

Escuela de Lenguas Modernas

**ACTAS DE LAS  
CUARTAS JORNADAS  
INTERNACIONALES DE LENGUA  
INGLESA. CULTURA DE LOS PAÍSES  
DE HABLA INGLESA**

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Compilación: Paula Ortiz, Verónica Repetti y Marco Luccón



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**Introducción**

La publicación que presentamos es el producto de los trabajos presentados por los disertantes de las *Cuartas Jornadas Internacionales de Lengua Inglesa. Cultura de los países de habla inglesa*, aprobadas por Resolución Rectoral N° 277/15, en el marco de las actividades extracurriculares de la Escuela de Lenguas Modernas, destinadas a proporcionar un espacio de encuentro, reflexión e intercambio para la comunidad educativa y académica cuyo objeto de estudio es el idioma inglés.

En ediciones anteriores de las jornadas de lengua inglesa, nos concentramos en la fonética y fonología inglesas; en los estudios de traducción e interpretación; y en la rica variedad de la literatura en inglés. En esta oportunidad, nos centramos en explorar la diversidad cultural de los distintos países de habla inglesa, que abarca el arte, la literatura, la historia y la historia de la lengua, la música, las tradiciones, y todos aquellos aspectos que nutren la cultura de estos países.

Creemos firmemente en la formación continua y el intercambio entre profesores, investigadores, graduados y estudiantes universitarios de las diferentes carreras de inglés, no sólo de nuestra Escuela, sino también de otras instituciones de educación superior de nuestro país. El intercambio recíproco entre los actores de la comunidad académica que comparten este interés nos permite a todos alcanzar la excelencia en lo que hacemos.

Durante las jornadas, tuvimos el honor de escuchar a disertantes de renombre con carreras de vasta trayectoria, y un compromiso apasionado en sus esfuerzos, a quienes agradecemos muy especialmente por su generosidad al enriquecer estas Jornadas. Asimismo, agradecemos a todos los que decidieron confiar en nuestra institución, participando y ganando experiencia en estas Jornadas y a aquellas instituciones que auspiciaron esta actividad: la Embajada de Irlanda en Argentina, la Asociación Católica Irlandesa, *Oxford University Press* Argentina y *The Shamrock*, por compartir con nosotros el deseo de contribuir a la difusión de la lengua y la cultura de los países de habla inglesa.

Deseamos firmemente que las disertaciones de estas Jornadas contribuyan al apasionado debate, investigación y estudio de los diversos aspectos de la cultura de las comunidades de habla inglesa.

**Paula Ortiz**  
Directora  
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Nota: Agradecemos la colaboración de los alumnos: Bárbara Nazarena Cáseres García; María Belén Chiaradia; Carolina Scrofani Soroka; María José Pérez; Aldana Mariel Lobato; Nicole María Tártara; Maximiliano Bossi; María Eugenia Formica Muntaner; Micaela Luciana Raffin; Samanta Soledad Romero; Silvana Lucía Bidave; Exequiel Vuoto; Melisa Medina Fraccaro; Jimena Ailén Bazán; Magalí Lucía Ormaechea; Natalia Belén Almaraz; María Luciana Gómez; Vanina Guarnieri; Lucía Yamanuha; María Paula Contarelli y Sofía Fasano, quienes realizaron la desgrabación de ponencias de estas jornadas, en el marco de las cátedras de Fonética y Fonología Inglesas a cargo del Prof. Lic. Marco Luccón.



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# The Irish Revolution and Irish-Argentine Solidarity, 1916-1923 – the Bulfin and Ginnell Diplomatic Missions

*Dermot Keogh\**  
University Collage Cork, Ireland

The season of commemorations, which reaches a high point in Ireland next year –the centenary of the 1916 Rising– has prompted a great burst of public discussion and research into Ireland’s twentieth century revolutionary period which might be bookmarked from 1912 –the Third Home Rule Bill– to the Irish civil war in 1922/3. No matter how inclusive and comprehensive the debate will prove to be on the following areas, themes and organisations:

- the Irish parliamentary movement,
- on Home Rule, or the devolution of minimal governing powers to Dublin
- on constitutional nationalism,
- on nationalist and unionist participation in World War I,
- on women’s rights and the suffragettes,
- on labour rights and trade union organisation,
- on the role of the Gaelic League,
- on the Irish language and cultural nationalism.

The main focus of scholarly discussion and debate will centre around the themes, topics and events which examine the personalities, organisations and events which helped bring about the Rising at Easter and the reasons for ultimate public acceptance of the goal and aspiration the executed leaders of 1916. Scholarly reflection and investigations will focus on the following:

- The radicalisation of Irish nationalist political leaders.
- The impact of the failure by the British government to deliver Home Rule on moderate nationalists like Patrick Pearse and many others who were “out” in 1916.
- The radicalisation of the Labour Movement and James Connolly’s shift towards accepting the idea of a Rising.
- The role of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and its planning of the rising.
- The power struggle within the Irish Volunteers and the outmanoeuvring of its leader, Professor Eoin MacNeill by those who favoured a rising at Easter.
- The events of the rising and British government and public reaction.
- The military repression of the rising.
- The impact on public opinion of the execution of 16 leaders of the Easter revolution, including Roger Casement who was hanged for high treason on 3 August 1916 in Pentonville, London.
- The role of the Catholic Church and other religious groupings during and in the aftermath of the rising.
- The reaction of business and commercial leaders to the rising and the destruction of parts of Dublin by the British Army in their efforts to retake the positions held by rebels during Easter week.
- The rounding up of members of Sinn Féin in the wake of the rising and their deportation to Britain.

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- The growth of organised political opposition to British rule in Ireland leading up to the general election in December 1918.
- The victory of Sinn Féin (SF) at that election, the secession of SF MPs from the British parliament and their establishment in January 1919 of Dáil Éireann.
- The war of independence and the civil war.

Perhaps the research theme most likely to yield the richest results in the year in which the centenary of the rising is commemorated will be the study of the struggle for Irish independence in an international context.

Naturally, a great deal of work has already been done on the links between Irish nationalism and Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There is important work also published on Ireland and South Africa. Since the late 1970s, I have been writing on Ireland in the European context –the Holy See, Italy, Spain and France.

Argentina is a relatively unknown quantity in that regard. I know the pioneering work of Mariano Galazzi on press reaction to the 1916 Rising and a small number of essays on the period 1919-1923.

My short talk today focuses on aspects of the relationship between Ireland and Argentina from 1916 to 1923. Let me try to set the broad context. My point of departure is the first meeting on 21 January 1919 of Dáil Éireann, in the Mansion House, where 69 Sinn Féin deputies ought to have taken their seats. In fact, the most that could have turned up on the day was 69 as four deputies had been elected for two different constituencies. Forty-two deputies were unable to attend. They were in British jails, many since the previous May when the authorities claimed to have found evidence of a “plot” by Germany to give support to Sinn Féin. Meeting in the Mansion House, Dublin, those in attendance voted in support of four documents: an Irish constitution; a declaration of independence, a message to the free nations of the world and the democratic programme. Although Dáil Éireann had no international recognition, a government was formed, government departments were set up, ministers were appointed, with the intention of eventually supplanting British rule in Ireland. All such government activities were clandestine. Simultaneously with the political campaign to make Ireland ungovernable, the first shots in the Irish war of independence were fired in Co. Tipperary, on 21 January 1919, on the same day as the first Dáil met in Dublin. Within a few months, the Irish nationalist political and military campaign were met with British ruthless opposition.

Dáil Éireann, despite being disrupted in its activities by British raids and arrests, continued to act as if it were the legitimate government of Ireland. To that end, its domestic policies were difficult to implement. But the Irish revolutionary leaders in 1919 recognised that a war of independence could be supported were the Irish conflict to be internationalised. For that reason, Dáil Éireann established Departments of Foreign Affairs and Publicity. A network of envoys began to operate in different countries. Under the leadership of Seán T. O Kelly, a European headquarters was set up in Paris. His job was to try to gain recognition at the Versailles Peace Conference for Ireland –a task that was to prove quite futile. But his portfolio covered four areas: diplomacy; publicity, fund-raising and gun running. Irish envoys operated in many continental countries –France, Germany, Italy, the Holy See, Spain and Belgium– and fulfilled their multiple mandate with varying degrees of success.

Eamon de Valera, the only commandant of the 1916 rising to escape the firing squad, was sprung from jail and went on a mission to the United States in June 1919 where he remained until his return to Dublin in December 1920. There he fulfilled much the same mission as O’Kelly in continental Europe, but with a much greater degree of success in the area of fund-raising where a large team collected \$5.5 million dollars. De Valera was the figurehead for the successful floating of Irish bonds.

It would appear, from the above, that Dáil Éireann, had the slightest interest in Latin America during these critical years of the war of independence. That is not accurate. Michael Collins, one of strategists of the political and military campaigns between 1919 and 1921, laid a strong emphasis on Latin America, and on the importance of Argentina in particular, as a fertile field in which to win solidarity and practical support for the cause of Irish freedom. He hand-picked a suitable candidate to be sent to Buenos Aires towards the end of 1918. That fateful decision depended, in

large measure, on a chance friendship forged between Collins and Eamonn Bulfin after the 1916 Rising in Frongoch prison camp. This story is told in detail in my book –*The Independence of Ireland – The Argentine connection*.

Born in 1892 in Buenos Aires, the man Collins sent to Argentina was the son of two Irish parents, William Bulfin and Anne O'Rourke. He had four sisters, Catalina marrying Seán MacBride, son of the executed 1916 leader –Major John MacBride. Eamonn's father, William, is well known to many as the author of the celebrated, *Tales of the Pampas*, published in 1900, and *Rambles in Eirinn*, published in 1907. As a writer, journalist, editor and newspaper proprietor, William Bulfin had come to Argentina in 1884 with his brother, Peter. Their uncle, Fr Vincent Grogan, who was the Provincial of the Passionist Order, gave William an introduction to a future employer, the sheep-farmer, John Dowling. By 1889, he had moved to Buenos Aires and in the 1890s worked on *The Southern Cross*, where he became in turn editor and then proprietor.

Young Eamonn Bulfin, born as I have said in 1892, grew up in a literary household. In the columns of *The Southern Cross* (TSC), his father brought to life coverage of political, social and cultural events in Ireland. His personal papers show him to have been a friend of the founder of the Gaelic League, Douglas Hyde, the founder of Sinn Féin, Arthur Griffith, and the radical nationalist and parliamentarian, Michael Davitt. The TSC schooled many Irish *porteños* in the history and politics of Ireland. Strongly nationalist and catholic in its editorial orientation, William Bulfin continued that editorial line as did the two brothers, Gerald and Frank Foley, who succeeded him. Readers of TSC read of the work and world of the Gaelic League and the Irish cultural revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers had the opportunity to read frequently articles by leading exponents of the new ideas driving Irish nationalism, Douglas Hyde and Arthur Griffith. William

William Bulfin divided himself between Ireland and Buenos Aires in the last ten years of his life. He lived between two worlds. He was immersed in the life of Irish Argentina. He was a strong admirer of the country of his adoption. But he never relinquished a keen interest in playing a role in the liberation of his country. In 1909, he returned to Ireland. His intention was to relocate there. During the remainder of that year, he immersed himself in the Irish-Ireland movement. Bulfin was highly regarded by the nationalist leadership. He was on close terms with leaders like Griffith and Hyde. Had he lived, Bulfin would have played an important role in the world of Irish nationalist journalism and as a political activist. He died suddenly and unexpectedly in early February 1910. William Bulfin was 47. The new editor of TSC, Gerald Foley, held that post from 1906 until 1927. The paper was unwavering in its support of the nationalist cause through those very difficult years.

Eamonn Bulfin was 18 when his father died. Between 1902 and 1908, he had attended the Dominican-run, Newbridge College, in Co. Kildare. But when William Bulfin, who was then in Buenos Aires, heard that the educational reform and Irish language enthusiast, Patrick Pearse, was setting up a new school, St. Enda's, in Dublin, he immediately enrolled his only son in the new venture. Eamonn Bulfin was the second student to register. Without the guiding hand of his father who had died, Eamonn Bulfin, became particularly close to the Pearse brothers, Patrick and William, and to Pearse's mother and their two sisters. Bulfin, an admirer of Pearse, recalled that, in his talks in the school, he stressed the fact that every generation of Irishmen should have a rising in arms and that every Irishman should know how to use a gun. Bulfin was convinced that Pearse favoured an uprising. Radicalised at a very early age –as were many of Eamonn Bulfin's contemporaries– he studied science at University College Dublin between 1911/2 and 1916 but continued to live at St. Enda's during that time. Bulfin was sworn into the IRB on Wolfe Tone's grave in Bodenstown churchyard in summer 1912. He was introduced to the Fianna circle by Con Colbert, later executed as a leader of the 1916 rising, The IRB was the engine room of the revolution and Bulfin was a member of that conspiratorial organisation during the critical years when the rising was being planned. Bulfin drilled in the Foresters' Hall, Parnell Square, where he met Seán MacDermott, another revolutionary leader who was executed in 1916. Paradoxically, the former St Enda's pupil, proposed Patrick Pearse, for membership of the IRB in 1912, a proposal received by the leadership of that organisation "with some diffidence," as he wrote many years later. Pearse, who had other backers for his membership of the IRB, was admitted.

Bulfin became an organiser in the Irish Volunteers when they were formed in 1913. He joined the Rathfarnham Company. Late in 1915, he was helping to make ammunition in the school grounds, hand grenades and buckshot about the size of a large pea. Willie Pearse, a sculptor, made the mounds. The hand grenades were the fuse type and somewhat volatile. All the munitions were shifted to Liberty Hall during Easter Week. Just before the rising, Bulfin was promoted to Lieutenant and to headquarters staff. He received orders for his company to stand to on Easter Sunday with arms, ammunition, bicycles and three days' rations. They were to report to Liberty Hall. They went to Mass and Holy Communion in Rathfarnham Church. On returning to school, they read in the paper that all manoeuvres had been cancelled. A number of visitors to the school sought to persuade them to cancel their own mobilisation. They also refused to take messages with the countermanding order to other parts of the city. But Bulfin decided to go to Liberty Hall in the city centre. There was a great deal of coming and going.

Returning to St Enda's, Bulfin held himself in readiness for a mobilisation order on the following day. On Easter Monday morning, a fresh mobilisation order arrived signed by P.H. Pearse, instructing him to mobilise the Rathfarnham company and proceed to Liberty Hall. Willie Pearse also sent amended orders. That was about 8.30 or 9 a.m. Bulfin started to get the Company together, parading outside the Church at Rathfarnham. The full strength of the company was about thirty-five and about twenty were present. They boarded a tram. As they approached the city, the tram stopped at the corner of Dame Street and George's Street and the driver and conductor fled. Bulfin heard shots coming from the direction of Dublin Castle. Bulfin marched his men to Liberty Hall. It was about midday. As they unloaded their bombs and ammunition, the company was ordered over to the General Post Office which had already been stormed by a force led by Patrick Pearse, James Connolly and other prominent leaders of the rising. Bulfin reloaded the ammunition on to a handcart and set off with his company in the direction of the G.P.O. They got to Princes St, beside the GPO, when the lancers charged. Bulfin's company did not fire on them but shots came from within the post office and from the Imperial Hotel across Sackville St. He led his men down Princes Street and gained entry into the GPO through a small side window in the course of which one of his company was wounded. Inside, one of their hand grenade blew up and wounded two of Bulfin's men.

They reported to Commandant Pearse, and were ordered to take up a position on the roof of the Post Office on the side near to Princes St. They were all given absolution by a "Franciscan or a Dominican" priest on Monday. Bulfin's men held that position until Wednesday evening. They observed looting in the street below. Bulfin recalled: "There were two flags on the Post Office. One was given to me [by Willie Pearse he thought]. It was the ordinary Irish flag, green with the harp, and in white letters (inscribed) across the middle were the words 'Irish Republic.'" The thing I remember most clearly about its hoisting is that I had some kind of a hazy idea that the flag should be rolled up in some kind of a ball, so that when it would be hauled up, it would break out. As a matter of fact, I did it that way because it did open out in the proper manner when hoisted. That flag was floating on the Prince's Street corner of the G.P.O. I think Willie Pearse was there when it was being hoisted. In fact, Gearoid O Sullivan raised the flag on the Henry Street Side of the GPO. Bulfin recalled the Lawrence's sports shop was looted and went on fire. Fireworks, retrieved from that shop were piled up on the street by the looters –mainly children– and set alight in the middle of O'Connell Street. Bulfin's company remained on the top of the GPO until Wednesday when they were deployed across Prince's Street and they also saw action in O'Connell Street. The British began to establish advance positions at the corner of Westmorland and D'Olier Street in Purcell's shop. They deployed sharp shooters on the roof. [Bulfin, who was a crack shot, did not say if he was one of them.] Bulfin witnessed the burning of the Imperial Hotel and how the garrison fled wrapping themselves in mattresses to protect themselves.<sup>1</sup> He recalled the GPO being hit by shellfire on Thursday and Friday night and vain efforts being

1. Bulfin recorded the following: "An incident occurred on Wednesday morning that I would like to mention. There was a train upturned at Earl Street and in the middle of all this shooting, scurrying and general tumult, we heard a voice shout: 'I'm a bloody Dublin Fusilier. I don't give a damn about anyone.' He staggered out to the middle of O'Connell Street where he was riddled with machine gun fire. One of our men, with a white flag, went over to where he lay, knelt down, said a prayer over his body, and dragged him in to the side. I don't know who that Volunteer was. I have never heard that incident referred to."



made to put out the fires on the roof. The hoses were working perfectly at first but then the British cut off the water at the mains. The GOP garrison were ordered into the main hall on Friday. Pearse addressed them:

We were ordered to take as much food and ammunition as possible with us, and to try and get in –as far as I remember now– to Williams end Woods factory. I did not know where it was at the time. We got an order to unload weapons, and a chap standing beside me was wounded in the foot when his shotgun went off, while in the process of being unloaded. We left the G.P.O. and crossed Henry Street, under fire, into Henry Place. At the junction of Henry Place and Moore Lane, there was a house which we called the “White House”. It was a small one-storeyed slated house, as far as I remember, and was being hit by machine gun fire and rifle fire from the top of Moore Lane. We thought that fire was actually coming from the White House. Volunteers, with bayonets, were called on to charge this house and occupy it. It was very duskish, and we could not see very well. There was no cohesion. Nobody seemed to be in charge once we left the Post Office; it was every man for himself. After waiting for a couple of minutes, the general consensus was that there was no one in the house. We crossed at the end of Moore Lane and, having proceeded down Henry Place, we found that junction also under fire. We broke into a store, which was quite convenient to the entrance of Moore Lane, and brought out a vehicle –I think it was an old float– on which we piled all kinds of stuff. We moved the dray across the street to block the fire and, having formed some kind of an obstruction there, we crossed the line safely. There were no casualties there, as far as I remember. We got down to the corner house at Moore Street and Moore Lane. A section having broken a hole in the end wall into the house, we entered the house by this means. They did not actually go into the street, as that was under fire too. We were there in that house for a while and, as the crowd began to swell, we decided to break through the houses along the street, on the second floor. Myself, Desmond Ryan and all the St. En’3a’s boys proceeded to break the divisions between the houses for about half the length of the street. The walls were quite thin, and there was no bother breaking them. We reached as far as Price’s, or O’Hanlon’s which was a fish shop. I remember the smells there.

Bulfin and his company spent Friday night barricading all the houses that they had occupied by throwing down all the furniture from the rooms - clearing all the rooms - down the stairways into the bottom halls, blocking up the doorways.

One shell hit a house which we had evacuated, down at the lower part of Moore Street, and flattened it out absolutely. It went down like a house of cards. We had to evacuate the civilians from the houses, of course - under great pressure too. Some were actually trying to get across the street. We did not get as far as the junction at Sackville Place. We got up quite near the barricade. Early on Saturday morning, I would not call it an order exactly, but the opinion seemed to have been formed that the barricade at the Pernell Street end of Moore Street should be attacked and that George Plunkett, who was a Staff Captain, should take command; but it never materialised. I don’t know why - possibly because the surrender came, although that was not until late on Saturday evening, I think. We got within about forty or fifty yards of that barricade eventually. We could have attacked the barricade with grenades but we were afraid that some of the houses up above, on the west side of the street had been occupied. I did not come across any of The O’Rahilly’s men, as far as I remember. Nothing happened on Saturday until we heard rumours of surrender. We were ordered to dump as much stuff as we could in the houses. It must have been in Moore Street we were paraded, because we did not pass the barricade at the top of Moore Street.

Bulfin and others were formed into two lines, and were told by the commanding officer that they that were going home. Willie Pearse was there but he did not take charge of the parade. They marched down Henry St. into O’Connell Street. Bulfin did not remember a white flag being carried:

We were herded in to the Rotunda Gardens - in a patch of grass in front. We were lying on top of one another. I was quite near Collins and Joe Plunkett. I remember a

British officer threatening to shoot the whole lot of us, and Collins saying to this officer, "This is a very sick man; will you leave him alone" –or words to that effect. He was, of course, referring to Joe Plunkett. Next morning –Sunday– we were marched down to Richmond Barracks. We were all searched, and our names and addresses were taken. Finally, I was transferred to Stafford Jail, and thence to Frongoch.

Bulfin was sentenced to death together with 100 or so leaders of the Rising. Sixteen were shot. Eamonn de Valera had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment as did Bulfin. There is some dispute about whether de Valera's US nationality saved him from the firing squad. In the case of Bulfin, there is evidence to show that his mother had pointed out to the Argentine honorary Consul in Dublin that Eamonn had been born in Argentina and was a citizen. But he did not hold a passport. The consul visited him in jail and Bulfin promised that he would come to consulate after his release and a passport would be issued in his name. Released at Christmas 1916, he duly received his passport at the Argentine consulate which would have a major influence on his future role in the Irish revolution. Bulfin was one of a few thousand Irish activists rounded up and sent to jails and detention centres in England and Wales after the rising. He was first sent to Staffordshire prison and then to Frangoch in North Wales where it justifiably became known as a university for revolutionaries –a Sandhurst of subversion. There, Bulfin forged a lasting personal friendship with Michael Collins whom he had known before and during the Rising. That friendship with Collins, Eamonn de Valera and the revolutionary leadership, together with his Argentine citizenship and the fact that he could speak Spanish, would help shape his future two years later.

Bulfin, upon his release, returned to his home in Offaly where he resumed his work as an officer in the volunteers and gained promotion. Collins put him in charge of Sinn Féin forces during a by election in the East Cavan by election on 20 June 1918. Ireland was living through stirring times. The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, had threatened to impose conscription on Ireland in April 1918. This brought a strong nationalist backlash, the unification of old nationalist rivals like Sinn Féin and the Irish Parliamentary Party, and the emergence of a strong campaign of resistance with the signing of a pledge by tens of thousands outside churches and, on 23 April 1918, a general strike brought the country to a standstill. Bulfin was in the thick of things. He was back in jail again, having been swept up in the German plot raids and arrested on 18 July 1918, and sent to Durham prison. He received a deportation order on 21 March 1919. He was given a fortnight's parole. "At that time I had every intention of resisting Deportation. I had simply to surrender my parole and go on the run. I did, in fact, surrender my parole. While on parole, however, he got in touch with his superior officers and had an interview with Michael Collins. Bulfin told him that he did not intent to allow himself to be deported. That he we would go on the run: "Collins told me that it had been decided to appoint me as representative to the Argentine and gave me instructions concerning the purchase of arms and ammunition in the Argentine. We also made arrangements for transport and communications."

Having received his instructions from Collins, he was re-arrested in the first week of May, 1919, taken to Liverpool Bridewell to await deportation. Before being shipped out, Ms Margaret Pearse arrived from Dublin with letters of instructions and some money from Headquarters. Bulfin was deported shortly afterwards. The deportation was due "entirely to my activities in organising, drilling, arming and instructing Irish Volunteer Units." He allowed the British authorities to deport him "solely on the instructions of my superior officers." Upon his arrival in Buenos Aires, he was pressed into joining the Argentine navy where he served as a stoker and then as a cook for a number of months. That accounts for the silence in the archives and the complaints that he was not sending back reports from Buenos Aires.

But as soon as he was discharged, he set about fulfilling his two-fold political and military mission. Bulfin purchased arms which he sent to Ireland via Liverpool. His activities in that area were limited by the financial resources at his disposal. He borrowed in order to purchase arms. He was till out of pocket by over 100 pounds by the mid-1930s. Bulfin also had to work at the political and diplomatic level. He organised the publication and circulation of a weekly propaganda Bulletin for the Press of the whole of South America. I have, however, failed to find a copy of any such publication.

Bulfin's work in Argentina is not widely known in Ireland. But he did a great deal of propaganda work helped by his sister Mary. They had little or no resources and were sent only small sums

from Dublin to keep their operation going. In many ways, however, Bulfin was fortunate. At the conflict intensified throughout 1920, Bulfin found that the support in Argentina for the cause of Irish independence spread far beyond the Irish community. Argentines, with no blood ties to Ireland, were not slow to identify with that cause. The Argentine government, led by the Radicals, did not overtly support the cause of Irish nationalism. But individual members of that government appeared at meetings called to support Irish independence.

Besides the important work done by The Southern Cross, Bulfin had allies for his official mission in two powerful religious orders working in Argentina; The Pallottines and the Passionists, made up primarily of Irish-trained priests, acted as educators and as chaplains to the far-flung Irish communities in the pampas. I ought not to forget the fact that two orders of Irish nuns, the Sisters of Mercy and the Blue Sisters, were working in Buenos Aires and in San Antonio de Areco. Both those orders gave Bulfin support in his propaganda work. But that support was more discrete. While TSC gave a highly-charged account of what was happening in Ireland, the mendicant chaplains spread the word through their pastoral work. Irish churches, run under their auspices, assisted Bulfin in his propaganda cause. . Few episodes in the war of independence, caused more international outrage than the death of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, on 25 October 1920. He died after 74 days on hunger strike. His death and his funeral, was perhaps the most important event in a series of heavy-handed and often extra judicial actions by British forces at the end of 1920 which turned public opinion against the British government. For example, in a reprisal attack, the British burned Cork city centre on 11/12 December 1920.

Bulfin did not have to organise the public reaction in Argentina exhibited after the death of MacSwiney. To a great extent, it was done for him. Requiem Masses were held for the late Lord Mayor of Cork throughout the pampas. But strong sentiment in Argentina did not rest at the level of emotion. Here Bulfin's organisational skills were tested as he sought to coordinate the fund-raising and solidarity activities of different groups. Although small sums were raised by peripheral groups, one organisation collected most of the money in Argentina for the relief of those who had suffered in the violence in Ireland. A high-powered local committee under the leadership of Fr Santiago Ussher, collected nationally for the Irish White Cross, a relief organisation set up under the auspices of the lord mayor of Dublin and of the Catholic Bishops. Appeals from Ussher's committee attracted a flood of donations as recorded in *The Southern Cross*. That money was sent to the parent organisation for distribution.

Perhaps inspired by the flow of healthy donations being sent to the White Cross fund in Dublin from Argentina, there was the mistaken belief that South America might be a lucrative source for an Irish bond drive. After all, over \$5 million dollars had been raised in the United States. The second stimulus for a change in Irish government policy towards Latin America was provoked by Bulfin himself. He sought further help for the Irish mission in Argentina and more resources. Based on his knowledge of the Argentine and of Irish *porteños*, Bulfin might have been in a position to inform Dublin that Irish Argentines were suffering from donor fatigue. The White Cross campaign, spearheaded by Fr. Ussher and other leading Irish Argentines had yielded a handsome return. But that was the extent of the money available.

Nevertheless, Bulfin's wish for extra staff was met. In May/June 1921 news reached him that Dail Eireann was sending a Special Envoy to "the Governments and Peoples of South America." Laurence Ginnell, author, agitator, land leaguer, veteran of land wars in the 1880s, long-standing member of parliament and now a TD, or member of Dáil Éireann, was being sent to Buenos Aires. He had been in the United State working on behalf of the Irish Government in connection with the Irish loan. He was expected to transfer his expertise, earned in the Irish government bond campaign in the USA, to South America. There is a detailed account of his activities in the final chapter of my book – *La independencia de Irlanda: la conexión argentina*. His presence in Argentina which lasted from the middle of 1921 until spring 1922.

## Conclusion

The Irish revolutionary leadership, as represented by Dáil Éireann in 1919, did not undervalue the importance of Argentina and Latin America as a potential source of diplomatic, financial and

propaganda support during the critical years of 1919 to 1922. Sending Eamonn Bulfin, deprived the Irish midlands of a talented and courageous guerrilla leader. But that was a sacrifice Michael Collins urged the Irish leadership to make in order to win over support for the Irish cause under the Southern Cross. Dublin may have been disappointed with some results. Argentina did not yield many guns for the revolutionary cause. But that was because Bulfin did not have the resources to purchase more arms and ammunition other than one consignment for which he had to borrow the money and dip into his own pocket. Had the Irish government wanted more arms from that source they need only have sent the funding. The arms were in plentiful supply and smuggling them out of Buenos Aires to Liverpool was not problematical.

Moreover, had the Irish government wished to get more support from throughout Latin America, it ought to have been possible to send envoys to other Latin American countries, apart from Argentina and Cuba. There were a few Irish active in Brazil. But they neither had the resources nor the training to have a national impact. The yield on the Irish investment in Argentina was significant. Bulfin mounted a strong propaganda campaign. Irish *porteños* were extremely generous. The White Cross collection which ran over several months testified to the generosity of the poor Irish in particular. There were substantial donations also provided by the more well-to-do. While that money did give relief to those who suffered in Ireland from the violence and destruction caused by war, its collection also displayed the high level of engagement of Irish *porteños* in the struggle for Irish independence.

The bond campaign, initiated in Buenos Aires, in autumn 1921, was not a resounding success. Firstly, the Irish government, unrecognised internationally, was not a sound investment. Secondly, there was not unanimity in the Irish community in support of the campaign. Thirdly, that scepticism over the bond drive led to tensions and friction within a community that was already divided. Fourthly, the committee with responsibility for the bond drive did not have the expertise to carry it through. Fifthly, the legal basis for such a bond drive was somewhat opaque. Finally, the Treaty split in December 1921 recoiled on the febrile unity of the Irish community in Argentina.

Both envoys, Bulfin and Ginnell, opposed the Treaty. Many leading Irish *porteños* supported the signing of the Treaty. The outcome was a debacle for what set out as a promising fund-raising exercise. By Christmas 1921 and January 1922, many Irish Argentines –like the majority of those deputies in the Dáil– supported the Treaty settlement. Others backed away and preferred to wait and see. That left Bulfin and Ginnell isolated and their mission was at an end. A diplomatic mission that had begun with so much promise, ended in recrimination and confusion. Both Bulfin and Ginnell returned to Ireland. The latter, sent to the United States to represent the anti-Treatyite de Valera, died in Washington in 1923. Eamonn Bulfin, offered a commission in the new Irish army, refused. He returned to private life and died in 1968.



# Irish Immigration to the United States and its Aftermath

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*"Every immigrant is a citizen of two nations, torn between the opportunities of the New World and their memories of the Old. But for few is this so true, or so poignant, as for the Irish in America."*

## Introduction

Three of the principal reasons which induce people to emigrate are poverty, persecution and the desire for self-improvement. If one adds to the total of those who left more or less to their own accord, those persons who were transported or whose occupations took them overseas to live, perhaps for the rest of their lives, the numbers of emigrants leaving Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries are enormous (Yurdan, 1990).

Of course, only a small percentage of all those emigrants to North America was Irish: it was the proportion who left in comparison to the total population of the country which was exceptionally high. Not that this was a new trend, for the Irish have always had been noted for their willingness to travel, particularly to mainland Britain. St. Patrick himself, as long as the fifth century AD, took part in this coming and going, admittedly doing it the opposite way round, for he left England to settle in Ireland. Even today, Irishmen will sometimes define a Scotsman as an Irishman whose ancestors could swim, and those Vikings who were almost certainly the first Europeans to land in North America probably set out from an Irish port such as Limerick.

The mention of emigration in relation to Ireland immediately calls to mind the unfortunates who fled the Famine of the mid-1840s onwards. In 1848, the wave of emigrants left, mainly for America was much more superior in number sharing some common characteristics: their striking poverty and their beliefs. They were Catholic.

The problem we are dealing with is the case of the Irish Catholic immigrants to the United States during the period of the Great Hunger and the following years. Estimations say that a million and a half Irish left the island towards North America. On their arrival they suffered an outrageous discrimination from the American people only compared to the one suffered by black people (still slaves at that moment).

## An Overview about Irish Immigration

Today, some 40 million Americans can trace all or part of their ancestry to those 7 million Irish immigrants. Likewise, nearly every one of the 5 million people who now live in Ireland has relations in the New World.

The origins of Irish immigration to the New World are buried in the remote past. In the sixth and seventh centuries, Irish missionaries left their homeland to spread Christianity. One of them, the legendary St. Brendan, supposedly sailed west across the Atlantic and discovered America long before the Vikings or Columbus. St. Brendan's voyage may be fictitious, but even today Irish folklore records ancient memories of mythical lands and journeys beyond "the western ocean."

Apart from these legends, the historical record of Irish immigration to the New World begins

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in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when between 50,000 and 100,000 people left Ireland, most of them transported overseas as indentured servants. Others came as prisoners, Irish rebels and felons. They had been sentenced by British courts to long terms of banishment and involuntary servitude on the sugar plantations of the West Indies or on the tobacco plantations along the banks of the Chesapeake.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Irish immigrants came in much larger numbers, perhaps as many as a half-million, looking for land on the frontiers of Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, and elsewhere in colonial America. Most of those who left Ireland during the decades immediately before and after the American Revolution were Protestants and came from Ulster, Ireland's Northern Province. Some were Anglicans; a few were Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists.

However, most were Presbyterians of Scottish ancestry, the so-called "Scotch-Irish", who brought to America such historically familiar names as Jackson and Buchanan, Wilson and Crockett. In the 1600s their ancestors had moved from the Scottish Lowlands to Northern Ireland, in a migration organized by the British Crown known as the Plantation of Ulster. Now, in the 1700s, oppressed by high rents and resentful of tithes and taxes, hundreds of thousands of Scotch-Irish left Ulster and crossed the ocean to what their Presbyterian ministers optimistically called "the land of Canaan."

After the American Revolution, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Scotch-Irish and other Irish Protestants continued to immigrate to the United States and, increasingly, to Canada. But in the 1790s and early 1800s the Scotch-Irish were joined by a new and much larger stream of Irish immigrants. They came not only from Ulster but also from Ireland's eastern, southern, and western provinces, Leinster, Munster, and Connacht. These new immigrants would have distinctly different reasons for leaving Ireland and distinctly different experiences in America, in large part because they were Catholics.

Of course, even prior to the American Revolution, a small number of Irish Catholics settled in the New World. But it was in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that Ireland's Catholics began their mass exodus overseas: to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, even to South Africa and Argentina –but primarily to the United States. During the half-century before the Great Irish Famine of 1845-50, perhaps a million Irish, about half of them Catholics, came to North America. From the Famine years until today, another 5.5 million Irish immigrants have come to the United States, the great majority of them Catholic.

These vast migrations of human beings were of enormous historical significance, for they shaped the future of both American and Irish societies, just as they shaped the lives and families of the immigrants themselves. For Ireland, the results of sustained mass emigration have been devastating. Between 1841 and 1926 the population of that small island fell by half, from about 8.5 million to only 4.25 million. Many Irish have blamed what they regard as Ireland's social stagnation and cultural conservatism on the log, enervating drain of young, vibrant, and dissatisfied men and women. Even today, as the Irish playwright John B. Keane laments, "Emigration in Ireland is a predominant way of life."

For the United States, however, the results of Irish immigration were mostly positive. The Irish brought labor, skills, capital, and sheer energy to build the farms, cities, industries, and transportation network that laid the foundations of much of America's prosperity. Indeed, it would be difficult to list briefly the many Irish American contributions to the history of the United States.

By 1776 the Irish comprised at least 10 percent of the population of the Thirteen colonies. And in many areas, such as Pennsylvania, they were active participants in the American Revolution. Eighty-five years later, more than 200,000 Irish immigrants fought in the American Civil War, the great majority on the Union side (Miller and Wagner, 1994).

The Irish, Catholics and Protestants alike, became prominent in American agriculture, business, the labor movement, religion, culture, sports, and politics. Irish immigrant farmers, lumbermen, and canal –and railroad-builders helped push the nation's frontier even westward.

Irish entrepreneurs, including banker Thomas Mellon and mine-owner Marcus Daly, built many of the nation's giant corporations. Other Irish Americans, such as Terence Powderly and "Mother" Jones, helped create the labor unions that battled the corporations to secure decent wages for Irish immigrants and for workers of other nationalities. Bishop John Hughes of New York and Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore built the Catholic Church into the nation's largest

denomination, while Irish Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists played major roles in shaping their churches in America.

In American literature and drama, few have analyzed the human condition and the American Dream more eloquently than Irish American novelist James T. Farrell or playwright Eugene O'Neill. In the world of sports, few have enjoyed greater success or popularity than boxer John L. Sullivan, the son of an immigrant from County Cork. And, finally, from the very beginning the Irish have been unusually prominent and successful at all levels of American politics, and no fewer than ten Presidents –including Jackson, Wilson, Kennedy, and Reagan– have traced their ancestry back to Ireland.

However, for the Irish immigrants themselves, and for their descendants, the results of migration were more mixed and ambiguous. Today, Irish Americans enjoy higher social status and greater wealth and influence than almost any other ethnic group. But the long history of Irish immigrations is tinged with sadness, anger, and even tragedy.

Many Irish immigrants, past and recent, did not want to leave Ireland, even for the United States. Often they regarded themselves not as voluntary immigrants seeking opportunity, but as involuntary “exiles,” compelled to leave Ireland by “British tyranny” and “landlord oppression.” Many assuaged their fears and resentments with the fond belief that the United States was a fabled “promised land” –with “gold and silver (lying in) the ditches, and nothing to do but gather it (up),” as one young immigrant dreamed. However, although a few found their *caisleáin* óir, or castles of gold, in America, great numbers quickly discovered that such illusions were false.

Most Irish Catholic immigrants, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were poor and unskilled and had to begin life anew at the very bottom of the American socioeconomic ladder. Further, most Irish newcomers, particularly the large majority who were Catholic, did not receive friendly welcomes from native-born American Protestants. The society that these Irish encountered in the United States was not initially or automatically tolerant and pluralistic: the Irish had to make it so, through strength of numbers and determined efforts, often against bitter opposition. On both sides, but especially for the immigrants themselves, the period of mutual adjustment was long and painful.

Eventually, despite much collective suffering and many individual failures, the Irish Catholics were successful, achieving great prosperity and prominence in all walks of American life. However, the burden of their Irish heritage and the scars of the immigrant experience often proved enduring.

Even those immigrants who achieved security or success in the United States passed on to their children and grandchildren a heritage tinged with bitterness. Sometimes they expressed a certain skepticism or ambivalence about the so-called American Dream that had cost them so much to achieve. More often they channeled a strong resentment, or even a burning hatred, toward the British government and the Irish landlords whom they held responsible for having forced them to leave Ireland as unwilling exiles.

As a result, a profound homesickness was widespread among the Irish in America, even among “comfortable” immigrants such as Maurice Woulfe. Despite that homesickness, and as Woulfe himself suspected, most Irish immigrants understood they could never really return “home” to Ireland –and very few ever tried to do so. Like Woulfe, they would live and die in America –and raise offspring who, try as they might, could never fully comprehend what their fathers and mothers had endured.

Thus, perhaps of all the different nationalities that came to the United States from Europe, Ireland’s Catholics most forcefully and poignantly reflected the painful ambiguities of the immigrant experience. On the one hand, the Irish have risen with great determination to the heights of political, cultural, and economic life in America. On the other hand, they have nurtured a deeply felt longing for an often idealized image of old Ireland –the “Emerald Isle.”

These seemingly contradictory impulses were passed on to succeeding generations, but they were most acute for the Irish immigrants themselves –for those whose lives transformed, and were transformed by, the histories of both their abandoned and their adopted countries (Miller and Wagner, 1994).

## Life in Ireland

To understand the above mentioned details, it is necessary to go back to Ireland and have a general perspective of life in that country. In the Irish, or Gaelic, language the act of leaving Ireland was most often described by the word *deoraí*. *Deoraí* translates into English not as “emigration” but as “exile”. Similarly, When Irish poets and peasants described the act of emigration, they said, “*Dob éigean dom imeacht go Meirice,*” meaning “I had to go to America,” or “Going to America was a necessity for me.” Thus, in the traditional Irish Catholic worldview, emigration was involuntarily -the result of fate or force, not of individual ambition. And although the Irish language declined rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the same sentiments were translated and reproduced in the new English dialects spoken in the Irish countryside -and in those Irish songs and ballads that portrayed emigration as tragic exile.

Of course, it was not simply their language that disposed the Irish to regard emigration to America as exile or banishment -it was the impact of English conquest and colonization on Irish Catholic society and culture. The physical and political consequences of that conquest can still be seen: in the ruined castles gracing the island’s landscape, in the armed border dividing the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland; and in the murals and graffiti adorning the walls of Belfast and the other war-torn cities of the north. The psychological scars are less visible, but equally enduring, both in Ireland -and in Irish America.

The rich and lovely valley of the Boyne River, in County Meath, about 50 miles north from Dublin, witnessed the birth and the political death of traditional Irish Catholic society. At Newgrange, impressive stone monuments, “passage graves” for ancient Irish chieftains, were constructed more than 5,000 years ago, long before the coming of St. Patrick and Christianity to Ireland. Not far from Newgrange is the Hill of Tara, the ceremonial capital of ancient Ireland, where the High Kings of Gaelic society were crowned and appointed. A few miles away are the ruins of medieval castles and of Catholic churches and monasteries, such as the Cistercian Abbey at Mellifont. Also lying in the peaceful river valley is the broad field on which raged the Battle of the Boyne. In that great conflict of July, 1690, the Irish armies of the deposed Catholic English King, James II, were defeated by the Protestant forces led by King William of Orange.

As early as 1530s, English Protestant rulers such as King Henry VIII, his daughter Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, and William of Orange had tried to conquer Catholic Ireland for reasons compounding equal measures of politics, prejudice and greed. Again and again, Irish lords and chieftains, fearing the loss of their estates and their religion, had risen in revolt: under the leadership of Hugh O’Neill in 1590s, Owen Roe O’Neill in the 1640s, and Patrick Sarsfield and the Catholic King James in 1688. Each time the Irish lords were crushed.

Many of their leaders and followers fled into exile in Catholic France or Spain and were replaced as landlords and tenants by Protestant English and Scottish colonists. By the time of the great defeat at the Boyne in 1690, even the Gaelic bards, whose songs and poems had once spurred the Irish into battle against the hated foreigners, had abandoned hope that Catholic Ireland could ever rise again.

In the years following their victory at the Boyne, the Protestant colonists and the British governments imposed on Catholic Ireland a vast system of social, political and economic control known as the Protestant Ascendancy. Nearly all land in Ireland was confiscated and given over to about 10,000 Protestant families, a few hundred of whom owned so much land that their estates and mansions dominated the landscape. Most Catholics were reduced to the levels of tenant farmers, peasants, laborers and servants.

Those Catholics fortunate enough to lease farms from their new masters were obliged to pay increasingly higher rents for the privilege of tilling the soil formerly owned by their ancestors. If they fell behind in their rent, or if the landlords’ profits were better served by grazing cattle or sheep, the farmers would be evicted and their homes-even entire villages-would be leveled to the ground. In addition to rents, Catholic farmers had to pay tithes for the maintenance of the Protestant Church of Ireland. Although Catholics still comprised more than 75 percent of the island’s population, the church of their landlords was now the legally established religion (Miller and Wagner, 1994).



## Countdown to the Great Hunger

Still, certain circumstances favourable to population increase were present in Ireland during this period. First, and most important, there was an abundant supply of incredibly cheap food, easily obtained, in the potato, and the standard of living of the time was such that a diet of potatoes was no great hardship. With the addition of milk or buttermilk potatoes form a scientifically satisfactory diet, as the physique of the pre-famine Irish proved. Arthur Young contrasted the Irishman's potato diet favourably with the contemporary English laborer's bread and cheese. The Irish, he wrote, "have a bellyful... I will not assert that potatoes are a better food than bread and cheese but I have no doubt of a bellyful of the one being much better than half a bellyful of the other".

Next, far from acting as a deterrent, the miserably low standards of Irish life encouraged young couples to marry early. No savings were necessary, no outlay was required; a cabin was erected for little or nothing in a few days, the young couple secured a scrap of land, owned a pot, perhaps a stool, not always a bed. Marriages were "daily contracted with the most reckless improvidence. Boys and girls marry literally without habitation or any means of support, trusting, as they say, to Providence as others have done before them". In fact, nothing was to be gained by waiting. Asked why the Irish married so young, the Catholic Bishop of Raphoe told the Irish Poor Enquiry of 1835: "They cannot be worse off than they are and... they may help each other". Women were chaste. Irish females, stated George Nicholls in his Report on Ireland, were "very correct in their conduct", and his own impressions were "highly favourable of their morals"-there was "no need to make provision for bastards". Girls married at sixteen, boys at seventeen or eighteen, and Irishwomen were exceptionally fertile; "... for twelve years 19 in 20 of them breed every second year. *Vive la pomme de Terre!*" wrote Arthur Young; and travelers in Ireland before the famine invariably comment on the troops of children to be found in every cabin. When the famine drove tens of thousands across the Atlantic, it was found that in the Irish immigrant slums of Boston, where infants under five years of age died at the rate of 61 per cent., the Irish nevertheless increased in numbers, because of their high birth-rate (Woodham Smith, 1962).

The Irish are fond of children, and family feeling is exceptionally strong. Moreover, in pre-famine Ireland children were a necessity. A Poor Law did not begin to operate until 1838, and then its provisions were limited; thus a man and woman's insurance against destitution in old age was their children.

There was too, barbarous and half-savage though conditions might be, one luxury enjoyed by the Irishman which favoured the survival and rearing of children -his cabin was usually well warmed by a turf fire. Ill-clothed though he was, sleeping as he did on a mud floor, with his pig in the corner, the Irish peasant did not have to endure cold, nor did his children die of cold. They were warm; they were abundantly fed -as long as the potato did not fail.

By 1841, when a census, was taken, the population had reached 8,175,124, and Disraeli declared that Ireland was the most densely-populated country in Europe; on arable land, he asserted, the population was denser than that of China.

It seems possible, moreover, that the census figure may be too low. Though the enumerators of 1841 were largely members of the Irish Constabulary, superior to their predecessors and a "highly disciplined body of men", much time, local knowledge and courage were needed to climb into the wild mountain glens, to penetrate the bogs and track down the communities of evicted and unemployed who existed in caves, sod huts and under tree-roots. An intelligent relief officer wrote that the Census of 1841 was "pronounced universally to be no fair criterion of the present population". He had tested it in Co. Clare and found the population to be one third greater than had been recorded; therefore in 1845 when famine came the population might well have been above nine millions.

For this closely-packed and rapidly-increasing people the only outlet -with the exception of parts of Ulster- was the land. Ireland has never been industrialized; such deposits of coal and iron as she possessed were "unfortunately of more significance to the geologist than the economist", and in 1845 the few industries she did possess were moribund. A remnant of the famous Dublin poplin weavers worked fifteen hours a day for about twelve shillings a week;

in the once-prosperous woolen industry, production had fallen about fifty per cent in the last twenty years, and three-quarters of the frieze, thick woolen cloth, worn by the peasantry, was dumped by England. The fisheries of Ireland, too, were undeveloped, and in Galway and Mayo the herring fishermen were too poor to buy salt with which to preserve a catch.

Even on the land, agricultural employment, as it was understood in England, did not exist. Labourers were not regularly employed on farms because Irish farms were too small to require hired labour; over 93 per cent consisted of fewer than thirty acres. Ten years before the famine, the Poor Enquiry of 1835 stated that three-quarters of the labourers in Ireland existed without regular employment of any kind, and the economist, Nassau Senior, told the Government that for thirty weeks of the year, that is, for the whole of the year except when potatoes were being cultivated, 2,385,000 persons were without employment because there was absolutely no work to offer them. Unless an Irish labourer could get hold of a patch of land and grow potatoes on which to feed himself and his children, the family starved.

The consequence was the doom of Ireland. The land was divided and sub-divided, again and again, and holdings were split into smaller and still smaller fragments, until families were attempting to exist on plots of less than an acre, in some cases half an acre.

Farms had already been divided by middlemen and landlords but the sub-division which preceded the famine was carried out by the people themselves, frequently against the landlord's will. As the population increased and the demand for a portion of ground grew more and more frantic, land became like gold in Ireland. Parents allowed their children to occupy a portion of their holdings because the alternative was to turn them out to starve; the children in turn allowed occupation by their children, and in a comparatively short time three, six, or even ten families were settled on land which could provide food only for one family.

The possession of a piece of land was literally the difference between life and death. "Ejectment", the House of Commons was told in April, 1846, "is tantamount to a sentence of death by slow torture." Turned off the land, evicted families wandered about begging, "miserable and turbulent." Since no employment existed they crowded the already swarming lanes and slums of the towns lived in ditches by the roadside until, wasted by disease and hard-ship, "they die in a little time."

As a result of the desperate competition for land, rents in Ireland were enormously high, eighty per cent to a hundred per cent higher than in England. High rents were further encouraged by the practice, generally followed in Ireland, of letting land by advertising for "proposals" and disposing of it to the highest bidder. Only on the best-managed estates, generally those owned by large proprietors, were the character and record of the tenant taken into account. Lord Gormanston, for instance, had let land to a witness before the Devon Commission at four shillings an acre less than he was offered elsewhere. But where landlords were greedy or in debt, the people's anxiety to secure a piece of land, or the fear of losing land already occupied, was so great that offers went beyond its value.

An immense and increasing number of people were too poor to make an offer to rent land, and this unfortunate class, mainly poor day-labourers, eked out an existence by means of a method of hiring land, called conacre.

Conacre was a contract by which the use of a portion of land was let, to grow one crop. Conacre was not a lease but a licence to occupy, and the relation of landlord and tenant was not created. Very small portions of land were let in conacre; in Tipperary, a quarter-acre was more common than half an acre; in Queen's Country, it was reckoned that half an acre of conacre would support a labourer's family.

The owner of conacre ground manured the soil and prepared it for the reception of seed; the hirer provided the seed, planted it, and performed all subsequent operations. Rent was high; £10 or even £12 to £14 an acre on good ground, and about £6 on poor ground. But the Devon Commission did not consider conacre rents "enormous", having regard to the crop which could be obtained in a normal season.

The whole of this structure, the minute subdivisions, the closely-packed population existing at the lowest level, the high rents, the frantic competition for land, had been produced by the potato. The conditions of life in Ireland and the existence of the Irish people depended on the potato entirely and exclusively.

The potato, provided it did not fail, enabled great quantities of food to be produced at a trifling cost from a small plot of ground. Sub-division could never have taken place without the potato: an acre and a half would provide a family of five or six with food for twelve months, while to grow the equivalent grain required an acreage four to six times as large and some knowledge of tillage as well. Only a spade was needed for the primitive method of potato culture usually practised in Ireland. Trenches were dug and beds –called “lazy beds”– made; the potato sets were laid on the ground and earthed up from the trenches; when the shoots appeared, they were earthed up again. This method, regarded by the English with contempt, was in fact admirably suited to the moist soil of Ireland. The trenches provided drainage, and crops could be grown in wet ground, while cultivation by the spade enabled potatoes to be grown on mountain sides, where no plough could be used. As the population expanded, potatoes in lazy beds were pushed out into the bog and up the mountain, where no other cultivation would have been possible.

The potato was, moreover, the most universally useful of foods. Pigs, cattle and fowls could be reared on it, using the tubers which were too small for everyday use; it was simple to cook; it produced fine children as a diet, provided that it did not fail.

Yet it was the most dangerous of crops. It did not keep, nor could it be stored from one season to another. Thus every year the nearly two and a half million labourers who had no regular employment more or less starved in the summer, when the old potatoes were finished and the new had not come in. It was for this reason that June, July and August were called the “meal months”: there was always the danger that potatoes would run out and meal would have to be eaten instead, the labourers would then have to buy it on credit, at exorbitant prices, from the petty dealer and usurer who was the scourge of the Irish village –the dreaded “gombeen man.”

More serious still, if the potato did fail, neither meal nor anything else could replace it. There could be no question of resorting to an equally cheap food. No such food existed, nor could potato cultivation be replaced, except after a long period, by the cultivation of any other food. “What hope is there for a nation that lives on potatoes!” wrote an English official.

Yet the British Government felt no apprehension about the potato crop. It was the problems arising from Ireland’s perennial rebelliousness and from the swarming, poverty-stricken “surplus” population, as it was called, that absorbed the attention of Parliament, and when the exclusive dependence of the Irish on the potato was deplored it was on moral grounds, as proving the improvidence and lack of energy of the Irish people.

There were, however, voices crying in the wilderness, and contrary to the usual course of history the voices were official. The Devon Commission reported in 1845, on the eve of the famine, giving warning in grave terms of the dangerous state of Ireland. The report was dismissed on the grounds that it did not “contain anything of striking novelty” and “there was nothing in it that everyone did not know already, and a timid bill based on its recommendations giving Irish tenants a right to compensation for improvements in certain restricted circumstances was denounced as “a violation of the rights of property” and withdrawn. The Devon Commission more over was only one of many. In the forty-five years since the Union no fewer than 114 Commissions and 61 Special Committees were instructed to report on the state of Ireland, and without exception their findings prophesied disaster; Ireland was on the verge of starvation, her population rapidly increasing, three-quarters of her labourers unemployed, housing conditions appalling and the standard of living unbelievably low.

True, an “Act for the more effectual relief of the Poor in Ireland”, an Irish Poor Law Act, had been passed in 1838, but its object was not so much to mitigate the sufferings of the Irish poor as to prevent them from coming over into England. George Nicholls, who drafted it, admitted as much; the vast numbers of Irish, he wrote, who “crossed the Channel in search of the means of living... made it a matter of policy, as it assuredly was of humanity, to endeavor to improve their condition; and nothing seemed so equitable or so readily effective for the purpose as making property liable for the relief of the destitution in Ireland, as was the case in England –in other words establishing some kind of Poor Law.”

In vain it was pointed out that the problems of poverty in England and Ireland were totally different, that the immense amount of destitution in Ireland would entail a gigantic expenditure if a poor law was to be effective. Workhouses for hundreds of thousands would have to be erected,

and the annual cost would be at least five million pounds a year: there was no possibility of raising such a sum in Ireland.

The British Government's mind was made up. The property of Ireland must support the poverty of Ireland, and a menace to England be removed. George Nicholls was sent to Ireland for six weeks, his first acquaintance with the country; after that the opinion of "the most representative Irish that could be consulted" was set on one side and on July 31, 1838, the Irish Poor Law Act became law.

The British Government, however, concerned as it was with Irish disaffection, with the recent alarm of the Repeal agitation, and with religious differences—much of the last session of Parliament before the famine was spent in debating an increase in the grant to the Catholic seminary of Maynooth—continued to contemplate the condition of the Irish people with "imperturbable apathy."

Meanwhile, in 1844, a report was received that in North America a disease, hitherto unknown, had attacked the potato crop (Woodham Smith, 1962).

To understand the magnitude of the disaster that the blight which affected the potato crop in Ireland caused, it is important to highlight the way of living of the Irish people and their basic needs.

The rights to a piece of land meant the difference between life and death in Ireland in the early 1800s. The population was exploding, and with hundreds of thousands without work, entire families managed to exist on a section no bigger than half an acre, growing nothing more than row after row of potatoes, but what was the alternative?

There were famine years before the blight struck and the English rulers were well aware of the problems arising out of the economic structure they had forced on the Irish. During the first 45 years of the 19th century at least 150 committees and commissions of inquiry, appointed by the British Parliament, had made their reports on the State of Ireland. But nothing happened (Woodham Smith, 1962).

Although emigration to America began in earnest more than a hundred years earlier, the Famine years, from 1846 to 1851, were marked by an urgency to get away as never seen before. Ships had always sailed in the spring and summer months. Now, the clamour for a passage saw vessels of every kind and size, with bunks hastily raised in the holds, departing in the autumn and winter too. They braved the worst of the weather—the bitter cold, ice, gales, fog, storms and heavy seas, short days and long nights, could not deter these desperate people. Desperation was the distinctive feature of the Famine sailings.

For an island nation during the last century, the sea was the only link with the outside world. The black waters of the Rive Liffey, where they enter Dublin Bay, provided perfect anchorage for as many as 4,000 ships, registered to the port of Dublin, in the mid-1800s. Small cutters and sloops carried the mail, cattle and agricultural produce for the English markets and the expanding passenger trade to Liverpool. Colliers and schooners kept local industry thriving while the big three-masted barques and brigs traded on the high seas. Dublin was the home port for 300 square-rigged ships sailing to every corner of the world, though few were fitted out to carry human cargo until the Famine arrived. Every day the cobblestones on Custom House Quay would ring with the sound of horses' hooves and creaking cart wheels and the shouts of men in a hurry. Dockside gangs unloaded cargoes from recent arrivals on to barges plying busily along the canals leading into the old city.

The year 1846, which marked the beginning of the Famine Emigration, saw the start of a dramatic change in the scene on Dublin's quays. The *Irish Quarterly Review* would subsequently record this scene as follows:

A procession fraught with most striking and most melancholy interest, wending its painful and mournful way along the whole line of the river, to where the beautiful pile of the Custom House is distinguishable in the far distance, towering amongst the masts of the shipping.

Melancholy, most melancholy, is the sight to the eye not only of the Dublin citizen or resident, but to the eye of every Irishman who is worthy of being so called and indeed, the spectacle is one of sadness and foreboding. A long continuous procession... a mixed stream of men, women and children, with their humble baggage, who are hurrying to quit for ever their native land!



It is not a departing crowd of paupers but unhappily an exodus of those who may be regarded as having constituted, as it were, the bone and sinew of the land; the farmers and comfortable tenantry, the young and strong, the hale and hearty, the pride and the prime of our Nation! (Laxton, 1997)

### **The Coffin Ships**

The crossing of the Atlantic was in fact the first ordeal the immigrants had to face before reaching America. Many of the ships adapted for the Irish emigrant trade were small, old and unseaworthy. They were often manned by poorly trained crews and officers who care little for the welfare of the passengers traveling in the bowels of the ship. Both before and during the Famine, sailing ships commonly put to sea without adequate water, provisions, medical assistance or cooking and sanitary facilities. Voyages usually lasted for five to six weeks, but passages of more than twice that length were common, extending the misery of physical privation and outbreaks of disease.

Passage in steerage was a nightmare. The emigrants were crowded together in the ship's dark, dank, holds, usually with only two square feet of space each. Only children had room to stand upright, and the narrow sleeping berths each held at least four people. These quarters were rarely or never cleaned, as a result "the filthy beds were teeming with abominations, ... the narrow space between the berths ... breathed up a damp and fetid stench." Many ships arrived with streams of "foul air issuing from the hatches –as dense and palatable as seen on a foggy day from a dung heap."

Some Irish passengers came supplied with whiskey and tried to drink their way through the tedium and unpleasantness of the voyage: Most simply tried to remain on deck as much as possible, to escape the lice and odors below. However, when storms struck their vessels, as they did almost invariably on the North Atlantic crossing, the emigrants were forced back into the steerage. There they lay for the duration of the storm, without fresh air, quaking with fear, praying, cursing and vomiting, while the howling wind and crashing waves smashed and tossed the fragile crafts –sometimes bringing their dreams of the "promised land" to a tragic early end.

Irish refugees of the Great Famine experienced all the usual horrors of the Atlantic passage – and others that were exceptional. Many of the Famine emigrants were not only suffering from the debilitating effects of malnutrition before they embarked, but also carried with them the germs of typhus, dysentery and even cholera. During "Black '47", mortality rates among Irish passengers were as high as 40 percent in these vessels known as "coffin ships". Including those who died in the waterfront slums of North American cities, or in the quarantine camps, as many as 50,000 Irish died *en route* to North America (Miller and Wagner, 1994).

### **The Irish coming to the U.S**

"Although in Ireland life was brutal, immigrating to the United States was not a pleasant experience. Referred to as the American Wake, those who chose to immigrate knew they would never see Ireland or their families again, and with poor communication over large distances, it was probable that the "wake" was the last time they would even hear of each other again. The only future left in Ireland was ever increasing poverty, disease, death, and oppression. America became their dream, their second chance for a brighter future."

Irish immigrants arrived in masses on overcrowded ships, branded Coffin Ships because the conditions were so deplorable; these ships were, for the most part, not even sea worthy. Even as the immigrants docked in American ports they learned life would continue to be a fight of endurance, a fight for survival. Many unfortunate immigrants found themselves snatched by dock loafers who preyed on the ignorance of immigrants; these dock loafers who would compel the Irish immigrants: men, women, and children, into favored tenant houses, charging the immigrants outrageous fees for this "service." Many immigrants remained too impoverished to escape or move on." (Marshall, 1988)

Free land did not appeal to the early Irish immigrants looking to escape the Potato Famine: they rejected the land, because the land had rejected them; yet they always spoke reverently of their Irish homeland. Most of the larger cities had an "Irish" or "Shanty Town" where the Irish would gather to commiserate their struggles, encourage each other, and celebrate together. (Miller and Wagner, 1994)

## Rise of the Irish

Following the Civil War, Irish laborers once again provided the backbreaking work needed for the enormous expansion of rapidly industrializing America. They ran factories, built railroads in the West, and worked in the mines of Pennsylvania, Virginia and Montana. They were carpenter's assistants, boat-builders, dock-hands, bartenders and waiters. In an era when there were virtually no governmental constraints on American capitalism, the Irish organized the first trade unions and conducted strikes when necessary for higher wages, shorter hours, and safer working conditions.

Single Irish women found work as cooks and maids in houses belonging to wealthy families on Beacon Hill in Boston and along Fifth Avenue in New York, and in most other big cities. Many lived inside the homes in the servants' quarters and enjoyed a standard of living luxurious by comparison to the life they had known in Ireland or in the tenements. These women were cheerful, kind-hearted, hardworking and thrifty, always managing to save a little money out of their salary for those back in Ireland. From 1850 to 1900 an estimated \$260 million poured into Ireland from America, bringing over more family members and helping out those remaining behind.

The women also donated generously to their local Catholic parishes for new parochial schools and the construction of stained-glass churches with marble statues and altars. The beautiful cathedral-like buildings became great sources of pride among the Irish, making the statement that Catholics had "arrived" in America. Catholic parishes became the center of family life, providing free education, hospitals, sports and numerous social activities, recreating to some degree the close-knit villages the Irish had loved back home while at the same time protecting them from unfriendly Americans.

Catholics in Ireland had endured centuries of discrimination at the hands of a dominant culture ruled by English and Anglo-Irish Protestants. They arrived in America only to find they were once again facing religious discrimination by the dominant culture; this time American Protestants. Eventually the Irish discovered the path to changing things in their new home lay in the local ballot box.

The large numbers of Irishmen now eligible to vote in cities such as New York and Boston meant they could no longer be politically ignored. The sons and grandsons of Famine immigrants joined the Democratic Party in droves, organized themselves by every ward and precinct into political "machines" then became candidates for office, first getting elected to city councils, later to the mayor's office itself.

In Boston, newly elected Mayor James Michael Curley boldly announced in 1914: "The day of the Puritan has passed; the Anglo-Saxon is a joke; a new and better America is here." Curley dominated Boston politics for nearly forty years. He freely used patronage as a way to reward loyalty and get Irish votes, filling various city departments with his supporters. The Irish delighted in taking civil service jobs with their steady paychecks and long-term security. In cities with big Irish populations, police and fire departments often became staffed by Famine descendants.

In New York, the political machine was known as Tammany Hall, a powerful but corrupt organization that traded favors and jobs for votes and money. Out of Manhattan's fourth ward emerged Al Smith, the grandson of Irish immigrants, who rose from the tenements of the Lower East Side to seek the American presidency. As governor of New York in the 1920s, Smith originated ground-breaking social reform programs that later became the model for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. But as the Democratic candidate for president in 1928, Smith was relentlessly bashed by anti-Catholic activists and was resoundingly defeated, losing to incumbent President Herbert Hoover.

The most extraordinary Famine descendant was John Fitzgerald Kennedy, great-grandson of Patrick Kennedy, a farmer from County Wexford who had left Ireland in 1849. Although other Presidents, including Andrew Jackson and Woodrow Wilson had Irish roots, John Kennedy

became the first Roman Catholic. To millions of Irish Catholic Americans, Kennedy's election in 1960 as the 35th President of the United States signaled an end to the century-long struggle for full acceptance in the U.S.

A key factor that affected the vote for and against John F. Kennedy in his 1960 campaign for the presidency of the United States was his Catholic religion. Those who had mostly voted for Republican Dwight Eisenhower, now gave Kennedy from 75 to 80 percent of their vote. Some Protestants, such as Norman Vincent Peale, still feared the Pope would be giving orders to a Kennedy White House. To allay such fears, Kennedy kept his distance from church officials and in a highly publicized confrontation told the Protestant ministers of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on September 12, 1960, "I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who also happens to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my Church on public matters –and the Church does not speak for me." He promised to respect the separation of church and state and not to allow Church officials to dictate public policy to him. Kennedy counterattacked by suggesting that it was bigotry to relegate one-quarter of all Americans to second-class citizenship just because they were Catholic. In the final count, the additions and subtractions to Kennedy's vote because of religion probably canceled out. He won a close election; *The New York Times* reported a "narrow consensus" among the experts that Kennedy had won more than he lost as a result of his Catholicism, as Catholics flocked to Kennedy to demonstrate their group solidarity in demanding political equality.

By the time of Kennedy's victory, descendants of the Famine immigrants were steadily leaving the old Irish working-class neighborhoods of Boston, New York and other cities and settling into the new suburbs sprouting across America. Irish Americans, three or four generations removed from their Famine forebears, now preferred a more generic middle-class American lifestyle complete with manicured lawns and backyard barbecues. Some of them even converted to Republicanism and wound up voting for another "Irishman" named Ronald Reagan for president.

The Irish, the first big group of poor refugees ever to come to the United States, had borne the brunt of American resentment and prevailed. They could now count on the fact that their children might be educated at Harvard University or perhaps rise to a top position in any corporation or business, based on their talent and ability. And they had paved the way for the waves of immigrants from Europe and other places that followed in their footsteps.

Hard work and sheer determination had allowed the Irish in America to overcome countless obstacles and find success and happiness. But their country of origin remained a very sad place in the decades following the Famine.



# The Hidden Music of Language

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*"The laws of harmony are the same for painting and music." (Henri Ravel)*

*"The world is full of resonances. It constitutes a cosmos of things exerting a spiritual action. The dead matter is a living spirit." (Wassily Kandinsky, "On the question of the form.")*

*"In your works, you have realized what I, albeit in uncertain form, have so greatly longed for in music. The independent progress through their own destinies, the independent life of the individual voices in your compositions is exactly what I am trying to find in my paintings." (Letter to Schönberg written by Wassily Kandinsky, 1911, after the performance of Schönberg's second string quartet and the "Three piano pieces")*

*"Colour is a power which directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammer, and the soul is the strings. The artist is the hand that plays, hitting one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul." (Wassily Kandinsky, "Concerning the spiritual in Art," Munich, 1911.)*

Perception refers to interpretation of what we take in through our senses, how we make sense of what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. The five senses have been developed with only one objective, namely sensing vibration, they have been developed to decode the same phenomenon. All the senses express a sensation in the form of electrical impulses, once a stimulus activates the different impulses, receptor cells synapse with neurons and pass on electrical impulses to the different areas of the cerebral cortex and it is the brain, in turn, which interprets the sensations. Responses to stimuli like pressure, light or chemical composition take the form of separate perceptions like touch, vision or taste only when they reach the brain. Hearing: ears evolved to decode sound waves. Sight: the outcome of the frequency of the light waves as perceived by the eyes. Touch: the feeling of things having different textures. This has to do with the different rates of vibration that the body perceives as compared to the objects one feels. Taste: there are six qualities to taste represented by the following adjectives: sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, salty and astringent. These qualities are related to the vibration of the molecules in the food we try. The senses of taste and smell differ only in the way we perceive volatile and nonvolatile chemicals, given that the same chemoreceptors are responsible for gustatory and olfactory perceptions. Smell: the nose is a sensor to measure the vibration of the molecules suspended in the air that we breathe. The flow of energy when the brain is at work, also takes the form of waves, which as such, can be measured by means of an electroencephalogram.

Talking to a much-admired colleague, I came to discover that according to her, the study of phonetics bounds up with mathematics. This assertion came as a surprise to me, for I have always regarded phonetics as part of the realm of music. I clearly recall how dramatically this idea influenced my view of the way the subject is to be taught. We, as teachers, should cater for differences inherent in our students: different intelligences, and different strategies they use when apprehending reality. Pondering upon this predicament, I, for my part concur with the fact that music is applied mathematics. Therefore, my colleague's perception and mine differed mainly in our approaches, one based upon reason and science for the most part, the other based

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upon the development of a “gut feeling,” a term that admittedly might sound vague, as if lacking scientific value. This is precisely my point.

How is music generally learned? Mostly, the approach comes down to drilling. Studying our musical scales, learning how to read music, playing a given score, etc. As for me, I am mostly self-taught, as far as music goes. This means that my first approach was intuitive and therefore more ear-oriented. Only after I had learned something by ear could I possibly play that particular piece, besides I am interested in jazz, which is based upon improvisation. Music, as language, is based upon rules. This eventually led me into learning the language of music in a more formal manner.

Why is it that naturally gifted students, albeit endowed with a good capacity for imitating the phonemes of the target language, fail when it comes to phonetically transcribing paragraphs or taking dictations? The age-old feud between Arts vs. Science seems to permeate our teaching tradition and the conspicuous winner seems to be the latter.

In my opinion, this is a good point of departure when choosing a path that might be of help to guide our students into the acquisition and subsequent production of the given phonemes in the target language. Could students of a second language both possess (acquire) and know (learn) the phonemes of the target language? We tend to fluctuate between an “inspired-static” pole and a “rational conscious” pole. Neither of them can truly overcome the other.

There is a tradition of thought that can be traced back to medieval times: the theory of the “ghost,” this one defined as the impression that is left on the soul, or the senses. This impression is then “impregnated” in a stanza (a term to be defined in the following paragraph) which in turn construes its own identity, and is fathomed and possessed in its entirety.

According to Giorgio Agamben in his book “Stanzas” the poets of the XIII century interpreted the word stanza as the essential nucleus of poetry, the place where it dwells. But how can we possibly capture the very essence of it? There has been a scission between poetry and philosophy, between the poetic word and the philosophical word. Plato declared there was a long-lasting feud between them. Poetry possesses its object without knowing it and philosophy knows it without actually possessing it.

The point is that ultimately, in order to judge whether a phoneme is properly produced by our students, we teachers need to rely on our ear, our experience in the target language and phonetic criteria. Vowels are more associated with emotion, especially involved with feeling, with our biological and sensory appreciation of what is going on and what is happening to us. Consonants are more associated with reason and can consequently be described with reference to it. They stand for formality, a draconian spirit amid the musicality of vowels. Therefore, it is our capacity for discrimination that will eventually help us conclude whether our students’ rendering should be judged as either proper or faulty.

We should start by examining what sound is. Sound is a pressure fluctuation in the air. This process starts by one particle triggering the particles about it, which in turn, trigger other particles which follow a longitudinal direction. This continuous flow of particles produces a wave which is propagated through the air at almost 350 metres per second. The number of pressure variations (cycles) per second is called “frequency of sound”. The unit of sound frequency is Hertz (Hz). We human beings have an audible range between 20 Hz and 20.000 Hz (20 kHz).

We know that when we produce a vowel, some frequencies are amplified due to the nature of our vocal tract and resonators. The whole process is triggered the moment we produce a voiced phoneme, with the production of a fundamental frequency (FO). This is the frequency at which the vocal folds vibrate normally. The range of vibration for male adults is between 80 and 200 Hz, for adult females, 150 to 300 Hz and for children 200 to 500 Hz. Some frequencies above the FO are amplified. We can draw a similarity here between what happens in our vocal tract and the harmonics which are naturally amplified due to the acoustic chamber of some musical instruments. We know that when we pluck a string we perceive the fundamental note plus the harmonics associated to it, through a process known as synergy, we perceive only one note, but this note is the sum total of harmonics. When we produce a vowel, some multiples of the fundamental frequency are going to be amplified due to the shape and size of our vocal tract and resonators. When we produce /i:/ the vocal folds are vibrating at about 100Hz (G#<sub>2</sub> in musical

terminology). The first amplified frequency is going to vibrate at about 280 Hz (C#<sub>3</sub> in music), that is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Harmonic, roughly 3 times above the FO. Some time ago phoneticians decided to label these given frequencies “formants.” If we think about these formants as the product of audible frequencies, they might become part of the realm of music simply by relating a musical note to a given frequency. Thus, the first formant in /i:/, for a typical male speaker, could well be related to a C sharp (Do #), given that the first formant has its peak of intensity at 280 Hz. And C sharp produces a sine wave that vibrates at 277.18 Hz. The second formant will in turn be related to an E (Mi) and the third one to G# (So sharp). In musical terms, we can safely conclude that the resulting chord will be a minor C sharp. At this point, an aforementioned notion calls for discussion, namely synergy: i.e.: the combined power of a group of things when they are working together, which is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately. It is through this nature of synergy that we perceive a vowel or a chord, not as a sequence of individual sounds, but as the sum total of them. The word interval is another term we need to discuss. According to the Cambridge Advanced Dictionary, an interval is: MUSIC (SPECIALIZED) the amount by which one note is higher or lower than another

*An interval of a 5th (= the top note four notes higher than the bottom one)*

In western music we divide the scale into twelve notes, we must remember we have seven notes, namely: A-B-C-D-E-F-G. (A is LA, B is Ti and so on). The separation between one note and the other is called a step. The interval between A and B forms an interval of a second, between A and C, a third and so on. We also have sharp and flat notes. The twelve notes are then:

*A- A# (or Bb)-B-C-C# (or Db)-D-D# (or Eb)-E-F-F# (or Gb)-G-G# (or Ab)*

Octaves go on forever above and below our musical scale, they are simply halvings or doublings of frequency. It is established that mid A vibrates at 440 cycles per second, thus its name A 440, we have a lower A at 220 Hz, and a higher one at 880 Hz, you can go up or down the different scales until the musical notes are no longer perceived as such. To provide just one example, one drum beat per second is what middle C sounds like 8 Octaves down.

Why is it then that musical intervals sound right? We might assume that they reflect the sounds of our own speech: they reflect the inherent timbre of the vowels we use. Musical scales just sound right because they match the frequency ratios that our brains are primed to detect.

The other topic that needs to be brought into consideration is that of pitch. If vowels get their timbre from the formants, which in turn are the result of the amplification of certain frequencies in our vocal tract, why is it then that the quality of the different vowels remains stable when we change the pitch of our voices, either through intonation when talking, or even, in more extreme cases, when singing?

The answer is that although it is true that the pitch of the voice changes, and the timbre of the vowels depends primarily upon the formants, the intervals remain unchanged. That means that when varying the frequency of one formant, namely F0 (by stretching or loosening our vocal folds) a change is triggered in the rest of the formants. The important point to consider here is that the intervals should remain unchanged. The process is similar to the one that occurs when playing a chord on a fretless instrument (a double bass, a cello, a viola, etc.) and you slide down your fingers along the fingerboard keeping the hand position for the chord unchanged. The result is that the notes are obviously going to change, while the intervals will remain unchanged. (We are then playing the same chord on different keys). At this point it is relevant to highlight the fact that very few people possess the gift of perfect pitch, or absolute pitch perception, but practically everyone is naturally endowed with relative pitch, that is to say, we are able to detect the “wrong” notes in a melody, but if the tune is transposed from its original key, we tend to perceive the melody as unchanged.

It is important to note that perfect pitch is much more frequent among speakers of tone languages. In Cantonese, for example, people use from seven to nine different pitch variations as a means of distinguishing words that share the same sequence of phonemes.

At this point I find it might be helpful to establish a parallelism between the phonemes in a certain language and the different divisions of notes on different musical scales. What we might perceive as a note being played out of tune, might sound perfect on musical scales that have an additional note within a half step. This is the case with some types of music, such as Indian music. We need to remember that a step in music is the largest difference in sound between two notes which are next to each other in the western musical scale, for example from C to D we have a step, but from C to C#, we find a half step.

When trying to play a small non-western piece I happen to have overheard, I discover I have not been “wired” to detect and play notes with a smaller division than a half-step. I find myself correcting, so to speak, the tune as I have to play it. The point is that the perception of the pitch of a given note is acquired, according to my view, in the same way as the phonemes of a given language are acquired. It is not surprising then that students find it very difficult to tell the difference between two foreign vowels that in our native language belong to the same phoneme.

The same can be stated as regards colours. According to Benjamin Whorf’s Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis experiences can be limited by language. Certain experiences cannot be fully expressed, because a given language might not have a word to refer to a particular concept. This language barrier may in turn affect perception of colour. The Inuits or Eskimos can detect many hues of white, in fact they have 17 words for white as applied to different snow conditions, which are understood as different colours, a difference which may go unnoticed for those who are not used to living in their environment and do not share their language.

A possible approach that we might aim at using when presenting the phonemes of the target language to our students, is a holistic approach, one in which more than one sense can be used to apprehend the nuances and intricacies of the target vocalic phonemes our students are to acquire in the classes of phonetics. Wassily Kandinsky proposed that there is a parallel to be drawn between language and painting. Lines or drawings are then to be understood as consonants and colours as vowels. One method to understand how our senses apprehend reality rests on the fact that we have five independently functioning senses. This view is known as the modularity thesis. The other viewpoint sustains that we possess one integrated sensory organ with five sub-organs (the unitary thesis). The latter is the theory that has been in vogue of late. Furthermore, it is the one that serves as the basis to sustain my approach to relate vowels, music and colours. We must bear it in mind that ancient cultures relate vowels, music and vibration to the different chakras, because for them sound is music and sound, good or bad, influences us and has an impact on our energy systems. Moreover, sound, music, musical notes chanting or vowel production, can be used for chakra balancing.

Interest in colour hearing goes back to classic Greek philosophy, when it was disputed whether colour, like pitch, could be considered as a physical quality of music. Pythagoras discovered the mathematical order of musical harmony by relating the length of strings to successive octaves. This led to the idea that colours and sounds could be related too, following mathematical rules.

Some scientists claim that we might be “pre-wired” for music, I prefer the term designed, in the sense that we could have been born with a type of universal grammar for music. The additional meaning of design, best understood in the analogous poem by Robert Lee Frost presents the idea of the unavoidable, or destiny. We might therefore assume that we humans have been then endowed and designed with an innate gift to develop language and music.

The term *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), first used in philosophy in an essay in 1827 was afterwards adapted and re-interpreted by the German opera composer Richard Wagner in 1844 in two different essays. He proposed that visual, auditory and namely all the senses can be part of a gestalt experience in an opera. Already during the Renaissance, artists such as Michelangelo did not perceive any real division between the different forms of art or, in some cases, science.

The word “Gestalt” translates as “whole” or “form.” The idea underlying this principle is that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. In other words, our brain needs to organize information into groups to better understand it. There are different principles: one is the principle of “Perceptual Constancy.” This principle maintains that we can apprehend and interpret information without unneeded repetition. We cannot possibly reformulate an object every time we come across it as if it were the first time, every single time you hear a vowel or a musical interval we relate it to the previous notion our brain has developed.



All these theories pave the way for my proposal of choosing a certain hue or shade of colour to represent every vocalic phoneme of the target language. This is not wholly capricious, but rather based upon certain correspondences between notes and colours.

As we know, notes are measured in Hertz. For example, when we speak of La 440, what we mean, is that the sine wave produced by this note vibrates at 440 cycles per second. By multiplying this number 41 times, we obtain another sine wave which cannot possibly be captured by our ear. This sine wave is then part of the realm of colour, which results in a hue of yellow and orange. We must remember that human beings can perceive from 9 to 12 octaves of sound, but only one of colour.

Of late, different studies have been carried out so as to establish the relationship between vowels and colours, among them we can mention Wrembel, M. & Grzybowski, A. and their publication *Achievements and perspectives in SLA of speech: New Sounds 2010*. Frankfurt, and a recent investigation carried out by Rob Drummond from the Manchester Metropolitan University. I, for my part, related the main vocalic formants to musical notes, these resulting notes, were then related to a certain hue of colour, at that time, I did not know of the existence of these aforementioned studies that bear a great similarity with my findings and intuitions. A possible representation of the different relationships between vowels and colours, is the following one:

English vowel n°1: a shade of yellow and green. English vowel n°2: a shade of light green and grey. English vowel n°3: dark green. English vowel n°4: orange. English vowel n°5: red. English vowel n°6: blue. English vowel n°7: dark blue/ brown. English vowel n°8: light brown. English vowel n°9: dark purple. English vowel n°10: a shade of grey and yellow. English vowel n°11: grey. English vowel n°12: grey.

The grayness of the central vowels reminds me of another quote by Wassily Kandinsky:

Clarity is a tendency towards white, and obscurity is a tendency towards black. White and black form the second great contrast, which is static. White is a deep, absolute silence, full of possibility. Black is nothingness without possibility, an eternal silence without hope, and corresponds with death. Any other colour resonates strongly on its neighbors. The mixing of white with black leads to gray, which possesses no active force and whose tonality is near that of green. Gray corresponds to immobility without hope; it tends to despair when it becomes dark, regaining little hope when it lightens. (Wassily Kandinsky, "Concerning the spiritual in Art," Munich, 1911.)

How can we possibly apply these notions in a pronunciation class? We might use colour cards with examples illustrating the different vowels with the given colour related to it. Students who are more visual, might benefit from these additional clues when it comes to acquiring the different vocalic phonemes of the L2 they are to learn.

We have every reason to suppose that articulate speech is one of the latest, as it certainly is the highest, of the arts acquired by man, and as the instinctive power of producing musical notes and rhythms is developed low down in the animal series, it would be altogether opposed to the principle of evolution, if we were to admit that man's musical capacity has been developed from the tones used in impassioned speech. We must suppose that the rhythms and cadences of oratory are derived from previously developed musical powers. (Darwin, 1871, p. 12)



# Some Issues in Young Adult Literature

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*You are either going to be disgusted by them,  
or you are going to be so filled with love for them  
that your heart almost breaks.  
(The girl who was Saturday night, Heather O' Neill)*

## Introduction

Young adult literature, adolescent literature, juvenile literature, junior books, books for teens, books for tweeners... different words to describe texts that bridge the gap between children's literature and adult literature. But, why are there different ways of naming the same genre? Hayn and Nolen (2012) explain that the answer may lie in evolution and that even those who advocate the genre face difficulties in reaching agreement over terminology. Cole (2009) asserts that "given the negative connotations of the words *adolescents* and *teens*, most experts agree upon *young adult literature*" (p. 49).

Literature written for young adults developed after World War II, when the change in the economy offered many teenagers an increase in economic resources and social autonomy. This new context contributed to the growth of a young adult market in the book publishing industry (Habegger, 2004).

During the 1960s, The Young Adult Library Services Association coined the term "young adult" to represent the 12-18 age range and, according to Cart (1996), the 1960s would be "the decade when literature for adolescents could be said to come into its own" (p. 43). In those times, young adult literature referred to realistic fiction that was set in the contemporary world and addressed problems, issues, and life circumstances of interest to young readers.

In recent years, the conventional definition of "young adult" has expanded to include those as young as 10 and, since the late 1990s, as old as 25 (Cart, 2008). Moreover, "literature," which traditionally meant fiction, has also expanded to include new forms of literary nonfiction, new forms of poetry and text combined with pictures, such as picture books, comics and graphic novels.

Although there are varied definitions for Young Adult literature, most of them point to the fact that this genre only includes works *written* for and *marketed* to young adults. In addition, characteristics of a young adult novel usually include several of the following: a teenage (or young adult) protagonist, a first-person perspective, adult characters in the background, a limited number of characters, a compressed time span and familiar setting, current slang, detailed descriptions of appearance and dress, positive resolutions, few (if any) subplots, and an approximate length of 125 to 250 pages, though this last aspect is not necessarily the rule.

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## Themes in Young-Adult Literature

*A lot of people have no idea that right now Y.A. (Young Adult)  
is the garden of Eden of literature.  
Sherman Alexie*

*So much of Young Adult literature has turned dark, almost pathological. It's almost as if there is a race  
to see who can be the most dysfunctional.  
Richard Paul Evans*

A comparative study carried out by Wells (2003) identified the following most common literary themes that are present in young adult books: friendship, getting into trouble, interest in the opposite sex, money, problems with parents (divorce, single parents, remarriage), younger siblings, concern over grades/school, popularity, puberty, race, death, neighborhood, and job/working. Some of the themes found relate directly to adolescent development and some of them reflect characteristics of our society. Since the 1990s, young adult literature has been based on social issues and has dealt with confronting themes including, among others, anorexia, child abuse, depression, sex and drugs.

Kaplan (2005) points out that, with the purpose of engaging more young people in reading, young adult books are constantly in search of the new and are being transformed by topics and themes that years ago would have never been conceived. Kaplan describes some of these “new” themes as “daft”, “a little far-fetched” and “out-of touch with everyday reality”. Yet, amongst supernatural romances, posthuman settings and a super class of human beings, most adolescent readers view characters that live and wrestle with real problems close to their own life experiences as teenagers. Questions of character, identity and values are at the centre of all these themes and a possibility arises for young adults to better understand how they, as adolescents, are being constructed. However, there are those who believe that, instead of helping young people to understand social and emotional problems and develop coping skills, young adult literature can have a negative impact on young readers. For supporters of this last view, openly discussing risky behaviour can lead teenagers to imitate the actions described in the stories they read.

It cannot be denied, though, that young adults do experience traumatic events in real life and young adult literature may engage teenagers emotionally while helping them realise that they are not alone and providing a rich context of information for topics that might not otherwise be freely discussed.

### Some *disturbing societal issues* as YAL topics

Chance (2014) states that “not all (YA) novels today are lighthearted... some... tackle difficult and disturbing societal issues.” Two points can be considered in this notion: lightheartedness on the one hand and darkness, as it has been called, on the other. There is what might be described as a degree of superficiality in this type of literary productions, either in the topics themselves or in how they are dealt with. It is possible to read the adventures of young friends playing the roles of amateur detectives in situations in which risk is minimum and success is most certainly achieved by the heroes (such as Edward Stratemeyer’s Hardy Boys or the Nancy Drew series), and it is also possible to find a “difficult and disturbing societal issue” such as genetic manipulation serving as a setting for a story in which the more *disturbing* aspects of cloning are, at best, made a brief reference to –such as in Nancy Farmer’s Matteo Alacrán stories.

There are stories whose setting resemble our own, but in a (bleak) universe, in which the hero needs to grow from innocence to adulthood to survive and help others. These may be dystopian tomorrows in our own Earth (as in Veronica Roth’s Divergent series) or in far off planets and civilizations (Frank Herbert’s Dune); or in universes where the natural is what we call supernatural or magic (such as Terry Pratchett’s Tiffany Aching series, within the Discworld multiverse). Again, there is reference to worrying issues such as the manipulation of the natural environment or the morality of turning human beings into social guinea pigs, but the stress seems to lie on the development of the narrative more than on a desire to make the (young) readers actually reflect on the effect of manipulating nature or society.

And then, there are other stories, in which the “disturbing issue” has a strong role in the plot and makes the protagonist –and the reader– reflect on options and choices and eventually take a stand. Gary Schmidt, for instance, takes the topic of parental abuse and its effect on children, with a great dose of hope in the vital role of friendship and education to overcome the dreadful situation. Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* deals, very explicitly, with friendship, betrayal, oppression, homosexuality, racial and other types of violence, and though a work of fiction, it does take place in our time, in our recent history, and in our world, presenting events that, sadly, have most probably happened.

Death and its related issues is also one of those “difficult” topics that have also been tackled by YAL. There is the interesting question whether it has been dealt with mostly in a “lighthearted” way or more as a “disturbing societal issue”. An initial attempt at a reply involves considering the realities connected with death that will be taken into consideration: death as a self-provoked event, death as a consequence of disease, and grief related to death.

Suicide, and teenage suicide to that effect, can be observed in different YAL works, albeit with varying depths in its treatment. A first example is a very early novel that, due to its characteristics, can be considered YAL: Louisa May Alcott’s *An Old Fashioned Girl* (1869). The reader will find a suicide attempted by Jenny, who is, in the main character’s words, “a girl ... who tried to destroy herself simply because she was so discouraged, sick, and poor”. Undoubtedly, there is a whole social situation surrounding this desperate decision: Jenny is said to have been unable to get a decent job, her only option being to take an immoral type of life, which she rejects. Nothing is expressed explicitly –the words “prostitution” or “suicide” do not appear, and the extreme situation of many a poor young woman is thus presented by means of side references only. The happy ending in this story consists in suicidal Jenny being adopted by a gentle matron, who helps her overcome her dire situation. Thus, thanks to this charitable action, the danger of suicide disappears from the girl’s horizon. It is a tale full of hope, in which the “disturbing issue” is presented and dismissed as quickly and lightly as possible, serving as a trigger for a moral reflection for more fortunate young ladies. Teenage suicide, however, is more complex than what Alcott’s simplified reference may lead to believe. Probably Alcott’s Jenny felt the anguish, sadness and despair which lead many teenagers to this terrible decision, but nothing is actually said about it. In contemporary YA novels the approach is quite the opposite. John Green’s *Paper Towns* (2008) seems to lead to the conclusion that teenage Margo has committed suicide. It is a fear the main character, her friend Quentin, does not allow into his mind, but which is never really discarded. There is a balance between the possibility of suicide and the hope that the girl has simply gone missing. In *All the Bright Places* (Jennifer Niven, 2015), the reader has access to the mental and emotional processes that a suicidal teenager goes through. In this work, the driving force of the story is precisely the drama behind the decision of taking one’s own life, from a first person perspective. There is no easy way out in *All the Bright Places*, and the end is actually the opposite of what Alcott offered in her approach to the topic. It is possible, then, to witness a change in perspective: from a covert reference and a miraculous way out to a dark tale of grief and defeat.

Another issue related to death is the suffering that those who will remain alive have to go through. From two different perspectives, *A Monster Calls* (Patrick Ness, 2011) and *The Fault in Our Stars* (John Green, 2014) deal with disease, agony, grief and mourning. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, 17-years old Hazel faces her own coming end: she suffers from terminal cancer. But despite the fact that her young life is seriously compromised, one of her main concerns is what is to become of her parents, especially her mother, not only *if* but *when* she dies. The thoughts that go through her mind, her worries about the pain she, though unwillingly, has caused and will cause to those she loves deeply, present the situation of loss and bereavement perceived by the one who will actually provoke them. It could be said that this presents the other side of the coin: in the stories dealing with suicide commented before, there is little or no concern for those who will bear the departure of the beloved one; the consideration of the feelings of pain, remorse, worry, experienced by the one about to die opens up a wholly different perspective for the readers. In *A Monster Calls*, Conor, the teenage protagonist, needs to face the fact that his mother is dying of cancer, and that he has contradictory feelings regarding her soon-to-occur death. The process of accepting the inevitable –there is nothing he can do to save his mother’s life– is intermingled



with a deeper and maybe more subtle feeling: the ambivalent desire for the end to delay but at the same time to come, which also brings about guilt and shame at his own weakness and self-perceived selfishness.

Unwind (Neil Shusterman, 2007) discusses the topic of abortion, portraying it against a dystopian environment, and from the perspective of the young adults who are going to be retroactively aborted. In this future society, life is sacred in the mother's womb and until the age of 12, but parents can opt for a so-called retroactive abortion, between their children's ages 13 to 18. Their lives are said not to be terminated, but recycled, as each and every part of their bodies is harvested to be used for transplant. Facing death here is seen through the eyes of three of these young people who are going to be *unwound*, that is, who are going to be subjected to the retroactive abortion. Each of the three main characters deal with their fate in a different way, which can relate to general reactions to impending death: exalted acceptance, hopeless resignation, and open refusal. However changed the rules in the dystopian future when these events take place, the young readers can relate to the fears and struggles of the protagonists.

These are some approaches to a "difficult issue" (Chance, 2014). From a rather lighthearted side reference to a deep consideration of the causes, consequences and ramifications of the specific issue chosen here –death, YAL offers a variety of possibilities for readers to consider different facets of the topic.

### Views of darkness

Headlines such as The Guardian's "Yes, teen fiction can be dark –but it shows teenagers that they aren't alone" (June 8, 2011), "YA books on death: is young adult fiction becoming too dark?" (May 11, 2014) or The Times' "Teens Crave Young Adult Books on Really Dark Topics (and That's OK)" (February 6, 2015) have opened a debate about how young adult novels that are characterized as *bleak* (or *dark*) may influence young adult readers.

According to Habbeger (2004), "one of the primary reasons that 'bleak' books are considered to be so bleak is due to their themes or subject matter. These books are about teens that face serious problems, such as violence, alcoholism, suicide and the 'Big Ds: death, divorce, disease and drugs'" (p. 36). Habbeger also explains that colloquial language is another characteristic of bleak novels and that the settings are usually realistic and contemporary, often in lower-class environments that are harsh and difficult places to live.

For Gardner (2011) there is a reason for the amount of darkness depicted in young adult literature and it is related to the reality that exists behind the bleak young adult books: the darkness in many teens' lives. Gardner explains that our world contains considerable darkness and that, instead of creating it, writers and publishers are reflecting what comes from the hearts and minds of real people.

For instance, Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2012), a dark series filled with death, violence, betrayal and mistrust, "is in fact critiquing a number of disturbing elements in current culture: violent video games, violent film and television, celebrity culture, and voyeuristic "reality" television shows" (Ordway, 2012). Similarly, there are many other examples of young adult bestsellers whose titles -not to mention the plots- illustrate dark, even scary, themes.

In Patrick Ness' *A Monster Calls* (2011), already mentioned, darkness is not only perceived in the multi-tonal black and white illustrations that accompany the text but also in the internal and external conflicts the characters are faced with. However, the kind of darkness portrayed in this novel may be defined as heart breaking and truly inspiring rather than cruel and destructive. Conor, the main character, struggles to cope with the consequences of his mother's terminal cancer and, when everything seems to be unclear and obscure, a light of hope is eventually found.

### Some reactions

Probably because of its rather recent expansion, reflection on YAL is also rather recent, and certainly only at its beginning. However, and as some parts of the previous analysis references were made to a changing approach to certain disturbing issues. Though there are plot-driven

stories in which there is little space for serious pondering of topics connected to life, society, change, to name a few, there are other works in which special care has been put so as to allow the reader to actually go beyond the narrative and see aspects that otherwise would have escaped their attention. This possibility, though, has met extreme reactions from adults.

In 2011, The Wall Street Journal published an essay by Meghan Cox Gurdon (essayist and book critic): *Darkness Too Visible*. In it, the author expressed her viewpoint about some current –and popular– topics in published YA novels:

How dark is contemporary fiction for teens? Darker than when you were a child, my dear: So dark that kidnapping and pederasty and incest and brutal beatings are now just part of the run of things in novels directed, broadly speaking, at children from the ages of 12 to 18. (Cox Gurdon, 2011).

She also advocated the idea that the way in which these topics are dealt with verges on sensationalism and naturalizes behaviours and attitudes which should rather be condemned.

This provoked strong reactions, mainly against her position. The most widespread criticism was that Cox Gurdon was trying to turn a blind eye to the fact that life is tough, not only for adults, and that teenagers going through any of the violent situations that are dealt with in YAL need to know that they are not different or bad because they have to undergo extremely difficult situations, and this is in partly achieved when they come to read YA novels. One such reply was given in The Guardian by young adult books author Maureen Johnson. She contended that

If subjects like these are in YA books, it's to show that they are real, they have happened to others, and they can be survived. For teenagers, there is sometimes no message more critical than: you are not alone. This has happened before. The feeling that you are feeling, the thing you are going through –it is a known thing. (Johnson, 2011)

What is more, she strongly dismissed the idea that YAL authors advertise in a way violent behaviours –“No one writing about self-harm is teaching how to self-harm. No one writing about rape is providing instructions on how to rape or how to be raped” (id.).

Even if it is true that the topics chosen in YAL and the way in which they are addressed seem to be more realistic, it is also true that many authors have taken a darker tone. However, the constant flow of novels for young adults offers a wide range of possibilities, from the lighthearted to the very deep, and in this as well the young readers are given a choice.

## Conclusion

It is undeniable that the subjects chosen and the approach taken to discuss them have experienced some change since the early YA novels. In the 1960s and 1970s issues once considered taboo or strictly restricted to adult literature started to be openly discussed in books for young adults (Abate 2010), and thus the scope and depth of what was accepted as a suitable topic for teenage literature became wider. And, in many ways, darker.

It is also undeniable that what were once considered *adults-only topics* in fact affect all age groups. If in the past they were barely or not discussed in relation to young adults, it probably had to do with the fact that the concept of adolescence as a separate period in life, with its own characteristics, emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with works such as those by anthropologist Margaret Mead. The consideration of disturbing or problematic issues through the eyes of a teenager may well help young readers who are undergoing similar situations to feel, as Johnson (2011) put it, not alone, especially if those around them do not offer the appropriate support.

But it is also true that in some cases, there is more emphasis on the negative aspects of reality, and very little hope. If it is correct to assume that young adults also go through painful situations that put them sorely to the test, it is also important to show some degree of hope, that not everyone and everything is dark, that it is possible to achieve happiness despite the extreme pain suffered. It is not fair to consider that all novels for the younger generations promote despair over hope; but it is accurate, at least, to say that there is an observable growing darkness in YAL.

All in all, what Abate (2010) expressed concerning children's books is also applicable to YAL:

Since the appearance of works for young readers, authors, parents and critics have debated these questions: Is the role of these books to educate young people about the world in which they live, including its unpleasant aspects. Or, is it their responsibility to shield children from such elements?

And, paraphrasing her answer to these questions, the decision largely depends on our social construction of young adulthood and what we, as parents and educators, want for them.

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# A Colourful and Enigmatic View of English Art

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Objective: to present an overview of contemporary art as it is perceived today in the influential English speaking countries, mainly UK and USA. A contrast between traditional and contemporary art will be contemplated as well as historical/cultural influences that originated the various stages in art. The main purpose of this visual presentation<sup>2</sup> is to develop an awareness towards art as it is seen today.

The following views on art throughout history reflect the essence of this talk, art is an expression of the inner self, it is what the artist creates in the spectator through the expression of feelings, which reproduce all the stages in the development of the human mind. Let's analyse them together and see their common denominators: an adventure of his soul, represent the inward significance of the object of art, it makes us see, makes demands on the spectator and it gives life a shape.

Analyse:

*"EVERY PRODUCTION OF AN ARTIST SHOULD BE THE EXPRESSION OF AN ADVENTURE OF HIS SOUL".*

W. Somerset Maugham. 1874/1965

*"THE AIM OF ART IS TO REPRESENT NOT THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THINGS BUT THEIR INWARD SIGNIFICANCE".*

Aristotles. 384 bc

*"ART DOES NOT REPRODUCE WHAT WE SEE; RATHER IT MAKES US SEE"*

Paul Klee. 1879/1940

*"ALL ART SHOULD HAVE A CERTAIN MYSTERY AND SHOULD MAKE DEMANDS ON THE SPECTATOR".*

Henry Moore. 1898/1986

*"THE OBJECT OF ART IS TO GIVE LIFE A SHAPE".*

W. Shakespeare.

Over the past century art has evolved from conventional studio methods, such as painting or sculpture, to include wide-ranging approaches to art making, including conceptual ideas, performances, installations and many experimental forms, a variety of materials and combinations of visual and sound images. It has even invaded public places, country fields (land art) and the most unthinkable places such as installations in churches (as we have seen at the Biennale in Venice, 2015).

Modern art can be bizarre or baffling. It can be funny, frivolous or puzzling and pointless. But it can also be stimulating, thought-provoking, absorbing and exciting. And above all... we should approach it with an open mind, forgetting all the traditional adjectives that usually define it: beautiful, awful, nice, attractive. Remember, you do not have to like art to appreciate it, and this is what we do today, appreciate as a mental exercise that implies involvement. Now we, the spectators, have to participate in the work of art and get involved. Yet many people feel better in the comfort of realistic art, art they can recognise and does not ask them to move away from their comfort zone. Take a risk... get involved and open up to your inner self; art, as Shakespeare says, should shape your life, your soul.

1. Please note that this presentation was based on a visual component.

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Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) was an influential eighteenth-century English painter, specializing in portraits. He promoted the "Grand Style" in painting which depended on idealization of the scenes and people. But what do we actually see in his paintings? They had to reflect splendor, beauty, outstanding landscape and country life, and above all show the richness of their clothes and perfection of their houses. His grand style showed this...what feelings are reflected, does it arise emotions in the spectator? The beauty of this girl's face conveys only that, static beauty. But the artist was expected to reflect all this, to cover imperfections, to hide anything that did not represent beauty. But the techniques used were perfect, detailed painting demanded a lot of work, concentration and hours of posing! The best artist in those days was the one who never showed ugliness in his paintings.

So... art is changing or not? (*Photos of Ramsey's and Bacon's paintings*)

What is your first reaction when you contemplate these two paintings? Do you have an immediate reaction connected with beauty and ugliness? Do you feel identified with one of them? How have you reacted? You feel forced to move away from your comfort zone, don't you?. These paintings are separated by over two hundred years and reflect all the changes and advances in the world, but also human conflicts.

Allan Ramsey (Scotland, 1713). This portrait is full of both grace and individuality, spotless skin (very rare in those days! There were health problems, dental problems, smallpox marks... but the artist had to hide all that).

And now the other portrait! What feelings does it show? Does it show human perfection? Does human perfection really exist? Francis Bacon (1902-1992), from Ireland, lived almost a century of major changes in history, inventions, wars, and the impact on art was enormous. Art reflects the history of mankind... it has to. His figurative art is known for his bold, emotionally charged imagery. He was unsure of his ability, he drifted as a highly complex bon vivant, his art became more somber, inward-looking and preoccupied with the passage of time and death. Bacon was equally reviled and acclaimed during his lifetime and Margaret Thatcher described him as "that man who paints those dreadful pictures"! And he became one of the most influential painters of portraits reflecting all the human decadence and abject feelings. In the 1950s (after WW2) Bacon shocked the international art world with his bold, severe and nightmarish figures. His figures were disturbing and made viewers to reconsider their feelings, they were affected violently. He was very good at exploring texture and colour to express those feelings.

Since his death his reputation and market value have grown steadily, and his work is amongst the most acclaimed, expensive and sought-after. On 12 November 2013, his *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* set the world record as the most expensive piece of art sold at auction, selling for \$142,405,000 until exceeded by the sale of a Picasso in May 2015 (over \$200.000.000). So art also means money and the art market is these days one of the most active all over the world. Fortunes are paid every day just for the pleasure of possession of a work of art.

And now we go to one of the greatest masters ever, his work continues influencing artists even to this day and many have tried to imitate his paintings of nature...and have realized it is impossible.

Joseph Turner (1775-1852), the "Painter of Light" (*photos from his paintings from Internet*). He was an English Romanticist landscape painter, water colourist, and printmaker. Turner was considered a controversial figure in his day because he moved away from static landscapes and seascapes and showed the real forces of nature. He is now regarded as the artist who elevated landscape painting to its highest in the history of painting. The art critic John Ruskin described him as the artist who could most "stirringly and truthfully measure the moods of Nature."

Now slightly close your eyes and look at his paintings of rough seas and then look at Rothko's. You see the pattern? Wouldn't you say that Rothko captured Turner's seas in his abstract paintings? And this is the height of Abstract Expressionism. Both artists separated by over two centuries yet one of the great sources of inspiration for modern Rothko was precisely "unconventional Turner"! See the cycles of art history?

Mark Rothko (1903-1970) was an American painter of Russian Jewish descent. Although Rothko himself refused to adhere to any art movement, he is generally identified as an Abstract Expressionist. He is one of the most famous postwar American artists. And war was indeed a

major turning point for all the artists. He always favoured colour and clearly states it when he says: "the fact that one usually begins with drawing is already academic. We start with color." He also said that colours contain their own life force, a "breath of life" lacking in most figurative painting of the era. Many of his paintings are composed of bright, vibrant colors, particularly reds and yellows, expressing energy and ecstasy. By the mid-1950s, however, Rothko began to employ dark blues and greens; for many critics of his work this shift in colors was representative of a growing darkness within Rothko's personal life.

### **What changed?**

Thomas Gainsborough (1750) and Hockney (1970) separated by two centuries yet the subject theme is the same... what has changed is the world and the perspective of life. Gainsborough was also a landscape artist and this is one of his most famous portraits of the magnificence of country life for well-off families. This is the period of the Enlightenment. What does he show here? He was definitely asked by this landlord to paint a scene that would reveal his riches, his vast stretches of beautiful land, a beautiful family. It is a combination of portrait and landscape, showing great sensibility, relaxation of power, leisure and possessions gave them peace of mind –in those days these paintings served a marketing purpose! To show how well he was doing in life. But observe one detail that indicates that part of this painting was finished in a studio: silk shoes. The landscape was painted first and on top the family that posed in the studio...the lady of the house with a book on her lap that was never finished! The new conception of success: land and relaxation.

And then we go to David Hockney's painting... isn't this a marketing tool as well? It is the portrait of a couple of very famous interior designers in the 60s who wanted to show their von vivant way of life. It was the days of Pop Art. Analyse this painting, in which ways does it resemble Gainsborough? Right, the same theme, the same attitude of showing off but in a different setting, a setting according to the times and history. Lack of sensibility, cold, detached as society was in those days; everything had to show aloofness and superiority given by money and acquisition of goods. Hockney is still very active today and he has ventured into different techniques, also using Polaroid snaps or photolab-prints of a single subject, Hockney arranges a patchwork to make a composite image. Since 2009, Hockney has painted hundreds of pop art portraits, still lifes and landscapes using the Brushes iPhone and iPad application.

### **More Portraits**

Reverend Patrick Brontë (1777-1861) was an Irish-English priest and author who spent most of his adult life in England and was the father of the writers Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë. So... his profession is clearly visible in this work, austere figures, calm, expressionless (one was expected not to show feelings) and the message is thus conveyed: three well brought up ladies looking for husbands!

Contrast with von vivant actress Marilyn Monroe by controversial artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987). He was an American artist who was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art. His works explore the relationship between artistic expression, celebrity culture and advertisement that flourished by the 1960s. After World War II things started to change, but in different ways, in the countries where the war was fought the reaction was suffering, the anxiety of starting all over... paintings expressed all that. In the countries where such proximity to suffering was not experienced, people concentrated on consuming, on all the funny sides of life, on loudness, mass industry flourished, tins became the latest fad... eating out of tins... and this was USA, and it was the birth of Pop Art in the hands of a publisher and marketing figure who became an artist: Andy Warhol. After a successful career as a commercial illustrator, Warhol became a renowned and sometimes controversial artist. Warhol's art used many types of media, including hand drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, silk screening, sculpture, film, and music. Marilyn Monroe was an icon, she represented all the excesses of this new era, and this is the origin of this painting. Monroe everywhere, in different colours, but colours are fading in some of the frames...why? It was after her death...an icon fades away to be replaced by others.

Warhol said “during the 1960s, people forgot what emotions were supposed to be. And I do not think they’ve ever remembered”. Everything was superficial and material. Pop arts reflected the light-hearted attitude that people craved after the World War II, that was real society in USA. Artists who had grown up during the war were now witnessing the fierce marketing of new products and they based their work on images that everyone could relate to (tins, cleaning products, stars). It represented Western American society.

Lucien Freud (grandson of psychologist, 1922-2011) was a German-born British painter. Known chiefly portrait and figure paintings, he was widely considered the pre-eminent British artist of his time as his works showed great psychological penetration. He was influenced by the theories of two of the greatest psychologist, Freud and Jung. Many of the poses of his nude models the conscious or unconscious influence of his grandfather’s psychoanalytical couch. His relationship with models and friends was discomfiting and conflictive. Great artist to show all human passions at all ages, his works on old age are very shocking and intense. Bacon and Freud were friends but artistic rivals. The two artists painted each other several times, starting in 1951. The fact that Queen Elizabeth took the risk of posing for him, before his death, shows the great recognition to his art. He was a strong believer in the fact that the face and body have all the power to show the most inner feelings. Needless to say, the differences between portraits in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and portraits these days, are remarkable; but they are only the results of new conflicts in human beings: art reflects life and its demons.

### **So... when did things change?**

The technical revolution affected people at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new inventions, cars, electricity, engines and cameras; the industrial revolution gave origin to the exploration of new materials; there was a new conception of life. Electricity created a new world... that of leisure time, days became longer. The invention of photography in 1839 affected artists’ practice the most. The public wanted photographs, not paintings. Some artists questioned the need for copying the world around them when photos could do the work with little effort; some used photos in their compositions. Some works received critical acclaim but disapproval was the most common reaction: *WHEN DID PEOPLE STOP BEING HORRIFIED BY ART THAT DID NOT CONFORM? WHEN DID THEY STOP BEING SCANDALISED AND SHOCKED?* NEVER. Much of the work being produced could only be appreciated by other artists and this continues... up to today.

Then came Carl Jung and his theory on the unconscious collective mind (1875-1961) and the gap between the expected “beautiful art” and “new art” became wider and reached the peak of artistic expression with Surrealism. The motto was “let’s represent our dreams, thoughts, feelings, the real core of humanity.”

Before 1900, artists had begun experimenting with colours in ways that had not been possible before as new chemical pigments were invented and the innovation of keeping paint in tin tubes kept these colours bright and fresh. Some artists also attempted to convey feelings or symbolic meanings through colour. Remember that in the past only natural pigments and dyes were available. You may have heard of Matisse... well he was one of the pioneers in using bright colours and the society was shocked! Artists started believing in the theory about the spiritual power of colours.

### **More contrasts (*Epstein’s sculptures and Greek sculptures*)**

Epstein and Greek sculptures offer a contrast in the representation of people. One shows the essence of beauty, of what a sculpture should be, but for whom? Beauty, serenity, or power and strength, ideal people. The contrast with Epstein’s “iron man” is dramatic for some spectators, but it clearly shows the use of new materials, the use of materials known to every person. It is also the impact that World War I had on artists. In this it is the conversion of a rock drill into a man: man and industry, man and labour. It is intimidating and menacing, something never shown in a sculpture before. (Certainly nearer to the common man than the idealistic sculpture on the right). For those of you who like literature, Ezra Pound also formed part of this post war movement.

Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) was a British sculptor who pioneered modern sculpture. He was



born in the United States, and moved to Europe in 1902, becoming a British citizen in 1911. He often produced controversial works which challenged taboos on what was appropriate subject matter for public artworks, Revolting against ornate, pretty art, he made bold, often harsh and massive forms of bronze or stone. his works often shocked his audience. This was because they deliberately abandoned the conventions of classical Greek sculpture.

### **Sculpture: a new vision** (*Hepworth*)

When looking at these two pieces of work by Barbara Hepworth we notice the new changes in art, abstraction, and simplicity of forms that give rise to different interpretations according to the spectator, the spectator has to get involved even further, has to participate now. She used undulating and smooth materials that often appear as if they have been part of the natural landscape; as a matter of fact she always liked putting her sculpture in the landscape, as part of it. Sculptures are for the open air; they have to merge with the surroundings.

Dame Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) was an English artist and sculptor. Her work exemplifies modern sculpture. She was "one of the few women artists to achieve international prominence highly interested in abstraction and art movements on the continent." And notice both Hepworth and Epstein were decorated by Queen Elizabeth (Dame and Sir) thus showing their great influence in modern sculpture. They (together with Henry Moore and Louis Bourgeois) formed the avant garde group and experimented with styles; powerfully inventive remained at the forefront of contemporary art.

Nash's sculpture may originate a traditional question in you: Is this a sculpture? But may be by now you have the tools to firmly say "it is." Why? It represents a dome (made of cork) which may (or may not mean) the fragility of religion in this modern world.

David Nash (1945) is a British sculptor who has worked worldwide with wood, trees and the natural environment, Nash also makes land art, of which the best known is *Wooden Boulder*, begun in 1978 a work involving the journey of a large wooden sphere from a Welsh mountainside to the Atlantic Ocean. Nash, the same as Hepworth and Moore, makes sculptures which stay in the landscape.

Henry Moore Henry (1898-1986) was an English sculptor and artist who experienced living through World Wars I and II, both having a great impact in his life and work. He is best known for his semi-abstract monumental bronze sculptures which are located around the world as public works of art. Buenos Aires is one of those cities... why don't you investigate where it is located?

His forms are usually abstractions of the human figure, typically depicting mother-and-child or reclining figures. Moore's works are usually suggestive of the female body, apart from a phase in the 1950s when he sculpted family groups. His forms contain hollow spaces. Moore and Nash worked together and formed part of committees to promote modern sculptures and their relation to the landscape. At the outbreak of the World War II the Chelsea School of Art was evacuated and Moore resigned his teaching post. During the war, Moore produced powerful drawings of Londoners sleeping in the London Underground while sheltering from the Blitz. The war influenced his work and made profound emotional demands on him.

Bright colourful sculptures, no longer in bronze but in different everyday materials, such as ceramics and paper. These two are part of a 2015 exhibition of YBA. Monica Debus is a young upcoming artist (born in Scotland) who uses ceramics as a key material that allows to introduce colour and drawings. The smoothness Moore achieved with bronze, she achieves with new materials; she was influenced by Moore in the rounded shapes, smoothness and refinement; in this case, the same as Moore, she chooses the subject of affection.

The other abstract sculpture made of wood and paper was collectively made by young artists from Glasgow; they move away from figurative representation and create a piece of work (untitled) that balances colour and shape, moving away from roundness: geometrical shapes begin its way into sculpture and this is the most remarkable aspect of their work, that's why it was chosen.

### **Summer Exhibition-Royal Academy of Art (2015)**

So now we face a new dimension of art. We saw different materials being used, different meanings being expressed and it is time to experience the latest is art, Summer Art Exhibitions.



The best and most avant garde location is London, the Royal Academy embracing now the real YBA (new generation).

We start with an artist that is cleverly combining engineering, metaphysics, philosophy, art, mathematics... to create works of art. Outstanding young artist Jim Lambie. Following the existing architecture of a room, Lambie applies continuous lines of tape to the floor beginning at the outer perimeter where the floor meets the walls. Using strips of alternating colour he gradually works his way into the centre to create a sort of distorted architectural footprint, which completely transforms the character and mood of its environment. Jim Lambie lives in New York and Glasgow and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2005. Lambie reconfigures the place to become the compositional elements of new sculptural forms.

Often made on the spot within the gallery setting, his work has an improvisatory feel and an energy that is immediately compelling. Lambie is best known for his on-going series of psychedelic floor and wall pieces made out of strips of multi-coloured vinyl tape under the collective title ZOBOP.

The Grand Opening in June was the highlight of the London season, everybody who was somebody was there and somebody even ventured showing up dressed to match the stairs, thus beginning a new fashion in London: coloured stripes. Isn't Lambie's work influential then?

And contemporary art continues experimenting, why not using everyday objects and give them a new dimension. When one of these simple objects becomes part of art, it gains a new status, it is transformed in meaning and use. The reason why it was originally made no longer exists; the artist has chosen it and it can no longer be used. Joseph Cornell (USA, 1903-1972) transformed everyday objects into spellbinding treasures. He felt the urge to preserve miniature objects so as to protect them from a society that threw everything away; a society that celebrated the new and discarded the old. And a new art was born, that of miniature "castles" that protected history of objects.

As a contrast Jon Arad (2015) gave an everyday object a new image with new materials, new life and shape. An ordinary chair became a cult, a sculpture. Is it still a chair? Can it become an object to be used in simple everyday life? It is for you to decide. Chairs have been used as objects of art for a long time, from thrones to humble wooden seats, but always reflecting a moment in history. Arad's chairs symbolise the luxury society admires and expects to find in every object; every object should be "an object of desire," regardless its comfort or use.

Spirals have different meanings and spectators add many more. To choose spirals as an inspiration for an art work may symbolise an infinite variety of religious and ancestral ideas. Artists have always referred to symbols in one form or another, hidden in the painting/ sculpture/ installation, some have preferred African symbolism (Picasso), others Celtic, but they have always been present. I have chosen spirals in this case because they seem to have been chosen by a great number of contemporary artists and the spectator has to be aware of their possible meaning. Spirals combined with colours acquire an extra strength. Take red, for example, as in the case of Cy Twombly.

Spirals are some of the oldest geometric shapes in ancient artwork dating back at least to the Neolithic period. Because of its connection with mother goddesses, the spiral is a very feminine symbol, representing not only women but also a variety of things traditionally associated with women. Besides lifecycles, fertility and childbirth, the spiral can reference intuition and other more internal concepts associated with women. Spirals and circles are much more commonly found in nature than straight-edged shapes like triangles and squares. As such, people today tend to associate spirals with the natural world as opposed to the constructed, mechanical and urban world. Life cycles and cycles of the natural world create change. As such, the spiral is not a symbol of stagnation but rather of change, progression, and development. In Celtic symbology the spiral is one of the most used shapes. The spiral symbol can represent the path leading from outer consciousness (materialism, external awareness, ego, outward perception) to the inner soul (enlightenment, unseen essence, nirvana, cosmic awareness) (*Source: internet*).

In these slides we see spirals represented in two different forms: one three dimensional and the other woven on a flat canvass surface. The spectator decides on their impact and significance.

## Royal Academy of Arts (2015)

### *The Dappled Light (Shawcross)*

This sculpture-installation, the largest installed in UK, exemplifies contemporary art at its level of excellence and imagination. It is the creation of a young artist. In order to make and install it he set up a workplace with the latest machinery (including sophisticated cranes) in engineering, he had a team of specialist in diverse areas, ranging from engineers to labour men. Collaborative work in art is another of the characteristics of this century as artists' imagination goes beyond the limits of what an individual can achieve on his own. Ideas and projects become a reality thanks to a team. Conrad Shawcross is an artist who creates his works of art combining all possible sciences and the previous stages to their realization imply research and studies on how to defy the laws of nature.

He is a 38-year-old British artist, and the youngest member of London's prestigious Royal Academy of Arts. He has just unveiled "The Dappled Light of the Sun," a colossal steel sculpture that scales the institution's classical courtyard like an alien landing. Even for Shawcross –an artist celebrated for his feats of engineering, spanning rope machines and robots– this is ambitious. Each of the 8,000 pieces has been handmade in five diminishing scales; when laid flat, the piece comprises about 7½ miles of welded steel and weighs in at around 30 tons. "It exploits the geometry of the tetrahedron," Shawcross explains of the mass of pyramid shapes. (*Material from Shawcross Catalogue RA*) "Seen on their own, they're very rational and ordered, but together, they become totally unruly. So the finished work is full of energy and movement. It looks anarchic against the order and stillness of the courtyard space." "I wanted to recreate the sense of well-being and serenity you get when sitting under a tree and the sunlight pierces through." The sculptures of Conrad Shawcross RA explore subjects that lie on the borders of geometry and philosophy, physics and metaphysics. For the 2015 RA Summer Exhibition, Shawcross has created a large-scale, immersive work consisting of five steel, cloud-like forms. These are made from thousands of tetrahedrons, standing at over six metres high and weighing five tons each. Shawcross explains: "The Greeks considered the tetrahedron to represent the very essence of matter. In this huge work I have taken this form as my 'brick,' growing these chaotic, diverging forms that will float above the heads of visitors."

As you may appreciate in these views, Shawcross has also worked with neon lights, wood, steel and a combination of them all. His work is the perfect example of today's advances in technology and industry put to the service of art, of course in the hands of a creative and visionary artist.

Let's go now to another extreme: the most controversial criticized and admired artist of these days: Damien Hirst. (*Photos of his works*) An artist? An opportunist? A business man? A madman? A money maker? He represents all these categories and critics are fiercely praising or demolishing him.

In 1988 a group of artists created a group called Friese, characterised by their lack of conventions or rules and complete freedom over the materials, processes and themes, their work shocked and provoked viewers. They were the YBA, today called Brit art because they are no longer young. Damien Hirst led this movement.

Damien Hirst Damien Hirst was born in Bristol in 1965. Throughout his work, Hirst has challenging approach to ideas about existence. His work shocks the viewer's convictions about the boundaries that separate desire and fear, life and death, reason and faith, love and hate. Hirst uses science and religion, creating sculptures and paintings whose beauty and intensity offer the viewer insight into art that transcends our familiar understanding of those domains. "There are four important things in life: religion, love, art and science," the artist has said. "At their best, they're all just tools to help you find a path through the darkness." But which darkness... his or ours?

Death is a central theme in Hirst's works. He became famous for a series of artworks in which dead animals (including a shark, a sheep and a cow) are preserved –sometimes having been dissected– in formaldehyde. The best known of these being *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, a 14-foot (4.3 m) tiger shark immersed in formaldehyde in a vitrine. He was and is highly criticized, yet he has become the icon of contemporary art. His work sells at incredibly high prices and world art collectors dispute the possession of his work.

In September 2008, he himself sold a complete show, *Beautiful Inside My Head Forever*, bypassing his long-standing galleries. The auction exceeded all predictions, raising £111 million (\$198 million), breaking the record for a one-artist auction as well as Hirst's own record with £10.3 million for *The Golden Calf*, an animal with 18-carat gold horns and hooves, preserved in formaldehyde. Is money the driving force behind his work? Why then did he abandon his managers and galleries so as not to have to share profits with them? "I did the work, the money is mine."

So now you see that art is not just the spiritual side... a lot of money is involved and what puts the prices up? Art dealers, the greed of art collectors, marketing, art critics, galleries, Biennales... all contributes to prices dumping or soaring high. Very few artists in history have become rich or earned money for a living. It is only in these days that some very few artists make money. Money that comes from a very well organized industry: the art industry. Take for instance any art fair (Arte BA, the Frieze, Biennales), the industry starts rolling well before the opening, collectors and galleries are contacted and they all compete in the purchasing of well famed works of art, the more who enter in the auction, the higher the price. Fierce quarrels, secret plots... anything may happen. The only goal is to be the acclaimed possessor of a masterpiece... as it is called. But... is it? What are today's parameters? Do these pieces go to Museums? Or are they kept in well preserved store places all over the world?

In spite of all these speculations on money Hirst has been praised in recognition of his celebrity and the way this has galvanised interest in the arts, raising the profile of British art and helping to (re)create the image of "Cool Britannia." Although Hirst participated physically in the making of early works, he has always needed assistants, and now the volume of work produced necessitates a "factory" setup, and this has led to questions about authenticity.

How would you define an installation? Is it permanent or ephemeral art? Spaces are meant to be used and they are always changing; today everything moves at a rapid pace, why then art should be static?

This is precisely what these two artists convey in their installations. Both represent a different use of the space, our space. One with colourful objects and neon lights gives life to a desert. The other with just cables attached to walls takes away movement from the space, the space is static and there is no possibility of change, the space responds to the lack of movement conveyed by those tight cables blocking the way. Two different uses and interpretation of space.

Geometric abstraction is a form of abstract art based on the use of geometric forms sometimes combined into non-representational compositions. Wassily Kandinsky, one of the forerunners of pure non-objective painting, was among the first modern artists to explore this geometric approach in his abstract work. However, geometric abstraction cannot only be seen as an invention of 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde artists or movements. It is present among many cultures throughout history both as decorative motifs and as art pieces themselves. Islamic art, in its prohibition of depicting religious figures, is a prime example of this geometric pattern-based art, which existed centuries before the movement in Europe and in many ways influenced this Western school. Geometric patterns were used to visually connect spirituality with science and art, both of which were key to Islamic thought of the time. Each and every culture in the world evaluates art and how it relates aesthetically to their surroundings and/or beliefs. Today, artists often use geometrical elements such as lines, angles, and shapes to create a theme throughout their artwork. Also, artists started using these geometrical elements as a way to create the illusion of the third dimension. This art became to be known as Optical or Op Art.

Like colour, shapes and patterns can describe emotions too. We respond unconsciously to different shapes, they can be uncomfortable, soothing or seem calm and happy. Some art creates the illusion of movement through geometrical shapes, some seem to quiver and whirl.

These paintings show a colourful and enigmatic representation of optical art and the spectator is free to speculate on their meanings. Palladino (Italy-Britain) is a well-known painter and sculptor who has participated in Biennals, inundating cities with his art. In this painting, he encircles geometric figures in four colours offering a perfect balance of shapes and colour.

Using different materials in art: today's art works uses new materials such as dyed pieces of cloth, paper, rattan, wood. Notice that the walls are no longer used, instead artists invade the space by using the floors so that spectators really have to walk through art and look at it from every angle. Art now is to be touched, felt and avoided by physically moving away from it, without being able to escape from it.

Richard Tuttle plays with limits, the limits that human beings try to either impose or avoid. Here the spectator decides what to do. It is art that now can be enjoyed by children, they respond to it either by touching it or by playing around it, imagining it is a big playground.

Anish Kapoor, the greatest of them all! To say Anish Kapoor is to say spectacular, grand, astonishing work. Sir Anish Kapoor (1954) is a British-Indian sculptor also decorated by Queen Elizabeth for his contributions to British art. In the late 1980s and 1990s, he was acclaimed for his explorations of matter and non-matter, specifically evoking the void in both free-standing sculptural works and ambitious installations. Many of his sculptures seem to recede into the distance, disappear into the ground or distort the space around them. His later stone works are made of solid, quarried stone, many of which have carved apertures and cavities, often alluding to, and playing with dualities (earth-sky, matter-spirit, lightness-darkness, visible-invisible, conscious-unconscious, male-female, and body-mind). "In the end, I'm talking about myself. And thinking about making nothing, which I see as a void. The use of red wax is also part of his repertoire, evocative of flesh, blood, and transfiguration. Throughout his career, Kapoor has worked extensively with architects and engineers. Kapoor says this body of work is neither pure sculpture nor pure architecture. His works are in most of the main capitals of the world and integrate with open spaces and are meant to be used by people, either by just walking around, inside, up or down. The Olympic Games house one of his magnificent pieces which towers up to the sky showing the heavenly aura of the games. He is called "The master of the Voids" because his starting point is always the void and what he does around it is just to enhance it and make it useful. All kinds of materials go through his hands and he has a mastery of altering any space with unique artistry.

We go from the huge masterpieces of Anish Kapoor to the other extreme: the miniatures of Joseph Cornell. Joseph Cornell (1903-72) had the mind of a visionary and the methods of an archivist. He accumulated odds and ends from the real world –bird's eggs, marbles, foreign stamps, thimbles– and assembled them into enigmatic dreams. The little boxes for which he's famous, when filled with arrangements of tiny fragments and fronted with glass, convey an intense but mysterious sense of meaning –somewhere between reliquaries and riddles. He thus created miniature museums to preserve the identity of objects which represented family and community life at a given moment in history. Poetical theatres, he called them, and indeed they are. There is an air of nostalgia and yearning to his art; a love of what he called "the light of other days", from ancient Egypt to his own lost childhood.

The contrast between the two artists enhances their work and teaches us to appreciate the role of art in our everyday lives, we can walk through Kapoor's work but we can also walk through our imagination in Cornell's work. Both equally powerful and meaningful, representing different aspects and moments of life: from alertness to silence, from grand splendour to quiet contemplation. Two extremes that at one point get together.

Jeff Koons (1955) is an American artist known for his reproductions of banal objects –such as balloon animals produced in stainless steel with mirror-finish surfaces. Money maker? Result of good marketing? Yet he occupies a prominent place in today's art. His works have sold for substantial sums of money, including at least one world record auction price for a work by a living artist, in 2013 Koons's *Balloon Dog (in the slide)* sold in New York City for US\$58.4 million.

### **Biennale of Venice (June 2015)**

Sarah Lucas (1962) is an English artist. She is part of the generation of Young British Artists who emerged during the 1990s. Her works frequently employ visual puns and bawdy/porno humour, and include photography, collage and found objects. Highly controversial, disliked in the traditional way, transgressor, that is why she was chosen to represent UK at the Biennale in Venice. Through her career, Lucas has continued to appropriate everyday materials (including, for example, freshly made fried eggs) to make works that use humour, visual puns and sexual metaphors of sex, death, Englishness and gender.

Thank you very much and I hope you leave this room feeling really confused about contemporary art!





# From Free Cinema to British New Wave: A Story of Angry Young Men

Diego Brodersen\*

## Introduction

In February 1956, a group of young film-makers premiered a programme of three documentary films at the National Film Theatre (now the BFI Southbank). Lorenza Mazzetti, Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson thought at the time that “no film can be too personal”, and vehemently said so in their brief but potent manifesto about Free Cinema. Their documentaries were not only personal, but aimed to show the real working class people in Britain, blending the realistic with the poetic. Three of them would establish themselves as some of the most inventive and irreverent British filmmakers of the 60s, creating iconoclastic works –both in subject matter and in form– such as *Saturday Day and Sunday Morning*, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* and *If...* Those were the first significant steps of a New British Cinema. They were the Big Screen’s angry young men.

What is British cinema? In my opinion, it means many different things. National cinemas are much more than only one idea. I would like to begin this presentation with this question because there have been different genres and types of films in British cinema since the beginning. So, for example, there was a kind of cinema that was very successful, not only in Britain but also in America: the films of the British Empire, the films about the Empire abroad, set in faraway places like India or Egypt. Such films celebrated the glory of the British Empire when the British Empire was almost ending. Here we could include films like *Four Feathers*, *Sanders of the River*, or some of the films made in the 1930s and 1940s.

British producers may have some sort of inferiority complex, and unconsciously think that their films are successful only if they succeed in America and in the world. That happened in the 1930s with some British films. It was the starting point for some genres and kinds of films which were very successful. These are also films in which there are plenty of kings, queens, royalty and aristocracy. We can find many films and miniseries with that subject. Maybe the most famous was *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933). Charles Laughton, a very good character actor, was actually very popular in America. Curiously enough, the producers and directors of this film were the Korda brothers, Alexander and Zoltan. They were from Hungary, and when they went to Britain they made all these successful films with their company, called London Films.

For some, then, British cinema is prestigious. A cinema with important subjects, and with very famous actors.

I now have to go back to the 1940s and mention Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, who produced critically and commercially successful films in the 1940s and 1950s: *The Red Shoes*, a very particular musical set in the ballet world, or *Black Narcissus*, a story about a nun (Deborah Kerr) who falls in love in the Tibet.

For some people, British cinema may also represent horror films. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a vast production of horror films in the UK, with new versions of, for example, *Dracula* and *The Mommy*. For others, it may represent comedies, of course. There was also a very strong documentary movement and films were flooded with social issues. In fact, social issues in British cinema are everywhere.

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Free Cinema appeared in the mid-1950s as a reaction to the way social documentaries were made. This group of film-makers started producing social documentaries which were different from the ones made before, and that is interesting in itself. The most successful director in Britain in the 1930s was Alfred Hitchcock, both critically and for the audience. He was a blockbuster film director.

### **The Free Cinema Directors**

*Lindsay Anderson (1923-1994)*

He may be considered the father of Free Cinema because he was the most thoughtful in a way. He was a film critic –a very good one– and he wrote many books on cinema. His most famous work is *John Ford*, a book about the American director, whom he interviewed a couple of times when he went to shoot *The Quiet Man* in Ireland. Anderson was born in India and his father was an Irish officer. He directed a very interesting short film in 1953 called *O dreamland*, shot in the Margate Fair in Kent. Lindsay Anderson was one of four film directors who in the late 1940s and early 1950s got tired of not being able to show their films, so they wrote a brief manifesto. They had a friend, Karel Reisz, who was one of the programmers at the British Film Institute. They talked about it and decided to show these films together in a programme called Free Cinema, a name which is rather bombastic. They succeeded, because that first night, in February 1956, there was a long queue outside the National Film Theatre waiting to see these films, the short films of these unknown film-makers, and that is when the whole thing started. One of Lindsay Anderson's latest films is called *The Whales of August*, made in the early 1990's, starring Bette Davies, Lillian Gish and Vincent Price, very talented actors indeed.

*Tony Richardson (1928-1991)*

Tony Richardson is maybe the most famous of them all –certainly, the most prolific. He made around twenty films in his career, apart from directing theatre, TV programmes and TV series. He married Vanessa Redgrave in the 1960s and is the father of Miranda and Natasha Richardson. One of his latest films is *The Hotel New Hampshire*, made in the early 1980s, starring Jodie Foster.

*Karel Reisz (1926-2002)*

The third director in the Free Cinema group is Karel Reisz. His name may not sound very British, because he was actually Czech. He fled from his native country with his family when he was very young –he was only seven or eight years old. That is why he is considered a British director. Apart from being a film-maker, he was a film critic. As stated before, he was a programmer at the British Film Institute. One of his latest films, made in the 1980s, may be regarded as the most famous of all these films: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons.

*Lorenza Mazzetti (born in 1928)*

Finally, the only woman in this group was Lorenza Mazzetti. She was not British either. She was from Italy, and is the only one still alive. I mention her last because she gave up film-making altogether. She made this very good short film which was included in the Free Cinema programme, then went back to Italy and made a couple of short films, a documentary about Rome in the mid-1960s, and after that she retired completely from cinema and became a very good writer in Italy. She has actually been writing until the present day. However, every time she attends a conference or delivers a lecture, everybody asks her "What about Free Cinema?" So she is probably really tired of that question!

## The Free Cinema Manifesto

These films were not made together; nor with the idea of showing them together. But when they came together, we felt they had an attitude in common. Implicit in this attitude is a belief in freedom, in the importance of people and the significance of the everyday.

*As film-makers we believe that  
No film can be too personal.  
The image speaks. Sound amplifies and comments.  
Size is irrelevant. Perfection is not an aim.  
An attitude means a style. A style means an attitude.  
Lindsay Anderson and Lorenza Mazzetti's manifesto.*

This is a fantastic manifesto, which was actually written as a marketing tool. Let us not be fooled. That was the idea and it worked that way, but I want to point out something about this question of size: size is not important. Of course, they were short films. And short films are the ugly ducks of cinema, everybody knows that. No film-maker comes to you and says: "Hello, I'm a short-film maker." I think that everybody who is into film-making and has made a couple of short films wants to make a feature length film. There are exceptions, though very few. Therefore, the size issue has obviously to do with the length of the films, but also, and most importantly, with the subject/ideas of these films, which were about common people, people you could meet in the streets in any British city back then. Therefore, the size has to do with the scope of the ideas these films dealt with, so that is actually the most important reason why these films were small.

*Momma don't allow* is the name of one of those three short films, which were shown together in that first programme. There were actually six Free Cinema programmes. This film is quite interesting because you can see British night-life before the Beatles, before "pop". The music that young people listen to in the film is jazz and it was directed by two of these Free Cinema directors. These films were shot with very cheap 16 mm cameras; they were low-budget productions. I believe that this film, for example, was shot with a Bolex camera, so you can get fifteen or twenty second shots, no more than that. You can shoot for twenty seconds and that is it.

What is interesting about these films, and what in my opinion makes them a very good example of the ideas these directors had about cinema, is that you could see the life of common people. In *Momma don't allow* there is a scene with a young butcher, for example, who is waiting for the working hours to end and go dancing. The film, in the first few minutes, goes back and forth between these guys in the band and some of the people who will go to this dance. And although the film is basically a documentary, there is some fiction in it, because *maybe* the guy was a butcher and *maybe* this girl worked at that place, but the directors are clearly resorting to re-enacting, which is alright. In other words, documentary film-making is not a security camera that you put there without telling the people that they are being filmed.

British documentaries from the 1940s and 1950s showed miners at work or men working in railway stations, but not the young people enjoying themselves, for example. So there was a very strong sense of the importance of the everyday industrial life for these directors. These ideas can be seen in all the films that they made from 1954 to 1959.

Then Free Cinema was over. They ended it. They said 'We are doing something else.' But all these ideas will later reappear in their feature length films. Free Cinema was the seed for depicting working class people. Of the six Free Cinema programmes from 1956 to 1959, three comprised British films made by these four directors and other British directors. The other three were programmes made with foreign short films. There was a Polish Free Cinema (I think it was the fifth), which showed works by a very young guy from Poland named Roman Polanski. There was another with French short films which presented short films by other directors called François Truffaut and Claude Chabrol. Nobody knew their names back then. So in this movement, they were also trying to get together people from other countries as well.

Now we will be moving from Free Cinema to British New Wave, which was not a term coined by these directors, but by the media: the British New Wave was only one of many *new cinemas* and *new waves* that were taking part in Europe and other places as well: the French nouvelle vague, the New German Cinema, the Nuberu Bagu in Japan, the New Wave in Czechoslovakia, and the Cinema Novo in Brazil. Therefore, the late 1950s and early 1960s were one of the most defining and important moments in cinema history. It was the birth of modern cinema. And something happened at that precise time –in different places, at the same time– that completely changed the way films were made and films were seen.

It was maybe one of the most important moments in cinema history. I am sure something similar could be said regarding art, visual arts in particular, because it was a very defining moment indeed.

### Key British New Wave Films

*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) [Dir: Karel Reisz, based on Alan Sillitoe's novel] is Karel Reisz's first feature length film. He was not the first of these directors to make a feature length film –the first one was Tony Richardson, a year before this, in 1959, when he directed *Look Back in Anger*.

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* the main actor is a very young Albert Finney. He plays a very angry character. This idea of the main protagonist of the film being angry is interesting because these film directors were related. They were friends with a group of writers and playwrights, who were known by the media, the public and the audience as 'the angry young men'. The term was coined by the specialized press, although most of them reacted very badly when they mentioned these 'angry young men' thing. However, the idea is that many plays and novels and films were based on and plays dealt with angry young men. Young men were angry about almost everything, and this anger was also in a way angst, anxiety. Their anger was directed at any figure of authority: father, policeman, teacher. It should also be borne in mind that the people that were in their early twenties in the late 1950s and early 1960s were the first generation born after the war, right before the war or during the war.

And they said that the previous generation was, in a way, a dead-end generation. That was it. It was over. So many of the main characters of these films have a very bad relationship with their parents and they see their parents as completely living-dead people. This rebellion against the *status quo*, against the middle-class values or working-class values is quite interesting and it is all over the place in these films, which are –most of them– black and white, with a very realistic approach to the situations and the dialogues. Sometimes they did extensive use of subjects like sexuality in a very frank way, which back then was completely different from mainstream Hollywood cinema.

It is interesting to point out that these British films were shown in the United States and were marketed as mature films. The other remarkable thing is that there is no way to funnel this anger and this angst. In the film, a few hours after being angry with working at this place, with the boss, with the father, with everything, the main character gets drunk. There is a dead-end situation: these angry young men are angry but they cannot manage it. It is a problem.

Another striking fact is that many of the key British New Wave films made in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, were produced by a man called Harry Saltzman, who was a quite young British producer. However, in 1962, he got together with an American producer called Albert Broccoli: they bought the rights to Ian Fleming's novel and they produced *Dr. No*, the first James Bond film. So "James Bond" killed "the angry young men" completely. It is well worth noting that the same producer that was making these socialist, big black and white material films went on to produce the James Bond films. Of course, he made much more money with James Bond. And he never came back to social cinema again. What is also interesting is that October 1962 seems to be a turning point, because it was the month when both *Dr. No* and the first Beatles' album were released. Therefore, pop culture killed *The Angry Young Men*. It may not have been exactly like that, but the pop phenomenon was so huge that it completely overshadowed these films in cinema business.



Of course, real social realistic films were made in the 1960s and the 1970s, but Britain in the 1960s was something else and Swinging London<sup>1</sup> was the place to be. Many film directors went to the United Kingdom and to London in particular to make films, such as Michelangelo Antonioni from Italy, who shot *Blow Up*, considered the quintessential of the Swinging London films.

Stanley Kubrick went to the United Kingdom to shoot *2001: A Space Odyssey* and he never returned to America. Many people think that Kubrick was actually British. However, he was a New Yorker.

*Look Back in Anger* (1959) [Dir: Tony Richardson, based on John Osborne's play] could be considered, in a sense, the first British New Wave film. It was based on John Osborne's play; Osborne is maybe the main figure in *The Angry Young Men* ambiance in theatre in those days.

Richard Burton is on it. He was a very well-known actor by then. He was, one could say, a star. He had made films in America before. And then, a few years after this, he would meet Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*, but that is another story.

*A Taste of Honey* (1961) [Dir: Tony Richardson, based on Shelagh Delaney's play] is Tony Richardson's fourth film. He made four films in two years; he was very prolific. And it is a remarkable film. Almost all these films are, I wouldn't say misogynistic, but phallogocentric: it is the men who are angry. However, the protagonist of this film is a girl, a young girl so it could be said she is an angry young girl. She is a very young girl who is attracted by a black American sailor. She gets pregnant, and she then befriends a gay man. This was 1961. No American mainstream film was made with this impossible interracial relationship and gayness, with the gay guy not getting punished for being gay... It is a very good film, by the way.

*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962) [Dir: Tony Richardson, based on Alan Sillitoe's short story] is, in my opinion, one of the greatest films of them all.

It was too bad that in Argentina it was released under the title *El mundo frente a mí*. The film was in competition in the Mar del Plata Film Festival in 1964, and won an award for best actor for Tom Courtenay.

*This Sporting Life* (1963) [Dir: Lindsay Anderson] was Lindsay Anderson's first British feature-like film. It was very good. The main actor was Richard Harris. I think it was released in Argentina as *El llanto de un ídolo*. It is quite an interesting, yet brutal film, about a young fellow who manages to climb socially because he starts playing rugby in a semi-professional way, so he gives up work at a mine and he encounters many problems.

*Billy Liar* (1963) [Dir: John Schlesinger]. John Schlesinger was not part of the Free Cinema, but he is part of the British New Wave. Tom Courtenay and Julie Christie are on this film. It is the story of a young man who lies a lot. It is an engaging film.

Each one of these directors, Tony Richardson, Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz, and even John Schlesinger won an Oscar. Each of these directors went in different directions. They actually made different kinds of films.

### Angry Young Men Movement: Playwrights and Writers

- John Osborne
- Alan Sillitoe
- Kingsley Amis
- Bill Hopkins
- Harold Pinter
- John Arden
- Stan Barstow
- Edward Bond

These are the playwrights and writers that are usually associated with the Angry Young Men movement.

1. *Swinging London* is a catch-all term applied to the fashion and cultural scene that flourished in London in the 1960s.





# **“Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear”**

## **Six reasons to love Shakespeare**

Valeria Rodriguez Van Dam\*  
I.N.S.P. Joaquín V. González

Most of what makes Shakespeare unique and relevant is to be found in the way he writes: the tensions he generates in the different genres he cultivates –always too small and restrictive for his needs–; the liberties he takes with the English language, and the multiplicities he unleashes inside each of his lines. Part of what makes his work irresistibly attractive resides in the intelligence and subtlety with which he overcomes the difficulties of his source texts; in the audacity of his systematically experimental approach to poetic and dramatic composition, and in the complexity and elegance of his aesthetic pronouncements, invariably in favour of a new, uninhibited kind of poetry. This brief article<sup>1</sup> aims to review those features in Shakespeare’s style of composition that give him so much current interest. In this respect, the work of Italian writer Italo Calvino, *Six memos for the next millennium*, will be referred to as a useful set of criteria in the attempt to categorise the qualities that continue to make Shakespeare unforgettable.

### **I.**

Italo Calvino was invited to deliver the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University during the 1985-1986 academic term. He planned six lectures with the purpose of exploring the characteristics that literature should promote if it is to survive in the new millennium. In each of the lectures he was to discuss the qualities that were, in his view, recommendable to writers. Unfortunately, he died shortly before he was due to travel to the US to open the course, and he never completed his plan for the last discussion. The texts he wrote for the first five lectures were then published in 1988 –*Six memos for the next millennium*–, with the following declaration of purpose:

Perhaps it is a sign of our millennium’s end that we frequently wonder what will happen to literature and books in the so-called postindustrial era of technology. I don’t much feel like indulging in this sort of speculation. My confidence in the future of literature consists in the knowledge that there are things that only literature can give us, by means specific to it. I would therefore like to devote these lectures to certain values, qualities or peculiarities of literature that are very close to my heart, trying to situate them within the perspective of the new millennium. (Preface)

A very brief explanation of these qualities –Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity– will reveal Calvino’s interest in contributing guidelines –rather than prescriptions– for an aesthetic consideration. Beyond all speculations as to what he might have wanted to say

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1. The text of the present article is a polished transcription of the lecture “‘Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear.’ Six reasons to love Shakespeare”, delivered on the occasion of the “IV JORNADAS DE LENGUA INGLESA. Cultura de los países de habla inglesa” (September 2015).

about Consistency –the sixth feature he was planning to discuss–, it might perhaps be more pertinent, for the purposes of exploring the qualities of Shakespeare’s work, to complete Calvino’s contribution with the search for any other possible feature, which remains as an open category, available for every coming generation to fill with its own significant content.

Calvino calls the first quality *Lightness*, which he describes as “weightless gravity” (19) and a “reaction to the weight of living” (26). It is a leap to be taken by a poet who holds “the secret of lightness” (12). Lightness also includes the “atomising of things” (9) for almost microscopic inspection, and three qualities that define it: it is “to the highest degree light”; it is “in motion”, and it is “a vector of information” (13). The poet should “take the weight out of language, to the point that it resembles moonlight” (24). The second feature, *Quickness*, is defined as an expression of the relationship between physical and mental speed. It includes four subcategories: economy of expression –using narrative and verbal links to connect “events that rhyme” (35)–; relativity of time –the compression, expansion, continuity and discontinuity of a time sequence–; agility –the quick adjustment of thought and expression– and transformation. *Exactitude* is a “patient search for the *mot juste*” (48) and for a sentence in which every word is unalterable; the “most effective marriage of sounds and concepts” (49). It is the search for a unique expression which is “concise, concentrated and memorable” (49); the maximum concentration of poetry and thought, manifested as

- (1) a well-defined and well-calculated plan for the work in question;
- (2) an evocation of clear, incisive, memorable visual images; [...]
- (3) a language as precise as possible both in choice of words and in expression of the subtleties of thought and imagination. (55-56)

By *Visibility* Calvino means the role of imagination, the visual aspect of the poet’s fantasy; the skill in going from word to image and from image to word. Integrating the power of “thinking in terms of images” (92) means reclaiming for literary expression “the power of bringing visions into focus with our eyes shut, of bringing forth forms and colors from the lines of black letters on a white page” (92). *Multiplicity*, “a network of connections between the events, the people, and the things of the world” (105), is a feature that focuses on the centrifugal power of a work: “a plurality of languages as a guarantee of a truth that is not merely partial” (117). The message, Calvino argues, must be comprehensive enough to represent a universal diversity. The writer is a man but at the same time he is the voice of all men, working towards “a unified text that is written as the expression of a single voice, but that reveals itself as open to interpretation at several levels” (117). The literature of multiplicity is a literature that has absorbed “the taste for mental orderliness and exactitude, the intelligence of poetry, but at the same time that of science and of philosophy” (118).

Perhaps one of the fundamental points that must be understood from these considerations is the view of literature as a discipline in its own right rather than as just an “area” of language. Literary expression as Calvino conceives of it uses language as a tool and it also reshapes and reinvents language when that tool becomes too small or restrictive. Literature, if it is to survive into the new millennium –if it is to survive at all– must continue to claim its own independent disciplinary status, not as one more “sphere” of culture but as a discipline that shapes culture by naming it, as a form of expression that surveys the world from a privileged vantage point.

## II.

An effective and attractive source of instances of Calvino’s systematization can be found in Shakespeare’s narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*. This poem belongs to the early period of Shakespeare’s career. It was published in 1593 and reprinted 15 times during his lifetime, which attests to its immediate and continuing success. *Venus and Adonis* is usually classified as an *epyllion*, a brief erotic poem in the Ovidian mode. Shakespeare’s generation of talented young writers were the first to contest and rebel against the Petrarchan aesthetic paradigm –still dominant at the Elizabethan court and the trademark of the older generation of the poetic establishment–, in favour of the Ovidian paradigm as a more representative form of poetic expression. As well as a

narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis* is a product of this poetic and aesthetic revolution: a powerful poetic manifesto which illustrates all of Calvino's guidelines.

The Ovidian myth of Venus and Adonis is very well known in Shakespeare's time, and especially popular among young intellectual enthusiasts of the Ovidian movement. Shakespeare's version of the story introduces a number of significant modifications concerning Adonis' age – Shakespeare's Adonis is a pubescent boy, not an adult male–; the nature of his response to Venus' advances and the overall duration of the story. In Shakespeare's poem there is also a parodic element which seems to contribute to his search for a definition of the art of poetry. The focus of the next sections is to discuss this aesthetic exploration by reference to two fragments of the poem, scrutinised through the lenses of Calvino's categories.

### III.

'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,  
Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,  
Or, like a nymph, with long dishevelled hair,  
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen.  
Love is a spirit all compact of fire,  
Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

'Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie;  
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me;  
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky  
From morn till night, even where I list to sport me..  
Is love so light", sweet boy, and may it be  
That thou should think it heavy unto thee?

(145-156)

This fragment belongs to the first half of the poem. Venus has been trying to seduce Adonis but the boy has been unresponsive, and there have been a series of successive argumentative attempts on the part of the goddess to persuade him into a moment of sexual intercourse which of course will not take place. Her attempts at seduction are both physical and linguistic. Venus physically accosts Adonis as soon as she sees him and a careful reading of the poem will reveal that the characters adopt a sequence of pseudo-amatory positions. In the fumbling that results from her advances, they seem to explore nearly a dozen different positions, each change coupled with a change in Venus' seduction strategy and, most significantly, changes in her *poetic* strategy. In fact, the whole poem resembles a kind of process- writing portfolio that traces the development of Venus' poetic expression through a series of rhetorical exercises, very much like those practised by schoolboys in Shakespeare's day. A very gradual, subtle but quite visible process of metamorphosis can then be traced, from the initial adherence to a Petrarchan mode of poetic expression –signalled by Venus' use of stifled, bombastic, fossilized, black-and-white clichés- towards an Ovidian mode characterized by colour, freedom, instability, movement, constant change and the fusion of opposites.

The two stanzas comprise an exercise in *self-blazon*. The blazon, one of the fundamental devices in the sonneteering tradition so vigorously parodied and resisted by Shakespeare – his Sonnet 130 is an instance of this–, consists of poeticising the physical characteristics of an ideal woman. It is essentially heteronormative: the inventory of physical details is invariably dissected by a *male* voice and it invariably catalogues a stereotyped, unrealistic *female* with a pale complexion, blonde hair, blue or grey eyes, rosy cheeks, red lips, mincing steps and delicate movements. The Petrarchan blazon does not only reduce the female to an anatomical catalogue, a fragmented and fragmentary vision of woman; it also reduces all forms of human love to only one possibility –male adoring female–, and it may be safely speculated that to a great extent our culture is still struggling to break free from the ideology that sustains it. The Petrarchan paradigm has left lamentable casualties along centuries of history in terms of the

fatal efforts of young women trying to approximate the shape of their bodies to the physical stereotype –whatever shape it happens to take at different periods– of an ideal woman up on a pedestal. For the first time, Shakespeare and his generation take that woman down from the pedestal of poetic history in order to explore the *real* woman, but they also begin to explore *all* the possible forms of human love, all the possible gender combinations in the gamut of people's experience which are to be celebrated in their realistic, carnal, imperfect but very tangible humanity.

Venus' self-blazon is a beautiful illustration of Lightness. Her ethereal capacity to walk lightly and dance is compared to the dancing and walking of a fairy and a "nymph with long disheveled hair". These visual allusions evoke in the reader a quick succession of images of Venus –first as a fairy, then as a dishevelled nymph–, as if on these lines Venus were rhetorically turning into the creatures that she is comparing herself to, in a poetic instance of metamorphosis. The idea of weightlessness is emphasised in the next stanza, with the reference to flowers: these very weak, insignificant little flowers are like trees, and now, suddenly Venus becomes very small; small enough to be leaning on the "forceless flowers" that support her as if they were "sturdy trees". These lines also illustrate Quickness: this series of transformations –Venus as a fairy, Venus as a nymph, and then Venus as a microscopic creature– take place at a very fast speed that challenges the quickness of response of the reader's imagination. Again, the weightlessness of the "forceless flowers" connects to that of the "strengthless doves" on the next line –the white doves that traditionally draw her chariot– in that in both cases there is a restrictive suffix that stresses the idea of absence: the absence of weight in these stanzas is such that Venus –and Shakespeare– does not want to spoil it by using any other, heavier words.

The final couplets in both stanzas offer reflections on the theme of love which also seem, at first sight, to illustrate Lightness. The first one ("Love is a spirit all compact of fire/ Not gross to sink, nut light, and will aspire") refers to love as a delicate, weightless entity that "aspires" –a word etymologically related to fire–; it flies upwards, like fire. The presence of the four elements is immediately evident –something gross sinking in water, an airy spirit elevating like fire from the ground–, which is relevant considering that the figure of Venus, originally a natural deity, is also a symbol of nature, in harmony with the elements. However, there are certain words that have very specific meanings, all of them quite evident to Shakespeare's contemporary readers. In Elizabethan English –and even today–, the word "sink" has a sexual connotation. "Spirit" meant "semen" to the Elizabethans, and "fire" did not only refer to passion. To "fire someone out" was to transmit a *venereal* disease to someone during sexual intercourse. All of a sudden, in the midst of the lightness and the delicacy of Venus' attributes, there are three words whose secondary meanings are far from ethereal; words which allude to a different type of lightness, a quality that comes closer to another meaning of "light" –wanton, sexually licentious, lustful–. The second final couplet is a question ("Is love so light, dear boy, and may it be/ That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee?") which can be rephrased in two ways: "Is love so ethereal?" but also: "Is love so wanton, so full of sexuality, that you find it heavy?" "Heavy", then, does not only mean "weighty" in the sense of "opposite to light", but also "problematic" or "conflictive". Venus, a sexually mature woman, is talking to a pubescent boy who clearly hasn't been sexually initiated yet, and she digresses on the idea that love should contain other ingredients which may be a little less easy to come to terms with.

This passage, with its extraordinary imagery, illustrates Lightness and Quickness, but at the same time it becomes clear that Venus –and, behind Venus, Shakespeare– is playing with the concept of Lightness and celebrating that other meaning, which is *sexual* lightness –after all, this is what Venus is interested in when she tries to seduce Adonis. The Lightness of Venus' bucolic flowers and doves, the weightlessness of her delicate impersonations as the fairy and the nymph dancing on the sands, are all extremely attractive components in her innovative self-portrait. But that other form of Lightness, the one that Venus is much more interested in, seems to be much more enticing, and –in terms of Shakespeare's poetic manifesto in the subtext of this poem– much worthier of exploration. It is this aspect of Lightness that nobody has dared invoke in the history of the Petrarchan paradigm.



#### IV.

'Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemmed thee here  
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,  
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;  
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;  
Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,  
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

'Within this limit is relief enough,  
Sweet bottom-grass and high delightful plain,  
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,  
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:  
Then be my deer, since I am such a park;  
No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.'

(229-240)

The "Park speech" is an even more complex example of the five qualities described by Calvino, all occurring simultaneously. This passage also belongs to the first half of the poem and it constitutes a second exercise in self-blazon on the part of Venus. At this moment the protagonists have changed their pseudo-amatory position for the fourth time. In keeping with the rising sexual tension at this stage, Venus generates a magnificent instance of "sexual topography" in the description of her body as territory, to which Shakespeare introduces a twist. Venus describes herself as a park and the first image –again, hinting at her poetic metamorphosis– is that of the ivory fence of her arms surrounding his neck. The "park" into which she turns is a hunting ground, fenced private property used for the purpose of hunting, and also a deer preserve where deer are allowed to breed freely with the ultimate aim of hunting them down and eating them. At the same time, Adonis being such a young boy, there is a very subtle allusion to another type of park: the playpen, for the boy/ hunter to play safely. The concept of the park brings together in a zone of ambivalence the ideas of *maternity* –with its interest in nourishing and protecting life–, *hunting* –predicated on destroying life with the ultimate aim of ingesting it, and also as a sexual metaphor: Venus is indeed "hunting" him down– and *sexuality* –with its sense of domination and possession, which seems to be part of the erotic repertoire of sexually mature females in Shakespeare.

What follows is an invitation to feed, for which Venus continues to develop a systematic trend of imagery connected to orality in the poem, with its funneling of significance on the mouth and its capacity to ingest, suck and kiss. What is offered to the deer/dear boy to feed on are the geographical features of this landscape that is her body: mountain, dale, lips where the deer can graze, and the "pleasant fountains" of her breasts that can be reached by straying "lower".

A careful re-reading of this first stanza, in particular of the order in which Venus enumerates her "geographical" features, reveals that she is following the convention of the blazon at the same time as she composes a highly unconventional blazon with the utmost degree of Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity. The direction of her descriptions traces a downward movement that concludes at the breast line –the "pleasant fountains"–, which is as far down as the conventional Petrarchan blazon will go: the inventory of physical features always has a boundary, a limit. Venus has now reached that limit at the "pleasant fountains"; indeed, the next stanza opens with a reference to limits. Within this boundary line there is relief of two kinds to be had: relief to hunger –the deer can find enough pasture within this portion of territory– and also sexual relief. The erotic undertones of these lines suggest the idea that the features surveyed by Venus so far are enough to satisfy the boy's sexual needs, but she is decidedly planning to go beyond that limit in every possible sense. The conventional Petrarchan blazon has always stopped dead at this boundary line, but poetry, Venus is saying, should venture forth beyond it to reach those other areas which have always lain hidden from poetic view. This new way of naming bodies and the way bodies can love each other does not only apply to the female body: poetry must transcend this and all other boundaries.

The second part of this self-blazon provides an insight into that which lies beyond. There is “sweet bottom grass” –the type of grass that grows in the valleys rather than in the mountains, in a clear reference to pubic hair–; “high delightful plain” and “round rising hillocks” –the genitalia and buttocks– and “brakes obscure and rough” –thickets, clumps of bushes, dense vegetation and Venus’ awareness of the difference in colour and texture between the hair growing in that area and that growing in the head. The Petrarchan paradigm never gave information about these hidden zones; it only described the hairs on a lady’s head and never concerned itself with any other type of hair on the human body. Now it seems, these “brakes obscure and rough” happen to provide “shelter” to anyone who can enter and hide in them and who will be safe from dogs “rousing”. The verb “rouse” means “awaken”, but in hunting terminology it refers to what hounds do when they scare the quarry away from its hiding place by barking, to force it to become visible to the hunters. There is a third meaning which is pertinent to this line, which is to arouse someone sexually. These last conclusive lines bring together the imagery of hunting, the imagery of maternity and profound sexual innuendo in a remarkable degree of Exactitude and Visibility: the readers have by now visualised the body of Venus with its different geographical accidents; in very few lines, with astounding economy and Quickness, she has metamorphosed into a park. Venus’ metamorphosis is also the metamorphosis of poetry; the idea that poetry should break its bounds and expand, not only its expressive possibilities, but also the way it defines and names the multiple forms in which human beings look at each other, like each other, lust after each other and love each other. These very few lines open up different levels of interpretation and a universe of different meanings that Shakespeare very subtly and elegantly is offering his readers for consideration.

Shakespeare is the essential, vital literary reservoir of our culture and of all generations to come. A man of his time and of all times, he invents, transgresses, breaks, strains, questions, violates, revivifies and transcends each and every constriction upon the English language, the literary genres, the ways in which human beings can be and exist together and the poetics available to name these ways. He stands at the core of our culture in every possible way. Every generation has found, and will continue to find, that which it needs to discover about itself in his work. He will continue to be relevant because, as Calvino suggests, he has set himself the impossible tasks that only literature can dare imagine:

Overambitious projects may be objectionable in many fields, but not in literature. Literature remains alive only if we set ourselves immeasurable goals, far beyond all hope of achievement. Only if poets and writers set themselves tasks that no one else dares imagine will literature continue to have a function. Since science has begun to distrust general explanations and solutions that are not sectorial and specialized, the grand challenge for literature is to be capable of weaving together the various branches of knowledge, the various “codes,” into a manifold and multifaceted vision of the world. (Calvino, 1988, p. 112)

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# Some Aspects of English Historical Legacy to Political Culture

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England, later Great Britain and the UK, has been a very influential country in history, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. This paper focuses on some of her positive contributions to political culture, some everlasting concepts that have been taken for granted for years, but whose historical origins are not so well known and which deserve to be highlighted.

The first issue I would like to discuss is the origins of the common law, probably England's most significant legacy. In the 12th century, in an attempt to centralize his power, King Henry II set up central courts at Westminster and made the law applied by the royal judges accessible to all England through a series of journeys that the judges went on every year. For this purpose, the country was divided into circuits and the judges became itinerant justices, who took the royal law to different parts of the country, beginning the process that led to the future supremacy of royal law over the law of the localities. In this way, royal law became common to all England, that is to say, it became the common law.

This law was very flexible since it was judge-made, which resulted in a dramatic growth of the common law in the High Middle Ages. Its flexibility also lay in the fact that the itinerant justices were given freedom to resort to different types of sources to base their verdicts on, not only Norman law but also Anglo-Saxon law, canon law and even Roman law.

Although the later development of statute law –law passed by the king in Parliament seemed to put an end to the early flexibility of the common law, this tradition did not disappear and, in the course of time, it re-emerged to create a peculiar legal system which includes case-law, customs and traditions alongside enacted laws.

Was the king limited by the law? The issue of supremacy of the law over the power of the king takes us back to the times of Magna Carta in 1215, when King John was forced to set his seal to the charter after his feudal vassals rebelled against his abuses in government.

Needless to say, the idea that the king is below the law had not yet appeared in the early thirteenth century. Nevertheless, this principle of government is present in an implicit way in any document which makes the laws of the land more precise, so that both subjects and sovereign know what is expected from them.

Magna Carta does not include philosophical or political theories, a detailed description of government or a list of old and new laws. It is neither a code of law nor a kind of constitution in the modern sense of the word. Its clauses are redefinitions of, not innovations upon, already existing laws. The barons' purpose was to confirm these laws, the English institutions from which they had emerged, and the machinery of government that enforced them. Article 40 clearly exemplifies this point.

To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that the king is below the law can clearly be seen in the spirit of the clause, if not in its wording.

The same analysis can be applied to the document as regards the principle of the social contract between ruler and subjects, which became so significant many centuries later, at the time of the

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1. Translation into English by G. R. C. Davies, PhD.

Enlightenment. This idea does not appear in black and white but it can easily be read between the lines. The society of 1215 was a feudal one. Thus it was based on written contracts accepted by both lords and vassals, which included their respective rights and obligations. Magna Carta is a document that reflects this social and political organization. By redefining feudal customs and traditions, it implicitly confirmed the private contracts between the king and his barons and other lords and their own vassals, and it became a kind of general contract for the country, a compact to which each party had to make contributions, a compact from which they could derive their respective rights and obligations.

This concept of the feudal contract, however, clashed with the medieval doctrine that the king derived his power directly from God, which the Normans took from the Anglo-Saxons after the conquest in 1066. This duality lingered on throughout the rest of the Middle Ages and into the modern period, until it found its final solution in the 17th century. I will soon come back to this point.

Although Magna Carta does not include extreme or radical statements that could be startling for its age, clause 61 could appear to be rather radical in that it allows for the creation of a group of barons whose duty would be to check the King's fulfilment of his promises. These barons could also rebel with the support of the rest of the population against the sovereign if he failed to do what was stated in the charter. In a broad sense, the so-called resistance clause seems to legalize rebellion. But it was the only thing the barons could think of at that time, since they lacked the machinery of government that would enable them to make sure that the king would do as he had promised. This clause was omitted from later reissues of the charter, but its spirit was not completely lost and it reappeared during the 17th century.

We must admit that laws are useless without the will to abide by them. John himself was not willing to accept Magna Carta since it lessened royal power; this is why, as soon as the meeting at Runnymede came to an end, he got ready to fight against his vassals. Luckily for them, he died in the midst of preparations for war, which enabled the barons to control government during the minority of his son, who was crowned as Henry III.

Another important concept which can be traced back to Magna Carta is that of "no taxation without representation;" that outcry of many American colonists who refused to pay the taxes that Britain wished to impose on her colonies. Clause 14 of the charter states that when the king wanted to ask his subjects for extra amounts of money (called scutage or aid, the feudal equivalent to modern taxation) he would

cause the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons to be summoned individually by letter. To those who hold lands directly of us we will cause a general summons to be issued, through the sheriffs and other officials, to come together on a fixed day (of which at least forty days' notice shall be given) and at a fixed place. In all letters of summons, the cause of the summons will be stated. When a summons has been issued, the business appointed for the day shall go forward in accordance with the resolution of those present, even if not all those who were summoned have appeared.

This article refers to the meetings of the Great Council, which later developed into Parliament. The Great Council was attended by all the kings' tenants-in-chief, the vassals who had been granted land directly by the sovereign, and who had to be summoned every time the king wanted to levy extra taxation. Articles such as this one show that Magna Carta bears a significance that goes beyond feudalism and that has played an important part in English constitutional history even after feudalism declined and disappeared. In fact, the Argentinean Constitution is often called our Magna Carta in Spanish, which shows how important this document has become in the course of time, not only in the United Kingdom, but in western political culture as well.

And how did the Great Council mentioned above develop into the ancestor of modern Parliament? In the 13th century representatives from the middle classes began to be invited to the sessions of the Great Council, and in the following century they became permanent members of this assembly, which began to be called Parliament. It is true that the role they played was mainly passive at the beginning, simply consenting to taxation as the new members did not dare



to oppose the king at that time. Soon, however, they started to become aware of their growing importance within the machinery of government. The middle classes were becoming wealthier towards the end of the Middle Ages and the kings started to depend on them for extra taxes. When the middle classes got together in the House of Commons and gained control over taxation, they redefined the phrase “no taxation without representation”, even though they never expressed the idea in these words.

At the same time, they also acquired a powerful weapon to use against the king; every time he summoned Parliament to ask for extra taxes, the Commons demanded redress of grievances first, thus gaining other rights such as the right of impeachment or the right to present common petitions and thus initiate legislation. The fact that the middle classes obtained a voice in government as early as in the 14th century has become a great constitutional achievement in English history and a legacy that was to be inherited by future generations.

The legislative branch of government in England underwent constant development during the late Middle Ages and the early Modern Age. Gradually, the assembly became an essential part of the machinery of government, so much so that King Henry VIII carried out the break with Rome entirely with the support of Parliament, which made the changes legitimate in English common law. It is true that King Henry and his secretary Thomas Cromwell were very good at manipulating the members of Parliament, which was made easier by the fact that Parliament was still a primitive institution by modern standards.

However, quoting David Harris Willson, ‘at least, the Commons knew that they were worth manipulating.’

This awareness led to the appearance of feelings of self-respect and self-confidence which gave the Commons the strength they needed to deal with the Stuart kings in the following century. The Stuarts defended the doctrine of the divine right of kings, thus underestimating the Commons’ privileges and importance in government. This situation became the background to the clash that eventually resulted in the civil wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

This is the constitutional and political tradition that the English emigrants took with them to America, to Virginia the first colony and, a few years later, on board the Mayflower, to modern Massachusetts. It is not surprising then that, a few years after the foundation of Virginia at the start of the 17th century, the House of Burgesses appeared as an assembly that played an active role in the government of the young colony. This assembly consisted of representatives from the different settlements chosen by the colonists who held land, which granted them the right to vote. It is not surprising either that the Mayflower Compact was signed by the so-called Pilgrim Fathers before they set foot on American soil. In the covenant they agreed to

combine our selves together into a civil body politic ... to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

The fact that the pilgrims were Separatists, a group within the Puritans who believed that each congregation was to be autonomous in religious issues and should have a voice in the decision-taking process, obviously resulted in the signing of the compact. But we must not underestimate the historical heritage that they brought with them, which must have contributed to shaping their political views.

In the 17th century, significant events took place in the mother country. The clash between the Stuarts and Parliament led to civil wars and a number of republican experiments carried out by Oliver Cromwell after the execution of King Charles I. The restoration of the monarchy did not solve the main constitutional and religious conflicts, which definitely came to an end with the English Revolution of 1688. This event, also called the Glorious Revolution since no blood was shed, was an answer to James II’s attempt to subvert English known laws and the religion accepted by the majority of the people. According to the parliamentarians of the time, the revolution aimed at preserving English institutions, which were being threatened by the king. When James fled to the Continent, Parliament declared the throne vacant and offered the crown to the king’s eldest daughter Mary and her husband William, who were both protestant.



Once again, all the statutes passed by Parliament on that occasion lacked declarations of political theories. It is outside the so-called revolutionary settlement that we find a philosophical justification of the principles derived from it. Needless to say, the reference is to John Locke's Two Treatises of Government, published in 1690, two essays that include his theory of the social contract, inalienable human rights and the right to rebel against the king when those rights are violated. According to Locke, men are originally born free and equal, subject only to the laws of nature. In order to avoid the inconveniences brought about by that state of nature, they enter into a commonwealth or community, and they form a civil society with a civil government to which they grant part of their natural rights. They retain, however, some basic inalienable rights that must be respected by the government. In Locke's words,

The Reason why Men enter into Society is the preservation of their Property; and the end why they chuse and authorize a Legislative is that there may be Laws made, and Rules set as Guards and Fences to the Properties of all the Members of the Society, to limit the Power, and moderate the Dominion of every Part and Member of the Society. .... Whensoever therefore the Legislative shall transgress this fundamental Rule of Sociey, and either by Ambition, Fear, Folly or Corruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put themselves into the hands of any other an Absolute Power over the Lives, Liberties, and Estates of the People; By this breach of Trust they forfeit the Power the People had put into their hands for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the People, who have a Right to resume their original Liberty, and, by the Establishment of a new Legislative ... provide for their own Safety and Security, which is the end for which they are in Society. What I have said here, concerning the Legislative ... holds true also concerning the supreme Executor.

In 17th century Britain, the executive branch of government was dramatically affected by the revolution of 1688. The revolutionary settlement proclaimed the sovereignty of Parliament. If Parliament can make kings, it can also unmake them following the concept of lawful resistance. Consequently, it became the body where sovereign power resided, and Britain emerged as a limited monarchy a century before the French rebelled against the absolutism of Louis XVI. The Coronation Oath written for William and Mary, clearly shows this since, for the first time, a king and queen had to swear to respect "the statutes in Parliament agreed upon, and the laws and customs of the same."

Locke's words are clearly echoed in the Declaration of Independence of the USA when it says

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these, are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That, to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that, whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

The eighteenth century witnessed the appearance of the ideas of the Age of Reason, among them Montesquieu's ideal type of government: three branches that checked one another to ensure balance of power. One of his sources of inspiration was British government, where he thought that three different powers could be clearly found. What he failed to notice from a distance was how powerful Parliament had become. Since the revolution of 1688, Parliament had had sovereignty over the king. Even the judicial power was closely connected with the House of Lords as this chamber had retained its traditional role as the Supreme Court in the land. In this way, England became an example through an ironic misunderstanding and indirectly influenced the writing of the Constitution of the USA, which adopted the principle of the separation of powers, and in turn, became a model for other constitutions like the Argentinian one.

The English documents and events discussed above have contributed significantly to the development of a strong feeling of respect for the rights and liberties gained in the course of time, and above all, for the rule of law in English society. This respect for the rule of law concerns acts

of Parliament, constitutional documents, judge-made law, tradition and custom, that is to say, what is known as English common law.

A good example of an unenacted convention can be found in Victorian times and it affected the selection of the prime minister. For many years after the revolution of 1688, kings had preserved the right to appoint their prime ministers. It was during the early Victorian period that a minor constitutional crisis led to the final settlement of this issue. At that time the Whig and the Tories, the two political parties of the time, had even forces in the Commons. Having relied on the support and good counsel of her Whig Prime Minister Melbourne, Queen Victoria refused to admit changes when he resigned and the Tories were asked to form a new Cabinet. Robert Peel, the leader of the Tories, felt that he could not take over government while the Queen was surrounded by Whig ladies and advisers at court. When he asked her to dismiss some of those ladies from her side as a sign of support for the new government, the young Queen considered this a gross interference in her private life and called Melbourne back. Lord Melbourne was Prime Minister until the elections of 1841 gave the Tories a clear majority over the Whigs. It did not take the young queen long to give in to what was inevitable, and from that moment onwards and without the need for an act of Parliament, it became firmly established that the Prime Minister had to be the leader of the political party that had won a majority in the Commons, regardless of the sovereign's desires.

This last issue has become one of the valuable lessons I have learnt throughout my studies of British history. Laws are passed to be respected whether they are convenient for our own personal or political interests or not. The same applies to long standing conventions that need not be enacted if citizens are guided by their common sense and their acceptance of what is best in the interests of society as a whole. Of course, there will always be people who break the law everywhere, but there should be a general attitude of respect for the rule of law as the basis of society if we want that society to be fairer and organized on a sound basis. Perhaps this lesson is pointless in many countries, but it is very significant in Argentina, where the law often seems to exist only to be ignored, broken, or manipulated. Widespread respect for the law should not be a utopia in any culture. It should be an aim worth aiming at.

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# The rise of nationalism and the European Union's uncertain future

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It has been my great good fortune to teach the history of European integration at University College Cork for over 25 years. I have also had the very good luck to work in archives in different countries in Europe and in the United States. I have also had the opportunity work with historian pioneers researching the origins and development of the European Union, that unique political construction and pioneer of pooled sovereignty.

In my lifetime, I have seen the European Economic Community (EEC) grow from the original six in 1956 to nine in 1973 with the admission of Ireland, Denmark and Britain, and on, in the wake of the ending of the Cold War, to 28 member states.

In that time, the community has changed its name as it has evolved towards ever closer union from Economic Coal and Steel Community to EEC, and then European Community and now the European Union. Whatever it has been called, the now European Union has been credited with having given Western Europe a prolonged period of unprecedented peace, breaking the cycle of world wars –helped turn swords into ploughshares and integrate the economies of the union. Ironically, paradoxically and surprisingly, the European Union has been led –since its inception– by a Franco-German axis, or better said, alliance. Both countries fought on opposite sides in the Franco-Prussian war of the 1870s, and in two world wars in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, both countries navigated the European Union through the ending of the Cold War and its aftermath of civil unrest and civil war in the former Yugoslavia and neighbouring territories. The fall of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European empire provided the unprecedented opportunity for the European Union to extend its parameters to the boundaries of a retracted Russian influence. By 2014, there were 28 member states and that is likely to remain static for a number of years as there are major problems with the country at the top of the queue... Turkey.

Not surprisingly, the leaders of the movement for European integration post-World War II were active in the resistance or were political opponents of Fascism and Nazism. In the 1930s and during the war years, many of the men and women who shaped the future of Europe, in the late 1940s and 1950s, had witnessed the collapse of the nation state on the continent, experienced a disastrous war and, most disconcertingly, saw elites in the occupied states placing governing apparatus in the hands of pro-Hitler puppet regimes. Moreover, those quisling-like regimes collaborated willingly with the plans of the Nazis to eliminate the Jews, gypsies, gay people, and anyone who stood in their way. As early as July 1941, the Italian federalist, Altiero Spinelli, helped produce the Manifesto of Ventotene in which it was written that

the nation has become a divine entity which thinks only of its own existence and its own development, without caring at all about the damage it may cause to others. The absolute sovereignty of the nation states has caused each one of them to try to dominate the other. The inevitable result of this desire to dominate is the hegemony of the strongest state over all the others.

The doctrine of nationalism, in those circumstances, provided an opportunity to return to old ways. The solution was to replace autarchy with a European federation and drive out forever

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the forces of National Socialism and Fascism by creating supra-national structures governing a United States of Europe.

Altiero Spinelli, the anti-fascist resistance leader in Italy favoured a federal solution in post-war Europe. At a meeting in Geneva in 1944, which was attended by Spinelli, the same message emerged:

If a post war order is established in which each State retains its complete national sovereignty, the basis for a Third World War would still exist even after the Nazi attempt to establish the domination of the German race in Europe has been frustrated.

What further reinforced strong sentiments of that kind for people like Spinelli was the manner and methods by which the Nazis had sought to conduct a policy of genocide against Jews and other groups of so-called *unttermenschen*, those with physical and mental disabilities, gypsies and gays.

On 16 October 1943, over 1,000 Italian Jews were rounded up and transported to Auschwitz as were over 4,000 others from Northern Italy. Add to that the millions who were exterminated in the death camps from all over Europe and it is not difficult to see why there was a great resolve amongst those who experienced the evils of Nazism and Fascism never to return to the international anarchy of the inter-war years when the League of Nations was neither respected nor obeyed by German and Italy.

Another great Italian, the author, Carlo Levi, was a strong voice against Fascism and wrote a memorable work, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, which was an implicit condemnation of the Italian regime and an act of defiance in literature.

His namesake, novelist and poet Primo Levi, was a holocaust survivor and he has left many haunting lines –in prose and in verse– which raged against the unimaginable tyranny of the Holocaust. In his poem, *Schemà*, Levi writes:

Consider whether this is a man  
Who labours in the mud  
Who knows no peace  
Who fights for a crust of bread  
Who dies at a yes or a no.  
Consider whether this is a woman,  
Without hair or name  
With no more strength to remember  
Eyes empty and womb cold  
As a frog in winter

His fellow poet, Paul Celan, –another survivor of the holocaust– has left us these lines from the poem called *todesfuge*, originally called *todestango*. (It is hard to grasp the perverse truth that the orchestra at Auschwitz also had tangos in its *repertoire*.) Whatever its original name, today the poem, *Deathfuge*, should never be expunged from the collective global memory:

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening  
We drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night  
We drink and we drink  
We shovel a grave in the air where you won't lie too cramped

Post World War II, continental politicians and civic leaders –who had experienced the horrors of the Nazi occupation and the Holocaust– worked with urgency to transform European political and economic structures and prevent a return to the post-Versailles international system which had collapsed in the 1930s. Europe in 1945 had a number of outstanding and like-minded political leaders willing to end inter-state conflict and rivalry and, influenced by progressive political thinking influenced heavily by Catholic social teaching, drive on towards the establishment of a United State of Europe based on the principles of the welfare state. The four most important leaders were Alcide De Gasperi of Italy, Robert Schumann of France, Konrad Adenauer of Germany, and the French civil servant and architect of a united Europe, Jean Monnet. Without



labouring the point, the European structures to emerge between 1948 and 1955 were based on the principles of pooled sovereignty, first exemplified in the structures of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) and later by the European Economic Community (1957). The six original members, France, Germany and Italy, together with the Benelux (Luxembourg, Netherlands and Belgium) had little difficulty adjusting to the idea of pooled sovereignty in key sectors. None were idolaters of the nation state. All enjoyed the full benefits of the free movement of goods, labour and capital. While not losing their respective national identities, citizens in all six countries were encouraged to cultivate their European identity. After all, the EEC was evolving towards a full political and economic union, and ultimately a United States of Europe.

It is not historically accurate to say that "the nation state" was totally discredited, or discredited in every way, by the war. The British, the Irish and the Scandinavians –Norway apart– were countries which had not experienced occupation. Britain stood up valiantly to Hitler. Ireland was neutral as was also Sweden (Spain and Portugal were not democracies.) In the unoccupied democracies, the nation state was not a spent and discredited institution. On the contrary, the opposite lesson was taken from the war; the nation state was, for example, what was perceived to have saved Ireland from invasion.

Eamon de Valera, the wartime leader, remained in power until 1948. He was, in the early post-war period, an enthusiastic supporter of integration for continental Europeans. But he did not see it as being immediately relevant for Ireland, or, at least, not at that point of departure in 1948/9. Winston Churchill, the great wartime leader, was put out of office in 1945. He remained strongly supportive of economic cooperation but not pooled sovereignty or federalism. Both the British and the Irish –for very different reasons– showed no inclination to join the Coal and Steel Community in 1951 or the EEC in 1957. But, by 1961, both had changed their respective policies and knocked on the door in Brussels to petition for membership, together with Denmark and Norway. There was never any doubt about the terms on which the British entered the EEC; London wanted EEC membership but for reasons of enlightened self-interest. The British wanted to mould the future of the community to its own image and likeness, pre-empting the emergence of a federal Europe or a united Europe. At this point, Scotland and Wales were not in a position to have a direct say in the decision to join, other than through their strong Labour representation in the Commons. Ireland, on the other hand, quickly learned the harsh realities of being a small power and a neutral. The Irish leader, Seán Lemass, made it clear in mid-1962 that Ireland was prepared to join a community heading towards ultimate political union. None of the applicants succeeded in that round. President Charles de Gaulle vetoed the membership of the British in January 1963. There was another flurry to obtain membership in 1967. But the British, the Irish and the Danes had to wait until 1 January 1973 to secure membership.

Thirdly, the EC had to confront the challenge from the British seeking to derail any effort to move towards federalism and social democratic influences.

Unlike Ireland where a referendum on membership of the EC was held in 1972 with a 91% "yes" outcome, the British did not get an opportunity to do the same. The new Labour Government of Harold Wilson called a referendum in 1975, 67.23% said "yes" to the question "Do you think the United Kingdom should stay in the European Economic Community (Common Market)?" The strength of the "yes" vote was all the more remarkable because of the split within the cabinet. Ministers canvassed on both sides. Many Conservatives would also have voted to remain in the EC.

The next enlargement brought in three countries which had emerged relatively recently from military dictatorship. Greece, ruled by the colonels between 1967 and 1974, joined in 1981. Spain, following the death of Franco in 1975, had successfully made the transition to democracy. Portugal, following the coup in 1974, had followed a similar path. Both joined on 1 January 1986. I will make three observations here. Firstly, the arrival of all three countries into the community was seen as a way of making the democratic process in each country irreversible or, at least, strengthening democratic institutions. Secondly, the larger the membership of the community became the greater the danger of losing sight of the original objectives. Widening jeopardised the deepening process.

The British Prime Minister between 1979 and 1990, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, was first and

foremost an English nationalist. She conducted a successful campaign during her first years in power to have the EC adjust Britain's VAT repayment to Brussels. "I want my money back," she demanded, and she got it to the eternal shame of the other member states.

But she had more of a struggle after 1985 with the new President of the Commission, Jacques Delors. The latter gave a new momentum to the process of European integration, completing the internal market and laying the foundations for a single European currency. He saw through the Single European Act in 1986 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Delors was there for the fall of the Berlin wall and for the accession in 1995 of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the community.

Delors' nemesis was Mrs Thatcher. She was, first and foremost, an English nationalist. She conducted a successful campaign during her first years in power to have the EC adjust Britain's VAT repayment to Brussels. "I want my money back," she demanded, and she got it. In 1988, Thatcher's Euroscepticism was at its most pronounced in a speech in the College of Europe, Bruges.

She said that "working more closely together does not require power to be centralised in Brussels or decisions to be taken by an appointed bureaucracy." She said her first guiding principle was that willing and "active cooperation between independent sovereign states" was "the best way to build a successful European Community." To try to suppress nationhood and concentrate power at the centre of a European conglomerate would be highly damaging and would jeopardise the objectives we seek to achieve.

She wanted France as France, Spain as Spain and Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality. "We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels," Thatcher declared.

When Delors called for the European Parliament to be the democratic body of the community, the commission to be the executive and the Council of Ministers to be the Senate, Thatcher told the Commons in reply in 1990: "No, No, No."

In her book *Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World*, Thatcher wrote in 2003 that "such an unnecessary and irrational project as building a European super state was ever embarked upon will seem in future years to be perhaps the greatest folly of the modern era."

But in the end, her extreme views on Europe contributed to her fall from power on 28 November 1990. However, free of the burdens of office, she was even more frank with her biographer, Charles Moore, who argued that she wanted Britain to leave the EC following the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992: "Advisers had persuaded her that she should not say this in public since it would have allowed her opponents to drive her to the fringes of public life." She did not really care too much about what was thought of her on this topic.

Delors, in contrast, gave a new momentum to the process of European integration, completing the internal market and laying the foundations for a single European currency. He saw through the Single European Act in 1986 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Delors was there for the fall of the Berlin Wall and for the accession in 1995 of Austria, Finland and Sweden. The popular press in Britain, known as the red tops, had a field day at the expense of Delors. These slides show his unpopularity. Building on the success of Delors, who stepped down as President in 1996, his successors helped bring about the introduction of the Euro in 2001/2 –perhaps the single most important driver of further European integration and the pooling of sovereignty in the area of banking and fiscal control. Some 19 of the 28 countries are now members in a Europe that has spread from the west to deep into the east. But as the introduction of the Euro has demonstrated, the European Union has deepened as well as widening in recent years. The prevalence and persistence of international financial crises has helped to deepen further the integration process. Ireland, which confronted a major financial melt-down in 2008, witnessed at first hand that rescue packages came at a severe price –not merely in terms of imposing rigidities and austerity on Irish people, but also by forcing –as part of a recovery package –Ireland to undertake reform of banking, business and government reform. Pension were cut, wage increases frozen, the civil service was down-sized, recruitment to the public service was prohibited. Just as EEC membership had obliged Ireland to introduce equal pay for women in the mid-1970s, so, too, were Irish

governments obliged –as a consequence of the crisis– to introduce such unpopular measures as property tax, charges for water and salary cuts. Such swingeing measures were unpopular and the backlash helped bring down Fianna Fáil and their Green Party coalition partners in 2011. But the measures worked, as the Irish economy in 2015 is growing at the rate of 6.5%.

Why were the Irish so passive in the face of such unprecedented cutbacks in the standard of living for so many people? The answer is that they were not and the change of government in 2011 demonstrated that they were far from being passive or fatalistic. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Irish public had not collectively targeted the European Union for its woes, is that reasonable citizens knew that the economic crisis following the departure of the Celtic Tiger was substantially home-made and home-grown. Membership of the EU provided a way for the Irish economy to recover while local politicians could blame Brussels for having to introduce property tax and water charges. Another reason why Irish citizens have not simply blamed Europe for its woes is because membership of the European Union in Ireland is rooted in the sovereign will of the people expressed on many occasions in referenda through the ballot box when Ireland first sought to join on 8 June 1972 and then on every occasion when there was a major change to the Treaty: Single European Act, 26 May 1987; European Union (Maastricht), 16 June 1992; Amsterdam, 3 June 1998; Nice 1 and 2, 7 June 2001, and 19 October 2002; Lisbon, 12 June 2008 (rejected), and 2 October 2009 (accepted); Fiscal Treaty (2012).

However unpopular the EU might be in Ireland today –with a revolt over water charges, dissent over austerity and the emergence of the strongest ever showing for independents in the opinion polls, at 31%– it cannot be argued convincingly that the Ireland's relationship with an ever-evolving EU is not rooted in democratic choice and popular sovereignty. But there is a growing scepticism over the future of the European project. It has strayed a far distance from the idealism of the late 1940s and early 1950s. There is a real danger that that idealism, which sought to guarantee no return to the destructive nationalism of the 1930s, has been replaced in part by a European project based on defence of the *status quo*. The humanitarianism which drove people like Altiero Spinelli, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schumann and Konrad Adenauer is no longer the main driver of the community. At least, that humanitarian legacy is in conflict with more conservative forces which wish to reduce the European Union to a coalition of nation states –and not a union in the true sense of that word. That was the vision of Charles de Gaulle –a Europe led by France without the presence of a pro-US Britain. In an extreme form, those nationalist sentiments are echoed by Marine Le Pen and her French National Front Party. On 22 April 2012, she polled 17.90%, or six million votes, in the first round of the presidential election. Unlikely to succeed in the next presidential election, she will certainly increase her vote. There are echoes of similar rightist sentiments in Italy particularly as represented by the Lega Nord in the northern part of Italy where the league is the largest part in the Veneto and Lombardy, and the second largest in Emilia Romagna and Tuscany, the third largest in Liguria, Marche and Umbria and the fourth largest in Piedmont. But for all the huffing and puffing, the league is unlikely to takeover national government in Italy, no more than Le Pen in France or the far right in Germany where the centre is deeply entrenched. But that does not mean that there ought to be any complacency in the European Union. The far right is a growing threat and its presence requires eternal vigilance in Belgium and in the Netherlands, in Spain, Portugal, Austria and Greece. Casting a swift eye over the former communist bloc countries, now members of the EU, Poland and Hungary have worrying groups of extreme nationalists. Although it would be alarmist to suggest that those forces collectively might dislodge the moderate centre of political gravity at the core of the EU, those parties are far from being an irrelevance in international politics. Madame Le Pen's party won 23 seats in the last European Parliament Elections. She helped form a new far right group in the European Parliament known as Europe of Nations and Freedoms which will have at least 36 members. The National Front, Austria's Freedom Party, Italy's Northern League, the Belgian Flemish Interest Party, the Dutch Party of Freedom, and the far right Polish Party as well as a former British member of the United Kingdom Independence Party. Le Pen has refused admission to Greece's Golden Dawn and the Hungarian Jobbik Party which has made anti-semitic statements.

While the practical impact of Madame Le Pen's new grouping is likely to have limited impact, the organisation of the far right in the European Parliament is a new departure and it shows



greater and growing cohesion between parties of the right in Europe. In a 751-member parliament, this new right grouping is not likely to sway many votes. The Christian Democrats have 221 seats and the Socialists 191. But their populist rhetoric and easy solutions for dealing with increasing numbers of emigrants, migrants and refugees reaching the shores of southern Europe will gain momentum. But the voice of radical, far right nationalism in Europe today is far from being the threat that it constituted in Europe in the 1930s with the rise of Hitler and Mussolini.

The danger in the contemporary context is that the policies of austerity imposed on wayward countries like Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, etc. feeds latent nationalist sentiment and helps the recruiting drives of the radical right in many European countries. So, whenever there is economic austerity, perceived to be imposed by Brussels, by the European Central Bank and by the IMF, xenophobia and anti-semitism rises as does also anti-Islam fervour. In Hungary, for example, the right-wing government has a long-standing claim for the retrieval of “their” land held by the Rumanians and other countries. There is an opposition party in Hungary even further to the right of the current government. When austerity measures were imposed in Hungary, irredentist claims for a lost territory became more pronounced. Without wishing to repeat myself, the far-right benefits politically from austerity policies perceived to be imposed by outside institutions. The cry soon goes up that Jewish bankers are behind the economic oppression of whatever country faces the acute need to reform rapidly and radically.

Judging by the jingoistic popular press in Britain, which is very hostile to the European Union and to British membership of the EC, their sustained attacks on Brussels and on European centralisation, may give cause for concern. The British Prime Minister, James Cameron, had pledged to renegotiate Britain’s terms of membership of the EU and to put the issue of membership before the electorate. But if there were a real danger of a British exit, Brexit, from the EU, one might have expected the UKIP party of Nigel Farage to have done better in the recent British General Election. They got two seats in the unforgiving first past the post system where their candidates sometimes polled twenty and thirty per cent of the popular vote. Will Cameron win a referendum to keep Britain inside the EU? There has not been such a referendum since 1975. So, the British Prime minister is in uncharted waters. Or is he? A rampant Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) won 56 of the 59 seats, wiping out the Labour Party in Scotland. The SNP is pro-EU, but not necessarily as part of the UK. The Liberal Democrats, reduced from 57 to eight seats, is also pro EU. The Labour Party, dropped 26 seats to hold a mere 232 seats to the Conservative Party’s 330 seats, a gain of 24. On these figures, even if the Conservative and Labour Parties have a large share of Euro-sceptics, Cameron should win a referendum on continued membership of the EU. His difficulty is that he needs to be able to show to the electorate that he has got substantial concessions from Brussels in the autumn of this year. That is highly unlikely. He will not reproduce the “triumph” of Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s when she banged the table until she got her way. Cameron will have to face a British electorate without much to show for his efforts. He brings with him to the fight his pro-business and pro-EU convictions. Rationally, Britain must choose –out of national self-interest– to remain in the EU. But a referendum is a Yes or a No. The distortions in results guaranteed by the first past the post system in a general election does not obtain in this contest.

Finally, this brings me to a crisis which may well ignite anti-immigrant sentiments in Britain and have a distorting influence on the forthcoming referendum vote on Europe. The press photographs and TV reports on the blockading of the Calais train tunnel have received widespread coverage in Europe. Tourists and lorry drivers have been inconvenienced by the growing numbers of immigrants/migrants/refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, from Eritrea, Syria and other countries which have begun to move *en masse* across the Mediterranean on the most makeshift boats –the pawns/victims of people traffickers and organised crime.

To say it is a humanitarian crisis on an unprecedented scale is to know little about the history of displacement in the twentieth-century world. But it is certainly a migration unexperienced in Europe since the 1880s and 1890s when there was a great surge from the east of people fleeing religious and political persecution. They came in their thousands as political refugees and economic migrants seeking a better way of life in a part of the world known to be prosperous and tolerant in the main. Now, over one hundred years later, there is an even greater migration surge

reaching the southern shores of Europe to Italy, Greece and Spain in the first instance. This new wave of migration will test the progressive, humanist and shared religious and political values of tolerance on which the European Union was founded –born as it was out of the embers of fascism, Nazism and dictatorships.

Ireland has agreed to take about 600 Syrian and Eritrean refugees. Other countries have been more generous. But the numbers to be accommodated now is in the tens of thousands. The EU response has been severely criticised by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. But burden sharing in countries, some of which have experienced the rigours of austerity over the past few years, will prove hard to persuade their respective electorates to accept that the admission of large numbers of refugees is just and justifiable.

Memory and, more and more, political education may govern the response to this new humanitarian crisis by the EU. But it is all too easy for governments and citizens alike to suffer from historical amnesia at this time of crisis. Of course, austerity has fanned the flames of radical nationalism and xenophobia in Europe. This will produce ugly echoes of an intolerant and authoritarian past within some EU countries. But it is unlikely that a growing current of strong economic nationalism will result in mainstream xenophobia or racism. Many countries will confront a rise of the radical right. But that is not likely to dominate the politics of the majority of European countries. But the containment of the radical right is not helped by a European Union which appears to perform like a group of beleaguered bankers and businessmen than as the inheritors of a project rooted in the xenophobic nationalism, the racism, the Nazism and the military authoritarianism of the 1930s. The European project was born out of a collective determination to say “never again” or “*nunca más*,” to the racism that begot the militarism that in turn begot the Holocaust.

That is why the contemporary policies of the European Union will be all the stronger and enlightened if European political leaders educate themselves in the history of their continent and never allow the memory of what happened under Fascism and Nazism to stray from the forefront of their minds. The slogan on the banner, carried in Rome to commemorate the Nazi deportation of Jews from that city on 16 October 1943, captures a great truth: “*Non c’è future senza memoria*”, there is no future without memory.

The poet Primo Levi records this same truth in the final stanza of his poem “For Adolf Eichmann”:

O son of death, we do not wish you death  
May you live longer than anyone ever lived.  
May you live sleepless five million nights  
Any may you be visited each night by the suffering of everyone who saw,  
Shutting behind him, the door that blocked the way back,  
Saw it grow dark around him, the air fill with death.

The Irish government agreed in 2015 to receive 4,000 refugees. Some 2,622 were to come from Italy and Greece, where most of those fleeing war in Syria in particular are resident. At the beginning of November 2016, just 69 from Italy and Greece have been relocated in Ireland, according to the Department of Justice as quoted by the Irish Examiner columnist, Michael Clifford.

In this regard, the Irish government faces many unanswered questions:

- Why is there no apparent sense of urgency in Irish government circles regarding this humanitarian disaster?
- Why is there a delay in bringing refugees to the country?
- If Germany took roughly one million refugees last year, why cannot Ireland live up to its public commitment to receive the remaining 3,931 of the 4,000 it promised to take in 2015?





# Ireland in Translation

Justin Harman\*

Diplomats, or diplomatists, share a special interest in the art of translation. Indeed, translation in the widest sense is one of the key skills of success in our profession. However, I'd like to start out on an autobiographical note with a few words about the reasons for my own interest in this topic. My first language is English, but I attended a school in Dublin where Irish was the language not only of instruction but also of everyday communication.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, you could be expelled from school for speaking English –theoretically anyhow; I never heard of that actually happening. My early exposure to the language made me feel emotionally very much at home in Irish, in some ways, more so than in English. This may seem a bit odd, although this is a common feeling among Irish people, even among those who do not even know the language. The most famous instance is James Joyce, who knew virtually no Irish, but whose alter ego Stephen Daedalus in *Portrait of the Artist* writes about the different meaning that words such as “home,” “ale,” and “master” have on Irish as opposed to English lips.

My interest in translation has been significantly influenced by the fact that I and my siblings were raised in a linguistically self-challenged household where apart from our school-going years being through the medium of Irish much store was placed on foreign language acquisition (I should say that this was in fact showed remarkable foresighted resourcefulness in the Ireland of the 1960s), with an elaborate scheme of rewards for the learning of words, and with a particular focus on German given that we had an Austrian living with us for some time, a factor which, in turn, contributed to the career choice of one of my elder brothers who went on to become a literary scholar and a distinguished translator, who has produced some of the most accomplished recent translations of Kafka into modern-day English. I am entirely indebted to him, Professor Mark Harman, for the reflections that follow<sup>2</sup>.

In a short historical perspective on the task of the translator in a commentary in the *Times Literary Supplement* entitled “A Circus Rider on Two Horses: Kafka and literary translation”, he (Harman) wrote: “from the 17th century to the early decades of the last, translators and critics in England and France insisted on the need for qualities such as naturalness and elegance, irrespective of the texture of the original. In the preface to his rendering of Ovid (1680), John Dryden insists that a translator “ought to make his author appear as charming as he can”. A century later, in the first systematic discussion in English of translation, “Essay on the Principles of Translation” (1791), Alexander Fraser Tyler defines a good translation as one that possesses “the ease of original composition” and praises Alexander pope for omitting passages of the Iliad and the Odyssey that “offend by introducing low images and puerile allusions.”

In Germany in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century figures such as von Humboldt and Goethe began to argue that translators ought to let foreign traits show through in the target language. Humboldt called for a delicate balance between foreign and conventional elements: “So long as one does not feel the foreignness/strangeness, a translation has reached its highest goal; but where the foreignness appears as such, and more than likely even obscures the foreign, the translator betrays

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1. To avoid misunderstanding I should point out here that I call the indigenous Celtic language of Ireland Irish rather than Gaelic, the term often used in the U.S., because in Ireland the term Gaelic is generally used by those hostile to the language.

2. I would refer readers to his review of *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages, Cultures* by Michael Cronin published by Cork University Press - <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07374836.2000.10524089?needAccess=true>

his inadequacy.” In the fullest statement of this theory, which has come to be called foreignizing translation, Schliermacher famously describes the two principal approaches to translation thus: “Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader.”

To return to our subject today: Ireland and Translation. Because of the abrupt and indeed traumatic way in which we turned our back on our own language and native literary culture in the nineteenth century, a painful but perhaps also productive rift runs through Irish culture. Translation has long been one of the ways of coping with this rift, and so translation is more central in Irish cultural life than it is in that of some other English-speaking countries. Indeed, for over a thousand years, translation has played a vital, if controversial, role in Irish culture. In the middle ages, Irish monks and scholars translated Greek and Latin works into Irish in monasteries and colleges scattered throughout continental Europe. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Irish Revival ushered in by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J. M. Synge was energized by translations of the ancient Gaelic sagas. Aptly enough, it was a translator, George Sigerson, who said of the ancient Gaelic bards and poets that they were the “Moderns of the Past” and rightly forecast that they might be “the Moderns of the Future.” That prediction proved to be accurate, since the Irish Revival transported the Gaelic bards into the twentieth century and beyond. It is worth reminding ourselves that the monoglot W. B. Yeats could draw inspiration from the oldest vernacular literature in Europe only with the help of translators such as Samuel Ferguson and Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League and first president of the Irish Free State<sup>3</sup>.

Oddly enough, relatively little attention has been devoted to the Irish tradition in translation, except in the area of Celtic Studies, where the focus has tended to be on narrow questions about lexicography that are of interest only to specialists. One exception is Michael Cronin’s exhilarating survey of the unexpectedly diverse range of translation activity in Ireland from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the present, which has almost single-handedly opened up this new field of study.

Medieval Irish culture was far from insular, and there was a thriving climate for translation, especially translations into Irish from classical and vernacular European sources. Gaelic culture produced some of the earliest European translations into the vernacular –the first Irish-language glosses on Greek and Latin texts date from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. These culturally self-confident translators loved to embellish the classical tales for their home audience, adding riffs in the style of the bardic storytellers.

In Ireland, as in many other colonies, territorial and linguistic domination went hand in hand. After the Vikings, who founded Dublin and other cities, came the French-speaking Normans, who first landed in County Wexford in 1169. In Britain the Normans soon traded their native French for English; in Ireland, they switched from French to Irish. By 1536, the English monarch Henry VIII can be found insisting in a message to the Burghers of the town of Galway in the West of Ireland, descendants of those original Norman invaders, that they must cease speaking Irish and instead adopt English, the language of the crown: “every inhabitant within the saide towne indevor theyme selfe to spek Englyshe, and to use theym selffe after the Englyshe Facion; and specially that you .... do put forth your childe to scole, to lerne to speke Englyshe.” Such measures met with little success, and by the 14<sup>th</sup> century the English authorities in Ireland attempted to put the force of the law behind the effort to revive the sagging fortunes of the English language. To give you a flavor of the times, I’d like to quote from the original document, entitled: “A Statute of the Fortieth Year of King Edward III., enacted in a parliament held in Kilkenny, A.D. 1367”:

“now many English of the said land, forsaking the English language, manners, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion, and language of the Irish enemies”

Therefore:

“it is ordained and established, that every Englishman do use the English language, and be named by an English name, leaving off entirely the manner of naming used

3. Hyde was President from 1938-1945 of the Irish Free State, which in 1949 became the Republic of Ireland.

by the Irish...and if any English, or Irish living amongst the English, use the Irish language amongst themselves, contrary to the ordinance...his lands and tenements... shall be seized into the hands of his immediate lord... his body shall be taken by any of the officers of our lord the king, and committed to the next gaol..."<sup>4</sup>

Given the adversarial relationship between English and Gaelic culture in Ireland, translation was often a fraught activity. Sometimes it served as an instrument of peace; at other times it was used as a way of scoping out the enemy. For instance, the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser, author of *"The Fairie Queene,"* took the trouble to sample the indigenous culture by having Gaelic poems translated into English for him. However, that exposure to his Gaelic literary contemporaries, sophisticated masters of an intricate native poetic tradition, did not prevent him from advocating what he himself calls the "translation" of entire Gaelic clans away from the south of Ireland, where he had lands. By the word translation, Spenser of course means "enforced displacement" –using language in a way that anticipates the Orwellian double-speak we have also become so used to in more recent times.

In Ireland ever since translation first became a weapon in the war between colonizers and natives, it has been a controversial practice. When Queen Elizabeth I commissioned a grammar of the Irish language, it was not because she was a budding Celtic scholar. Translations of Protestant religious texts into Irish could be used to wean the Papists from their faith. It is no accident that the first book printed in Irish Foirm na nUrnuidheadh (Edinburgh, 1567) was a translation of a Protestant devotional text.

Translations even became the intellectual equivalent of battering rams. Take, for instance, the decision in 1577 to publish John Hooker's translation of Gerald of Wales's virulently anti-Irish Latin tract *Expugnatio Hibernica*. This was an attempt to secure intellectual weapons in the propaganda war against the native Irish. If the natives could be effectively portrayed as barbarians, this would help justify the Tudor and Cromwellian policies against the indigenous Irish, who, however, fought back by translating from the Irish a history of the island by the Norman-Irish scholar Seathr Ceitinn (anglicized as Geoffrey Keating) that emphasized the antiquity and nobility of Gaelic civilization.

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, even before the outbreak of the calamitous potato famine, the Irish language and Gaelic culture in general had fallen on hard times. English had become the urban language; Irish the tongue of the impoverished hinterlands, especially in the West. Scholars, often from an Anglo-Irish background, sensed the importance of the Gaelic heritage, and sought to preserve it by translating ancient Gaelic texts into English. It is no exaggeration to say, as one scholar has done, that this new translation phenomenon "led eventually to fundamental changes in Irish self-perception" (Cronin, 84). However, initially, this movement to translate Gaelic literature was more archeological than communicative in intent. Little was done to preserve the spoken language. This was because the spoken language was a badge of national allegiance and identity –and, generally, also of religion. Most were native Gaelic speakers. The largely Anglo-Irish early-19<sup>th</sup> century translators preferred to see their work as disinterested antiquarian scholarship because the living Irish language was potentially a source of division between those who wanted to retain the Union with Britain and those who favored autonomy for Ireland.

And this is where the would-be apolitical Douglas Hyde comes in. In 1890, his collection of prose translations, *Beside the Fire*, introduced an entirely new tone into translations from the Irish. Hyde himself wrote modestly of his enormously influential subsequent prose translation of Gaelic stories that it "only aims at being literal, and has ... no doubt ruggedly, reproduced the Irish idioms of the original." Yet it was precisely this ruggedness that inspired such writers as Yeats, who contrasted Hyde's fresh translation strategy in his famous *Love Songs of Connacht* with the jaded approach of his predecessors:

There have been other translators but they had a formal eighteenth-century style that took what Dr. Hyde would call the "sap and pleasure" out of simple thought and emotion.

"Their horses were always steeds and their cows kine, their rhythms had the formal monotony or the oratorical energy of that middle-class literature that comes more out of will and reason

4. Quoted from the verbatim online text of the Statutes of Kilkenny at [www.rootsweb.com/~irlkik/statutes.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~irlkik/statutes.htm)

than out of imagination and sympathy... His (Hyde's) imagination is indeed at its best only when he writes in Irish, or in that beautiful English of the country people who remember too much Irish to talk like a newspaper..." (Cronin, 135)

The appreciation of Yeats for translations that hew to the texture of the original ought to give pause to those who advocate smoothness and naturalness in the target language at all costs. By and large, the Irish experience suggests that the translations with the greatest creative potential are those that subvert English by infusing it with the qualities of the foreign (or in the Irish case, native!) tongue.

Of course, Yeats's commentary is that of a man who himself knew virtually no Irish and for whom translation was necessarily all gain. For those who care about the survival of Irish as a living tongue, translation has often seems a mixed blessing, especially given the massive hemorrhaging of the language that accompanied the potato famine of the 1840s, which struck the poor Gaelic-speaking parts more strongly than it did the rest of the country. Although Ireland contained the greatest numbers of Irish speakers ever in 1831, by the turn of the century the language seemed headed toward extinction. As a result, the question arises as to what end translation into English is serving: Is it merely a final nail being driven into the coffin of the Irish language?

The continuing centrality of translation in Irish cultural life was made clear by Brian Friel, the award-winning playwright whose play *Translations* was partly inspired by George Steiner's treatise on translation, *After Babel*. In the play, a few years before the outbreak of potato famine of the 1840s, a translator called Owen helps the British Ordinance Survey to obliterate the original Gaelic place names and replace them with bastardized Anglicizations, only, finally, to recognize the error of his ways. Although Irish translators have sometimes behaved like Owen, generally, far from being collaborators or parasites –a charge sometimes leveled against translators in Ireland and elsewhere– they have played a creative role in forging connections between the diverse and often warring languages, cultures, and traditions of Ireland.

Translation continues to be a controversial activity. Some Irish language poets refuse to allow their works to be translated into English. They feel that to do so is to capitulate to those in Ireland who want to avoid the effort of attaining proficiency in their native tongue. Is that a short-sighted and self-defeating attitude? The remarkable poet Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill regularly attracts large audiences. However, how many would come if she refused to allow English translations of her work, which have in the meantime gained her entry into the somewhat inappropriately entitled *Longman's Anthology of British Literature*. On the other hand, the late Seamus Heaney, who translated a Middle Irish epic as well as the Old English *Beowulf*, and who claimed that it does not really matter whether the Irish language lives or dies, because, he figured, it will live on through the mediating efforts of translators and poets such as himself. But the question is perhaps why we can't have both? Many argue both for original works in the Irish language and for translations that will ensure them a readership beyond the small numbers of people capable of appreciating them in the original. This is the position of most literary translators. They do not aim to supplant the originals, but rather to create roads that lead towards them. If readers really want to experience the text first hand, inspired perhaps by the work of the translators they will learn the language and read the text in the original medium.



# An Approach to English Culture and Idiosyncrasy for Spanish Speakers

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I would like to make my introduction to the study of the English language and its close connection with the culture and idiosyncrasy of its native speakers by doing something MOST un-English, which is talking about me.

The reason why I feel the need to do so is because I do not only intend to lecture on the subject from acquired knowledge, but also from my own experience. Being Argentine by birth as well as by culture, I have been raised in an “English” household by my English mother, and my father who (like his own father) was educated at an “English” bilingual school where they became acquainted, not only with the English language, but also with its culture.

To put it in a nutshell, I was an English speaker before I was five, though totally unaware of the fact.

This brief account is most relevant to the topic in question, since I wish to refer to the important role culture and idiosyncrasy play when teaching and/or learning a foreign language.

It would be fitting to begin by defining a language. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a language is “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.”

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a language as:

- “The system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other.”
- “Any one of the systems that are used and understood by a particular group of people.”
- “Words of a particular kind.”

That is “the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them and using them, used and understood by a community.”

Richard Nordquist, Grammar and Composition expert defines a language as: “A human system of communication that uses arbitrary symbols such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols.”

All these definitions are incontestable yet, is it possible to acquire a foreign language by merely considering it as a “system of communication”?

The choice of the shortest route to success in the teaching of English to Spanish speakers is a controversial matter, since new methods and teaching aids are continually being developed, each being replaced by the next –as though all adult or elderly foreign English speakers had acquired their knowledge spontaneously!

I believe that the real issue is the way the teaching is approached. The preconceived idea is that a mastery of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation of a second language (English in this case) is enough for a person to be considered bilingual. Yet, why then do we so often come

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across an utterance which is grammatically and semantically correct, and yet “not English”?

The answer is: because a language is a system of communication that responds to the needs of people who share not only a territory but also a history, a culture, and who have an idiosyncrasy of their own. Therefore, before even attempting to teach a foreign language, one should begin by acquiring and transmitting awareness of the intrinsic differences between the idiosyncrasy of the prospective learner and that of the native speakers of the language he wishes to acquire. If we apply this to a native Spanish speaker who wishes to learn English, we should begin by trying to identify the differences between the two languages, which will unerringly point to the idiosyncrasies of their native speakers. Long and clumsy sentence constructions, for instance, are the natural consequence of this lack of awareness.

This leads us to a concept that sums up one of the main differences between Spanish and English descendants. In Spanish speaking communities people are garrulous, outspoken, and extroverted. The Spanish language, therefore, suits their temperament. We Spanish speakers need to reaffirm everything we state –we are fond of long words, and make a greater use of adjectival and adverbial phrases and clauses.

The English, on the other hand, are naturally shy, self-contained, detached and have therefore developed an onomatopoeic, even musical language, with words rich in connotations in order to suit their reticent nature, thus allowing them to be accurate and precise but also capable of painting vivid word pictures in very short phrases.

In my experience, keen observation of English behaviour and the analysis of literary work have proved to be invaluable tools. I have been greatly inspired in my analysis of the English character, as opposed to that of native Spanish speakers, by George Mikes and, lately, by the English social anthropologist Kate Fox –Co-director of the Social Issues Research Centre in Oxford; for these authors’ keen observation of English behaviour has done nothing but confirm that cultural awareness is a “must” if we wish to acquire a language in every sense of the word.

George Mikes, critic, broadcaster, and writer –who was sent to London to cover the Munich crisis and never returned– has very humorously depicted the differences, between England and the Continent (the latter, in direct allusion to the French), in his widely known book *How to Be an Alien*. In the *Warning to Beginners* he definitely shows the foreigners’ outspokenness and extroversion as opposed to English reticence by wittily pointing out that “On the Continent public orators try to learn to speak fluently and smoothly; in England they take a special course in Oxonian stuttering...”

I have used Mikes’ book for years and, considering that it was first published in 1946, I sometimes wondered whether his observations (and my own) had not become slightly outdated, to say the least... And then, an inspired student brought to my attention the existence of *Watching the English* by Kate Fox (published in 2004), and I rejoiced, not only because it is a most enlightening work, but because this 21st century English social anthropologist wholly coincides with Mikes, and has furthermore included his work in her bibliography.

Insularity is clearly exposed by Mikes in his constant reference to the differences between England and the Continent; likewise, Kate Fox, when referring to the English as a classist society, quotes George Orwell’s belief that class differences “fade away the moment any two Britons are confronted by a European.” Scottish, Welsh, and Irish national identities merge into a British one, adopting English behavioural patterns and language when living in a foreign country. This is very obvious in Argentina, for instance, where these people are all “*los ingleses*” to us. We can hardly tell their national identities apart, and Fox’s “grammar of Englishness” certainly applies to all, when confronted with another culture.

In his novel *Flowers for Mrs. Harris*, Paul Gallico introduces us to an English charwoman who has discovered man-made beauty in a couple of Dior dresses she has seen in one of her clients’ closets and her life changes for she feels the urge, the craving for one. But this would not only mean saving a lot of money, but also actually going to Paris! When the moment comes, “Mrs. Harris realized that she was leaving England behind her and was about to enter a foreign country, to be amongst foreign people who spoke a foreign language and who, for all she had ever heard about them, were immoral, grasping, ate snails and frogs, and were particularly inclined to crimes of passion and dismembered bodies in trunks.”

On the other hand, in his screenplay *Shirley Valentine*, Willy Russell introduces us to a housewife from Liverpool who refers to her husband's reluctance to travelling: "No... he'd never go abroad. He hates travellin'. He gets culture shock when we go to Chester!"

This *insularity* probably explains the reticence that Kate Fox defines as "social dis-ease", "lack of ease, discomfort, and incompetence in the field (minefield) of social interaction."

This dis-ease is "treatable", she says, by means of certain facilitators such as "weather talk," moderation (fear of fuss), humour, hypocrisy, empiricism, (distrust of 'airy-fairy' Continental theorizing and rhetoric). Incredibly enough, a Hungarian depicted these same traits back in the 1940s, exhibiting a very English sense of humour.

But, before delving into these aspects of the English character, I would like to focus on the way this "dis-ease" is reflected in their language. For the English language is characterized by its word economy, in other words, its key difference with Spanish, the feature which has led me to discover the enormous potentiality of the short story as a tool for English language teaching.

The very nature of the short story calls for word economy. That is a careful choice of words, which will allow the author to convey full ideas, impressions, feelings, character traits, with superb brevity –this not only requires a mastery of semantics but also of sentence structure. Furthermore, the short story calls for the students' perspicacity in reading between the lines, an aspect that turns it invaluable for the development of their comprehension.

In a short story not a single word is left at random. Quoting Edgar Allan Poe, "every word tells, and there is not one word that does not tell." This seemingly simple assertion should be, in my opinion, the *motto* of every English teacher and learner, as it is to every short story writer and native speaker because it represents the very essence of this language. I must say, however, that word economy is present in other literary genres, as we shall later see.

This feature is particularly significant to native Spanish speakers whose aim is to acquire the English language and, particularly, to those who wish to become translators or interpreters. Thus, if we were to make reference to the "*clack-clack* approach of a sightless man", or to the same man "*thumping* his way before him" our listener/reader would get an instant mental picture of a blind mind working his way with a cane. This could not be easily replaced by a single word in Spanish (nor do I believe a native speaker of Spanish would care to make the attempt, for word economy is not the essence of that language).

The use of prefixes and suffixes is another way of "economizing," especially when it comes to coining words which will give the exact idea one wishes to transmit. In his essay "Selected Snobberies", Aldous Huxley uses terms such as "low-browism" (as opposed to "culture snobbery"), or "up-to-dateness" as a synonym of "modernity snobbery." How can these terms possibly be improved on? And how useful they are to satisfy English directness and straightforwardness! It would be practically impossible to find a single word in Spanish to express these ideas.

This is obviously idiosyncratic, and it is where cultural awareness comes in. Kate Fox mentions "deeply ingrained impulses" of the English "cultural equivalents of laws of gravity" which I have already mentioned regarding what she calls the "central core of Englishness," these "chronic inhibitions and handicaps". She calls them "reflexes" because they are automatic ways of being/doing things.

Fox considers humour to be one of the most important "basic reflexes" the English have as a resource to counteract their social inhibitions. Moreover, it is part of their everyday lives and culture. Satire, wit, irony, sarcasm, understatement, are some its characteristic forms.

While in other cultures there is a time and place for humour, among the English it is always there, it pervades their lives. They refuse to come across as sentimental they shirk pomposity and self-importance (and even tend to distrust those who are like that).

D. H. Lawrence's opening paragraph of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a most controversial novel set in post First World War England, clearly shows the deepest pain concealed beneath an ostensibly cynical surface. He wrote:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened; we are among the ruins; we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future;

but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.

This was more or less Constance Chatterley's position. The war had brought the roof down over her head. And she had realised that "one must live and learn."

Her husband, Clifford Chatterley, had been sent to Flanders "to be shipped over to England again six months later, more or less in bits... He didn't die, and the bits seemed to grow together again. For two years he remained in the doctor's hands. Then he was pronounced a cure and could return to life again with the lower half of his body, from the hips down, paralysed for ever."

The English tend to define self-importance and pomposity in a single word: "cleverness," which they utterly dislike and distrust and, when detected, immediately counteract with irony and sarcasm. George Mikes wrote: "This pompous, show-off way of speaking is not permissible in England. The Englishman is modest and simple. He uses but few words and expresses so much—but so much—with them."

This is very wittily shown in a section of *How to Be an Alien* under the title "How not to be Clever." Thus, when briefing "aliens" on how to be rude, G. Mikes highlights the different reactions to an obviously untrue story. According to him, "on the Continent you would remark: 'You are a liar, Sir, and a rather dirty one at that.' In England you just say 'Oh, is that so? That's rather an unusual story, isn't it?'"

English humour, as Kate Fox points out, "is not a special, separate kind of talk... it is like breathing." The English can't function without it. This "reflex" manifests itself whenever they wish to avoid discomfort of awkwardness. "When in doubt, joke."

Going back to Shirley Valentine, she is caught out talking to the wall, by her husband Joe:

JOE: Who the bloody hell are you talkin' to?

SHIRLEY: To the wall.

JOE: To the *what*?

SHIRLEY: The wall. Any objections?

JOE: Never mind the bleedin' wall. It's nearly six o'clock, get on with getting me tea.

SHIRLEY: Oh, my God! It's six o'clock and his tea isn't ready. Will the Government collapse? Does this mean the end of civilisation as we know it?

JOE: I always have me tea at six o'clock.

SHIRLEY: So just think how excitin' it would be if for once you had your tea at quarter past six. It'd make the headlines: 'World Exclusive. Joe Eats Late!'

Though Shirley and Joe are an ordinary Liverpudlian couple leading monotonous lives, we may clearly detect this pervasiveness of English humour in their everyday conversations; this refined sarcasm. Instead of reacting temperamentally to Joe's unkind remark, Shirley settles on cynical irony instead. "Humour is all in context."

In Spanish, when we write or speak seriously, even ceremoniously, we MEAN IT! When we wish to make serious criticism, we're DEAD serious.

Another feature of the English character which is clearly reflected—especially in their satirical writings—is the use of an elaborate style, as a roundabout way of expressing a critical opinion (while incidentally showing moderation and avoiding open unpleasantness). Paradoxically enough, garrulous Spanish speakers resort to simplicity and straightforwardness whenever they wish to tell someone where to get off, whereas formality is clearly meant, both in literature and in speech. Tragedies are treated tragically and the style matches the mood.

In literature this can be achieved through the use of hyperbole (exaggeration), long sentences, and a formal register. Caricatures are a clear example of this elegant form of criticism. The Author's note introducing Peter Mayle's *A Dog's Life* may well illustrate this point.

"My story is based on actual events. However, following the current autobiographical custom adopted by politicians in their memoirs, I have adjusted the truth wherever it might reflect unfavourably on myself."

Noël Coward, again, was captivated by "...the verbal adroitness of Saki's dialogue and the brilliance



of his wit." In this century, the wit might seem laboured and the language old fashioned yet, he believed Saki does not belong to this category of writers. "His stories and novels appear as delightful and, to use a much abused word, sophisticated, as they did when he first published them."

His caricature of Cornelius Appin in the short story "Tobermory," which Coward defines as a masterpiece, paints a clear picture of the Edwardian high social society and their prejudice and distrust of those who did not actually "belong" –especially if they insisted on showing off their achievements.

"Of all her guests, he was the one who had come to Lady Blemley with the vaguest reputation. Someone had said he was 'clever' and he had got his invitation in the moderate expectation, on the part of his hostess, that some portion at least of his cleverness would be contributed to the general entertainment. Until tea-time that day she had been unable to discover in what direction, if any, his cleverness lay. He was neither a wit nor a croquet champion a hypnotic force nor a begetter of amateur theatricals. Neither did his exterior suggest the sort of man in whom women are willing to pardon a generous measure of mental deficiency."

It may be pointed out that, in this particular quote, English class-consciousness is also alluded to and satirized by the author. English humour is not a synonym of "good humour"; in many cases it is quite the opposite. In fact, quoting K. Fox "...we have satire instead of revolutions or uprisings."

In English, an elaborate style is one of irony's greatest allies in the achievement of verbal wit through euphemisms, parodies, caricatures.

Going back to "Selected Snobberies," Huxley makes use of the euphemism as a subtle means of satirizing the young adolescents of his time whom he categorizes as "disease snobs," who thought it would be "romantic to fade away in the flower of youth like Keats..." in direct allusion to consumption: an incurable disease, in those days, which had taken the lives of many highly admired artists and poets.

English cultural traits are constantly coming up, both in spoken and written language; thus, proverbs or popular sayings, as well as nursery rhymes, are a typical source of verbal wit.

In *Blithe Spirit*, a hilarious play by Noël Coward, he spices up the dialogues between the protagonist, Charles Condomine, and the ghosts of his two late wives who, tired of bickering and competing with each other, join forces against him; and also tired of Madam Arcati's (the medium) vain attempts to send them back to the "Other Side", they complain:

RUTH: And now, owing to your idiotic inefficiency, we find ourselves in the most mortifying position. We're neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor whatever it is.

ELVIRA: Good red herring.

The actual saying is: "Neither fish, flesh nor good red herring," with reference to someone whom others find hard to understand. "Red herring," on the other hand, refers to a fact, argument, etc. that leads attention away from the matter being considered.

In another part of the play, Charles and Elvira (his first wife), argue about infidelity (especially his):

CHARLES: On looking back on our married years, Elvira, I see now, with horrid clarity, that they were nothing but a mockery.

ELVIRA: You invite mockery, Charles. It's something to do with your personality, I think. A certain seedy grandeur!

CHARLES: Once and for all, Elvira...

ELVIRA: You never suspected it, but I laughed at you steadily from the altar to the grave, all your ridiculous fussings and fumings.

Elvira's remark is a parody of the idiom "from the cradle to the grave", i.e. from birth to death. The result is, obviously, satirical humour.

Like proverbs and sayings, nursery rhymes are a structural aspect of the English language. In fact, most of them may be traced many centuries back, and are closely related to English history.

Towards the end of the play, Madam Arcati has finally stumbled across the solution to the



problem of sending Elvira and Ruth back. Edith, the maid, had been the natural force that had enabled the medium to conjure them up, in the first place. Though Elvira and Ruth are still sceptical, she decides that the step to follow is hypnosis.

MADAM ARCATI: Here Edith –this is my finger. Look! (She waggles it). Have you ever seen such a long, long, long finger? Look, now it's on the right – now it's on the left – backwards and forwards it goes – see – very quietly backwards and forwards – tic-toc, tic-toc, tic-toc.

ELVIRA: The mouse ran up the clock.

This last rejoinder is a clear allusion to the nursery rhyme "Hickory, Dickory, Dock."

As you have surely noticed, these witticisms would be clearly wasted on anyone who has no knowledge of these cultural features.

It is essential that a translator or interpreter should be acquainted with these cultural traits.

## Hypocrisy

The English are, as Kate Fox puts it, "rightly renowned for their hypocrisy." Just like humour, it is another omnipresent trait of their behaviour.

In our Spanish speaking culture, hypocrisy is a negative feature, for it is automatically related to deceit. Yet, as in the case of "cleverness" (which has a negative connotation for the English, defying every definition in the dictionary), hypocrisy is not as odious a feature of Englishness as it might appear to the naked eye for, in most cases, it is a form of politeness to avoid causing offence or embarrassment. Hypocrisy comes naturally to the English, particularly because of their "social dis-ease" which causes them to become inclined, in Fox's words, to "polite pretence rather than honest assertiveness."

George Mikes very subtly, though effectively, reaffirms this: "On the Continent people either tell the truth or lie. In England they hardly ever lie but they would not dream of telling you the truth."

W. Somerset Maugham, like Saki, unravels this feature of the English character revealing it as indispensable to social interaction, as well as to avoid unpleasantness.

In the short story "The Luncheon," he describes the ordeal he had had to go through during a luncheon, as his guest kept ordering expensive dishes, while he could not bring himself to even suggest that they were far beyond his means.

I was startled when the bill of fare was brought, for the prices were a great deal higher than I had expected. But she reassured me.

"I never eat anything for luncheon", she said.

"Oh, don't say that!" I answered generously.

"I never eat more than one thing. I think people eat far too much nowadays. A little fish, perhaps. I wonder if they have any salmon".

Well, it was early in the year for salmon and it was not on the bill of fare, but I asked the waiter if there was any. Yes, a beautiful salmon had just come in, it was the first they had had. I ordered it for my guest. The waiter asked her if she would have something while it was being cooked.

"No," she answered, "I never eat more than one thing. Unless you had a little caviare. I never mind caviare".

My heart sank a little. I knew I could not afford caviare, but I could not very well tell her that. I told the waiter by all means to bring caviare. For myself I chose the cheapest dish in the menu and that was a mutton chop.

In another of his stories, "Louise", he shows a rather darker side of English hypocrisy, though still elegant and subtle.

I could never understand why Louise bothered with me. She disliked me and I knew that behind my back, in that gentle way of hers, she seldom lost the opportunity of saying a disagreeable thing about me. She had too much delicacy ever to make a direct statement, but with a hint and a sigh and a little flutter of her beautiful hands she was able to make her meaning plain. She was a mistress of cold praise.

These two passages speak for themselves and, in the latter, a word combination such as “cold praise” strengthens the ironic effect even further.

Understatement is another literary resource which points to English negative response to earnestness. Kate Fox points out that it is permanently used in context, in key phrases like: “Oh, come off it!” which she defines as their national catchphrase along with “Typical,” or “A bit of a nuisance” (meaning disastrous, traumatic, horrible), to say the least.

As far as understatement is concerned, Eeyore from A. A. Milne’s *Winnie the Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner* always comes to mind. In fact, Eeyorishness is one of the features that Kate Fox describes as part of the English socio-cultural cosmology (and which I will later refer to, in particular). In the chapter called “Pooh Builds a House”, he and Piglet make a terrible mistake: they take Eeyore’s house for a pile of sticks and decide to use those sticks to make him a house in a part of the Forest which is “out of the wind.” When Eeyore discovers that the house he had built for himself is gone, he goes to see Christopher Robin:

“What’s the matter, Eeyore?”

“Nothing, Christopher Robin. Nothing important. I suppose you haven’t seen a house or whatnot anywhere about?”

“What sort of a house?”

“Just a house.”

“Who lives there?”

“I do. At least I thought I did. But I suppose I don’t. After all, we can’t all have houses.”

“But Eeyore, I didn’t know – I always thought – ”

“I don’t know how it is, Christopher Robin, but what with this snow and one thing and another, not to mention icicles and such like, it isn’t so Hot in my field about three o’clock in the morning as some people think it is. It isn’t Close, if you know what I mean – not so as to be uncomfortable. It isn’t Stuffy. In fact, Christopher Robin,” he went on in a loud whisper, “quite-between-ourselves-and-don’t-tell-anybody, it’s Cold.”

“Oh, Eeyore!”

“The Guardian” Books blog published an article on Eeyore in May, 2011, in commemoration of his 140th birthday. In literary terms he is described as an archetypal outsider living in his own Gloomy Place in the Hundred Acre Wood, where everyone else lives happily. He is described as the outsider unlike the rest of the animals who, in his own words “have no Brains... only grey fluff that’s blown into their heads by mistake and they don’t think.” He is in his lonely corner thinking to himself, “Why?” and sometimes “Wherefore?” and wrestling with these questions alone.

Still, he is a lovable character. According to this article, this is because he is the funniest of the characters and “his melancholy often teeters on the brink of absurdity” as in the chapter in *The House at Pooh Corner*, in which Tigger accidentally bounces him into the stream while playing Poohsticks, and he ends up floating round in circles, trying to “maintain his sombre demeanour.” His sarcasm, on the other hand, is glorious (though completely wasted on the other animals in the Wood). He is the embodiment of English “moaning” and taste for irony; and, while we enjoy the nuances of this essentially literary character, we unheedingly drink in these profoundly English features.

Kate Fox has tried to un-fathom the obscure reasons that may account for English behaviour, and has come to the conclusion that neither climate nor geography can entirely explain their disease, since other nations share similar conditions –and yet differ from them, completely.

When I read about Eeyorishness in her book, I was absolutely flabbergasted since, in my own household, we have been giving virtual “Eeyore Awards” to those of us who were forever feeling sorry for ourselves. My mother was usually the winner. To give a trivial example, after his retirement, my father –who was extremely active– used to arrange for meals at home. They would either have food delivered or eat out (with some exceptions, when my mother chose to cook). If, around lunch or dinner time, my father made no move, my mother would stoically ask: “We’re not having lunch/supper today, are we?”

These idiosyncrasies are definitely inbred and, like the others which I have already mentioned,

should be matter of study and source of awareness to all who wish to understand these people and their ways.

As English Language teachers at this University, we are absolutely conscious of this and work on these peculiarities in order to get our students to become literally immersed in the language –just as though they had been brought up among native speakers. In other words, to understand their sense of humour (which is not so different from ours), ever present in every aspect of their lives, no matter how tragic the circumstances may be; to understand how certain peculiarities of the English language such as word coinage by affixation or compounds, for instance, are much more unusual in Spanish; to identify and elicit irony or sarcasm through verbal wit, hyperbole, purple passages, or understatement; to express ideas with this elaborate simplicity that the English master so well (and which is so difficult to achieve in Spanish) –I am referring to word economy.

Throughout my exposition I have quoted passages from famous plays, essays, novels, and stories which have allowed me to make my meaning plain. This is what we do in our language classes, and the result is satisfactorily seen in our students' excellent production of essays and short stories, many of which reflect their understanding of "Englishness" to perfection –a clear proof that all of this is possible.

# The English Language in the 21st century. Different Identities of a “Global Language.”

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When it comes to approaching the “Different Identities of a ‘Global Language’” there are at least three aspects that must be defined or narrowed down before attempting any sort of analysis within the framework of this paper. These are:

- a) The concept of the term global language, the factors involved which make a language global, and the reasons for English to have become a global language.
- b) The notion of the identity of a language.
- c) The manner in which any language can acquire different identities.

Again, if we are to define a global language, the correct thing to do is to begin by defining language. There are many definitions of language, but for the sake of this paper only two have been chosen. The first by Dwight Bolinger (1968) in his renowned *Aspects of Language*, in which he defines human language as “a system of vocal auditory communication using conventional signs composed of arbitrary patterned sound units assembled according to set rules interacting with the experience of its users.”

The second by David Crystal (2015) on *Britanica.com*, who in turn defines language as:

... a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

A number of different definitions could have been chosen, these were chosen because they are both connected to the main theme of the “IV International Conference on English Language – Culture of English Speaking Countries”, i.e. the relationship between language and culture.

Both definitions, though forty-seven years apart, include the cultural aspect of language. Bolinger says: “rules interacting with the experience of its users,” stressing the idea of the “experience of its users.” What is this *experience* other than the cultural element in language? As will be pointed out later on, the relationship between a peoples’ experience, their language and their culture is unavoidable.

Crystal (2015) goes even further when he overtly connects language with the “culture” and “the expression of identity” of its users.

Now the issue at stake is: Whose culture? Whose experience? Whose identity? The answer is not as straightforward as it may seem at first sight. And it is definitely not so in a language such as English.

This brings us back to the three aspects that necessarily have to be narrowed down before we attempt to explain the situation of English in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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1. Crystal, David (2003) *English as a Global Language*.



David Crystal (2000, p. 3), when addressing the concept of the term global language, says that “a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.” This *special role* that Crystal argues a language must develop is not related in any way to the number of native speakers of that language or the number of countries where in which the speakers use that language as a mother tongue, but more to the role it plays in countries where the speakers are non-native speakers of the language in question. This special role could be that of an official language, such as is the case in India or some of the African nations, or the main foreign-language taught, either to children at school or to adults who have never learnt it.

The factors involved in one language becoming first international and then global, have very little to do with whether one language or another is perceived as simpler to use or teach, or whether one language is more “user friendly” than another. The main cause is related to the power of the people who speak it (Crystal, 2000). This power can be either political, economic, military, technological, or a combination of all of these factors.

There have been many examples of this throughout history. Greek and Latin were, at the time, the equivalent of world languages though what was considered as the world has differed considerably over the centuries.

Now, why has English become a global language? There is no doubt that English clearly meets the description above as to what makes a language global. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>, the language of the British Empire and the USA, as a superpower, has been English.

Graddol (2000, p. 6) argues that during the 17th and 18th centuries “the nation state emerged as a territorial basis for administration and cultural identity... National languages... had to be constructed. Consequently English was self-consciously expanded and reconstructed to serve the purposed of a national language.” As form then, English has worked its way to becoming a global language. It became the language of science, of the industrial revolution, of the economic power of Britain and the USA in the 19th century as they dominated the money markets of the world. It went on to become the language of diplomacy and of technological innovation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup>.

Having addressed the issue of English as a global language, it would be appropriate to identify who the users of English are. Professor Braj Kachru (1987) proposes a perspective based on the users of English in a three circle model: the Inner Circle (L1 varieties, e.g. the USA, United Kingdom), the Outer Circle (ESL varieties), and the Expanding Circle (EFL varieties). (Figure 1)

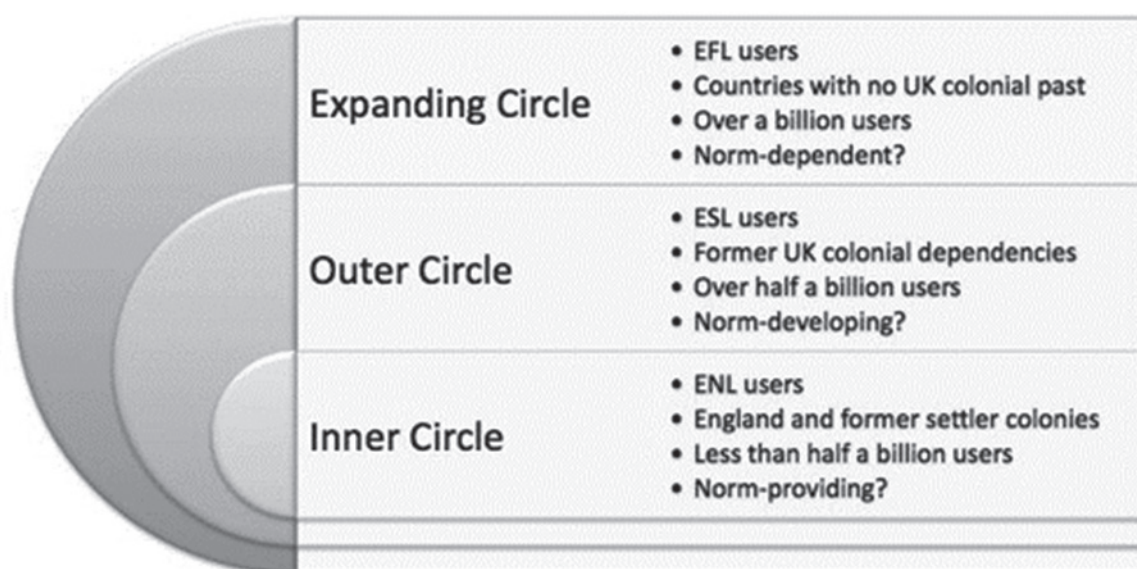


Figure 1



Each of these users of English has an identity of their own which as Kachru (1987, p. 181) says:

bring to the English language... a unique cultural pluralism, and a variety of speech fellowships. These three circles certainly bring to English linguistic diversity, and let us not underestimate- as some scholars tend to do - the resultant cultural diversity. One is tempted to say, as does Tom McArthur (1987), that the three Circles of English have resulted in several English "languages."

The term *culture* is closely associated with the concept of identity. Culture, according to Yule (2006, p. 267) is used "to refer to all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things, people and ideas that we learn when we become members of social groups." And it is via language that culture is manifested. As Claire Kramsch (2013, p. 63) notes,

In the dyad 'language and culture', language is not a bunch of arbitrary linguistic forms applied to a cultural reality that can be found outside of language, in the real world. Without language and other symbolic systems, the habits, beliefs, institutions, and monuments that we call culture would be just observable realities, not cultural phenomena. To become culture, they have to have meaning. It's the meaning that we give to foods, gardens and ways of life that constitute culture.

Yule (2006, p. 267) agrees with Kramsch that culture necessarily needs language to manifest itself, consequently strengthening the notion that language and culture are mutually dependant,

... we develop awareness of our knowledge, and hence of our culture, only after having developed language. The particular language we learn through the process of cultural transmission provides us, at least initially, with a ready-made system of categorizing the world around us and our experience of it. With the words we acquire, we learn to recognize the types of category distinctions that are relevant in our social world. Very young children may not initially think of "dog" and "horse" as different types of entities and refer to both as bow-wow. As they develop a more elaborated conceptual system along with English as their first language, they learn to categorize distinct types of creatures as a dog or a horse. In native cultures of the Pacific, there were no horses and, not surprisingly, there were no words for them. In order to use words such as dog or horse, rain or snow, father or uncle, week or weekend, we must have a conceptual system that includes these people, things and ideas as distinct and identifiable categories.

The paradigm shift of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which brought about changes in lifestyle, technology and moral values, is clearly portrayed in the award-winning British television series "Downton Abbey." These changes made it very hard for some of the members of the older generation to quite grasp what was going on. A good example is precisely the understanding of the terms *weekend* and *telephone*. In the Britain of the turn of the century, the concept of work days, Monday to Friday - Saturday and Sunday, among the upper classes did not exist. In the following scene, the Dowager Countess of Grantham, who one would imagine has not worked a day in her life, is at a complete loss when Mathew Crawley, the lawyer who is the pretender of the Earldom of Grantham, suggests that he will continue with his law practice in Rippon and come down to Downton at the *weekend*:

Lady Edith: What will you do with your time?

Mathew Crawley: I've got a job in Rippon. I said I'll start tomorrow.

Lord Grantham: A job! You do know I mean to involve you in the running of the estate.

Mathew Crawley: Don't worry. There are plenty of hours in a day, and of course I'll have the weekend.

Dowager Countess: (quite puzzled) What is a weekend?

(retrieved from [www: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhfpbw-nuwk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhfpbw-nuwk))

The Dowager Countess is awed even further by the telephone, which is clearly not part of her

conceptual system: "Is this an instrument of communication or torture?" and "First electricity, now telephones. Sometimes I feel as if I'm living in an H.G. Wells novel."

Having established that there is a mutual dependency between language and culture, both of which are closely connected with identity, it would now be appropriate to pose the following question: *whose culture is reflected through English?* Considering that, according to Professor Kachru, there are over a billion speakers of English as a Foreign Language, most of which we can infer have had teachers who speak English as a Foreign Language, as is the case in Argentina, it is very likely that most of the speakers of English in the world are manifesting their own cultures via English, thus giving English a new identity.

David Crystal (2013) in his lecture at the English Speaking Union in London argues that language affects culture, and if a language is transferred to a new setting, it quickly reflects aspects of that culture. This has generated different varieties of English that have lessened the chance of standardization. Nonetheless he still believes that though English is no longer the language of the English, it has the English seal on it. He argues that culture-specific elements of English, as idioms for example, are not fully grasped by non-native speakers of English.

Braj Kachru (1998) claims the controversy has two aspects. The first is that the uses and users of English have gone out of control. More than four hundred million people are using English within the context of their non-western, non-Judeo-Christian sociocultural context. The language has been Asianised, Africanised, culturally, linguistically and socially speaking. In other words, English has been separated from its traditional cultural norms. A number of institutional varieties of English have their local histories, traditions, pragmatic contexts and communicating norms. The result is that the African English, South Asian English, South East Asian English is African, South Asian and South East Asian First and Universal Second.

The second aspect, claims Professor Kachru, is that there has to be a pragmatic shift. English must cease to be looked at within the perspective of a monolingual's view of the language, and within a mono-cultural speech community. Instead, it must be looked at within a multicultural context. The traditional presuppositions about English, therefore, have to be re-evaluated. English must be viewed as a repertoire of cultures, not a single culture (Kachru, 1998, p. 314).

Linguists, especially working in the field of English as a second language, have yet to study the international implications of the uses of English in the OUTER CIRCLE. There is enough evidence and considerable research to show that the deviations are not merely phonological, lexical nor grammatical, but the whole cultural convention which is used in these varieties, the whole notion of textual conventions are distinctly different. The pragmatic notions of politeness rudeness, force, persuasion, are not the same as in American or British culture. Therefore the underlying notion of what is appropriate is different, and appropriateness is a feature of culture.

The idea of English as a single homogenous variety is now dissipating as the varieties have become distinctive in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. English has become, says Crystal (2013), an amalgam of varieties. In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was a need for intelligibility among speakers of EFL; in the last ten years or so, the need has been for identity.

The question is: what happens when a language develops a distinctiveness of this kind? The idea is not new (Crystal, 2013). The differences between British and American English go back to the days of the American independence. In the American Continental Congress of 1778 (McCrum, 1993, p.229), it was recommended that "all replies and answers to the visiting French Congressman should be put to him in the language of the United States." Language nationalism even led John Adams to propose an Academy in order to promote American English as an institution.

Though it would be relevant, there is no need to enumerate the differences between British and American English vocabulary, pronunciation or grammar based on their cultural background. They are so widely spread that most speakers of English are aware they exist, and have been exposed to them at some point or other. But it is clear that they are two quite different cultures, because it would be a hard thought for both Britons and Americans to live with if it were believed that the English language never really left its original cultural home and is therefore, still in some sense, British culture.

The cultural identity that is manifested via English is based on local everyday life and includes animals, plants, food, drink, customs, practices, sports, games, politics, religion, myths, legends, etc. (figure 2)

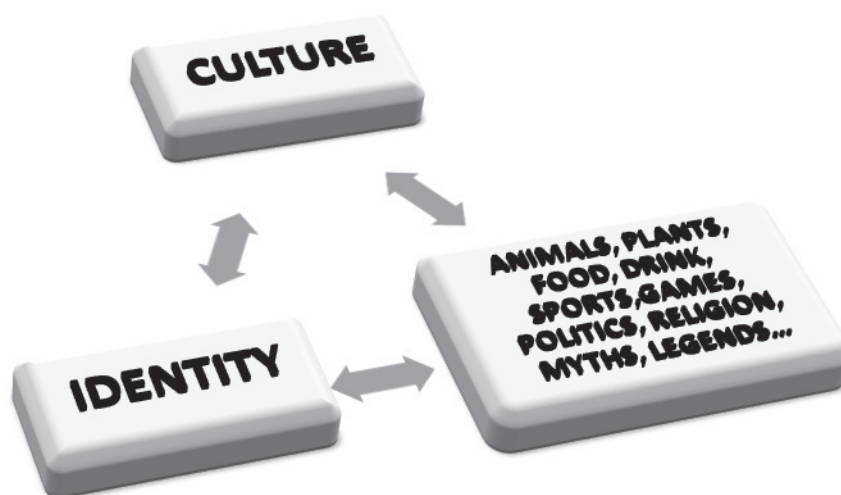


Figure 2

A good example of cultural identity modification of English is Japanese English. English has become acculturated to Japanese Culture, becoming “less and less of a foreign language” (Iwasaki, 1994, p. 266) “...and more and more an additional language for international communication, with the result that the Japanese have acquired an additional vehicle of Japanese Culture.” Many terms, such as sushi<sup>2</sup>, bonsai<sup>3</sup>, Shinto<sup>4</sup>, Zen<sup>5</sup>, haiku<sup>6</sup>, and origami<sup>7</sup> are defined in Romanized Japanese and are now well established English words that are listed in the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language.

Other less well-known examples of Romanized Japanese words include, *Taian* (a lucky day), *butsumentsu* (Buddha’s death; an unlucky day), *shichi-go-san* (the lucky numbers: three, five and seven), all of which are used in Japanese speakers of English because their cultural content cannot be translated.

Bhatt (1995) claims that Indian English addresses the relationship between the forms in which English is manifested, its speakers’ perception of reality and the nature of their cultural institutions. “Language is constrained by the grammar of culture.”

The use of undifferentiated question tags serves positive politeness functions. They are linguistic devices governed by the politeness principle of non-imposition, e.g. “You said you’ll do the job, isn’t it?” Indian English speakers find this type of example non-impositional and mitigating.

Another example of Indian grammar is the use of the pragmatic particle *only*. As contrastive stress is rare, they use such a construction as “He works on Thursdays and Fridays only,” though it can solely be used for members of a set that belongs to a particular, semantically identifiable, lexical field. Thursday and Friday belong to the same lexical field.

In most varieties of Indian English, direct questions appear without the English subject-verb

2. Sushi: a Japanese dish of small cakes of cold cooked rice, flavoured with vinegar and served with raw fish, etc. on top.

3. Bonsai: (1) a small tree that is grown in a pot and prevented from reaching its normal size. (2) the Japanese art of growing bonsai.

4. Shinto: a Japanese religion whose practices include the worship of ancestors and a belief in nature spirits.

5. Zen: a Japanese form of Buddhism.

6. Haiku: a poem with three lines and usually 17 syllables, written in a style that is traditional in Japan.

7. Origami: the Japanese art of folding paper into attractive shapes.

inversion rule, as in *What this is made from?* Or *How many kids he has?* This indicates that in Indian English the *focus* takes preverbal position.

## Conclusion

This paper intended to establish the relationship between the English language and the culture/identity of its users. As mentioned above, English “is not a bunch of arbitrary linguistic forms applied to a cultural reality that can be found outside of language,” it is the vehicle by means of which culture is manifested. The English language has changed and will continue changing. There are varieties developing. There are differences arising. These differences are the result of the pressure exerted by the culture of the people who use these developing varieties.

English is no longer the language of the English. The English language has taken over the history of the people who speak it, as if encapsulated in its words and structures (Crystal, 2000). To quote Ngugi Wa Thiongo: “Language as culture, is the collective memory bank of a peoples’ experience in history.”

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# Cultural Differences – Jack Murphy – An Odyssey

*Jack B. Murphy\**

The Irish entrepreneur Jack B. Murphy, who has been living in Argentina for over two decades, shared his life experience and, in particular, referred to the cultural differences that he encountered along the way:

- Born Cork Ireland
- 1959: Started Jacques Photographers. By 1961 was largest wedding photography studio in Cork.
- 1961: Graduated from University College Cork with Degree in Business Studies.
- 1965: Joined John Murray & Sons Limited Youghal Co. Cork (a small construction and joinery firm), later known as Murray Kitchens Capacity: Accountant.
- 1966: Appointed as General Manager.
- 1967: Built the First Fitted Kitchen in Ireland.
- 1969: Bought Murray Kitchens with Leveraged Buy Out.
- 1971: Inaugurated first purpose built furniture factory in Ireland dedicated to “complete fitted kitchens.”
- 1972: Developed first Home Assembly Kitchen in Ireland and started to export.
- 1974: Commenced exporting to the USA. MK was first European kitchen furniture manufacturing to become a member of the American Association of Kitchens dealers.
- 1976: Exports grow to 65% of total production. Murray Kitchens brand leader in Ireland.
- 1977: Exclusive case work supplier to Atari Inc. (a subsidiary of Warner Communications) to make arcade video games for all of their markets worldwide outside of the USA.
- 1982: Sold special casework division to Atari Inc.
- 1984: Relocated to London.
- 1988: Relocated to New York.
- 1990: Murray Kitchens sold.
- 1992: Relocated to Buenos Aires.
- 1994: Two apartment buildings built and sold in San Isidro: Torres del Centenario.
- 1995: Co-founded The Shamrock Bar and Basement Club with Jason Murphy as joint partners. The First Irish Pub in Buenos Aires which continues to be one of the most successful bars in the city.
- 2004: Feng Shui Homes Launch.
- A total of four Feng Shui Homes buildings were completed and successfully sold:

Crámer 1667 – 2005

Moldes 825 – 2007

11 de Septiembre 1078 – 2009

Rivera 3030 – May 2011

\* Born in Cork Ireland. In 1959, he graduated from University College Cork with Degree in Business Studies. In 1992, he relocated to Buenos Aires. In 1995, co-founded The Shamrock Bar and Basement Club with Jason Murphy as joint partners. The First Irish Pub in Buenos Aires which continues to be one of the most successful bars in the city.