, struggles with a double torment: by a body that experiences sexual passion and birth, and by an inflexible religious/political belief that causes her to reject her sexuality, her child, and any reconciliation with the other community. Marian challenges the image of mother/Ireland by being both “mother” and “not-mother”³⁶⁵ thereby occupying a radical, double role. I contend that Marian and Lily as one haunted/haunting female psyche located on this “border of motherhood” challenges the masculine political

agenda by her creation of a communal, feminine space that joins men and women with seemingly incompatible ideological, religious, and political backgrounds. Marian by communing with the ghost of Lily calls upon both men and women to find new ways of thinking in “these violent times” for it is the *new kind of mother* that can locate (and reproduce) the life in others as well as herself that will ultimately pay the debt to their dead and pave at least one road towards peace and reconciliation.

The Phantom Within

Lily is the phantom within Marian. This is evident by the way that Marian is the only person in the house who can see and respond to the ghost and by the way that Lily only reveals her secrets through the diaries Marian has read. Additionally, in the first scene between Lily and Marian, several lines suggest that Lily is not really there: first, the stage directions read that Marian is “*aware that her mind is playing tricks on her*”; second, Marian says to herself “There’s nobody here. Nobody”; and third she says to Lily, “You’re not here now” (P, 181, 183). In his theory of the phantom, Nicholas Abraham speaks of the phantom buried within the other, and how the child embodies the secrets of the parent.

The phantom is a formation of the unconscious that has never been conscious – for good reason. It passes – in a way yet to be determined – from the parent’s unconscious into the child’s....The phantom...works like a ventriloquist, like a stranger within the subject’s own mental topography. (...)
*The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other. A surprising fact gradually emerges: the work of the phantom coincides in every respect with Freud’s description of the death instinct...the phantom is sustained by secreted words, invisible gnomes whose aim is to wreak havoc, from within the unconscious, in the coherence of logical progression.*³⁶⁶

The unresolved, secret history of the parent (mother) becomes the phantom that resides in the child (daughter). Lily is the shadow/mother of Marian, with the crucial and radical difference of sectarian affiliation. Thus Lily reflects Marian's desire for death. In 1941, Lily wanted to die because she believed her sexual transgression and the abandonment of her baby rather than her rigid (unforgiving) Protestant faith transformed her home into a place of imprisonment where the walls cried out against her. Marian subconsciously hopes for death in an effort to overcome emotional lifelessness. At the play's opening, five years have passed since her son's death, and Marian is still in mourning. Similar to May (in *Footfalls*) and The Mai, (in *The Mai*) Marian is stuck in a psychological stasis and thus she moves into an abandoned house to face the literal (Lily) and symbolic (her son) ghosts that haunt her.

Haunted House

In Northern Ireland, even private space is politicized. The play opens on the day of Lily's funeral in the kitchen of her former parlour house. Mrs. Alfred George Matthews, Lily to her friends, had died earlier in the week of natural causes at the age of 74, "the same age as the century."³⁶⁷ It is late evening when (Catholic) Marian surveys the contents of a (Protestant) home – things belonging to a stranger that neither she nor her estranged husband knew. Lenny, from whom Marian has been separated now for nearly two years, has inherited the house and offers Marian the opportunity to take any of Lily's possessions for her antique shop. In the process of inspecting the household items, Marian shocks Lenny with her news: she has sold her antiques business; she has put her flat on the market; and she is interested in purchasing and moving into Lily's house. It is

unclear at this point exactly why Marian wants to move into an abandoned house alone in the middle of sectarian violence. Lenny implores her to reconsider:

Ach, for Jesus' sake come off it, Marian, you can't possibly live in this gaff, it's the last house on the road left inhabited! – the very road itself is scheduled to vanish off the map, it's the middle of a redevelopment zone, not to mention the minor detail that it's slap bang in the firing line, the Prods are all up in that estate (*Gesturing towards the back of the house.*) the Taigs are right in front of us, anyway look at it – it's reeking of damp...it's riddled with rot and it's dingy, dank and absolutely freezing! (P, 179-180)

Marian's cheeky response is, "Perfect, I'll take it." The fact that the house is slap bang in the firing line means that both outside and inside the house will be a space of sectarian divisions. The territory surrounding the house is insecurely held, and Marian's future ownership (as a Catholic in a predominantly Protestant neighborhood) will not resolve that dilemma.³⁶⁸ Lily's house may be one "eloquent with the history of this city" as Marian says early in the play, but it is also place that has been left behind, now rotting and remaindered, the only house on the road with inhabitants (P, 192). Different from The Mai's house at Owl Lake, which is at first a dream house that transforms into a home/scape, this home/scape is haunted first, and then it becomes a generative space of alternative possibilities.

Lily's house is similar to any other typically haunted house beginning with its location on a deserted street. The playwright describes the environment in realistic detail:

The large kitchen window looks out on the back yard, which is very narrow, with high, whitewashed walls topped by lines of broken glass...The kitchen in particular is cluttered, almost suffocated, with the furnishings and bric-a-brac of the first half of the century...But in spite of now being shabby, musty, threadbare, it has all clearly been the object of a desperate, lifelong struggle for cleanliness, tidiness, orderliness – godliness (P, 171).

The space is cluttered, but is also organized, a threshold between disorder and order, between the walls closing in and the walls of a worldview expanding. By describing the space as almost suffocated Parker animates the kitchen suggesting it is between life and death. Parker concludes the description by stating, “everything is real except the proportions...the walls climb up and disappear into the shadows above the stage” (P, 171). The kitchen of Lily’s house therefore represents a real but unreal space, a purgatorial place between worlds extending upwards towards a vanishing point. In her haunted home, the materialization of Lily represents the uncanny, what Freud describes as the “return of the familiar in unfamiliar form,”³⁶⁹ and soon she reveals the secrets of her repressed past.

The feminine kitchen space is where, according to Carol Margaret Davison, “the potentially nightmarish, ‘dark side’ of the dreamlike ideals of marriage and motherhood” is revealed.³⁷⁰ Each of the three times Lily visits Marian it is nighttime suggesting the dark recesses of the unconscious. Here the repressed layers of the ghost’s life will be peeled away so that the notion of the idealized proper wife will be overturned. Lily’s husband Alfie found the house: “it was him that first put down the deposit, moved the pair of us into it within a week of them building it – ...this house was his life, same as mine” (P, 181). Lily’s house begins as “a symbol of male privilege and protection” but it soon becomes a patriarchal symbol of power: the fallen Protestant woman becomes locked within its walls, a prison of the self and domesticity.³⁷¹ Lily, who lost a baby as well as a future, condemned herself to life in her home as punishment (P, 238). Lily’s outward appearance exemplified a good marriage as the proper wife to a loyalist Protestant household for nobody ever knew but her: “At least I never let myself down –

never cracked. Never surrendered. Not one inch. I went to my grave a respectable woman, Mrs. Alfred George Matthews, I never betrayed him” (P, 231). And yet she is tormented by her desire to maintain this respectable identity and by what she knows to be the truth. Marian confronts Lily about the truth of the past, to which the ghost reveals her suffering in a house that became hostile to her:

I sinned against my own flesh in lust and fornication, I had to desert my own baby, nobody ever knew only the Lord our God knew and His eye was on me all right, burning into the very soul of me. He alone was witness to the torment that I’ve suffered every living hour in this house *where the very walls and doors cry out against me*, there was never anybody to tell the knife that went through me a dozen dozen times a day, minding how I left my child, walking away from him, leaving him bundled up there in that wooden box, nobody to help me, *only me here in this house, gnawing and tearing away at my own heart and lights, day in day out* – until I was all consumed by my own wickedness, on the inside, nothing left but the shell of me, for appearance’s sake – (P, 231) (emphasis added).

Lily grieves for a past she could never reconcile and for the infant boy she had to leave behind, thus her home becomes a literal space of entrapment – similar to The Mai’s house – to which she can cry out to no one except the Lord our God. The shell of her suggests a kind of blind conformity to modes of behavior in which she is not personally invested. The structures that dictated Lily’s idealized image as the proper wife and mother is in fact a rigid, unrealistic picture that caused immense pain for her every living hour in this house. The house is haunted by social and political constructs that prove to be damning to Lily. Marian however comes to recognize that in loving the English airman, Lily is awakened to the sensuality of the female body, the thing that has been historically denied in Northern Irish women’s historical experiences in a patriarchal society.

Just as Lily was left to stagnate in the house alone, the house is also left to gather dust. The home/scape may serve as a temporary refuge for Marian, but it too becomes a space of imprisonment. Marian wants to preserve the house, and by extension to hold on tight to the past, making it fixed and unchanging. Lily's (haunted) house is a "repository...of memory and tradition"³⁷² and it is this repository of Lily's things that Marian wants to safeguard for future generations. She tells Lenny and Peter, Lenny's friend from university:

Lily Matthews lived here. 1900-1974. This house was her whole life. She never threw anything away. I've started cataloguing it all. Every last thimble and shirt stud, every grocery bill and cigarette card and rationing coupon, every document...(P, 207).

Marian wants to turn the house into a museum and has plans to contact the National Trust, so that it can be recognized as part of the history of the city. To Ruth she says, "I haven't touched anything, I don't want anything tidied up or touched...that's the one stipulation I have to make, about you staying here" (P, 186). In wanting to preserve the past and to keep things the same (the house and her life) Marian becomes paralyzed and unable to move forward.

A Home/scape for Suicide

The home/scape of Lily is a space of isolation: an unfamiliar home *to which* Marian wants to escape and a too familiar home *from which* Lily wants to escape. Lily isolated herself for the last fifteen years of her life with no one coming into her life or her home. Lily and Marian's isolating experiences are expanded by women's sense of isolation in late 20th century Northern Irish society. This isolation leads to attempted

suicide. As the war raged outside her home Lily waited for the Blitz of Belfast to destroy her. Marian recounts the event:

Lily sat in that parlour, right through the Blitz. Alfie was a fire warden, out most nights – she promised him she’d stay down in the cellar during the air-raids, instead of which she sat up in that front parlour, in the blackout, the pitch dark, listening to the war in the air – the bombers and the fighters, the ack-ack and the shells falling, falling and exploding – she stretched out on that self-same sofa, where Alan Ferris had stretched her out seven years earlier [...] and her ears roared now with the rage of a wholesale slaughter, pounding the ground under her and the air all round her, Armageddon, random and blind, pulverising her whole body [...] *and she composed herself to die there, waiting for the chosen bomb to fall on her and cleanse her terrible sinfulness and shame* – (P, 237, emphasis added).

Lily wants to eradicate her body in order to rid her mind of the ongoing torment of having failed to measure up to societal, communal, and religious expectations. From this chapter’s introduction, we are reminded by what Bronfen writes about suicide, that “(t)he choice of death emerges as a feminine strategy within which writing with the body is a way of getting rid of oppression connected with the feminine body.”³⁷³ Although she does not succeed, Lily’s suicidal intention is an attempt to rid the oppressive shame of the body associated with prescribed modes of behavior. Lily’s death drive is demonstrated by her lonely return to a physical scene of psychic trauma – the sofa in the front parlour symbolizing both conception and wished-for death. Marian’s compulsion to move into the vacant house alone is her attempt to also return psychically to the death of her son and place herself in the line of fire.

Marian’s suicidal impulse is haunted by the revelation of Lily’s suicidal impulse, which are desperate measures to radically release a past filled with shame and guilt. Marian’s actions speak to a suicidal drive: continual grieving, giving up her former life

and all of her things, and moving into a stranger's house alone. Mary Kay Norseng writes, "One of the most striking outward signs of someone haunted by suicide is a giving away of or getting rid of things...exacerbating the already unspeakable emptiness. (...) there is a death, at least of part of the self...in the sense that there is a deliberate letting go of identity."³⁷⁴ Thus letting go of things is equivalent to letting go of one's identity, which happens to those haunted by suicide. At one point in the play, the ghost asks Marian: "Why did you come here? What possessed you to move in on me?" – questions Marian must ask her self to find out why she is in that house alone (P, 179). Her suicidal impulse is "born of mental anguish...the pain of excessively felt shame, guilt, fear, anxiety, loneliness, angst."³⁷⁵

Death-in-Life

Marian experiences a particular kind of haunting represented in Freud's concept of death-in-life. This is a "condition of melancholia that afflicts those with an inability to mourn. (and)...is not only an *individual* form of foreclosed mourning and grief."³⁷⁶ In the play the concept of death-in-life can be read as affecting whole communities of women in the North who are unable to mourn that which is intolerable in their experiences in a violent sectarian society. Marian's seemingly irresolvable torment over the death of her son, she believes, is the death of a future for the province. Onstage there is a literal haunting of that future, when at the end of Act I Marian holds up the unused 1930's christening gown that was "folded" and "wrapped in tissue" as a direct confrontation to Lily and her past. The visibility of the ghostly christening gown appears as an apparition of the dead son/s of Lily and Marian. Upon showing the gown, the terrified Lily – spooked as if she herself had seen a ghost – backs out of the room and Marian confesses

to feeling at home in Lily's childless house (P, 212). Marian's admitting, "(w)hy else would I feel so much at home," is a realization that she does indeed belong someplace, but it is an empty, barren, lifeless place, like Northern Ireland itself. Not until her encounter with Lily is Marian able to speak about her son:

Christopher would have been five in August. Starting school. If he hadn't gone. Left me. Given up the ghost in me. My own soul, left for dead He was our future, you see. Future, at a time like this – what could it possibly mean – a future? In a place like this?
She looks down at Lily's unused christening gown...The light fades to blackout...(P, 212).

The dead buried within Marian is Lily as well as her son – “the ghost in me.” When her son died, her future died alongside with him. Correspondingly when the power-sharing initiative died in 1974, many in the North believed this was also the death of a future for Northern Ireland. The condition of death-in-life relates to Marian's own ghostliness, to which she tells Lily: “You think you're haunting me, don't you. But you see it's me that's actually haunting you. I'm not going away...So you might as well give me your blessing and make your peace with me, Lily” (P, 180).

If Lily is mother to Marian – albeit a sectarian other – then the secreted words buried within Marian is a woman's past in which patriarchal structures dictate strict codes of behavior. The ghost of Lily, as the haunting Protestant loyalist past, exhibits the pressures of her environment, wanting desperately to keep things secure and the same. Ruth Moore writes that for Protestant women, “Going against the grain leads to accusations of betrayal, leads to ridicule and social isolation.”³⁷⁷ Marian as a Catholic idolater is not welcome in Lily's Protestant home: “I want no truck with any of yous, stay you with your own and let me rest easy with mine” (P, 181). Lily haunts Marian and the

world of the play as a symbol of the legacy of sectarianism as well as those repressed women's histories. Lily remains staunchly sectarian even in death and it is this sectarianism that has shaped her individual experience, which then serves as a microcosm of the collective experience.³⁷⁸ Regarding the marginalized accounts of Northern Irish women, we turn to Gordon once more because she writes about haunting as representing “a marginal discourse, the story of how the real story has emerged, (that) consistently shadows and threatens to subvert the very authority that establishes disciplinary order.”³⁷⁹ The female ghosts of these silenced histories come back in an attempt to challenge the patriarchal narratives, which were foundational to the history of the province. Gordon further suggests that: “Being haunted draws us affectively...into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition.”³⁸⁰ Being haunted, Marian recognizes that Lily, whose bigotry and hatred has been handed down from generation to generation, is a woman conditioned but also terrorized by patriarchal political and religious structures that have been in place throughout the twentieth century.

By her interactions with the ghost, Marian is transformed into a person who can see the humanity in everyone, what she calls “the christ” – love, truth, and life. In their last moment together, Marian and Lily are joined together, as the stage directions read “*Marian takes Lily's hand and holds it against her own heart*” (P, 232). Marian's concluding words to the ghost are, “forgive me, Lily.” In seeking forgiveness from Lily – for prying into her very private life – Marian seeks forgiveness from her self for years of self-directed anger and hatred. Lily and Marian come together in their shared history as childless women rejecting the expectations of patriarchal narratives and transcending

their oppositional histories as sectarian rivals in an act of reconciliation/reaching across to the other.

By the play's final scene the ghost of Lily no longer appears, but the specters of rage and intolerance continue to dominate the male characters, which erupts in a violent exchange between them. Peter, who now lives in England, sarcastically describes the quaint "Irish little family" that is gathered in the room with "the strong saintly suffering ma" referring to Marian and the "shiftless clown of a da here" referring to Lenny (P, 242). While grabbing hold of Lenny, Peter taunts him about never leaving the North:

Peter: ...face it, your life's locked in and the key
surrendered –

Lenny: I'll live whatever life I choose, and I'll live it here,
what's it to you, you think you're any further on?...
I live for my real friends...I'm a musician, I live for
what I play.

Peter: On that? (*The trombone.*) Play on that? You want to
know what playing on that is? Farting into the wind.
*Lenny, with a sudden spasm of rage, dislodges Peter's grip
on him, flings him across the table, and then turns away in
disgust* (P, 242).

Their masculine physical outburst seems rather silly (a sarcastic jab, a mean cutdown), but along with the violence of the Troubles, represents a historical and familiar mode of behavior for handling inner and external conflict. The patriarchal political system determines that the province "be demarcated, tamed, controlled, protected, and defended through hierarchical authority relations that value domination, force, and the warrior values associated with masculine characteristics."³⁸¹ Since women have to a large extent been left out of political discourses, Marian takes over the discourse and condemns the actions of the men by accusing them of not just anger, but righteous anger.

Peter: ...what would Jesus Holy Christ do with us all here,
would you say? (...) Why would he come near the

place, let's face it, he's already been crucified once.
He's already been once in hell.

Lenny: The Church invented hell. They've just used this town to show us what they mean.

Marian They. They. You think you can both shuffle it off, so easily, with your righteous anger, let me tell you, you're not even in the same league as I am for righteous anger, I've supped on precious little else for five years past, it changes nothing. Forget the church. Forget the priests and pastors... I had a child once... I called him Christopher. Because he was a kind of Christ to me, he brought love with him...the truth and the life. He was a future. Until one day I found him dead. I thought like you for a long time. He chose death in this cot rather than life in this town, in these times, it was their fault, they had done it to me, I hated them. Hated life. It was all a lie, of course. The cause and effect were in me, in him too, (*At Lenny*) we were mortal after all, we were human...

Personally I want to live now. I want this house to live. We have committed sacrilege enough on life, in this place, in these times. We don't just owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our dead too – our innocent dead...for the life they never knew. We owe them at least that – the fullest life for which they could ever have hoped, we carry those ghosts within us, to betray those hopes is the real sin...(P, 243-244).

Marian's righteous anger is directed towards them – the masculine bodies of church and state – and “the hierarchical system of gender that constrains the space and social possibilities of women.”³⁸² After communing with the ghost of Lily – and recognizing the common humanity – Marian wants to live and to turn the home/scape back into a home. She offers a process of psychic recovery that exhibits transformative powers, eventually opening a dialogue as an alternative strategy for coping with loss, frustration, and rage. By witnessing the christ in every one and imploring the rest of the household (and by implication the province) to live the fullest life now, Marian transforms herself into a new kind of mother proposing a new life to those around her.

“What the house needs most is air and light,” she says to the others (P, 238). The obvious representation here is that Marian symbolizes Mary and her son Christopher is the Christ child. Marian is the mother to a future filled with forgiveness and redemption. The use of the Catholic icon of the Virgin Mary/Mother is interesting for a number of reasons. First, Parker grew up in a working class Protestant family. Second, Marian is no virgin mother – she had sex before marriage; she is a mother/not-mother; her child died at five months; she is divorcing her husband; and she held onto righteous anger for years. Third, the word Christ is only capitalized once – the other four times Marian utters the word, it is spelled christ, implying the human expression of love, truth, life. Fifth, Parker uses a real woman instead of the glorious, holy image to convey the re-birth of the humanity (the christ) in everyone.

Marian’s move into the house as a woman alone was a defiant statement against the status quo of a conservative social climate, and her attempted suicide was an act of self-negation as well as a creative act that eventually releases her from the pain of being left childless and marginalized. Her desire for life is for herself, her friends, and for the region’s citizens. Marian goes outside the boundaries of identity – especially those of traditional motherhood – to look for transformation and redemption. Sarah Edge discusses the importance in Northern Ireland of recognizing identity as not born but made and thus can be imagined anew, and the possibility of change within identities that have been constructed through time:

What is required is an understanding of national identity and gender identity not as something inherent and essential but rather as socially and culturally constructed – ‘imagined’. Then the potential for the creation of new ‘imagined’ identities which accommodate both desires for change and recognition would be possible.³⁸³

Marian and Lily represent opposing communal identities, but in Parker's play these women are brought together to emphasize their commonalities as childless mothers. Hansen emphasizes the value of a mother's loss by suggesting these narratives "be read in ways that do not forget or transcend but rather remember and look within the loss and impasse" in order to reevaluate "assumptions about what motherhood is really like."³⁸⁴ Parker re-writes women back into the History of the Troubles with Marian forging an identity as a new kind of mother, who can guide her friends in a re/birth of themselves.

The characters in *Pentecost* have locked themselves in a room, wanting to be released from their personal and political past, but Marian has made her home a communal space in which to purge those histories. This new kind of family – Protestant/Catholic, woman/man, living/dead, past/present – co-exists here by a metaphorical integration of their differences. This new family was made possible by communing with the ghostly mother and becoming aware of the other's humanity. Anne McClintock ponders if in Northern Ireland what is needed is an "alternative iconography from that of the family in order to empower women within the nation-state"³⁸⁵ or more feasibly Lorraine Dowler asks, "could a more progressive nationalism – one which surmounts gender difference and instead uncovers spaces in concert with each other – provide a new radical iconography which not only empowers traditional roles but transcends them."³⁸⁶ Parker's play retains the iconography of the family, yet empowers the women not only to take the lead in searching for solutions in the North (over and against the male-dominated structures) but also to reject the church's domination in political narratives. Marian tells the men, "There is some kind of christ, in every one of us... Each of us either honours him, or denies him and violates him, what we do to him is done to ourselves" (P, 244). In

her creation of a communal space, she encourages those around her, her new family, to live for new political and cultural possibilities in the North.

Lily and Marian talk through their grief since the loss of the child is a continuous present tense for them. Similarly Northern Ireland was making an attempt at a new form of dialogue, breaking from its former political processes. As both mother and not-mother *to* the nation – rather than *of* the nation (as represented in the mother/Ireland trope) – Marian introduces a new concept of mothering, which is not within traditional familial structures or roles. While Lily at first appears to be mother figure to Marian, it is Marian who becomes mother to Lily and the North by her ability to forge a space of inclusiveness and forgiveness and give birth to the idea of a possible alliance among conflicting forces. In the play's final moment the window is opened allowing an influx of fresh air into the room and into the province. With this illustrative gesture, Marian and the others breathe new life as individuals, and as a collective spirit of the province, they are infused with hope. The ghosts of the past vanish and Marian who retains her status on the border of motherhood ends her existence as a liminal figure and chooses the energy of life. Parker may evoke the religious maternal icon of the Virgin Mother, but he seeks to undermine its conservative association by having a haunted and very human woman play the role while in Carr's world mother/Ireland is not a figuration but rather a theatrically haunting presence that limits possibilities and threatens the autonomy of women in the nation.

BY THE BOG OF CATS...

By the end of the 20th century the worn images of mother/Ireland and woman/Nation had receded from view as more pressing political and social concerns

occupied women such as reproductive freedoms, divorce referendums, and opportunities outside the home. Irish women were less confined by any single identity of the domestic, positioning themselves more actively in political and cultural discourses. The fact that two women have held the office of President of Ireland for the past twenty-one years is a sign of the very real presence of women in political and national spheres. Yet even at the highest levels of government, the image of mother/Ireland is hard to shake. At the turn of the 21st century, Frances Gardiner noted the discrepancy between the women elected as Head of State and the number of women elected as members of parliament. She believes that the position of President is easier for a woman to access than the Dáil (Irish parliament) because of the “caring, Mother Ireland role (and with little real power) acceptable in a woman president; at the cutting edge of political power, by contrast, women’s entry seems less welcome.”³⁸⁷ Hence the image of mother/Ireland was conjured once again to suggest that Irish citizens prefer a maternal/President (ceremonial role) rather than a woman/Deputy (member of the principal chamber of parliament). For women in Ireland, change in attitudes and social practice has indeed been a slow process.³⁸⁸ Thus we see language being used that prolongs “the gendering of Ireland,” which in turn is used to define “the identities and roles of men and women in Ireland.”³⁸⁹ The image of mother/Ireland is one from the past, and as the nation moves forward the issue of irresolvability becomes even more pertinent: how does a nation both leave behind and face up to its past.³⁹⁰ Nicholas Grene has written that, “negative figurations of mother Ireland and her children are nothing new” in literary or dramatic representations.³⁹¹ In Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats...* the female characters are not symbols

of the nation but rather are part of a nationalist narrative that has historically relegated them to limited roles and as a result are now part of a haunted landscape.

Ghosts and mothers haunt the world of Carr's play *By the Bog of Cats*..., the story of Euripides' *Medea* set in contemporary midlands Ireland. Carr is particularly drawn to the subject of Greek tragedy in which ghosts inhabit modern retellings of betrayal, rage, and revenge that also frequently hinge on women who break traditional social boundaries. In *Bog of Cats*, however, the playwright's canvas extends beyond the bare setting of a bog and the age-old story of a woman wronged. The play adheres to the structure of *Medea*, but several factors brand it unmistakably Irish such as the characters' relationship to the land, the ethos of Catholicism, and the supernatural figures indebted to Irish folk tales and legends. Ghostly images of the vanished and the dead drift over the landscape of the barren bog. Yet more than simply hovering, the ghosts represent a nation's conflict with itself over its past. Carr adapts and transforms the model of Greek tragedy in such a way that underscores the links between haunting, family legacy, and Irish social history to create a narrative that resonates on the level of both the personal and the political.

The protagonist Hester Swane is a modern day Medea, who along with her ghostly absent mother Big Josie will not be contained in physical or psychological spaces. Hester is an Irish traveller,³⁹² and similar to the foreignness of her Greek antecedent, she is one of a group of people often referred to as Ireland's "national outsider[s]."³⁹³ When Medea steps out of the female centered household into the male dominated public sphere, there is a fundamental shift in her character: from a wailing victim to a force to be reckoned with intent on revenge. The haunted Hester is also

abandoned by her lover, and is empowered by her connection to the world outside, and the natural landscape of the bog. Just as Medea is othered by her status as foreigner, Hester and Big Josie are positioned outside the narrative of the Irish nation by their status as Irish travellers, by their unconventional relationships with men, and by their sense of belonging to the landscape rather than the physical structure of the home. This sense of belonging to the land is in contrast to the settled community's attachment to the land, which refers to legalities and ownership, in which the Irish traveller is mostly disinterested. And yet the otherness of the Irish traveller is fraught with struggle, since it is, as Mary Burke offers, "structured by the social, economic, cultural, and political exclusion of Travellers in contemporary Irish society."³⁹⁴ As Irish travellers Hester and Big Josie straddle the border of Irish identity as other to – and outside the confines of – the settled population. By their identity as Irish/outsider of the nation, they are as liminal and in/visible as ghosts.

The historical origin of the Irish traveller is a source of debate, often focusing not on where but rather on how and when they formed as a distinct ethnic group.³⁹⁵ For example, colonial origin stories point to their existence as part of the peasantry who were forced into landlessness by eviction and famine in the 19th century. Other origin stories suggest that their ancestors were Irish who were driven out by William of Orange or "those evicted during Penal times."³⁹⁶ What can be deduced is that they have been excluded from property ownership, and since they have no written records of their past, they have an unresolved history. Thus Irish travellers live on as living, haunting evidence of dispossession.

Carr is writing from a specific Irish context in *By the Bog of Cats...*, and similar to *The Mai*, she highlights the experiences of a broad range of women while at the same time perverting the traditional image of mother/Ireland. Hester and Big Josie are unconstrained by the normative conditions of Irish society as a result of what Hester herself calls her tinker blood. Even though Big Josie does not appear onstage, we know from the play that she upsets societal expectations by her overt sexuality and her unmotherly behavior towards her daughter. Hester is akin to her mother in not feeling at home in the domestic sphere, and while she shows great affection for her daughter, she is labeled unfit by her former partner Carthage.³⁹⁷ The difference between Big Josie and Hester however is considerable. First, since Hester was abandoned by Big Josie when she was seven she has fought for her right to exist in a sole relationship with her ghostly mother: jealousy of her brother Joseph and his separate life with their mother compelled Hester to murder him. Second, Hester desires a complete life wherein she can be seen as flourishing – a husband, a daughter, and her own house – all of which defies the itinerant legacy of Big Josie. I argue that the ghost of Joseph is the tormented double of Big Josie: Joseph as m/other represents the resuscitated memory of Hester's idealized mother who refuses to be trapped in domesticity or the role of mother. Hester on the other hand as a mother herself is tormented by her desire to somehow fit into Irish society (and the settled community) through marriage, family, and home and by wanting to identify with this unmotherly woman. I contend that by her suicide Hester may fulfill the legacy of Big Josie and unite them in death, but also she re-creates the self in refusing to wait for a mother who never returns and in overturning entrenched images of women in Irish society. These women haunt the sociopolitical landscape as flawed individual women

rather than as metaphors of Irish motherhood, and in the process irrevocably shatter the myth of mother/Ireland.

Ghost Fanciers and Fate

The fate for Hester is clear – by the end of the play she will be dead, a destiny that was sealed by her now absent mother. The appearances of the black swan, the Ghost Fancier, and Joseph’s ghost are all reminders of the death that is to come for Hester. As the curtain rises, Hester is seen dragging the corpse of the swan auld Black Wing across the snowy bog, leaving a trail of blood behind her. The symbol of the black swan is particularly potent in Celtic tradition because the swan is the creature that traverses land, water, and air – “whose milieu has no boundaries” – and is used for the “communication between two worlds.”³⁹⁸ The female Black Wing was an important figure in Hester’s life as she was implicated in the curse Big Josie put on her daughter. When Hester was born, Big Josie took her to the black swan’s lair and laid Hester in the nest alongside Black Wing and left her – thereby literally and symbolically giving up her motherly duties (BOC, 275). Big Josie’s abandonment of her baby as well as her curse – “That child...will live as long as this black swan, not a day more, not a day less” – transforms the black swan into both a mother figure and alter ego to Hester (BOC, 275). Big Josie could be viewed as a bad mother because she “perverts her social position” (as a mother) by way of abandonment and conjuration, causing anxiety in the community and nation.³⁹⁹ As a reminder of a mother’s curse, the image of the dead black swan resonates throughout the play as an omen for the black haired Hester.⁴⁰⁰

As Hester takes the black swan to its proper burial place, another symbol of death appears, the Ghost Fancier. The arrival of the Ghost Fancier, an Irish Grim Reaper,

suggests the dead living among us, a mainstay of Irish folk tradition. In *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, Fiona Macintosh maintains that the dead remain in the world in order to take care of the living just as the living take care of the dead in this ongoing reciprocal relationship:

[T]he Irish dead, like the dead in ancient Greece, had no definite home for the simple reason that they had an important function to fulfil as custodians of the living. The dead continued to exist alongside the living, with whom they could make contact officially at *Samhain* ... but unofficially they could make contact with the living at any time. The relationship between the living and the dead was by no means one-sided: as the dead were at liberty to call upon the living, the living could equally well call upon the dead for their assistance.⁴⁰¹

These blurred borders between worlds are made evident in the first scene of the play as the Ghost Fancier arrives in the misty haze of morning:

Hester: Who are you? Haven't seen you around here before.
Ghost Fancier: I'm a ghost fancier.
Hester: A ghost fancier. Never heard tell of the like.
Ghost Fancier: You never seen ghosts?
Hester: Not exactly, felt what I thought were things from some other world betimes, but nothin' I could grab on to and say, 'That is a ghost.'
Ghost Fancier: Well, where there's ghosts there's ghost fanciers (BOC, 265).

When Hester asks “Mr. Ghost Fancier, what ghost are you ghoulin’ for around here?” she is taken aback that it is she herself he is seeking. The Ghost Fancier does not mistake Hester for a ghost – he says to her “you’re alive” – but his declaration of “where there’s ghosts there’s ghost fanciers” suggests she is hovering between life and death. Realizing he is “too previous” – he thought it was dusk not dawn – the Ghost Fancier quickly makes his apologies and exits. Hester’s encounter with the Ghost Fancier

signifies her liminality, corresponding to Macintosh's definition of the tragic character, "'absent and present' in the world at one and same time."⁴⁰² The presence of Ghost Fancier, like the death of Black Wing, calls attention to Hester's imminent death and her premonition about her fate.

By the Bog of Cats... opens on the morning of the arranged marriage between Carthage Kilbride and Caroline Cassidy and proceeds through the tragic events of that day. Carthage has abandoned the forty-year-old Hester because of her wild behavior, which stems from her brother's murder, and involves excessive drinking, night roaming on the bog, and sleeping in the caravan leaving their seven-year old daughter Josie unattended in the house. Carthage and Hester were together fourteen years but never married, and because Carthage wants a better and more lucrative life for himself and young Josie, he accepts the proposition made by the rich landowner Xavier for land, farm, and daughter.⁴⁰³ Through a separate but connected agreement, Hester has sold her property to Xavier and now is obligated to move away from the Bog of Cats and into town. Since Hester is still waiting for her mother's return, she cannot leave the Bog of Cats. Also, she tells neighbor Monica Murray that her life "doesn't hang together" without Carthage, so she interrupts the reception party of Carthage and Caroline dressed in her own wedding dress and attempts to claim the wedding as her own (BOC, 269). Her efforts to re-claim Carthage, and what was supposed to be her wedding, are thwarted and she leaves outraged, proclaiming a vicious war against Carthage. Irish travellers have been known to set fires to places before they vacate, and Hester too sets fire to their house and livestock, knowing she will leave the Bog of Cats but not in the way anyone expects. As a final act of defiance, she commits suicide but first slashes young Josie's

throat not wanting her daughter to repeat waiting a lifetime for a mother who never returns.

Outsiders: the Traveller and the Abandoned Woman

The Irish traveller has been left out of official discourses because their perceived foreignness and their wandering lifestyle rendered them at cross purposes to the stability of a homogeneous Irish nation. Furthermore, the absence of the woman traveller from the annals of Irish history is similar to what Eavan Boland describes in her essay “Outside History” as “the influence of absences” which are the “negative and hidden effects” of women’s marginalization from the nation’s political and cultural History.⁴⁰⁴ The absence of Irish traveller women from dominant discourses represents one of the many “silenced, female ghosts of Irish history.”⁴⁰⁵ While the plight of the Irish traveller has historically been one of discrimination and disadvantage, Joanne Templeton argues that the discrimination that women particularly experience as members of Irish traveller communities may be viewed as a “double burden.”⁴⁰⁶ Hester, proud of her tinker heritage, is trying to make her way as part of the settled community and here describes her uphill battle as a woman and a traveller:

Think yees all Hester Swane with her tinker blood is gettin’ no more than she deserves. Think yees all she’s too many notions, built her life up from a caravan on the side of the bog. Think yees all she’s taken a step above herself in gettin’ Carthage Kilbride into her bed. Think yees all yees knew it’d never last. Well, yees are thinkin’ wrong...I’m not runnin’ with me tail between me legs just because certain people wants me out of their way (BOC, 269).

Hester knows it is Xavier Cassidy, a dichotomous character with conservative inclinations but dubious ethics, who wants her to leave the community. At one point she defends herself to him saying, “I’m as settled as any of yees” (BOC, 295). Because of

what the others perceive as her “subversive impulse to wandering,” which diminishes her standing in the community, she is seen as a “threat to the values of rootedness and proprietorship.”⁴⁰⁷ Her tinker ways render Hester an “unsettled and unsettling outsider”⁴⁰⁸ even though she desires a stable (married) life with Carthage and her daughter. A traveller who has in many respects become settled upsets the binary between the two communities.

Just as the Irish traveller is positioned externally to the dominant discourses of the nation, so too the abandoned woman may be labeled as an “outsider.”⁴⁰⁹ Hester has been doubly abandoned – first by her mother, then by her partner. The abandonment by Big Josie has affected Hester throughout her life but the abandonment by Carthage is the catalyst for the play. Threatened by this further loss, Hester begs Carthage to stay: “Tell me what to do, Carthage, and I’ll do it, anythin’ for you to come back. [...] Anythin’, Carthage, anythin’, and I’ll do it if it’s in me power” (BOC, 289). The repetition of the word anythin’ shows what Hester is willing to do to *not* be abandoned again. As a woman who lives “in ‘abandon,’” Hester is in a precarious position, unpredictable and “capable of sudden dangerous turns.”⁴¹⁰ Writing about women who live “in abandon,” Lipking argues that, “since neither the protection nor the inhibition of the law applies to them any longer, they constitute a potential threat to a well-ordered society.”⁴¹¹ The maintenance of the well-ordered society was secured by the 1937 Constitution, which “required the repression of the disruptive revolutionary strategies and political formations which were necessary to bring about the foundation of the state.”⁴¹² By way of forging national unity and a Catholic religious adherence, Ireland depended on the well-ordered society for its very survival. Hester as the abandoned woman upsets the social order by her efforts to

defy contracts, weddings, and rules, all of which are in opposition to the authority of the church and state. She tries to renege on her deal with Xavier concerning her property that she signed over to him, “six months ago, for a fine hefty sum” (BOC, 293). Hester claims that, “I wasn’t thinkin’ right then, was bein’ coerced and bullied from all sides” (BOC, 293). As a result of the sale, Hester’s property is no longer hers, and in her attempt to gain the land back – similar to her trying to persuade Carthage to come back to her – she is up against men who now hold the power and the land. Xavier rejects Hester’s money, “I’m not takin’ it. A deal’s a deal” (BOC, 293) and Carthage dismisses Hester’s pleas. With their refusals, order and stability are restored by the power of the patriarchy and property ownership.⁴¹³ Hester answers to no authority, but at this point in the play, there are forces more powerful than the abandoned woman.

In another example of the abandoned woman threatening the well-ordered society, Hester crashes Carthage and Caroline’s wedding. Mrs. Kilbride, Carthage’s mother, lambasts Hester for not living by the rules – implying rules of the Church and decent society – to which Hester mockingly replies “Ah rules! What rules are they? Teach them to me and I’ll live by them.”⁴¹⁴ Mrs. Kilbride as part of the settled community has contempt for Hester as a tinker, who lives outside not only the community, but also conventional (read: conservative, Catholic) codes of conduct. Carr plays with the fluidity of tinker identity since Mrs. Kilbride is accused of also having tinker blood on her grandfather’s side. Hester unwittingly mocks the institution of marriage and thereby the Church by appearing at someone else’s wedding in her own wedding gown, prompting Mrs. Kilbride to declare, “the brazen nerve of her turnin’ up in that garb” (BOC, 312). Elsie Kilbride is even more repulsed by Hester’s sexuality, especially as it concerns her

son, “ya had to take advantage of a young boy for your perverted pleasures” (BOC, 313). The ideologies of nationalism and the Catholic Church decreed the purity of women, which led to the repression of (female) sexuality. Conservative religious ideologies such as those exhibited by Mrs. Kilbride pronounced marriage as the legitimate place in which to express one’s sexuality. Also in the play, the conflation of a purity and woman persists such that the characters of Mrs. Kilbride and Xavier are compelled to control women and their behavior. Hester, as an unmarried sexual being, talks about the pleasures of the (female) body and in so doing not only defies moral and social codes but also tears down some of the “pieties” associated with the “religious and cultural images” of women and mothers.⁴¹⁵

Controlling the Absent/Present Female Body

Big Josie is never seen on the stage, but her body and behavior become topics of much discussion and disgust. Many of the characters have strong opinions about Big Josie (Hester, Xavier Cassidy, Mrs. Kilbride, Catwoman, Monica Murray, and Joseph) and thus the issue becomes about the control over the narrative/body of Big Josie.

Roberta Geftter Wondrich asserts that it is the Irish female body and the (patriarchal) need to control that body that is at the heart of conflict for many women in late 20th century:

Ireland...proves to be a nation where the effects of an intense and remarkably fast socio-economical modernization, with contrasting forces and influences operating simultaneously, have probably emphasized rather than effaced the role that the female body still holds in the context of contemporary society as a prominent and crucial site of tension and ultimately, of control.⁴¹⁶

Several characters weigh in on the body of Big Josie: Mrs. Kilbride calls her a “tramp”⁴¹⁷; the very nice Monica Murray says, “She was a harsh auld yoke”⁴¹⁸ (BOC,

323); and Hester herself describes her as “a rancorous hulk” (BOC, 320). By these three words – tramp, yoke, and hulk – Big Josie is a sexually promiscuous woman, an indescribable thing worthy of contempt or pity, and a large awkward person, all of which attempt to label, and thereby put limits on, her body and behavior. Wondrich, writing as late as the year 2000, asserts, that “it ought to be acknowledged how women’s bodies in Ireland are quite evidently held to be the object (or rather the sites) of legal, sexual, physical, domestic, moral and religious control in a socio-cultural order which is slowly – though perceptibly – progressing from its markedly patriarchal character.”⁴¹⁹ The narrative/body of Big Josie is a site of tension throughout the play, but mainly for Xavier. He was drawn towards Big Josie – according to Hester, “Catwoman told me ya were in a constant swoon over me mother, sniffin’ round the caravan, lavin’ little presents... and money and drink” – but also repulsed by her (BOC, 294). Xavier claims that Big Josie was violent (“wance she bit the nose off a woman who dared to look at her man”); sexual (“she was a loose wan, loose and lazy and aisy”); and improper (“her half covered in an excuse for a dress”) (BOC, 294, 329, 294). To Hester he gives the ultimate insult, that Big Josie was just a “five-shillin’ hoor, like you” (BOC, 329). In the last scene between them, we see Hester trying to wrest control again from Xavier by pitting his hoor stories (the body) against her memories (the narrative):

If you’re tryin’ to destroy some high idea I have of her
you’re wastin’ your time. I’ve spent long hours of all the
long years thinkin’ about her...So don’t you think your five
shillin’ hoor stories will ever change me opinion of her. I
have memories your cheap talk can never alter (BOC, 328-
329).

This wrestling with the body/narrative of Big Josie goes on throughout the play rendering her identity as not only created but also, as Melissa Sihra describes it,

“conditional, performative, or fabricated.”⁴²⁰ Xavier as representative of a patriarchal system (in his authority over the community and its women) is the one most invested in controlling the narrative/body of Big Josie, in the end declaring to Hester, “I ran your mother out of here and I’ll run you too like a frightened hare” (BOC, 328). For Xavier, if a woman cannot be controlled, she must be evicted.

Xavier’s effort to control the body of Big Josie is matched by his control over the land and his daughter, and his attempted control over Hester and Carthage. The representation of Xavier as father figure and representative authority of the community is indicative of a prevailing patriarchal attitude still in play towards the end of the 20th century. Xavier thinks that he and Carthage are of like minds about the land: “(Carthage) loves the land and like me he’d rather die than part with it wance he gets his greedy hands on it. With him Cassidy’s farm’ll be safe, the name’ll be gone, but never the farm” (BOC, 328). When Carthage differs with his now father-in-law, Xavier is incensed, “there’s nothin’ besides land, boy, nothing!” Carthage is a grown man at 30 years old, but Xavier must infantilize him. For Xavier, land trumps family and any kind of relationship with his wife Olive (she died of an unknown ailment), his son (he died in suspicious circumstances) or daughter Caroline. To Hester, Xavier admits, “Ya see, I married me daughter today! Now I don’t care for the whiny little rip that much, but she’s all I’ve got” (BOC, 330). Xavier’s comments are equivalent to, “I sold my daughter today” since she was part of the package wedding deal for Carthage –land and daughter. Xavier has land and the female body under his control, made especially visceral when he physically holds Hester down towards the end of the play. He takes his gun, looks down her charred wedding dress, and says,

Now let's see the leftovers of Carthage Kilbride... Now are ya stronger than me? I could do what I wanted with ya right here and now and no wan would believe ya. Now what I'd really like to know is when are ya plannin' on lavin'?' (BOC, 330)

Xavier's threats are outmatched by Hester's actions: she takes the gun barrel, places her mouth over it, and taunts him to shoot her. Because Xavier cannot in the end control Hester, he chides Carthage for his inability to control her, for he says, if "ya can't control a mere woman, ya'll control nothin'" (BOC, 332). These tussles over land and the female body correspond to the nation's compulsion to control and dominate.

The Haunted Land/Home/scape

The landscape of the bog is where Hester feels most at home and serves as a psychological space, where the depths of Hester's psyche can be plumbed. There is also a linkage between the land and Hester's survival, as she explains to Catwoman: "Ah, how can I lave the Bog of Cats, everythin' I'm connected to is here. I'd rather die" (BOC, 273). The Bog of Cats is the closest Hester can get to her mother's memory, for it was on the Bog of Cats that her mother left her. Hester belongs on the bog – she spends her nights wandering there – and as a liminal space between the living and the dead is the perfect traipsing ground for ghosts. The house that she, Carthage, and young Josie once shared is of no use to her:

Ghost Fancier: You live in that caravan over there?
Hester: Used to; live up the lane now. In a house, though I've never felt at home in it (BOC, 266).

The idea that Hester does not feel at home in the house mirrors her discomfort at feeling at home in the nation. The house becomes a rigid space of entrapment, whereas the bog is a dynamic space: "ya know this auld bog, always shiftin' and changin' and

coddin' the eye" (BOC, 267). The shifting, changing nature of the bog is similar to the traveller identity, never wanting to be rooted in the same place. In this way, the bog like the traveller lifestyle is a liberating force. While Hester desires some of the traditions of the settled community, she does not want to live in the home/scape – neither the one on the land nor the one in town. This home/scape becomes such a symbol of oppression for Hester that in an act of revenge against Carthage (and by extension the settled community) she burns it to the ground. Monica Murray comes in yelling to Hester that her house is on fire, to which she responds: "Would ya calm down, Monica, only an auld house, it should never have been built in the first place. Let the bog have it back. In a year or so, it'll be covered in gorse and furze, a tree'll grow out through the roof, maybe a big bog oak. I never liked that house anyway."⁴²¹ In burning the house, Hester destroys all of the trappings of family and home that she had once desired. She relinquishes her position in the home/scape, but not her responsibilities as mother.

M/others and Daughters

Big Josie, as a woman uninterested in the role of mother, not only embodies the monstrous image of mother but also defies Irish society's patriarchal values. The relationship between mother and daughter was fraught with mistreatment (Hester was "chained like a rabied pup to this auld caravan" (BOC, 272-273)) and abuse (Hester had first hand experience of Big Josie's "whiplash tongue and fists that'd land on ya like lightnin'.")⁴²² In writing about the relationality between mothers and daughters, Alex Hughes argues that, "as long as mothers are compelled by patriarchy to renounce their identities as sexual beings, confine themselves to maternal functionality, and abandon all pretensions to material and economic autonomy, neither enabling, authentic mother-love,

nor mother-daughter harmony, can easily obtain.”⁴²³ Thinking about the term mother-love is valuable here as a reciprocal and circular concept – mother by definition loves her children, and conversely her children return that love in what is a natural emotional bond. As discussed earlier the *ideal* Irish woman as represented in the image of mother/Ireland was a mother first and central to the sustenance of the family. We know that Big Josie does not shy away from her sexuality, does not adhere to maternal functions, and has economic autonomy. Yet the play strongly suggests that she was driven from the land by a patriarchal figure in the community, which naturally would have foreclosed any possible mother/daughter relationship. Hester’s need to forge a link between mother and self regardless if she was cruel and unloving is so powerful that she, like May (in *Footfalls*), The Mai (in *The Mai*), and Marian (in *Pentecost*), remains stuck in a psychological imaginary of the past.

All of the narratives about Big Josie, whether myth or truth, revolve around desires of the flesh and not desires of the maternal. The unfeminine hulk of Big Josie and her fragmented and peripatetic lifestyle is in direct opposition to the trope of the idealized Irish mother. Conversely Hester’s dream is an idyllic family life with herself as the strong Irish mother. To Caroline, the new wife of Carthage, she confesses:

I’ve been a long time wishin’ over me mother too. For too long now I’ve imagined her comin’ towards me across the Bog of Cats and she would find me here standin’ strong. She would see *me life was complete, that I had Carthage and Josie and me own house*. I so much wanted her to see that I had flourished without her and maybe then I could forgive her – (BOC, 336, emphasis added).

Hester desires a settled, conventional life that includes marriage, home, and family and which positions her in a traditional Irish woman’s role and place. The reality of Hester’s

situation would seem to preclude her from fantasizing about a mother/daughter reunion (after thirty-three years) and a perfect family (her partner is now married to someone else). Yet the way in which she wants Big Josie to see her standin' strong in her complete life becomes a revenge fantasy, her life accomplished without her mother's help. In a way, Hester adores and abhors her mother, her absence holding some ambivalent power that is irresolvable.

The contact with Joseph as m/other tries to ease Hester's torment over the loss of Big Josie and to foster understanding about that relationship. Joseph's presence provokes Hester talk about her, "What was she like, Joseph? Every day I forget more and more till I'm startin' to think I made her up out of the air. If it wasn't for this auld caravan I'd swear I only dreamt her. What was she like?" (BOC, 320) She is slowly losing memories of her mother but the ghost does not allow Big Josie to die. The ghost of Joseph – the child as duplicate of the mother – is not a stand-in for Big Josie, but rather functions as the "symptom of what is missing"⁴²⁴ in Hester's life. Also Joseph represents the secret kinship between the murdered and the murderer in a battle over the mother, which is a twinning of sorts between brother and sister and between the one who haunts and the one who is haunted. As mentioned previously, haunting is a way of knowing the past so that it may be opened rather than closed. The ghost interrupts the linearity of identity and the legacy of the past that gets passed down from previous generations and as such the ghost makes way for a transformative recognition. For Hester, this recognition comes in the form of what continues to be missing in her life. Joseph becomes the memory of Big Josie but more important Joseph as namesake to Big Josie physically brings the spectrality of their mother onto the stage, the two of them doubly haunting Hester. In

killing Joseph, Hester tried to destroy the memories of a mother who left her and the image of an unmotherly mother that could not be reconciled. In his/her ghostly return, she reckons with the thing that was “lost” – her m/other – “but never had.”⁴²⁵

The trajectory of the play suggests that Hester is “being forced to die into death”⁴²⁶ and she is slowly being erased. The loss of the mother erased a part of the self, and now the impending loss of the partner threatens to do the same. On the one hand, she struggles with this loss of the self and on the other with the right to exist as a daughter and a partner. Hester laments to Carthage, responding to the liminal position in which she finds herself, “The truth is you want to eradicate me, make out I never existed” (BOC, 315). Her dream of being his wife is slowly fading, just as she feels her own life is slipping away. Hester killed Joseph because he would not stop talking about Big Josie “as if she wasn’t my mother at all” (BOC, 319). In their scene together, Joseph’s ghost, double for m/other, again erases Hester:

Hester: Didn’t she ever tell ya about me?
Joseph: She never mentioned ya.
Hester: She must’ve. It’s a long time ago. Think,
will ya.
Didn’t she ever say anythin’ about me?
Joseph: Only what she tould me father. She never
spoke to me about ya.
Hester: Listen to Ya! You’re still goin’ on as if she
was yours and you only an auld ghost.
You’re still talkin’ as if I never existed. (...)
Joseph: ...She told him you were dead, that ya died
at birth, it wasn’t his fault. Ya would’ve
liked the old man, but she told him ya died,
that ya were born with your heart all wrong
(BOC, 320).

Even in her absence, Big Josie refuses to acknowledge her daughter or even talk about her. Upon seeing the ghost of Joseph, Hester has a sense she is about to die, for it is

in this scene she admits that for a long time she has been thinking she is “already a ghost” (BOC, 321). The problem of existence for the abandoned woman is that she is moving from one state of existence to another,⁴²⁷ but for Hester the next state is that of death.

Disrupting the Past

On a broader scale, Hester’s lament is over narrowly constructed narratives of the nation and the ideology of a mother/Ireland that called for women to fulfill domestic roles. Her rage is against an Irish sociopolitical culture that suppressed her individuality and her sexuality. She is tormented by her desire for marriage and the familial unit: to young Josie she laments, “(Carthage) swore to me that after you’d been born he’d marry me and now he plans to take ya off of me. I suppose ya’d like that too” (BOC, 326). Yet she is plagued by an idealization of a mother who radically refused the natural vocation of Irish women. She struggles against the legacy of these images but also struggles for recognition within the normalized settled society. Pheng Cheah insists that a nation’s ideology can become that phantom that invades the body politic, and becomes hazardous to that body’s health. He writes, “When the state is characterized as an abstraction, or when national culture is described as an ideology, we think of them as creatures of death or phantoms that invade the living body of the people and obstruct its life.”⁴²⁸ Likewise Hester’s body has been invaded by the phantoms and images of the past: Big Josie, Joseph, traveller identity, and mother/Ireland.

Hester does not defy death so much as assert control over it. The fate/fact of her death remains the same, but she chooses when to die and how to leave the Bog of Cats – “the only way I’m lavin’ this place is in a box” (BOC, 324). As mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, the act of suicide may be read in several ways, here it is a self-

creating act – release from the legacy of her mother and the patriarchal constraints of Xavier and Carthage. Hester’s suicide is an act of redefining herself in her own terms for if she moves into town, the men, in a sense, have controlled her destiny. Yet Hester’s suicide is not an either/or: it is not an act of despair or one of hope, rather her suicide is a liminal event existing between two worlds. Higonnet proposes that the suicide be read as a “vanishing act,” standing at what she calls “the juncture between life and death, the suicide is neither-nor, always in transit.”⁴²⁹ The fact that the audience witnesses Hester’s suicide onstage solidifies this notion of the vanishing act, as she dances with the Ghost Fancier, who helps her guide the fishing knife into her heart. Thus as neither empowerment nor despair, Hester’s suicide may be considered a rejection of the patriarchal control that has been placed on her body.⁴³⁰

As the play draws to a close, Hester is still unresolved about her mother. Tormented, Hester decides to leave her home on the Bog of Cats and her child. Intent on killing herself, Hester tells her daughter Josie that she cannot go with her, “because wance ya go there ya can never come back” (BOC, 338). Frantically the young girl holds onto her mother: “No, Mam, stop! I’m goin’ with ya! (...) Please!” Hester calms her daughter:

Alright, alright! Shhhhh! It’s alright, I’ll take ya with me, I won’t have ya as I was, waitin’ a lifetime for somewan to return, because they don’t, Josie, they don’t. It’s alright. Close your eyes...
Hester cuts Josie’s throat in one savage moment (BOC, 339).

Only in the final moments of the play does Hester decide to take Josie with her because of a deep love and the fact that she cannot bear to walk away from her, like her mother did. Hester repeats the past – walking away from the Bog of Cats – but with a difference

and this marks a disruption with the past she has inherited. Hester has irresolvable desires: the traditional role of wife and mother but a relationship with an absent mother; and to be free from societal pressures but to have a conventional family. Big Josie and Hester confound the fixed category of motherhood by which they critique women's place within Irish society. Hester chooses suicide as a metaphorical rebirth into death.

Over the passage of one day, Hester is paid a visit by the Ghost Fancier and called on by the ghost of Joseph but the figure that haunts her most is that of her absent mother Big Josie. Her scene with the ghost of her brother takes its form as a battling with herself against her mother's memory and trying to find the will to seek a resting place within the world in which she already exists. The work of memory over her mother "involves a complex negotiation between remembering and forgetting, between the destruction and creation of the self."⁴³¹ For Hester, the negotiation results in the gap of suicide, destroying and creating the self. She physically leaves the Bog of Cats, but will never spiritually leave: "Ya won't forget me now, Carthage, and when all of this is over or half-remembered...take a walk along the Bog of Cats and wait for a purlin' wind thorough your hair or a soft breath be your ear or a rustle behind ya. That'll be me and Josie ghostin' ya" (BOC, 340). By the representations of Hester and Big Josie, the image of mother/Ireland is resisted and abandoned, but traces of these – like the women themselves – will always come to haunt.

Conclusions

The representation of women on the Irish and Northern Irish stage, especially as mothers has the potential of representing national/religious ideals or goals because the images of mother/Ireland, woman/Nation, and the perfect wife/mother are deeply

ingrained in the unconscious of the nation and province. Carr and Parker transform these images by opening up new spaces in which to think about Irish women's identity. In writing about the women figures in *Footfalls*, R. Thomas Simone notes that Beckett's landscape is inhabited by "the exhaustion of the traditional aspects of the feminine."⁴³² Here too in the plays of Carr and Parker the traditional feminine has been overturned, and in its place are multifaceted women who demand their own histories in the life of the nation/province. The female characters challenge narratives of unionism and nationalism, but as absent/presences, they become part of the spectral legacy of women who have been cast aside or abandoned. The ghosts, through their own narratives and through their positioning in the home/scape, facilitate a working-through of a woman's difficult and troubled past from the island's patriarchal structures. Heather Ingham finds a space for Irish women (and I would argue Northern Irish women) located in the gap between a rigid nationalism (or the tenets of unionism/loyalism) and full exclusion from the nation/province:

...from their position on the margins of the nation, Irish women have the opportunity to use their voices to subvert entrenched Irish nationalism and open it up to a more fluid identity. In this way Irish women may avoid on the one hand complete identification with a nationalism that may be oppressive for them and, on the other, total ostracism from the life of the nation.⁴³³

In these plays, what were mirages of women are no longer visible and Irish and Northern Irish women are re-configured as complex subjects with heterogeneous identities: daughters, mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, Protestant, Catholic, Presbyterian, pagan, middle-aged, young, old; and mothers are represented as cruel, hopeful, jealous, protective, self-centered, unhappy, generous, obstinate, loving,

judgmental, demanding, desirous and who *ultimately* control their own destiny. The women depicted are strong and often fiercely independent, but paradoxically are dependent on outmoded ways of thinking about a woman's role in Irish and Northern Irish society. The act of suicide or attempted suicide is seen as a rebellious act, by which each woman is unbound. For Paula Murphy à la Derrida, "the future cannot be comprehended without coming to terms with the Other, whether this Other signifies ghosts, death, or both."⁴³⁴ Here, the other is the haunting *absent mother* in a sociopolitical landscape wherein the Irish or Northern Irish mother was foundational to the nation/province. By the end of the plays, these women leave an *unresolved legacy of loss* that can only be measured against the passionate ways in which they chose to live and die. The time has come to abolish the figure of mother/Ireland, yet her irresolvable position in the island's histories indicates she will always return and haunt anyway.

CONCLUSION

Ghosts that Remain

The appearance of the ghost says it even without the words: 'I am dead and yet I am among you, the living. I am gone and will go and yet I can always come again. I am your past but as the past, also your future, a future you can never fully control. And you can never put me in my place.'⁴³⁵

The ghost is a trace of a historical past and of a future not yet arrived that must be dealt with in the here and now. The ghostly speech of Samuel Weber emphasizes several key points about the spectral nature of ghosts that are foundational to my project. The ghost defies temporal boundaries – I am your past; I am among you, the living; and I am your future – and as such belongs to no time or era. Weber also describes the ghost as “temporal in the sense of *persisting*, *insisting*, of *remaining*,”⁴³⁶ which suggests a ghost’s urgent desire to be present as well as its propensity to leave something behind. The ghost upsets the binary condition of alive/dead. In this way the ghost survives,⁴³⁷ but only in so far as neither the condition of life nor that of death can contain it. The ghost – as the past – will never be controlled or laid to rest, implying that the ghost and the past are always to come, and therefore irresolvable.

Ghosts return because something from the past has yet to be resolved. However, the ghost’s appearance does not resolve that past. The dominant insight of my work is that the ghost returns to confront that which has been historically unacknowledged, marginalized, or reified in Ireland’s past, but that the ghost also points to the idea that those conflicts or conditions must remain irresolvable. The notion that the past is

irresolvable tells us more about the mechanisms involved in the construction of national and historical narratives than the course of historical events themselves. Irresolvability means there is no going back to alter the past while at the same time there must be a continual reconsideration of the past. The playwrights highlighted here deal with the dead, irresolvability, and the past all through the figure of the ghost and by so doing generate other narratives that become part of Irish and Northern Irish histories.

David Lloyd argues that ghosts in Ireland are not just the restless remains of a past steeped in historical trauma, but also represent possibilities that go beyond the borders of rational thought.⁴³⁸ Ghosts are contained *in* but not *by* Ireland's histories and thus they often seep outside the confines of historical events making their presence known in strangely familiar ways. Integral to my work is the idea of what he calls an "unpacified history": a history not yet at peace and so a history unresolved. In writing about history's hold on the present as it pertains to Ireland, David Lowenthal in his book *The Past is a Foreign Country* writes, "Some societies need no re-enactment to reactivate history; the process seems to be ingrained, habitual. Unassuaged injuries and injustices often lead men to conflate remote with recent times and even with the present...But the Irish do not 'live in the past'; rather, Ireland's history 'lives in the present.'"⁴³⁹ The idea of Ireland's histories as part of an "ingrained, habitual" process and as living in the present corresponds with the idea that the ghost represents survival – not death. For ghosts are not only remnants of the past, but also a present and future infused with potentiality. These ghosts are possibilities not yet thought about or experienced, and often exceed what is known to be true.

The unresolved past has a habit of reappearing. To put it simply, Ireland has a violent past that has been a result of both external and internal conflict. Two well-entrenched examples of these are the external conflict between Ireland and England (pre-partition) and the internal conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland (post-partition). The conditions of colonialism and partition, and the necessity for many citizens on the island to identify with either Ireland or Britain, led to irresolvable conditions. Following partition, Ireland initiated a program of cultural and economic protectionism, which resulted in the 1937 Constitution along with other conservative policies, and Northern Ireland became a society divided by politics, cultural identity, and religion. The unresolved past produces a legacy that precludes a sense of inclusiveness between and among the dominant narratives North and South. When the island was partitioned, narratives of History were also separated into Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism, causing divisiveness in the island's histories and historiography. The plays analyzed here seek to undermine the legacy of the History of Ireland and Northern Ireland wherein the appearance of ghosts provokes a multiplicity of narratives to tell the story of WWI, the Troubles, and the image of women on the island.

In this dissertation I examined the figure of the ghost in contemporary Irish and Northern Irish drama by focusing on the ways in which the return of the ghost complicates the writing of Ireland's History. Using the idea of the irresolvable past, I looked at how the plays here – by way of the ghost – became a form of re-imagining Ireland's past through the mode of historical recuperation (WWI-Republic), reconstruction of identity (WWI-North), reclamation of past suffering (the Troubles), and dismantling of myths (images of women). As we saw in Chapter One, for much of the

20th century, Ireland's involvement in World War One was for the most part unacknowledged. The meta-narrative of Irish nationalism excluded the event of the First World War because the visibility of the Irishman in British uniform was seen as a threat to the South's (new) stability as a nation. In the plays, the ghosts of WWI soldiers return to regain a place in the island's histories. And yet even though histories of WWI were slowly being recovered in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the black hole of knowledge that surrounds World War One and Ireland remains deep and wide. In Chapter Two, I emphasized the idea that because the narrative of the Troubles in Northern Ireland mostly revolves around paramilitary organizations, the British forces, and sectarian strife, the stories of the victims of violence are often marginalized, and the truth of their deaths is obfuscated. In the plays, the ghosts of innocent victims return in the name of justice, but also to be remembered. And while the dead victims have a voice here, their ghosts call attention to the conundrum of memory – how much to remember versus how much to forget in order to “turn the page without closing the book.”⁴⁴⁰ In Chapter Three, I drew attention to the way in which the images of Mother Ireland and Woman-as-Nation have had a long history on the island and that their pervasiveness in social, political, and cultural discourse led to their reification. The ghost mother haunts in the plays so as to overturn the fixed images of woman as mother/Ireland and the proper wife and by so doing incorporates a more diverse representation of the Irish and Northern Irish woman into the narratives of both North and South. Representations of women in the late 20th century may no longer conform to Mother Ireland and the like, but women have been tethered to these images for such a considerable amount of time. Can that linkage ever be completely severed? The plays themselves are re-imagining a version of Ireland's past

through a variety of methods: the figure of the ghost upsets any notion of stability to that past, which results in the past becoming a fluid, living thing; disruptive dramaturgical structures upset linear narratives, which highlight the idea that the past is disordered and messy; and unacknowledged, under-represented, or reified histories offer a new way of looking at the past.

While I have argued that these plays impel a reimagination of Ireland's national past, that reimagination clearly has limits: issues of race, sexuality, and the dominance of the family remain unacknowledged in these plays. These dramaturgical limits are connected to the composition of Irish and Northern Irish society in the 1980s and 1990s (and for much of the island's history) – a mostly white population with traditional family structures and a cultural entrenchment in heteronormative sexuality. The majority of the plays I examined reflect a homogeneous, conservative populace both north and south of the border, even as many of them were written at a time in which the national population was becoming increasingly diverse and heterosexual family structures less socially dominant. While this conception of Ireland and Irishness may be considered conservative, it is not monolithic even in the plays chosen in this dissertation. Mary Trotter argues that “minority discourses” such as women's issues, class, sexuality, and religion were given “unprecedented focus” in Irish and Northern Irish theatre in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁴¹ Several of the plays I considered here emphasized women's issues, especially in Chapter Three as well as shed light on alternative discourses. For example, I discussed the Irish Traveller community in *By the Bog of Cats*..., a minority ethnic group that has historically been discriminated against due to what Jane Helleiner calls “anti-Traveller racism.”⁴⁴² Traveller communities may rely on the solidity of the familial unit,

but my analysis of the play drew attention to the struggle of Irish Travellers to fit in to Irish (settled) society. In *Pentecost*, I explored the ways in which the character Marian seeks to re-imagine the family in Northern Ireland – from one formed around a single cultural identity to one that embraces the region’s cultural differences, and brings together Irish, British, and Northern Irish, Catholic and Protestant, nationalist and unionist. One striking omission of these alternative discourses was my examination of *Observe the Sons of Ulster*, in which a homosexual longing is expressed between the characters of Kenneth Pyper and David Craig albeit in mostly subtle, understated ways. That is, until the end of Part III, which David Cregan explains: “McGuinness dissolves all homosexual innuendo in a moment never before witnessed on the stage in Ireland: Pyper and Craig passionately kiss.”⁴⁴³ McGuinness’ play ventures outside the island’s conservatism and heteronormative sexuality by staging the demonstrative gay male body, the visibility of which, Cregan contends, has never been seen on the Irish stage. The stage direction of the kiss, it must be said, is not written into the version in McGuinness’ *Plays:1* (1996), in some ways suggesting a reluctance to commit a corporeal yet ephemeral homosexual encounter to a stable and permanent playtext. The subtle and restrained nature of Pyper and Craig’s relationship as dictated by the script was one reason why my textual analysis did not include what could only be inferred, but what would probably be realized in performance.

20th century Ireland may have been constrained by social, political, cultural, and religious conservatism, but beginning in the late 20th century and continuing into the 21st, Ireland has been – and continues to be – the site of a radically changing context. Today the island is more ethnically, racially, and sexually diverse – the Republic is seeing an

influx of immigrants (a 2007 population statistic states that 13% [or 420,000] of the people living in the Republic come from someplace else⁴⁴⁴) as well as a growing gay and lesbian community (in a 2007 poll, 6% [or 200,000] of the Republic's population identifies as gay or lesbian⁴⁴⁵). Since the 1990s Northern Ireland too has experienced a greater influx of immigrants. The island's contemporary context is vastly different than 30 years previously: both the Republic and Northern Ireland are more global due to immigration and economic policies; there has been political transformation in the North; the Irish Catholic Church no longer has the social and political power it once had; the collapse of the Celtic Tiger (2008) has resulted in a disastrous financial crisis that is still being sorted out; and there has been a rise of multiculturalism and gay rights. In the 21st century, many Irish and Northern Irish plays are contending with these vast social, political, and economic shifts; future critical analyses of these dramatic literatures might do well to focus on how nationalist discourse is slowly evolving into a discussion about Ireland's place in Europe and the wider world.

The next step for this project would be to investigate the notion of irresolvability alongside a broader conception of haunting in Irish and Northern Irish plays that would not be limited to the literal figure of the ghost, nor to a conception of Ireland/Northern Ireland as white, national, and familial. Ireland's dramatically changed political and cultural landscape has produced questions surrounding cultural diversity and identity, refugees and racism, homosexuality and homophobia, and the presence of "Others" within Irish and Northern Irish society. What is haunting Ireland *now* – in light of its changing demographic – that in turn is also haunting its past? In other words, how does the specificity of political haunting used to interrogate the conditions and preoccupations

of Ireland's dramas become transmogrified into a global haunting that demands both worldly and local perspectives? Since Irish and Northern Irish dramatic literatures are a global phenomenon – involving numerous translations, adaptations, and touring productions – what “sense of the world” haunts these plays and performances? Instead of haunting used as a particular way of thinking about the individual or social psyche of Ireland, haunting might be as used a mode of analysis by way of what Avery Gordon calls “a mediation”⁴⁴⁶ – that between the local and the global. Several contemporary plays in which notions of haunting and the haunted are focal points but where actual ghosts do not appear would be exemplary in such a study. Some of them include *No Place like Home* by Owen McCafferty (2001), *It Come Up Sun* by Joe O’Byrne (2000), *The Playboy of the Western World* adapted by Bisi Adigun and Roddy Doyle from J.M. Synge (2007), *The Butcher Babes* by Bisi Adigun (2010), *God’s Country* by Colin Bell (2010), and *Bang Bang Bang* by Stella Feehily (2011). Worlds outside Ireland – Poland, Nigeria, the Congo – haunt these plays, as do issues of homophobia and racism. Is it possible to think about the wider implications for these dramaturgies of haunting that might begin to envision Ireland as a transnational space? The characters’ anxieties and hauntedness in the plays reflect the difficulty in maneuvering through the rocky terrain of Ireland’s socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions today.

In the dramatic literature of the late 20th and early 21st century, meanwhile, the interrogation of the confinements of traditional nationalist femininity and maternity begun in the plays examined in my third chapter has been extended into a radical critique. A smaller scale research project of mine involves haunting and Irish women in what I call the women in the bed project. This would be the end point refraction of the home/scape,

wherein the home is reduced to the ultimately confined space of passivity. These plays include Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985), Sebastian Barry's *Our Lady of Sligo* (1998), Enda Walsh's *Bedbound* (2000), and Marina Carr's *Woman and Scarecrow* (2006). All of the women – Mommo, Mai, Daughter, and Woman – are confined to the bed and are haunted by a traumatic past of dead children or unfulfilled lives, and restrictive mental, cultural, and physical spaces.

The monumental changes as outlined above are occurring in the socioeconomic and cultural landscape of the Republic and in the political landscape of Northern Ireland. Many plays being produced over the past few years are also grappling with the specific realities of a post-Celtic Tiger Republic and a post-Ceasefire (or post-Troubles) Northern Ireland – haunted as they are by a former prosperity and by a long period of sectarian violence. Additionally those plays written during the Celtic Tiger are haunted by past poverties whether the economic period of the 1930-60s, or the cultural climate of the 20th century. One such example is *The Queen and Peacock* (2000) by Loughlin Deegan, the setting of which is a gay bar in London where its Irish inhabitants, having emigrated years earlier, remain unaware of the booming Ireland and the growing acceptance of homosexuality in their native Dublin. Thus another direction for my research revolves around these “posts” in order to work out how these societies are dealing with a haunted environment of a different kind such as the effects on the individual and social body of the spectacular economic rise and fall in Ireland and of enduring sectarianism in Northern Ireland. Many plays set in the Celtic Tiger period have a subtext of fear or spiritual desolation in the overconfident society of contemporary Dublin – such as *Shiver* (2003) by Declan Hughes, *Homeland* (2006) by Paul Mercier, or *The Grown-Ups* (2006) by

Nicholas Kelly – but also wrestle with the problem of leaving history behind. Because the phenomenon of the Celtic Tiger was changing as rapidly as history itself, the plays call to mind the idea of being performed “out of time,” which suggests not only the two “presents” of a play, but also the idea that the play is “dated” at the moment of performance. Plays about the post-Celtic Tiger condition include *The Parting Glass* (2010) by Dermot Bolger, a play that conjures the post-boom era, even though it is set on the eve of its bust, and John McManus’ *The Quare Land* (2010) a satire on the Celtic Tiger period that also “historises” Irish attitudes to land, as Patrick Lonergan writes, “showing that the greed evident in recent years needs to be understood as a reaction to the poverty that dominated Irish life prior to the 1960s.”⁴⁴⁷ Poverty, famine, and the Celtic Tiger are the things that haunt McManus’ play. Post-Ceasefire plays include *National Anthem* (2010) by Colin Bateman, *A Cold House* (2003) by Brian Campbell and Laurence McKeown, and *Waiting...*(2000) by Dave Duggan, all of which delve into the process of moving on from the conflict of the Troubles. What is it that these plays enunciate about a post-Celtic Tiger or post-Ceasefire moment – in the midst of a “post” period (a time “after” poverty and partition, for instance) while at the same time acknowledging the persistence of history?

I am particularly interested in these post-plays and how the characters are haunted by a troubled past/present and how the condition of haunting might influence their future. In this post-context, I stand by my opening claim – that ghosts in Ireland are political as they are tied to identity and the land – but I expand on it by arguing that haunting in Ireland is political insofar as Irish and Northern Irish identity is situated within a European or international identity and the land is part of a global landscape. The

ghosts I have analyzed in this dissertation as well as those haunted characters and situations to be examined at a later time invite the imagining of a different future because ghosts are always to come. The question, nonetheless, remains: Will the ghosts in/of Irish and Northern Irish dramatic literature whether visible on the stage or not ever get laid to rest? The answer must be an unequivocal no.

END NOTES

Chapter One Notes

¹ David Lloyd is referring to an unpublished lecture of Seamus Deane, “Politics and Culture in Modern and Contemporary Ireland,” California Institute of Technology, Pasadena California, November 7 2002 in his article “Frames of *referrance*: Samuel Beckett as an Irish question” in *Becket and Ireland* ed. by Seán Kennedy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 42.

² Alvin Jackson, “Irish Unionism” in *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the revisionist controversy* ed. by D. George Boyce and Alan O’Day, (London and New York: Routledge), p. 121.

³ Aleida Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. by Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 216.

⁴ Many 20th century plays have haunting but no actual ghosts in them, such as Conor McPherson’s work. Two plays considered for this chapter were Michael Harding’s comedy *Hubert Murray’s Widow* in *New Plays from the Abbey Theatre 1993-1995*, ed. by Christopher Fitz-Simon and Sanford Sternlicht, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996) and Stewart Parker’s historical *Northern Star* about the failed 1798 Rising in *Stewart Parker: Plays 2*, (London: Methuen Drama, 2000). Other plays with ghosts are Tom McIntyre’s *Sheep’s Milk on the Boil* (1994); Dermot Bolger’s *April Bright* (1995); and Daragh Carville’s *Family Plot* (2005).

⁵ Other playwrights who helped place Irish theatre on the map during this time were Conor McPherson, Enda Walsh, Martin McDonagh, Gary Mitchell, Christina Reid, Billy Roche, Stella Feehily, Owen McCafferty, Daragh Carville, and Mark O’Rowe.

⁶ The first phase of writers included W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, J.M. Synge, and Sean O’Casey while the second phase included Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, John B. Keane, Hugh Leonard, and Tom Kilroy.

⁷ Field Day’s premiere production – Brian Friel’s play *Translations* in 1980 – gave new life to inter-communal dialogue in the region, if only briefly. The Druid, founded in 1975, premiered Martin McDonagh’s *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in 1996, which led to productions in London and New York. Rough Magic, founded in 1984, brought Stewart Parker’s *Pentecost* to the Kennedy Center in D.C. in 2000 as part of the Irish Arts Festival.

⁸ Fintan O’Toole, “Notes from the Notice Box: An Introduction” in *Re-imagining Ireland* ed. by Andrew Higgins Wyndham, (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p. 8.

⁹ Divorce was legalized in 1996 and contraceptives became freely available in the mid-1980s.

¹⁰ See *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the revisionist controversy*, ed. by D. George Boyce and Alan O’Day, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹¹ Nancy J. Curtin, “‘Varieties of Irishness’: Historical Revisionism, Irish Style in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Revisionisms (April 1996), p. 195-219, p. 195.

¹² Curtin, “‘Varieties of Irishness’”, p. 195-219, p. 205.

¹³ Ciaran Brady, ed. *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism* as reproduced in the *Oxford Companion to Irish History* under “History and Historians,” ed. by S.J. Connolly, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 256. For example, the revisionist view of the Irish Famine was that it was not a monumental moment in Irish history but part of a series of “existing trends,” that famine was inevitable because of “the large population and underdeveloped agricultural sector,” and that the British government did what it could to prevent and end it. This revisionist view however does not take into consideration the long history of Anglo-Irish relations (colonialism, cultural stereotyping) nor the vast suffering endured. See Christine Kinealy, *The Great Hunger in Ireland*, London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1997), p. 3.

¹⁴ Revisionist historians include T.W. Moody, Ruth Dudley Edwards, F.S.L. Lyons and R.F. Foster.

¹⁵ Curtin, “‘Varieties of Irishness,’” p. 195-219, p. 219.

¹⁶ Others include Brian Friel’s *Translations* (1980) – takes place in 1833 and *Making History* (1988) – takes place in 1591 and 1614; Frank McGuinness’ *Mutabilitie* (1997) – takes place in the 16th century and *Dolly West’s Kitchen* (1999) – takes place in 1943-45; Stewart Parker’s *Northern Star* (1984) – takes place in 1798; and Gary Mitchell’s *Tearing the Loom* (1998) – also takes place in 1798.

¹⁷ See: Anthony Roche, “Ghosts in Irish Drama” in *More Real than Reality: The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts*, ed. Donald E. Morse and Csilla Bertha, (New York: Greenwood, 1991), pp. 37-66; Donald E. Morse, “‘Revolutionizing Reality’: The Irish Fantastic” in *Journal of The Fantastic in the Arts*,

8, 1, (1997), 2-14; Csilla Bertha, "Myth and the Fantastic: the Example of W.B. Yeats's Plays" in *More Real than Reality: The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts*, ed. Donald E. Morse and Csilla Bertha, (New York: Greenwood, 1991), p. 17-27; James W. Flannery, "Staging the Phantasmagorical: Theatrical Challenges and Rewards of W.B. Yeats" in *Irish University Review*, 26.1 (Spring-Summer, 1996), 92-106; Kay Martinovich, "The Mythical and the Macabre: The Study of Greeks and Ghosts in the Shaping of the American Premiere of *By the Bog of Cats*..." in *The Theatre of Marina Carr: 'Before Rules Was Made'* ed. by Cathy Leeney and Anna McMullan, (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2003); Tom Herron, "Dead Men Talking: Frank McGuinness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*" in *Éire-Ireland*, 29.1 & 2, (Spring-Summer, 2004), 136-162; Richard Rankin Russell, "Exorcising the Ghosts of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Stewart Parker's *The Iceberg* and *Pentecost*", *Éire-Ireland* 41. 3-4, (Fall-Winter, 2006), 42-58; Richard Rankin Russell, "Talking with Ghosts of Irish Playwrights Past: Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*...", *Comparative Drama* 40.2 (Summer 2006), 150-168; Kay Martinovich, "Ghosts of the Great War in *The Steward of Christendom*" in *New Hibernia Review*, 13:2 (Summer 2009), 110-124.

¹⁸ Roche, "Ghosts in Irish Drama," p. 44.

¹⁹ Roche, "Ghosts in Irish Drama," p. 60.

²⁰ See books (in chronological order): William Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore, 1620-1984*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986); Bonnie C. Winsbro, *Supernatural Forces: Belief, Difference, and Power in Contemporary Works in Ethnic Women*, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994); Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Jean-Michel Rabaté, *The Ghosts of Modernity*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996); Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Kathleen Brogan, *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*, trans. by Teresa Lavender Fagan, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Katherine A. Fowkes, *Spirits, Ghosts, and Angels in Mainstream Comedy Films*, (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1998); *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* ed. by Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's "Spectres de Marx"* ed. by Michael Sprinker (London and New York: Verso, 1999); Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Lee Kovacs, *The Haunted Screen: Ghosts in Literature and Film*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1999); René L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2000); Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing*, (Montreal & Kingston and London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley*, (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2003); *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination* ed. by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); *Ghosts, Stories, Histories: Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories*, ed. by Sladja Blazan, (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007); Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects: deconstruction, psychoanalysis and the return of the dead*, (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2007); Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Judith T. Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Heonik Kwon, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Stories from the Little Crossing-Over Place*, (Seattle: University of Washington, Press, 2008); Jeffrey Weinstock, *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture* ed. by Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, (New York and London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010); *Death in American Texts and Performances: Corpses, Ghosts, and the Reanimated Dead* ed. by Lisa K. Peridgao and Mark Pizzato, (Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010); Arthur

Redding, *Haints: American Ghosts, Millennial Passions, and Contemporary Gothic Fictions*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011); *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History*, ed. by Colleen E. Boyd & Coll Thrush, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2011); Fiona Barclay, *Writing Postcolonial France: Haunting, Literature, and the Maghreb*, (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2011); Maria del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost-watching American modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

²¹ Alice Rayner, "Rude Mechanicals and the 'Specters of Marx'" in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4, (2002), p. 535-554.

²² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, (New York and London: Routledge Classics, 1994), p. 3.

²³ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 17, 64.

²⁴ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 41.

²⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 194.

²⁶ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 64.

²⁷ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 4, 17.

²⁸ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 29.

²⁹ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, 5.

³⁰ Helen F. North, "Death and Afterlife in Greek Tragedy and Plato" in *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions* ed. by Hiorshi Obayahi, (1992) cited in Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 23, fn 58.

³¹ The Phantasmagoria was developed in France in the 18th century but gained popularity in England in the 19th century.

³² Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 199.

³³ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 44.

³⁴ Alice Rayner, *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. xxii.

³⁵ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. xxiii.

³⁶ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. xiii.

³⁷ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. 39.

³⁸ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. 35.

³⁹ Kathleen Brogan, *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*, (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), p. 28.

⁴⁰ What got me first thinking about this was when I was working with Irish Repertory of Chicago a few years ago. At the time I was interested in directing one of Gary Mitchell's plays – Mitchell is from Northern Ireland and a Protestant working class background. His plays are very much a part of that world. Mitchell's agent got back to us saying that Mitchell was "unenthusiastic" about having his work produced at a company with the name "Irish Rep" because, as he himself said, he was not Irish.

⁴¹ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 17.

Chapter Two Notes

⁴² Private Herbert Beattie, 17, soon after the Battle of the Somme quoted in Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster*, (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1992), p. 455.

⁴³ Sean O'Casey, "The Silver Tassie" in *Seven Plays by Sean O'Casey*, selected, with an Introduction and Notes by Ronald Ayling, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1985), p. 201.

⁴⁴ Yeats argued that O'Casey had no war experience, and therefore could not adequately write about it, and that there was no dominant central character or unity of action. He was also dismayed at the play's lack of an Irish theme as well as the mixture of expressionistic and realistic styles. Yeats sent his criticisms to Lady Gregory, who then forwarded them, (unbeknownst to Yeats), to O'Casey in London thus instigating the whole row. See Nuala C. Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 116.

⁴⁵ Johnson, *Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance*, p. 116, 117.

⁴⁶ Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 235.

⁴⁷ *The Home Place* (2006) is also the name of a play by Brien Friel, which takes place in 1878 at the beginning of the demise of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and the rise of the Home Rule movement, the first Home Rule bill being introduced in 1886.

⁴⁸ The plays whose subject matter involves WWI include: Christina Reid, *My Name, Shall I Tell you My Name?* Yew Theatre Company, Dublin, 1989; Jennifer Johnston, *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (adapted from her novel of same name), Lyric Theatre, Belfast, 1993; Brian Ervine, *Somme Day Mourning*, Shankill Community Theatre Company, Belfast, 1994, (unpublished); Bill Murphy, *Absent Comrades*, Focus Theatre, Dublin, 1997, (unpublished); Nicola McCartney, *Heritage*, Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, 1998; Martin Lynch, *Holding Hands at Paschendale*, Lyric Theatre, Belfast, 2006, (unpublished); and Dave Duggan, *Still, The Blackbird Sings*, The Playhouse, Derry, 2010, (unpublished).

⁴⁹ See Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands 1912-1939*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). John Horne, "Our War, Our History" in *Our War: Ireland and the Great War – The 2008 Thomas Davis Lecture Series*, ed. by John Horne, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008). Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, "Introduction" in *Ireland and the Great War: 'A war to unite us all'?*, ed. by Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland*, p. 236.

⁵¹ Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland*, p. 129.

⁵² James Loughlin, "Ulster unionism and the politics of remembrance" in *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'?*, ed. by Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 146.

⁵³ The first Home Rule bill was introduced in 1866, but defeated in the House of Commons; the second Home Rule bill was introduced in 1893, and while it passed in the House of Commons it was defeated in the House of Lords.

⁵⁴ Following the introduction of the 3rd Irish Home Rule Bill, the group known as the Ulster Volunteers was founded in the North (1912), a militaristic and unionist group organized by Edward Carson and James Craig to block Home Rule to Ulster. Ulster Unionists and other Irish Protestants had always strongly opposed Home Rule, since they equated it with Rome Rule, that is, that the Pope and the Catholic Church. In the South, the formation of the Irish Volunteers (1913), a nationalist militia, was in direct response to the founding of the Ulster Volunteers – both of which were ready to fight the other, if Home Rule Bill succeeded. These were some of the internal antagonisms leading up to the Great War.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 143.

⁵⁶ Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000*, p. 145.

⁵⁷ For years following his death, Redmond was disavowed and denounced by many nationalists believing he was a traitor to independence.

⁵⁸ For example, the Irish National War Memorial Gardens built at Islandbridge, Dublin to honor the Irish soldiers who gave their lives in the Great War had been in the works since 1919, but was not officially opened by a government minister until 1994. See Ann Rigney, "Divided pasts: A premature memorial and the dynamics of collective remembrance" in *Memory Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2008), p. 89-97. <<http://mss.sagepub.com/content/1/1/89.full.pdf+html>>. Retrieved 1/18/11.

⁵⁹ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, p. 2.

⁶¹ Sebastian Barry, "Preface" in *Sebastian Barry Plays: 1*, (London: Methuen, 1997), p. xv.

⁶² Sebastian Barry has said that when writing *The Steward of Christendom* Willie was at first "just an unknown child in the room." After the play was produced, Barry found out that James Dunne did have two or three sons in the war. He says, "What became of them I do not know. So Willie is made up but at the same time isn't..." See interview with Sebastian Barry, <http://us.penguin.com/static/rguides/us/long_long_way.html>. Retrieved 1/10/11.

- ⁶³ Sebastian Barry, "The Steward of Christendom" in *Sebastian Barry Plays: 1*, (London: Methuen, 1997), p. 254. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (SC page).
- ⁶⁴ The Dublin Lock-out (1913) was a labor dispute between 20,000 workers, who were mostly unskilled labor, and 300 employers who, led by William Martin Murphy, collectively agreed to "lock out" their workers if they intended to join or were already members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The strike or lock-out lasted from August 26, 1913 to January 18, 1914. In the play, Thomas Dunne's participation in the Lock-out was as a member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, who on several occasions used violence against strikers during their rallies.
- ⁶⁵ Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, "Colonial Policing: *The Steward of Christendom* and *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*" in *Out of History: Essays on the Writings of Sebastian Barry*, ed. with intro. by Christina Hunt Mahony, (Dublin and Washington, D.C.: Carysfort Press and The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p. 144.
- ⁶⁶ Cullingford, "Colonial Policing," p. 124.
- ⁶⁷ John Wilson Foster "All the long traditions': Loyalty and Service in Barry and Ishiguro" in *Out of History: Essays on the Writings of Sebastian Barry*, ed. with intro. by Christina Hunt Mahony, (Dublin and Washington, D.C.: Carysfort Press and The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), p. 119.
- ⁶⁸ Orr, "200,000 Volunteer Soldiers," p. 75-76.
- ⁶⁹ Jane Leonard, "Survivors" in *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*, ed. by John Horne, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), p. 218.
- ⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, transl. by Peggy Kamuf, (New York and London: Routledge/Routledge Classics, 1994, 2006), p. 11.
- ⁷¹ Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The "uncanny")" in *New Literary History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Spring 1976), p. 543.
- ⁷² Sigmund Freud, "Repression" in *Sigmund Freud #11 On Metapsychology*, comp. and ed. by Angela Richards, trans. under general editorship James Strachey, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 157.
- ⁷³ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 11 transl. from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 251-268.
- ⁷⁴ Tammy Clewell, "Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud's Psychoanalysis of Loss" in *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* Vol. 52, No. 1, (2004), p. 44.
- ⁷⁵ Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," p. 253, 252.
- ⁷⁶ Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," p. 252.
- ⁷⁷ Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," p. 251-268.
- ⁷⁸ Ken Frieden, *Freud's Dream of Interpretation*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 2.
- ⁷⁹ Tammy Clewell, "Consolation Refused: Virginia Woolf, The Great War, and Modernist Mourning" in *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1, (2004), p. 202, 199.
- ⁸⁰ Stef Craps, "Learning to Live With Ghosts: Postcolonial Haunting and Mid-Mourning in David Dabydeen's "Turner" and Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*," *Callaloo*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (Spring 2010), p. 468.
- ⁸¹ Patricia Rae, "Introduction: Modernist Mourning" in *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. by Patricia Rae, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), p. 17.
- ⁸² Jacques Derrida, "Mnemosyne" in *Memoires for Paul de Man*, translated by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, and Eduardo Cadava, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 35.
- ⁸³ Gabriele Schwab, "Replacement Children: The Transgenerational Transmission of Traumatic Loss," *American Imago*, Vol. 66, No. 3, (Fall 2009), p. 278, p. 277-310.
- ⁸⁴ Roger Luckhurst, "'Something Tremendous, Something Elemental': On the Ghostly Origins of Psychoanalysis" in *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, ed. by Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), p. 62.
- ⁸⁵ In Act One, Annie tells the story of how the bus conductor was treated when he returned from France himself one of the Volunteers: "oh, it was painful, the way she looked back at him, as if he were a viper, or a traitor...A man that had risked himself, like Willie, but that had *reached home at last*." (SC, 265) (emphasis added)
- ⁸⁶ *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 421.

- ⁸⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 95.
- ⁸⁸ Nicholas De Jongh, "Look back with pride" in *Evening Standard*, Theatre Museum Research Collections-London, (September 6, 1995), p. 48.
- ⁸⁹ Helen Robinson, "Remembering the War in the Midst of Conflict: First World War Commemorations in the Northern Irish Troubles" in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (2010), p. 83.
- ⁹⁰ Declan Kiberd, "Frank McGuinness and the Sons of Ulster" in *Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 35, (2005), p. 280.
- ⁹¹ See James Loughlin, "Mobilising the sacred dead: Ulster unionism, the Great War and the politics of remembrance" in *Ireland and the Great War: a war to unite us all?* ed. by Adrian Gregory and Senia Paseta, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 135.
- ⁹² Kiberd, "Frank McGuinness and the Sons of Ulster," p. 296.
- ⁹³ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 12.
- ⁹⁴ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 11, 12.
- ⁹⁵ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 53.
- ⁹⁶ The New University of Ulster is in Coleraine, Northern Ireland.
- ⁹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London and New York: Verso, 1983), p. 9.
- ⁹⁸ Sigmund Freud as quoted in Maud Ellmann, "Introduction" in *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, ed. by Maud Ellmann, (London and New York: Longman, 1994), p. 8.
- ⁹⁹ Freud as quoted in Maud Ellmann in *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁰ Frank McGuinness, "Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme" in *Frank McGuinness: Plays 1*, (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996), p. 97-98. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (OTSOU, page).
- ¹⁰¹ Dorothy Kelly, "The Ghost of Meaning: Language in the Fantastic", *SubStance*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Issue 35 (1982), p. 46.
- ¹⁰² Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 7.
- ¹⁰³ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 5.
- ¹⁰⁴ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 6.
- ¹⁰⁵ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 31.
- ¹⁰⁶ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 18.
- ¹⁰⁷ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 5-6.
- ¹⁰⁸ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 15.
- ¹⁰⁹ Throughout the play, Pyper makes allusions to his past, without explicitly spelling it out to anyone except Craig: first and foremost, that he is a homosexual; that he was probably married and living in France; that he tried to make a living as an artist in Paris, specifically as a sculptor; and that apparently the French woman he was with committed suicide when he could no longer live in the lie of their relationship.
- ¹¹⁰ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, 134.
- ¹¹¹ Claire Gleitman, "Reconstructing history in the Irish history play" in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Irish Drama*, ed. by Shaun Richards, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 221.
- ¹¹² Most likely the well-known bridge at Carrick-a-Rede, County Antrim.
- ¹¹³ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 73.
- ¹¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Introduction to *Psycho-analysis and the War Neuroses*" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XVII, trans. by James Strachey, (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), p. 208-209.
- ¹¹⁵ Freud, "The Uncanny" in *Sigmund Freud #14 Art and Literature*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. under general editorship James Strachey, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 357.
- ¹¹⁶ Tim Armstrong, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory*, (Hampshire, England, and New York: Palgrave, 2000), p. 35.
- ¹¹⁷ Nicholas Abraham, "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology" in *The Shell and the Kernel: Volume I*, ed. and transl. by Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 175. (emphasis in original)
- ¹¹⁸ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 71, 136n22.
- ¹¹⁹ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 3-4.

- ¹²⁰ Freud, "Introduction to *Psycho-analysis and the War Neuroses*," p. 210.
- ¹²¹ Interview with Robert Jay Lifton in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited with an intro. by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 137.
- ¹²² Otto Rank quoted in Claire Rosenfield, "The Shadow Within: The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double" in *Daedalus*, Vol. 92, No. 2, (Spring, 1963), p. 334.
- ¹²³ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 20.
- ¹²⁴ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 22.
- ¹²⁵ Scarva is a village in County Down where every year is held what is called the "Sham Fight" Pageant on July 13th, a mock re-enactment of the Battle of the Boyne.
- ¹²⁶ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 142.
- ¹²⁷ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 22.
- ¹²⁸ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 22.
- ¹²⁹ "1916 Commemorations." [Department of the Taoiseach. <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Taoiseach_and_Government/History_of_Government/1916_Commemorations/Irish_Soldiers_in_the_First_World_War.html>](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Taoiseach_and_Government/History_of_Government/1916_Commemorations/Irish_Soldiers_in_the_First_World_War.html). Retrieved 11/19/10.
- ¹³⁰ Boy Soldier remains unpublished at the time of this writing. After contacting Red Kettle Theatre Company, a copy of the script was emailed to me in March 2008.
- ¹³¹ The company produces works by Irish playwrights as well as international writers. See Red Kettle Theatre Company website at <http://www.red-kettle.com/site/>.
- ¹³² The most recent tour was January through March 2008 when it played in a number of cities including Galway, Sligo, Cork, and Limerick, taking in most of the southeastern part of the island as well as an area in the northwest.
- ¹³³ Alice Rayner, *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 34.
- ¹³⁴ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 29.
- ¹³⁵ Ben Hennessy, *Boy Soldier*, unpublished manuscript, p. 1. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (BS page).
- ¹³⁶ These include the home of Condon, a recruiting rally led by John Redmond who is also fighting for Home Rule, a bottling plant where Condon works, a marketplace, and a recruitment office.
- ¹³⁷ See "Ben Hennessy's Boy Soldier", *The Loy*, 7 February 2008, <http://www.theloy.com/2008/02/ben-hennessys-boy-soldier.html>. Retrieved 12/9/10.
- ¹³⁸ The Munster Express, Review: *Boy Soldier*, <http://www.munster-express.ie/entertainment/review-boy-soldier/>. Retrieved 1/15/11.
- ¹³⁹ Antony Tatlow, "Ghosts in the house of theory: Brecht and the unconscious", *The Brecht Yearbook*, Vol. 24, (1999), p. 8. See <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/German.BrechtYearbook024>. Retrieved 2/20/11.
- ¹⁴⁰ Willie Redmond fought in WWI and at the age of 56 was killed at the Battle of Messines in 1917. Elder brother John saw his influence and health decline significantly after the Easter rising, dying in March 1918 at age 61.
- ¹⁴¹ John Redmond's actual Woodenbridge speech can be found in Stephen Lucius Gwynn, *John Redmond's Last Years*, (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919), p. 155.
- ¹⁴² This famous speech of John Redmond was highly influential in recruiting Irish soldiers to support the British war effort because it tapped into two Irish sensibilities: an Irishman's morality and the courage of the Irish race, both of which are linked to Irish identity.
- ¹⁴³ Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press).
- ¹⁴⁴ Rokem, *Performing History*, p. 7.
- ¹⁴⁵ Marvin Carlson, "dramatic theory" in *Continuum Companion to Twentieth Century Theatre*, ed. by Colin Chambers, (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 227.
- ¹⁴⁶ Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point*, (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 199.

¹⁴⁷ In the play, it is revealed that at the actual exhumation in 1923, “the evidence of the number on his boot 6322. 4 – R.I.R. was stated to be John Condon. That piece of boot I believe was sent to his father in Waterford” (BS, 39).

¹⁴⁸ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁹ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. 87.

¹⁵¹ Ben Hennessy, Red Kettle Theatre Co. presents *BOY SOLDIER*, (January 8, 2008) p. 3.

<http://www.lec.ie/BOY%20SOLDIER.pdf>>. Retrieved 11/30/10.

¹⁵² Rayner, *Ghosts*, p. xx.

¹⁵³ Michel Foucault, “Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michel Foucault”, transl. by Martin Jordin, *Radical Philosophy*, Vol. 11, (Summer, 1975), p. 25-26.

¹⁵⁴ Edward Power, *John Condon*, Portlaw, (County Waterford, Ireland: Rectory Press, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ John Burns, “Memorial to 13-year-old war victim under fire.” *The Sunday Times*. 9 November 2003.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/ireland/article1012587.ece>>. Retrieved 11/15/10. See also

Thomas Harding, “Memorial to Irish boy soldier ‘is imperialist.’” *Telegraph*. 12 November 2003.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ireland/1446492/Memorial-to-Irish-boy-is-imperialist.html>>. Retrieved 11/15/10.

¹⁵⁶ David Harkness, *Ireland in the 20th Century: Divided Island*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands: 1912-1939*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 54.

¹⁵⁸ Rae, “Introduction: Modernist Mourning,” p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ Eve Sorum, “Mourning and Moving On: Life after War in Ford Madox Ford’s *The Last Post*” in *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. by Patricia Rae, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), p. 161.

¹⁶⁰ Eve Sorum, “Mourning and Moving On,” p. 161.

¹⁶¹ Martin Jay, “Against consolation: Walter Benjamin and the refusal to mourn” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 232.

Chapter Three Notes

¹⁶² Seamus Deane, “The Writer and the Troubles”, *Threshold*, No. 25, (Summer, 1974), p. 16-17.

¹⁶³ Frank McGuinness, “Carthaginians” in *Frank McGuinness: Plays One*, (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996), p. 306.

¹⁶⁴ Bloody Sunday occurred on January 30, 1972, wherein thirteen men, seven under the age of twenty, were shot and killed by British forces in the Catholic Bogside area of Derry City during a particularly incendiary civil rights march. A fourteenth man died a few months later. A total of 26 protesters were shot that day. Numerous testimonies of the day acknowledged – as the Saville Inquiry (2010) recently confirmed – that none of the protesters who were shot, including the men killed, were armed.

¹⁶⁵ Tom Herron and John Lynch, *After Bloody Sunday: representation, ethics, justice*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2007), p. 114.

¹⁶⁶ Bliss Cua Lim, “Spectral Times: The Ghost Film As Historical Allegory” in *positions*, vol. 9, issue 2, (Fall, 2002), p. 309.

¹⁶⁷ Graham Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past? Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 315.

¹⁶⁸ Eugene MacNamee, theatre review of “Revenge,” *The Vacuum*, Media – Issue 14, <http://www.thevacuum.org.uk/issues/issues0120/issue14/is14artreveng.html>>. Retrieved 2/15/11.

¹⁶⁹ For example, through the form of parades, Protestant/unionists and loyalists “glorify specific aspects of (the past and) use memory to foster pride in some of their communal traditions”; and through anniversary commemorations, Catholic/ nationalists turn to remembering the past “to demand a recognition of suffering.” See Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, (Maidenhead, England and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), p. 138.

¹⁷⁰ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 102. Caruth talks about the ethics of memory by way of the confrontation of death in the traumatic experience. In “Traumatic Awakenings: Freud, Lacan and the Ethics of Memory” she

writes of “the necessity and the impossibility of responding to another’s death” specifically in relation to Lacan’s reading of Freud’s concept of trauma within the interpretation of a dream of a father’s “burning” son: “In thus implicitly exploring consciousness as figured by the survivor whose life is inextricably linked to the death he witnesses, Lacan resituates the psyche’s relation to the real not as a simple matter of seeing or of knowing the nature of empirical events, nor as what can be known or what cannot be known about reality, but as the story of an urgent responsibility, or what Lacan defines, in this conjunction, as an *ethical* relation to the real.” (emphasis in original) Further, Caruth argues that the moment of the real is not in dream or awakening, but rather in the transition between the two, what she writes of Lacan’s reference to “the gap that constitutes awakening.” See Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, p. 100, 102, 142.

¹⁷¹ There is no consensus as to a point of origin to the recent Troubles.

¹⁷² See J. Bowyer Bell, *The Irish Troubles: A Generation of Violence 1967-1992*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993). Paul Arthur & Keith Jeffery, *Northern Ireland since 1968*, second edition, (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1996). Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles 1968-99*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999).

¹⁷³ Bell, *The Irish Troubles*, p. 837.

¹⁷⁴ Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, “The Postcolonial Ghost Story” in *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* ed. by Peter Buse and Andrew Stott (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 181.

¹⁷⁵ The historical context of the Troubles could go back four hundred years ago because, some believe, the struggle for national liberation and “de-colonization” has been ongoing since the 17th century.

¹⁷⁶ Cathal McCall, *Identity in Northern Ireland: Communities, Politics and Change*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), p. 32.

¹⁷⁷ Michael MacDonald, *Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p. 56. The signed treaty resulted in Irish Civil War from 1921-1922, which did not necessarily pit Protestant against Catholic, but instead the conflict was between those who believed the 26 county settlement was good enough for the time being (Catholics and Protestants alike) and those who believed that since Catholics were natives (colonized) and Ulster protestants were settlers (colonizers) violence was necessary and justified in order to seize the North back as part of the Republic. The restoration of peace in 1923 brought relative calm to the region.

¹⁷⁸ McCall, *Identity in Northern Ireland*, p. 32-33.

¹⁷⁹ McCall, *Identity in Northern Ireland*, p. 39-40.

¹⁸⁰ Gelder and Jacobs, “The Postcolonial Ghost Story,” p. 183.

¹⁸¹ April 1966 marked the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, wherein large republican parades in Dublin celebrated the occasion; and July 1966 marked the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, which was observed in the North as a loyalist commemoration. The UVF was also established in 1966 to commemorate the fallen soldiers of WWI but also to counteract IRA activity spilling over from the Easter Rising celebrations.

¹⁸² Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, transl. by Peggy Kamuf, (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

¹⁸³ The play implicitly references the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921); World War I; IRA border campaign (1956-1962); and the beginning of the Troubles (late 1960s).

¹⁸⁴ “Vincent Woods in Conversation with Kevin Barry” in *Theatre Talk: Voices of Irish Theatre Practitioners*, ed. by Lilian Chambers, et al., (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2001), p. 487.

¹⁸⁵ Vincent Woods, “At the Black Pig’s Dyke” in *Far from the Land: Contemporary Irish Plays*, London: Methuen Drama, 1998, p. 3. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (ABPD, 3).

¹⁸⁶ After exhaustive study, I have determined that the play takes place in the present time of 1992 (when the play premiered), the late 1960s (the beginning of the recent Troubles), the late 1930s (when the Constitution of Ireland was enacted), and the mid-1950s (the IRA Border Campaign) and it also makes reference to the early 1920s (Anglo-Irish War) and the mid-1940s (WWII).

¹⁸⁷ “Vincent Woods in Conversation with Kevin Barry” in *Theatre Talk*, p. 488.

¹⁸⁸ The red poppy is the symbol of remembrance for veterans who have fought in the wars since World War I. The bomb was detonated at a gathering of a Remembrance Day service.

¹⁸⁹ It was the worst month for Troubles-related casualties since 1976.

¹⁹⁰ Between the years 1987-1993 the number of deaths from the recent Troubles averaged 90 persons per year. That is, until a drastic drop in the number of deaths in 1995. The Year and Number of Deaths from the recent Troubles: 1987 – 98; 1988 – 104; 1989 – 76; 1990 – 81; 1991 – 96; 1992 – 89; 1993 – 88; 1994 – 64; 1995 – 9; 1996 – 18. See Malcolm Sutton’s *An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland* at CAIN web service, <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Year.html>>. Retrieved 3/9/10.

¹⁹¹ Angela Kerr, *The Irish News*, 3 November 1992.

¹⁹² Grainne McFadden, *The Belfast Telegraph*, 4 November 1992.

¹⁹³ Ruairí Ó Caomhanach. *Irish Folk Drama*. December 16, 1998, <<http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/drama.htm#pig>>. Retrieved 4/1/10.

¹⁹⁴ The Abbey Theatre turned down Murphy’s *A Whistle in the Dark* as a way of controlling the representation of violence and its relationship to the Irish character. Murphy’s story of an Irish immigrant family in Coventry who live by criminal activities and a tribal code of violence did not, according to the Abbey’s Managing Director at the time Ernest Blythe, “accurately resemble” Irish life. See Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre, 1899-1999: Form and Pressure*. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), p. 188.

¹⁹⁵ Tom Maguire, *Making Theatre in Northern Ireland: Through and Beyond the Troubles*, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006), p. 32-33.

¹⁹⁶ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 32.

¹⁹⁷ Roger Luckhurst, “‘Something Tremendous, Something Elemental’: On the Ghostly Origins of Psychoanalysis” in *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, ed. by Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), p. 52.

¹⁹⁸ All of the time periods listed for *At the Black Pig’s Dyke* are approximate because they are not given by the playwright, but rather are ones I have determined from studying the play.

¹⁹⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism*, (London: BBC Books, 1993), p. 10.

²⁰⁰ Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 172.

²⁰¹ Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland, 1968-2008*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), p. 23.

²⁰² John Hewitt, ‘No Rootless Colonist’ in *Ancestral Voices: The Selected Prose of John Hewitt*, ed. by Tom Clyde, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1987), p. 146.

²⁰³ Michael MacDonald quoted in *Representing the Troubles in Irish Short Fiction* by Michael L. Storey, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 213.

²⁰⁴ The Mummer’s play is similar to Irish pantomime, which incorporates song, dance, buffoonery, slapstick, and sexual innuendo.

²⁰⁵ Henry Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mummung*, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 59.

²⁰⁶ Carla Jodey Castricano, *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida’s Ghost Writing*, (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), p. 133.

²⁰⁷ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 1-2.

²⁰⁸ Homi Bhabha talks about “the third space” as “a contradictory and ambivalent ‘space of enunciation’ which makes the claim to a hierarchical ‘purity’ of cultures untenable.” Quoted in Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland 1968-2008*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), p. 10.

²⁰⁹ In the play, rumor had it that they were quarrelling about the issue of honor because John’s sister Mae Brolly, a Catholic servant in the household, was pregnant with Clements’ child.

²¹⁰ Quoted in Claire Rosenfield, “The Shadow within: The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double” in *Daedalus*, Vol. 92, No. 2, Perspectives on the Novel, (Spring, 1963), p. 334, 327.

²¹¹ David Riches, “The Phenomenon of Violence” in *The Anthropology of Violence*, ed. by David Riches, (Oxford, UK and New York: Blackwell, 1986).

²¹² Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 37.

²¹³ Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass*, p. 123.

²¹⁴ Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass*, p. 24.

²¹⁵ Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass*, p. 123.

- ²¹⁶ Even though the performance of the mummer's play is over, the characters are still listed by Woods as their mumming characters.
- ²¹⁷ Bernard McKenna, *Rupture, Representation, and the Refashioning of Identity in Drama from the North of Ireland, 1969-1994*, (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 71.
- ²¹⁸ Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 53.
- ²¹⁹ *Violence*, ed. by Neil L. Whitehead, (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press and Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2004), p. 5.
- ²²⁰ Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schröder, "Introduction" of *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, ed. by Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schröder, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 5-6.
- ²²¹ Linda-May Ballard, "Before Death & Beyond – A Preliminary Survey of Death & Ghost Traditions with Particular Reference to Ulster" in *The Folklore of Ghosts*, ed. by Hilda R. Eillis Davidson and W.M.S. Russell, (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd. for the Folklore Society, 1981), p. 37.
- ²²² Ballard, "Before Death & Beyond", p. 37.
- ²²³ Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, p. 67.
- ²²⁴ Aimee Van Wagenen, "An Epistemology of Haunting: A Review Essay" in *Critical Sociology*, Volume 30, issue 2, (2004), p. 288.
- ²²⁵ Quoted in Richard Pine, *Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 43, which is quoted in D.E.S. Maxwell, *Brian Friel*, (Bucknell: Bucknell University Press, 1973), p. 29.
- ²²⁶ Deane, "The Writer and the Troubles", p. 13.
- ²²⁷ Stephen Watt, "Friel and the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' play" in *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel*, ed. by Anthony Roche, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 30.
- ²²⁸ Watt, "Friel and the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' play," p. 32.
- ²²⁹ Watt, "Friel and the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' play," p. 32.
- ²³⁰ It is important to point out that the first two plays in this chapter are written by playwrights from Catholic nationalist backgrounds because a level of transparency must accompany any writing about the culture of Northern Ireland since what is omitted is as striking as what is included.
- ²³¹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 64.
- ²³² Dawson, *Making peace with the past?*, p. 119.
- ²³³ Francis Charles McGrath, *Brian Friel's (Post)colonial Drama: Language, Illusion, and Politics*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p. 111.
- ²³⁴ Brian Friel quoted in Stephen Watt, "Friel and the Northern Ireland 'Troubles' play", p. 39. Watt writes: "In a 1986 interview with Laurence Finnegan, Friel described *The Freedom of the City* as an 'ill-considered play because it was written out of the kind of anger at the Bloody Sunday events in Derry.'" This interview is reprinted in Christopher Murray (ed.), *Brian Friel: Essays, Diaries, Interviews: 1964-1999* (London and New York: Faber and Faber, 1999), pp. 123-134.
- ²³⁵ Herron and Lynch, *After Bloody Sunday*, p. 100.
- ²³⁶ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 23.
- ²³⁷ A naming dispute exists for both the city and county of Derry/Londonderry. The name Londonderry is used by most unionists and Derry by most nationalists. Friel as a well-known nationalist sets his play in Derry City. The official name of the city is Londonderry established by Royal Charter n 1662, and was reaffirmed in 2007. See "Has the change to Derry City Council changed the name of the city to Derry?" Item #31 and especially Item #42 at <[http://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/markup.cgi?doc=/nie/cases/NIHC/QB/2007/5.html&query=title+\(+Derry+\)&method=boolean](http://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/markup.cgi?doc=/nie/cases/NIHC/QB/2007/5.html&query=title+(+Derry+)&method=boolean)>. Retrieved 7/10/10.
- ²³⁸ Brian Friel, *The Freedom of the City*, (London and New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1973), p. 28. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (FOC, page).
- ²³⁹ The poet's life-long interest in magic, the occult, and theosophy began when he was in art school and later influenced much of his thinking and writing. Yeats' biographer R.F. Foster suggests that for Yeats and others "an interest in the occult might be seen on one level as a strategy for coping" with the "Irish Protestant sense of displacement" and the loss of position and status at the end of the 19th century. See R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life: I-The Apprentice Mage 1865-1914*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 50. According to Declan Kiberd, Yeats' intention for what he considered his masterwork A

Vision was “to provide a spiritual foundation for the new nation-state.” See Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*, (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 316.

²⁴⁰ *A Vision* was privately published in 1926 and revised in 1937.

²⁴¹ W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1981), p. 226.

²⁴² W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, 2nd edition. (London: Macmillan, 1937. Reprint, ‘with the author’s final revisions’, 1956). Quoted from David Ewick, “Japonisme, Orientalism, Modernism: A Bibliography of Japan in English Language Verse of the Early 20th Century”, <<http://themargins.net/bib/B/BL/bl038.html>>. Retrieved 5/19/11.

²⁴³ W.B. Yeats, “Words Upon the Window Pane” in *W.B. Yeats, Selected Plays*, ed. by Richard Allen Cave, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 210.

²⁴⁴ In addition to finding it “in old Irish literature, in modern Irish folk-lore,” Yeats admits the “once universal belief” of the returning spirit can also be found in “Japanese plays, in Swedenborg, in the phenomena of spiritualism, accompanied as often as not by the belief that the living can assist the imaginations of the dead.” W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, 2nd edition. (London: Macmillan, 1937. Reprint, ‘with the author’s final revisions’, 1956). Quoted from David Ewick, “Japonisme, Orientalism, Modernism: A Bibliography of Japan in English Language Verse of the Early 20th Century”, <<http://themargins.net/bib/B/BL/bl038.html>>. Retrieved 5/19/11.

²⁴⁵ Watt, “Friel and the Northern Ireland ‘Troubles’ play,” p. 33.

²⁴⁶ Quoted in Sylvia Soderlind, “Ghost-National Arguments” in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2, (Spring 2006), p. 676.

²⁴⁷ Eugene O’Brien, “Guests of a Nation; *Geists* of a Nation” in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 11, no. 3, (Autumn, 2007), p. 116.

²⁴⁸ O’Brien, “Guests of a Nation,” p. 116.

²⁴⁹ Homi Bhabha quoted in Marlene Goldman and Joanne Saul, “Talking with Ghosts: Haunting in Canadian Cultural Production” in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2, (Spring 2006), p. 654.

²⁵⁰ Herron and Lynch, *After Bloody Sunday*, p. 101.

²⁵¹ Kai Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. with an intro. by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 188.

²⁵² Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” p. 183.

²⁵³ Paul Antze & Michael Lambek, “Introduction: Forecasting Memory” in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, ed. by Paul Antze & Michael Lambek, (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), p. xxii.

²⁵⁴ Cathy Caruth, “I. Trauma and Experience: Introduction” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. with an intro. by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 5.

²⁵⁵ Caruth, “I. Trauma and Experience,” p. 6.

²⁵⁶ Dawson, *Making peace with the past?*, p. 78.

²⁵⁷ Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*, transl. by Rachel Gomme, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 187.

²⁵⁸ Steve Pile, *Real Cities: Modernity, Space and the Phantasmagorias of City Life*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005), p. 139.

²⁵⁹ Watt, “Friel and the Northern Ireland ‘Troubles’ play,” p. 38.

²⁶⁰ Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, p. 62.

²⁶¹ Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, p. 61.

²⁶² For the families, the Saville Inquiry’s Report established, among other things, that the paratroopers fired the first shots and that they fired on unarmed civilians. Others such as the unionist community, have also greatly suffered during the recent Troubles thus the idea of a hierarchy of victims suggests the nationalist community has suffered on a larger scale. See Henry Patterson, “For many, the Bloody Sunday Saville Report has fallen short” in *Belfast Telegraph*, 5/16/10, <<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/henry-patterson-for-many-the-bloody-sunday-saville-report-has-fallen-short-14843874.html>>. Retrieved 5/22/11.

²⁶³ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 215.

²⁶⁴ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 79.

²⁶⁵ Outreach Resource Pack for *Revenge* by Michael Duke, Tinderbox Theatre Company, March 2004, p. 4.

²⁶⁶ Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p. 36. The Morrigan is a figure from Irish mythology, often represented in

guise of three women: a triple goddess of war, battle, and death as well as fertility and life. The Morrigan appears in the Ulster Cycle, specifically in tales of Cúchulainn, where she is represented as an individual deity. "In addition to being battle goddesses, they are significantly associated with fate...along with appearing before a death or to escort the deceased." See "Morrigan." *Encyclopedia Mythica* from Encyclopedia Mythica Online, <<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/m/morrigan.html>>. Retrieved 3/20/11.

²⁶⁷ Outreach Resource Pack for *Revenge* by Michael Duke, Tinderbox Theatre Company, March 2004, p. 22.

²⁶⁸ Michael Duke, *Revenge*, unpublished manuscript, 2004, p. 8. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (RV, page).

²⁶⁹ Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), p. 19.

²⁷⁰ Quoted in Bessel A. Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart, "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. with an intro. by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 177.

²⁷¹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 17.

²⁷² Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. xx.

²⁷³ Caruth, "I. Trauma and Experience," p. 11.

²⁷⁴ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. xvi. (emphasis added)

²⁷⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 142.

²⁷⁶ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. xvi.

²⁷⁷ Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community," p. 190.

²⁷⁸ Andrew Rigby, *Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2001), p. 2.

²⁷⁹ Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, p. 19.

²⁸⁰ C.D. Alison Bailey, reviewer of *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China* by David Der-wei Wang, <<http://mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/reviews/bailey.htm>>. Retrieved 4/7/11.

²⁸¹ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, p. 24.

²⁸² Pile, *Real Cities*, p. 139.

²⁸³ Michael Ignatieff, "The Balkan Tragedy" in *The New York Review of Books*, May 13, 1993, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1993/may/13/the-balkan-tragedy/>. Retrieved 4/9/11.

²⁸⁴ Michael Ignatieff quoted in Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, p. 10.

²⁸⁵ Conor Carville, "'Keeping the Wound Green': Irish Studies and Traumatic Culture" in *What Rough Beasts?: Irish and Scottish Studies in the New Millennium*, ed. by Shane Alcobia-Murphy, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), p. 57.

²⁸⁶ Dawson, *Making Peace with the Past?*, p. 315, 318.

Chapter Four Notes

²⁸⁷ David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 77.

²⁸⁸ Samuel Beckett, "Footfalls" in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1990), p. 402.

²⁸⁹ Beckett, "Footfalls," p. 400.

²⁹⁰ See *Beckett and Ireland*, ed. by Seán Kennedy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Patrick Bixby, *Samuel Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Emilie Moran, *Samuel Beckett and the Problem of Irishness*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Stephen Watt, *Beckett and Contemporary Irish Writing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁹¹ Anna McMullan, "From Matron to Matrix: Gender, Authority and (Dis)embodiment in Beckett's Theatre" in *Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation* ed. by Melissa Sihra, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 97.

²⁹² Lawrence Graver, "Homage to the Dark Lady" in *Women in Beckett: Performance and Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Linda Ben-Zvi, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 148.

²⁹³ McMullan, "From Matron to Matrix," p. 97.

²⁹⁴ Eavan Boland, “Guest Introduction: The Minds and Voices of Modern Irish Women” in *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 6, No. 4 / Vol. 7, No. 1, (Winter/Spring 1995), p. 7.

²⁹⁵ Both explained in more detail below.

²⁹⁶ I directed all three plays for Irish Repertory of Chicago, a professional equity company that produced Irish and Northern Irish plays in Chicago from 2000-2007. I directed *The Mai* for the company’s inaugural production in 2000; I directed the American premiere of *By the Bog of Cats...* in 2001; and I directed *Pentecost* in 2003. My directorial experience enhances my analysis of the political, social, and psychological dimensions to the plays.

²⁹⁷ Maryann Valiulis, “Neither Feminist nor Flapper: the Ecclesiastical Construction of the Ideal Irish Woman” in *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women’s Status in Church, State and Society*, ed. by Mary O’Dowd and Sabine Wichert, (Belfast: The Institution of Irish Studies, The Queen’s University of Belfast, 1995), p. 178.

²⁹⁸ Lawrence I. Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. xvii.

²⁹⁹ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. xvii.

³⁰⁰ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 142.

³⁰¹ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. xvii.

³⁰² They are The Mai’s 100-year old Grandma Fraochlán; The Mai’s aunts Julie (age 75) and Agnes (age 61); The Mai’s sisters Connie (age 38) and Beck (age 37); and The Mai’s daughter Millie (16 and 30). Not represented, but are hovering presences, The Mai’s great-grandmother The Duchess and her mother Ellen, who died at age 27.

³⁰³ Act II in *By the Bog of Cats...* is set in Xavier Cassidy’s house.

³⁰⁴ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 8.

³⁰⁵ England had since the reign of Henry II in the 12th century constructed the Irish in terms of feminine traits, which inevitably produced a version of Irishness that assisted in their imperial power over them. Political songs such as *Róisín Dubh* (dark rose) from late 16th century and *The Shan Van Vocht* (the poor old woman) from late 18th century used the woman/Nation, mother/Ireland trope for nationalist aspirations.

³⁰⁶ Gerardine Meaney, *Gender, Ireland, and Cultural Change*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), p. xvii.

³⁰⁷ “Peter: [to Patrick, laying a hand on his arm]: Did you see an old woman going down the path? Patrick: I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen.” From W.B. Yeats, “Cathleen ni Houlihan” in *W.B. Yeats: Selected Plays*, ed. by Richard Allen Cave, (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 28.

³⁰⁸ Susan Cannon Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 60.

³⁰⁹ Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, p. 60.

³¹⁰ Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, p. 67.

³¹¹ Harvey O’Brien, *The Real Ireland: The Evolution of Ireland in Documentary Film*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 206.

³¹² In 1966 the Irish Supreme Court reinforced the institution of marriage as the basis of the family. See “Ireland – Marriage”, <<http://family.jrank.org/pages/962/Ireland-Marriage.html>>. Retrieved 5/25/10. It was not until 1996 that divorce was at last made available in Ireland with the passage of the Family Law (Divorce) Act. Since 1937, issues involving women have made significant advances, yet the struggle for women’s rights concerning reproductive freedom and equality continues.

³¹³ Ingman, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, p. 12. Linda Connolly, *The Irish Women’s Movement from Revolution to Devolution*, (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England and New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 67.

³¹⁴ Michael Boss, “Constitutional and Legal Reform in Ireland, 1937-1998: The American Context”, an essay in *Culture and Law in Nordic Irish Studies*, ed. by Michael Boss, Vol. 1, (2002), p. 124.

³¹⁵ “CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND – BUNREACTH NA hÉIREANN”, <www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/pdf%20files/constitution%20of%20ireland.pdf>. Retrieved 5/12/10.

³¹⁶ Jennifer Molitor, “Dying for Ireland: Violence, Silence, and Sacrifice in Dorothy Macardle’s *Earth-Bound: Nine Stories of Ireland* (1924),” in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4, (Winter, 2008), p. 44.

- ³¹⁷ Ingman, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, p. 12.
- ³¹⁸ In 2005, an Irish government committee conducted a study regarding specific constitutional articles including Article 41 (family). One question asked was, “Is the Constitution's reference to the woman's 'life within the home' a dated one that should be changed?” See “The All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution,” <<http://www.constitution.ie/current-study/default.asp?UserLang=EN>>. Retrieved 11/2/11. More recent efforts have been made to change the language in Article 41.2 to reflect gender neutrality. See National Women’s Council of Ireland’s Press Release dated October 10, 2011, <<http://www.nwci.ie/news/2011/10/10/united-nations-member-states-call-on-government-to/>>. Retrieved 11/2/11.
- ³¹⁹ Joan Fowler, “Review: King Billy and Mother Ireland in Mirrors” in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2, (1991), p. 105.
- ³²⁰ Edna Longley, “From Cathleen to Anorexia: The Breakdown of Irelands (1990) quoted in *Irish Writing in the Twentieth Century: A Reader*, ed. by David Pierce, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), p. 1074.
- ³²¹ Ruth Moore quoted in Rebecca Pelan, *Two Irelands: Literary Feminisms North and South*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), p. 98.
- ³²² Christina Reid quoted in Pelan, *Two Irelands*, p. 97.
- ³²³ Paula Murphy, “Staging History in Marina Carr’s Midlands Plays,” *Irish University Review*, (Autumn/Winter 2006).
- ³²⁴ Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 1976.
- ³²⁵ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 5-6.
- ³²⁶ Emer Nolan, “Postcolonial Literary Studies, Nationalism, and Feminist Critique in Contemporary Ireland” in *Éire-Ireland*, Vol. 42: No. 1&2, (Spring/Summer 2007, p. 336-361), p. 340-341.
- ³²⁷ Gulsen Sayin, “Quest for the Lost M/Other: Medea Re-Constructed in Marina Carr’s *By The Bog Of Cats*...(1998)” in *Journal of Arts and Sciences*, (May 2008), p. 76, <[http://jas.cankaya.edu.tr/gecmisYayinlar/yayinlar/jas9/\(08\)GulsenSayin.pdf](http://jas.cankaya.edu.tr/gecmisYayinlar/yayinlar/jas9/(08)GulsenSayin.pdf)>. Retrieved 8/12/10.
- ³²⁸ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 171.
- ³²⁹ Peter C. Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2004), p. 22.
- ³³⁰ Meaney, *Gender, Ireland, and Cultural Change*, p. 62.
- ³³¹ Adalgisa Giorgio, “Writing the Mother-Daughter Relationship: Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Literary Criticism” in *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women*, ed. by Adalgisa Giorgio, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 31.
- ³³² Meaney, *Gender, Ireland, and Cultural Change*, p. 10.
- ³³³ Department of the Taoiseach, “Proclamation of Independence,” <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Taoiseach_and_Government/History_of_Government/1916_Communications/Proclamation_of_Independence.html>. Retrieved 11/7/11.
- ³³⁴ Marina Carr, “The Mai” in *Marina Carr: Plays I*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1999), p. 111. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus (TM page). The legend of Owl Lake goes, according to Millie, the lovely Coillte fell in love with Bláth, and she came down from her mountain home to his domain in the valley where they “lived freely through the spring and summer.” As autumn approached Bláth told Coillte that he had to go live with the “dark witch of the bog, that he would return in the spring; and the next morning he was gone.” Coillte goes to the witch’s lair to find him, but Bláth does not look at her or talk to her. Coillte cries endlessly day after day, and when the dark witch finally sees her, she pushes Coillte into her own lake of tears. In the spring when Bláth is released from the spell of the witch, he goes in search of Coillte – only to be told, “she had dissolved” (TM, 147).
- ³³⁵ Patrick Bixby, “Beckett at the GPO: Murphy, Ireland, and the ‘unhomely’” in *Beckett and Ireland*, p. 82.
- ³³⁶ Heather Ingham, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, (Hampshire and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), p. 11.
- ³³⁷ Ingham, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, p. 6.
- ³³⁸ Mary Ryan, “Then and Now: Memories of a Patriarchal Ireland in the Work of Marian Keyes” [online article] in *452° F. Electronic Journal of Theory of Literature and Comparative Literature*, 4, 110-130, (2011), p. 119, <<http://www.452f.com/index.php/en/mary-ryan.html>>. Retrieved 6/28/11.

- ³³⁹ Diarmaid Ferriter, "Women and Political Change in Ireland since 1960" in *Éire-Ireland*, vol. 43, 1&2, (Spring/Summer 2008), p. 182.
- ³⁴⁰ For instance in 1977 a member of Ireland's parliament responded to a questionnaire about women's issues by stating: "In my own county the women are doing a great job of work in keeping their homes going and bringing up their families. This I think is just what Almighty God intended them to do." See Ferriter, "Women and Political Change in Ireland since 1960," p. 189.
- ³⁴¹ Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*, p. 31.
- ³⁴² Tim Armstrong, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory*, (Hampshire, England, and New York: Palgrave, 2000), p. 35.
- ³⁴³ Longley, "From Cathleen to Anorexia", p. 173.
- ³⁴⁴ Longley, "From Cathleen to Anorexia", p. 173.
- ³⁴⁵ Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, "Introduction" in *Nationalisms and Sexualities* ed. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, Patricia Yaeger, (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.
- ³⁴⁶ An idea from Gerardine Meaney quoted in McMullan, "From Matron to Matrix," p. 100.
- ³⁴⁷ Margaret Higonnet, "Frames of Female Suicide" in *Studies in the Novel*, 32.2, (Summer, 2000).
- ³⁴⁸ Translation of *a stóir* is "my dear."
- ³⁴⁹ One option not available for *The Mai* in 1980 was divorce since the constitutional ban on divorce (from 1937) was not lifted until 1995 – one year after Carr's play was first produced.
- ³⁵⁰ Molidor, "Dying for Ireland," p. 47.
- ³⁵¹ Shonagh Hill, "Articulating the Subject: Metamorphosis in Marina Carr's *The Mai*" in *Platform*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Staging Gender(s), (Spring 2009), <<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/dramaandtheatre/documents/pdf/platform/41/7articulatingtheabject.pdf>>. Retrieved 7/10/10.
- ³⁵² Pat O'Connor, "Ireland: A Country for Women?" (1999). <<http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v4i1/oconn.htm>>. Retrieved 7/7/10.
- ³⁵³ Higonnet, "Frames of Female Suicide".
- ³⁵⁴ Higonnet, "Frames of Female Suicide".
- ³⁵⁵ Anne Fogarty, "'The Horror of the Unlived Life': Mother-Daughter Relationships in Contemporary Irish Women's Fiction" in *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women* ed. by Adalgisa Giorgio, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 102.
- ³⁵⁶ Rosemary Sales, *Women Divided: Gender, Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 3.
- ³⁵⁷ Lorraine Dowler, "The Mother of all Warriors: Women in West Belfast, Northern Ireland," in *Gender and Catastrophe*, ed. by Ronit Lentin, (London: Zed Publications, 1997), p. 78.
- ³⁵⁸ Marysia Zalewski, "Gender Ghosts in McGarry and O'Leary and Representations of the Conflict in Northern Ireland" in *Political Studies*, vol 53, issue 1, (March 2005), p. 201-221.
- ³⁵⁹ Stewart Parker, "Foreward" in *Stewart Parker: Plays: 2*, (London: Methuen Publishing Limited, 2000), p. xiii.
- ³⁶⁰ Stewart Parker quoted in Marilyn Richtarik, "Living in Interesting Times: Stewart Parker's *Northern Star*" in *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland*, ed. by John P. Harrington and Elizabeth J. Mitchell, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press published in cooperation with the American Conference for Irish Studies, 1999), p. 15.
- ³⁶¹ The Loughhall Ambush occurred on May 8, 1987 in County Armagh wherein the British Army Special Air Service killed eight IRA members and one civilian. It was the largest loss of life for IRA in a single event during the Troubles. Six months later the Remembrance Day bombing occurred on November 8, 1987 in County Fermanagh wherein an IRA bomb killed eleven people and injured another 63. Discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.
- ³⁶² The Parliament of Northern Ireland was in existence from 1921 until it was suspended in March 1972 (six weeks after Bloody Sunday) when the British government took over control of Northern Ireland from London.
- ³⁶³ Quoted in Marilyn Richtarik, "'Ireland, the Continuous Past': Stewart Parker's Belfast History Plays" in *A Century of Irish Drama: Widening the Stage*, ed. by Stephen Watt, Eileen Morgan, and Shakir Mustafa, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 269.

- ³⁶⁴ Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Mother Without Child: Contemporary Fiction and the Crisis of Motherhood*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 10.
- ³⁶⁵ Hansen, *Mother Without Child*, p. 236.
- ³⁶⁶ Emphasis in original. Nicholas Abraham, "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology" in *The Shell and the Kernel: Volume I*, ed. and trans. By Nicholas T. Rand, (Chicago & London: the University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 175.
- ³⁶⁷ Stewart Parker, "Pentecost" in *Stewart Parker Plays: 2*, (London: Methuen Publishing, 2000), p. 186. Hereafter cited thus (P, page).
- ³⁶⁸ R.F. Foster, *The Irish Story*, (London and New York: The Penguin Press, 2001), p. 136.
- ³⁶⁹ Maud Ellmann, "Introduction" in *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, ed. by Maud Ellmann, (London and New York: Longman, 1994), p. 4.
- ³⁷⁰ Carol Margaret Davison, "Haunted House/Haunted Heroine: Female Gothic Closets in 'The Yellow Wallpaper,'" *Women's Studies*, 33:1, (2004), p. 47-75, p. 54.
- ³⁷¹ Eva Figes and Kate Ellis in Davison, "Haunted House/Haunted Heroine," p. 54.
- ³⁷² Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1994), p. 18.
- ³⁷³ Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*, p. 142.
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- ³⁷⁵ Edwin S. Schneidman, *The Suicidal Mind*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 13.
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- ³⁷⁷ Ruth Moore, "Kissing King Billy Goodbye" in *New Internationalist Magazine*, issue 255, (May 1994), <<http://www.newint.org/features/1994/05/05/kissing/>>. Retrieved 6/24/11.
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- ³⁷⁹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 26.
- ³⁸⁰ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 8.
- ³⁸¹ Mary K. Meyer, "Ulster's Red Hand" in *Women, States, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*, ed. by Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 123.
- ³⁸² This is an idea from Linda Edgerton in Begoña Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 77.
- ³⁸³ Sarah Edge, "Representing Gender and National Identity" in *Rethinking Northern Ireland: Culture, Ideology and Colonialism* ed. by David Miller, (London and New York: Longman, 1998), p. 225.
- ³⁸⁴ Hansen, *Mother Without Child*, p. 19.
- ³⁸⁵ Anne McClintock quoted in Lorraine Dowler, "'And They Think I'm Just a Nice Old Lady': Women and War in Belfast, Northern Ireland" in *Gender, Place & Culture*, 5:2, (1998), p. 172.
- ³⁸⁶ Dowler, "'And They Think I'm Just a Nice Old Lady,'" p. 172.
- ³⁸⁷ Frances Gardiner, "The Women's Movement and Women Politicians in the Republic of Ireland, 1980-2000" in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing Volume V: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions* ed. by Angela Bourke et al., (New York: New York University Press, 2002), p. 237.
- ³⁸⁸ Ferriter, "Women and Political Change in Ireland since 1960," p. 182.
- ³⁸⁹ Catherine Nash, "Embodied Irishness: Gender, Sexuality and Irish Identities" in *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography* ed. by Brian J. Graham, (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 111.
- ³⁹⁰ Idea from Fidelma Farley, Interrogating Myths of Maternity in Irish Cinema: Margo Harkin's Hush-a-Bye Baby" in *Irish University Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (Autumn/Winter 1999).
- ³⁹¹ The examples he cites begin with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and end with Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985). See Nicholas Grene, "Ireland in Two Minds: Martin McDonagh and Conor McPherson" in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 35, (2005), p. 298-311, p. 301.
- ³⁹² Irish Travellers (known pejoratively as Tinkers) are a minority group who lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle, often in extended family groups. In Ireland they often live in opposition to the majority settled communities on what are commonly referred to as halting sites.
- ³⁹³ Eileen Battersby, "Marina of the Midlands" in *Irish Times*, 4 May 2000.
- ³⁹⁴ Mary Burke, *'Tinkers': Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 5-6.

- ³⁹⁵ Jane Helleiner, *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture*, (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 30.
- ³⁹⁶ Burke, 'Tinkers,' p. 4.
- ³⁹⁷ Marina Carr, "By the Bog of Cats..." in *Marina Carr: Plays 1*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1999), p. 290. Hereafter cited parenthetically thus: (BOC page).
- ³⁹⁸ Rees and Rees, *Celtic Heritage*, p. 236. Also, two famous Irish legends feature swans – the *Children of Lir* and *The Wooing of Etain*.
- ³⁹⁹ Marcy J. Epstein, "On Medea, Bad Mother of the Greek Drama (Disability, Character, Genopolitics)" in *Bodies in Commotion: Disability & Performance*, ed. by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, (?: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 289.
- ⁴⁰⁰ Big Josie had a "big head of black hair" (BOC, 323) so Hester's hair coloring must be similar.
- ⁴⁰¹ As discussed in Chapter Two, the festival of Samhain takes place at the beginning of November wherein the boundaries between the living and the dead collapse. Fiona Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), p. 37.
- ⁴⁰² Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, p. 78.
- ⁴⁰³ The play does not make clear what came first – the business deal between Carthage and Xavier or the relationship between Caroline and Carthage. The lines are blurred here.
- ⁴⁰⁴ Quoted from Anne Fogarty, "'The Influence of Absences': Eavan Boland and the Silenced History of Irish Women's Poetry," in *Colby Quarterly*, Vol. 35, Issue 4, (December 1999), p. 256-274 (p. 271).
- ⁴⁰⁵ Fogarty, "'The Influence of Absences': Eavan Boland and the Silenced History of Irish Women's Poetry," in *Colby Quarterly*, Vol. 35, Issue 4, (December 1999), p. 256-274 (p. 271).
- ⁴⁰⁶ Quoted in Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland: A Century of Change*, (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2003), p. 244.
- ⁴⁰⁷ Burke, 'Tinkers,' p. 190.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Burke, 'Tinkers,' p. 190.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. xxvii.
- ⁴¹⁰ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. xvii.
- ⁴¹¹ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. xvii.
- ⁴¹² Barry Collins and Patrick Hanafin, "Mothers, Maidens and the Myth of Origins in the Irish Institution," *Law and Critique*, Vol. 12, no. 1, (2001), p. 57-73, p. 68.
- ⁴¹³ Pat O'Connor, *Emerging Voices: Women in Contemporary Irish Society*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1998), p. 141.
- ⁴¹⁴ Emphasis added. Carr revised the text for the Dramatists Play Service edition, adding the two lines about rules. Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2002), p. 40.
- ⁴¹⁵ Fogarty, "'The Horror of the Unlived Life'", p. 100.
- ⁴¹⁶ Roberta Geffer Wondrich, "The Pain Within: Female Bodies, Illness and Motherhood in Contemporary Irish Fiction" in *Textus: English Studies in Italy*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2000), p.128-148, p. 149.
- ⁴¹⁷ This reference is not the original published version I chiefly use here but rather in the revised version published by Dramatists. Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2002), p. 42.
- ⁴¹⁸ According to the OED, this use of "yoke" is defined as "a thing, a thingummy"; the origin is Anglo-Irish, the earliest usage is 1910, and the etymology is origin unknown. See OED, "yoke, n.2," <<http://www.oed.com.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/view/Entry/232054?rskey=IhFQpY&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>>. Retrieved 7/11/11.
- ⁴¹⁹ Wondrich, "The Pain Within," p. 131.
- ⁴²⁰ Melissa Sihra, "A Cautionary Tale: Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats*" in *Theatre Stuff: Critical Essays on Contemporary Irish Theatre*, ed. by Eamonn Jordan, (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2000), p. 259.
- ⁴²¹ Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2002), p. 48.
- ⁴²² Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, p. 46.
- ⁴²³ Alex Hughes, "Writing Mother-Daughter Relationality in the French Context" in *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women* ed. by Adalgisa Giorgio, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 167.
- ⁴²⁴ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 63.
- ⁴²⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 183.

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- ⁴²⁶ Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama*, p. 90.
- ⁴²⁷ Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition*, p. 187.
- ⁴²⁸ Pheng Cheah, "Spectral Nationality: The Living On [sur-vie] of the Postcolonial Nation in Neocolonial Globalization" in *Boundary*, Vol. 2, 26.3 (1999), p. 225-252, p. 239.
- ⁴²⁹ Higonnet, "Frames of Female Suicide," p. 231.
- ⁴³⁰ Sandra M. Gilbert, "The Supple Suitor: Death, Women, Feminism, and (Assisted or Unassisted) Suicide" in *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 24:2, (Fall 2005), p. 247-55.
- ⁴³¹ Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 180.
- ⁴³² Writing about *Rockaby* and *Not I*. R. Thomas Simone quoted in Mary Bryden, *Women in Samuel Beckett's Prose and Drama: Her Own Other*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1993), p. 121.
- ⁴³³ Ingham, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women*, p. 49.
- ⁴³⁴ Murphy, "Staging Histories in Marina Carr's Midlands Plays," p. 389-402.

Conclusion Notes

- ⁴³⁵ Samuel Weber, "Piece-Work" in *Strategies for Theory: from Marx to Madonna* ed. by R.L. Rutsky and Bardley J. Macdonald, (Albany: State University of New York, 2003), p. 6.
- ⁴³⁶ Weber, "Piece-Work," p. 16.
- ⁴³⁷ Weber, "Piece-Work," p. 16.
- ⁴³⁸ David Lloyd, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1880-2000: The Transformation of Oral Space*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 50.
- ⁴³⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 250.
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