The Formation of Musical Communities in Twentieth Century Irish Literature

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Boston College
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

THE FORMATION OF MUSICAL COMMUNITIES
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY IRISH LITERATURE

A Dissertation

by

REBECCA TROEGER

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
The Formation Of Musical Communities In Twentieth Century Irish Literature
Rebecca Troeger
Chair: Marjorie Howes

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is situated within the opening field of Irish literary and musical interdisciplinary studies and argues that a scholarly focus on the presence of music within Irish literature and culture opens new readings and perspectives. Drawing on cultural studies and musicology, I focus on the musical moment as a limited space during which identities and relationships are dynamically refigured. Through this approach, I look at the formations of communal and individual identities in and through musical performances, the production of gendered identities through music, and musical constructions of memory and the past.

The first two chapters of my study deal specifically with the development of gendered identities through musical performance. Chapter 1 focuses on William Butler Yeats’ and Augusta Gregory’s variations on the trope of the male wandering musician as reflected in their writings on the Galway singer and poet Anthony Raftery, and the effects of Yeats’ interest in Raftery on the evolution of his poetic persona, Red Hanrahan. I argue that Raftery, as introduced to Yeats by Lady Gregory, was pivotal to the evolution of Yeats’ self-image as a national poet and helped to define his thoughts on poetry as a performed and musical art. Chapter 2 focuses on opera as a venue for an increased range of personal expression for female characters in Joyce. In it, I argue that the strictly disciplined nature of operatic roles allow Julia Morkan of “The Dead” and Molly Bloom of Ulysses a level of agility with gender identity otherwise unavailable to them. Chapter
3 moves from the gendered individual to communal and national identity as reflected in the musical events at the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. In it, I argue that the musical performances throughout this event briefly opened a unique social space in which contradictory versions of Irish identity could coexist. Finally, Chapter 4 moves ahead to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, focusing on Roddy Doyle’s approaches to communal musical experience, the negotiations of identities through music, and constructions of memory through music in *The Commitments* and *The Guts*. Here, I consider the issues of cultural connections and appropriations examined by critics of *The Commitments* and extend these questions to a reading of *The Guts*. Drawing on Arjun Appadurai’s work on the mobility of cultures and the availability of the past as “raw material” for the present, I argue that *The Guts* shows how a fraudulent “found” recording of a fictional singer can provide a needed ancestor who articulates a needed narrative of defiance and survival for a 2012 audience.
# The Formation of Musical Communities in Twentieth Century Irish Literature
Rebecca Troeger

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Acknowledgments

No dissertation is written alone, and this work is no exception. I take pleasure in acknowledging the work and generosity of my teachers, mentors, colleagues, friends, family, and students here. First, I have been lucky to have an outstanding dissertation committee. Marjorie Howes, my advisor and chair of this dissertation, has worked with me patiently and generously throughout my MA project, coursework, and dissertation research. She has been a role model and a much-needed source of support. Jim Smith has also been with me from the very beginning, and his tireless attention to my work has consistently challenged me to find new and expanding horizons. Ann Spinney has been a joy to work with, and she brought an important musical perspective to my research. None of this work could have been done without direction and inspiration from all three.

I have been very fortunate to receive doctoral and dissertation fellowships from Boston College as well as the Adele Dalsimer dissertation fellowship from the Boston College Irish Studies program. I have also benefitted enormously from discussions and work with the English and Irish studies faculty, especially Philip O’Leary, Joe Nugent, Rob Savage, Chris Wilson, James Najarian, Min Song, Amy Boesky, Lad Tobin, Mary Crane, and Alan Richardson. I am also grateful to my mentors and colleagues at the University of Connecticut and the US Coast Guard Academy, who have challenged me as a teacher and a writer. Susan Lyons and Pamela Bedore at UConn-Avery Point provided a welcoming and stimulating professional environment and supported me as colleagues and friends. At the Coast Guard Academy, I have been lucky to have the support and guidance of Faye Ringel, Karen Wink, José Gonzalez, Brian Krautler, Mariette Ogg, Alex Waid, and Elizabeth Rivero in the Humanities Department, and I am indebted to
Kathleen Jernquist, Linda Burrows, and Rosalie Maxham at the Hewitt Reading and Writing Center as they have supported me through the final stages of my writing.

I am also hugely grateful for the support of the Ph.D. students in the Boston College English department. Amy Witherbee, Katherine Kellett, Catherine Michna, Patrick Moran, Alison Van Vort, Alex Puente, Matthew Heitzmann, Nikhil Gupta, Emma Atwood, Mimi Cowan, and so many others have provided a wonderfully supportive community and sounding board for my ideas. The members of the *Finnegans Wake* reading group at Boston College, under the able leadership of Joe Nugent, inspired my enthusiasm and curiosity about Joyce’s work.

I have also been lucky to teach so many energetic and motivated students at Boston College, UConn, and the Coast Guard Academy while working on my dissertation. At Boston College, the experience of translating my ideas from my writing to the classroom helped me to see *The Commitments*, *Ulysses*, and Lady Gregory’s and Yeats’ writing, among many other texts, in an entirely new light. Teaching American literature at UConn while writing Chapter 1 allowed me to see new transatlantic connections, and my students’ input made me excited for further work in American studies. At the Coast Guard Academy, the cadets’ deep commitment and enthusiasm gave me the motivation and discipline I needed to keep my work moving forward.

I was first inspired to study Irish literature alongside music through my interest in Irish traditional music, and for that I acknowledge the teaching and encouragement of the late Tony Cuffe, whose class at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education introduced me to the richness and diversity of Irish and Scottish traditional music and reacquainted me
with my fiddle, as well as the teaching of Seamus Connolly at Boston College and the
regular Monday night seisún attendees at the Green Briar pub in Brighton.

Finally, and very importantly, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my family.
My parents, Jim and Beth Troeger, and my sister, Laura Troeger, have shown patience
and generosity through the ups and downs of my writing process. I am fortunate to have
a large and loving extended family and it has meant so much to have Armens, Grillos,
Duhaimes, and Troegers in my corner. My in-laws, Robert and Maureen Ostrowski, have
welcomed me into their family and provided much love and support.

Most of all, my husband, Mike Ostrowski, has earned this degree at least as much
as I have, and is impossible to list all the ways he has made this dissertation possible
through his support and his musical knowledge and talent. I hope to be able to repay the
favor in some small part.
Introduction:

Finding Community In and Through Musical Performance

This dissertation is based on an approach to music as both a measure of and a determiner of a social and cultural identity, and on the idea that musical performances can create physical and metaphorical spaces for new configurations of social identities and relationships. In this work, I pinpoint moments across the Irish twentieth century and to the present that (a) reflect a sense of Irish identity in transition, and (b) express these changes through musical performances, whether those are historical musical performances or literary representations of music. Specifically, I look at W. B. Yeats and Augusta Gregory's works on and involving the pre-Famine Gaelic poet, singer, and musician Anthony Raftery; James Joyce's representations of women who sing in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*; the musical performances at the thirty-first Eucharistic Congress in Dublin; and Roddy Doyle's depictions of musical performers in *The Commitments* (1987) and *The Guts* (2013). In all of these chapters, I am interested in the extent to which musical experiences are depicted as constructive of social cohesion.

Music, Literature, and Ireland

The field of music and literature studies has steadily increased its presence since the publication of Calvin S. Brown's foundational volume *Music and Literature: A
Comparison Of The Arts\(^1\) (1948), which focused on a detailed classification of the various ways that writers depict and demonstrate music in literary works. Since then, word and music studies has developed alongside musicology to incorporate a cultural studies approach, integrating studies of social, historical, and cultural context into readings of "musical texts" (texts that narrate musical experiences and/or texts that integrate musical elements into their method of narration).\(^2\)

In the context of Irish studies, intermedial studies of music and literature have only recently begun to take shape. The music historian Harry White has published a number of volumes that study the history of music in Irish culture, including depictions of music in Irish literature.\(^3\) White's overarching argument in many of his works is that the centrality of music to Irish literature as a symbol of nationalist ideology has overshadowed the work of twentieth century Irish composers. As a result, according to White, Irish writers value traditional music as a shorthand for a nostalgic and conservative sense of Irish identity. More recently, Gerry Smyth has published a number


of works that study music and the cultural history of Ireland, including the representation of music in Irish literary works. Smyth's focus is on Irish musical history, and as such his discussions of Roddy Doyle, Bernard MacLaverty, and other contemporary writers bring questions more common to ethnomusicology to literary scholarship. Also, the topic of music in James Joyce's works has become a significant subset to the larger field of Joycean criticism. Zack Bowen’s 1974 volume of annotations to musical references in Joyce’s work, followed by Ruth Bauerle’s 1982 collection of piano scores, lyrics, and histories of key songs, provided a foundation for scholarship on the presence of music throughout Joyce's work.

Finally, the past twenty years have seen an increase in scholarship on the cultural history of music in Ireland. Significantly, in his influential 2007 study of Irish literature and culture, Joe Cleary accorded popular music a privileged place in his analysis. Cleary asserts that it is musical artists such as U2, Sinead O’Connor, and Bob Geldof who command the kind of international attention and currency that Joyce and Yeats once

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6 The James Joyce Songbook (New York: Garland, 1982).

enjoyed, and that “rock stars seem to have an appetite to take on major issues of the historical moment in a way that their literary peers rarely do,” citing Geldof’s and Bono’s work in support of various charities and O’Connor’s outspokenness on social issues affecting Ireland. From this observation, Cleary asserts that “music has been not only one of the most energetic domains of activity in late twentieth-century Ireland, but also one of the most politically lively.”

Speaking of the Irish economic boom of the 1990s, Cleary writes that Irish cultural critics have yet to engage substantially with the increasing presence of “corporatized forms of cultural production and consumption.”

The role of the mass-market music industry, and what its financial resources make possible, creates a new kind of artist in Ireland: “those individuals and groups, such as U2 most especially, that have attained the most spectacular success have become themselves multinational enterprises complete with their own extended administrative, investment and security staff and public relations and image-development teams.”

Cleary gives only a brief view of music in late twentieth century Ireland, but the privilege that he ascribes to it is indicative of a relatively new interest in the history of music in Ireland in the context of ethnomusicology and Irish history and culture. Gerry Smyth and Harry White, as noted above, have contributed significantly to the field. In addition, several

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 108.
12 Ibid.
studies published within the past fifteen years integrate Irish musical studies within a broader interdisciplinary context.\textsuperscript{13}

This dissertation aligns itself with the new directions taken by these scholars and others to more fully integrate musical studies within Irish literary and cultural studies. Specifically, as a literary scholar looking towards musicology, I focus on the production, performance, and reception of music, as revealing of constructions of identity that are otherwise often missed. In the following section, I detail the ways that each chapter approaches the question of musical performance and individual, social, and national identity.

\textit{Musical Community in Irish History and Literature}

The four chapters of this dissertation vary widely in the time period covered as well as methodology, but all approach musical performance as a lens through which to view questions of identity that reflect on gender, community, and nationality. Specifically, Chapter 1 focuses on the trope of the wandering musician as a dominant symbol of Irish masculinity in Revivalist literature; Chapter 2 focuses on opera as a venue for an increased range of personal expression for female characters in Joyce; Chapter 3 moves beyond the gendered individual to look at the musical crowd at the

Eucharistic Congress in 1932; and Chapter 4 brings all of these themes together through a consideration of Roddy Doyle’s musical fiction.

In Chapter 1, “Writing ‘The World That Sang And Listened’: Yeats, Gregory, and Raftery,” I trace W. B. Yeats’ and Augusta Gregory’s writings on Anthony Raftery (1779-1835), a Galway poet, singer, and fiddler, as foundational to both writers’ ideas about the poet and the nation. I argue that Raftery, as he was introduced to Yeats by Lady Gregory, was pivotal to the evolution of Yeats’ self-image as a national poet. In this, I first look at scholarship on music and nationalism in nineteenth century Ireland, which established a basis for Yeats’ and Gregory’s conceptions of music as a specifically masculine expression of nationality. Next, I look at Yeats’ early writings on bardic culture that reveal the beginnings of this thought about the poet/performer as a mouthpiece for his community. During these years, Yeats began to develop the character Red Hanrahan as a poetic persona and a representative of this bardic tradition, who was not only the result of Yeats’ exposure to eighteenth century bardic poetry but also a product of his involvement in the Decadent movement of the 1890s. Thirdly, I consider

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15 Elizabeth Cullingford’s and Adrian Frazier’s work on Yeats in this period were especially influential. See Elizabeth Cullingford, Gender and History in Yeats’s Love Poetry (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996); Adrian Frazier, “Queering the Irish Renaissance: The Masculinities of Moore, Martyn, and Yeats,” in Gender and
Yeats’ and Gregory’s literary output from the summers of 1899 and 1900, when Gregory’s discoveries about Raftery renewed her and Yeats’ interest in a local oral and poetic tradition. Finally, I look at Yeats’ 1905 revisions of his Hanrahan stories and writing on Raftery in the 1905 essay, “Literature and the Living Voice.” Throughout all of these texts, I argue that the developing theme of the solitary and isolated male performer who articulates something otherwise unrepresentable for the benefit of a worldly audience is given a material presence through references to Raftery. Whereas Lady Gregory depicts Raftery as fulfilling a crucial role within his community, and therefore could conceive of him as a type of self-portrait, Yeats’ Raftery is the last and most successful of the bards and has an afterlife as Hanrahan, the most successful of Yeats’ many poetic personas.

Chapter 2, “‘… till she began to lilt’: The Female Voice in Performance in Dubliners and Ulysses,” grew out of a confluence of interests in feminist studies of Joyce, scholarship on Joyce and music, and feminist studies of opera. In it, I look at Julia Morkan’s performance of “Arrayed for the Bridal” in “The Dead” and Molly Bloom’s singing career in the context of feminist approaches to opera and the female voice and Joyce’s own interests in singing. In both texts, I argue that opera is a unique venue for these characters’ artistic expressions. As an art form, operatic singing is highly disciplined and constrictive, but ultimately dependent on active performance. The female singer is contained within an elaborate artistic production and dependent on the audience,

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the text, and all participants in the production, but because she often holds a featured role within the musical work, the many complexities of operatic performance also depend on her and provide her with the potential for subversion within a patriarchal institution.

I begin this chapter with a look at feminist studies of opera, beginning with Catherine Clément’s argument that women are at the center of an art that often assigns them tragic ends, and that operas are structured around a woman’s “undoing.” Clément sees opera as an inherently misogynist art form that encourages audiences to identify with the oppressive patriarchal structures that punish women for transgression. Critics Michel Poizat and Carolyn Abbaté see the primacy of the female voice in opera as an invitation to a counter-reading that privileges the singing voice over operatic narratives. Moreover, it is the ability of the singing voice to disrupt narrative structure that, according to Timothy Martin, most attracted Joyce to opera. With this in mind, it is possible to see Julia’s performance as Elvira, the young bride of Donizetti’s bel canto opera I Puritani, as a momentary triumph over an oppressive narrative structure not only because her performance is described as virtuosic by a narrator who is otherwise unkind to her, but also because her situation parallels that of Elvira within her narrative: both women sing this song in the last moment before they are overwhelmed by an oppressive

narrative framework. In the case of *Ulysses*, Molly Bloom’s performance as the peasant bride Zerlina from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* anchors this particular work as a point of reference for both Molly and Bloom as they periodically adopt and discard connections with many of the characters in the opera. As *Don Giovanni* is largely an opera about a limited period of time during which identities are in flux, its presence in *Ulysses* highlights the performative nature of the characters’ lives. In this approach, I build on criticism that posits Molly as both a performer and a performed role and add that the specific voice type that Joyce gives Molly (*soprano leggiero*), along with her role as Zerlina and her occasional association with Giovanni, makes it especially possible for her to consider her “trying on” of various roles as a matter of play.

Chapter 3, “‘Voices of the World’: National Identity and Musical Space at the 1932 Eucharistic Congress,” moves the focus of this dissertation from the development of gendered individual identity through musical performance to the musical crowd; specifically, the congregation at the final Mass at Phoenix Park for the 31st Eucharistic Congress in 1932. I argue that the musical performances throughout this event briefly opened a unique social space in which contradictory versions of Irish identity could coexist. Following Paige Reynolds’ analysis of public events across the Irish twentieth century as negotiations of identity between artists and audiences, my chapter looks at the ways that the Eucharistic Congress allowed for the congregation to participate in their

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own self-definition through the process of ritual, spectacle, and musical performance.\textsuperscript{22} Further, I argue that the event fits Josh Kun’s description of an “audiotopia,” or a space “within and produced by a musical element that offers the listener and/or the musician new maps for re-imagining the present social world.”\textsuperscript{23} The Eucharistic Congress marked an important point of transition for Ireland, and it was important for the new Fianna Fáil government to demonstrate a close relationship with the Catholic hierarchy. Here, the new Irish state had the opportunity to present itself to the world as the triumphant outcome of centuries of oppression and a new nation founded on Catholic identity. Still, the Congress was often reported as an international event that promoted a modern, cosmopolitan Catholicism along with a diasporic Irishness.

The climactic final Mass at Phoenix Park featured several musical performances, each of which reflected a different version of Irish identity. First, I look at the choral singing of Palestrina’s \textit{Missa Brevis} as exemplary of church music reform, an international movement that took shape in Ireland as connected to a nativist, Catholic nationalism. Secondly, John McCormack’s rendering of César Franck’s “Panis Angelicus” introduced a cosmopolitan nationalism that established Ireland on the world stage. Finally, the procession from Phoenix Park to O’Connell Bridge, along multiple paths and accompanied throughout with hymns broadcast over a complex PA system, turned the focus to the congregation itself. Throughout the event, the element of musical ritual involved the participation of every individual in the enactment of a unified group identity.

\textsuperscript{22} Paige Reynolds, \textit{Modernism, Drama and the Audience for Irish Spectacle} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16.
\textsuperscript{23} Josh Kun, \textit{Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America} (Berkeley: U of CA Press, 2005), 23.
Chapter 4, “Music and Memory in Roddy Doyle’s *The Commitments* and *The Guts*,” returns to the themes of communal musical experience, the relationship between music and national identity, and constructions of identity in musical expression in a contemporary context. *The Guts* (2013), Doyle’s most recent novel, returns to Jimmy Rabbitte, the main character of *The Commitments* (1987), and through his continued story Doyle connects the recent economic recession with the uncertainty of the 1980s. Both novels concern Jimmy’s efforts to produce a musical product that speaks for a disenfranchised population. In this chapter, I outline the progress of critical responses to *The Commitments* that questioned the viability of “Dublin Soul” and extend the questions raised in this discussion to my reading of *The Guts*.

Whereas critics have tended to question the appropriation of soul music by a group of white teenagers in a Northside community in Dublin in the 1980s, I suggest that, following Arjun Appadurai’s writing on the ethnoscape as a measure of mobile and dynamic populations with varying alliances and identities, the Commitments’ music can be both rooted in their own lives and an authentic expression of local identity, but only in a limited scope. In her essay on the question of working-class politics in the novel, Mary McGlynn, “Why Jimmy Wears A Suit: White, Black, and Working Class in ‘The Commitments,’” *Studies in the Novel* 36, no. 2 (July 1, 2004): 232–50; Gerry Smyth, “Bringing It All Back Home? The Dynamics of Local Music-Making in The Commitments,” in *Music In Irish Cultural History*, 1st ed. (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 65–83; Åke Persson, “‘The Culchies Have Fuckin’ Everythin’: Internal Exile in Roddy Doyle’s The Barrytown Trilogy,” in *Re-Mapping Exile: Realities and Metaphors in Irish Literature and History*, ed. Britta Olinder, Irene Gilsenan Nordin, and Michael Boss (Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2005), 195–219. ———.
McGlynn argues that the band succeeds and fails because of their ability to conform to the demands of the marketplace, regardless of their claim to speak for the voiceless. Soul music, along with any other musical genre, turns out to be a “vacant vessel;” no more than a strategy for material success in a capitalist system. I add that, while the particular musical genre of soul music in *The Commitments* does fail to deliver the kind of grand artistic statement that Jimmy intends for it, a consideration of Appadurai’s theories on the mobility of cultures allows for a reading that allows the band to find a temporary avenue to authentic expression through a musical type that is not “theirs.” Additionally, Appadurai’s connection of the dynamic nature of modern cultures with the availability of the past as “a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central casting” draws together the question of cultural appropriation in *The Commitments* with the musical plot of *The Guts*, in which Jimmy Rabbitte fabricates and promotes a fraudulent “found recording” of a fictional blues singer. In this chapter, I argue that Jimmy’s forgery is a success in important ways that the Commitments were not because it provides a needed ancestor who articulates a needed narrative of sexual desire, religious doubt, and resistance to the “official story” of a conservative Ireland, for a 2012 audience.

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Doyle’s 2013 novel provides a look back to many of the topics and themes of this dissertation. Most immediately, the return of the Eucharistic Congress to Dublin in 2012 serves as an important theme in *The Guts*, as it inspires Jimmy to produce the compilation album that will include his song. As I elaborate in the chapter, Jimmy’s project to produce an album that presents a counter-narrative to an oppressively nationalist Eucharistic Congress is not incompatible with his father’s memory of a transcendent moment of national unity, inclusive of the total diverse Irish population. Whereas the Eucharistic Congress Jimmy Jr. resists is centered on his understanding of the event as the imposition of an oppressive social structure, Jimmy Sr.’s memory places John McCormack at its center and therefore prioritizes the event as a musical one. The central role that Doyle gives to the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in his novel, then, reflects my argument that the musical elements within the event opened up the experience to be inclusive of otherwise contradictory identities. In the 1932 congregation as in Doyle’s novel, audiences are never only spectators, but participants in the process of making meaning within a performance.

*The Guts* also returns to the topic of the isolated male singer as a carrier of national identity. More broadly speaking, the individual singer who functions at a remove from society is a constant throughout the dissertation. Both Yeats and Gregory invested this figure with the ability to renew an Irish identity through reference to an ideal past. Further, Yeats found a sense of assertiveness in Raftery’s poetry that became a basis for his own poetic persona. The role of the individual artist, which Yeats ascribes to the bardic tradition, returns in the newspaper accounts of McCormack’s

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29 See my discussion of “Mise Raifteiri” at the close of Chapter 1.
performance at the Eucharistic Congress: One local reporter described McCormack’s singing as “an offering of the best that our land has produced”\textsuperscript{30}, ascribing to the tenor the ability to represent Ireland to an international audience and crediting the audience for producing McCormack’s voice. Similarly, the presence of Don Giovanni in \textit{Ulysses} allows Molly some limited access to the trope of the traveling musical man whose aim, as with Yeats’ Hanrahan, is the disruption of the patriarchal family. Finally, when Jimmy Rabbitte perceives Irish audiences to be in need of a new forebear who can express a current sense of disillusionment with national, economic, and religious institutions, he invents a traveling blues singer. In all of these cases, including the historical figures Raftery and McCormack, there is a fantastical element to the way they are shaped in the public imagination as belonging to the nation: Audiences find the persona that is needed at the time.

This dissertation is situated at the intersection of Irish literary studies and musicological studies that approach music as a performed art, located within specific spatial and temporal boundaries, which depends on a particular process of audience interaction. The four chapters approach a wide variety of topics, but all contribute directly to questions of musical audiences, the production of gendered identities through music, the construction of relationships between the individual and the community, and the ways that music constructs a national identity. These questions are central not only to the progress of scholarship on music in Ireland, but to Irish studies overall.

Chapter 1:

Writing “The World That Sang and Listened”: Yeats, Gregory, and Raftery

On August 26, 1900, a dedication ceremony took place in the village of Killeenan, Co. Galway, for a new grave marker for the local poet, singer, and fiddler Antón Ó Rafterí (Anthony Raftery), who died at the age of 56 in 1835. The event was an auspicious one for the time: in attendance were Douglas Hyde, who gave a speech in Irish, Gregory, who had raised the funds for the new headstone and organized the event, and W. B. Yeats, who also addressed the gathering in English. Both Gregory and Yeats published their observations on the event: Gregory in her letter to the Gaelic League newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis* immediately following the ceremony, and Yeats in his essay, “Literature and the Living Voice,” published in *Samhain* in 1905 to mark the opening of the Abbey Theatre. While Lady Gregory’s account, written for Gaelic League members, emphasized the importance of this pre-Famine, Gaelic language figure to the locally-driven social activism that formed the nucleus of Revivalist initiatives, Yeats’ account, written five years later, formed the opening of his pivotal thoughts on the role of the poet in society, and moreover his own projected role in a new Irish nation. Both authors’ interest in Raftery provided a foundation for the new directions their writing would take in this period.

2 Yeats, “Samhain: 1906--Literature and the Living Voice.”
Ronald Schuchard argues that “Literature and the Living Voice” formally announced Yeats’ interest in the bardic arts (that is, poetry spoken and chanted rather than written) as foundational to his vision for a national art form. In his account of the dedication ceremony, Yeats presents the scene at Killeenan as a contrast to the influence of commercialism in Galway:

A headstone had been put over his grave in the half-ruined churchyard, and a priest had come to bless it, and many country-people to listen to his poems. After the shawled and frieze-coated people had knelt down and prayed for the repose of his soul, they gathered about a little wooden platform that had been put up in a field.

Yeats values the unnamed local residents for their innate connection to an ancient poetic tradition. The singing and recitation of folk poetry establishes the community as an organic whole, unified and kept alive by its traditions. While Gregory’s letter describes a tightly organized event engineered to promote Gaelic League projects, Yeats finds in Killeenan an ideal audience as well as a source for an authentic Irish poetic voice, and presents this community as a model for a national art. Raftery is a model for his idea of a new literature as a “living voice” of a nation.

In this chapter, I look at the literary output of Yeats and Lady Gregory in the late 1890s and early 1900s as it reflected both writers’ interests in Raftery. For both writers, I read their engagement with Raftery as motivational to their developing goals for their own careers. In the case of Lady Gregory, Raftery provided a tangible link to the folk culture in and around Coole Park and a “way in” to her career as a nationalist writer, and a way for her, as an Anglo-Irish landowner, to insert herself meaningfully into the Gaelic

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culture that would inspire her writings for the years to come. In Yeats’ case, I argue that his exposure to Raftery during his visits to Coole in the late 1890s provided a needed bridge from his earlier work and thought on bardic culture and his later conception of his own role as a national poet. I trace this transition in Yeats’ thought through a consideration of his essays on bardic poetry and on Raftery, and also by tracing the evolution of his Red Hanrahan character, a fictional wandering singer and subject of a series of short stories.

I place this study of Yeats’ and Gregory’s writings within several cultural and historical contexts. First, I look at scholarship on music and nationalism in nineteenth century Ireland, which established a basis for musical performance as a specifically masculine expression of nationality. Next, I look at Yeats’ early writings on bardic culture produced in the years before his first visit to Coole. In these essays and short stories, Yeats began to think of the poet and performer as a mouthpiece for his community, and based his Hanrahan character in Edward Walsh’s written histories of the Gaelic poets Owen Rua O’Sullivan and Blind William Heffernan. Through these precedents, Hanrahan emerged as a representative of a spoken, musical bardic tradition and a product of Yeats’ influence from the Decadent writers of the 1890s. Building on Elizabeth Cullingford’s and Adrian Frazier’s work on Yeats’ evolution as a poet in the context of changing conceptions of sexuality in this period, I add that Yeats’ exposure to Raftery at Coole, through Lady Gregory, allowed him to ground the esoteric interests of the Decadents in a living folk culture.

The third section of this chapter considers Yeats’ and Gregory’s literary products of the summers of 1899 and 1900, when Gregory’s discoveries about Raftery inspired her
and Yeats’ interest in a local oral and poetic tradition. Among these works, the most thorough depiction of Raftery is Gregory’s long essay, “Raftery,” which details the products of her folklore discovery travels around County Galway and presents the poet as a folk hero. I also look closely at the collaborative composition processes that produced Douglas Hyde’s plays, “Casadh an tSugain” and “An Posadh,” which Lady Gregory translated as “The Twisting of the Rope,” featuring Hanrahan, and “The Wedding,” featuring Raftery. Lastly, I look at Yeats’ final revisions of his Stories of Red Hanrahan, published in 1905, which reflected the influence of Lady Gregory in its narrative style and in his new depiction of Hanrahan as a poet more fully anchored in a living culture. I close with a second look at Yeats’ 1905 essay, “Literature and the Living Voice,” in which Raftery gains a privileged position as the bearer of a national spoken and musical poetic tradition.

Through the course of this literary chronology, I posit an equation between Yeats’ efforts to find a poetic truth in the folk traditions he and Lady Gregory studied, Hanrahan’s efforts to communicate his visions of the otherworld to the occupants of the material world, and Raftery’s success, as a blind singer, in providing his nation with a native art. Throughout all of these cases, a solitary man carries the responsibility of depicting the unrepresentable for a worldly audience. In the period that this chapter outlines, Yeats’ thoughts on that solitary poetic voice are illustrated through the development of his Hanrahan character towards the embodiment of a contradiction inherent to Yeats’ bardic persona: Although Hanrahan is the product of a long history of

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Gregory Castle identifies this contradiction in his work on Yeats’ Revivalism. See Gregory Castle, “‘Fair Equivalents’: Yeats, Revivalism, and the Redemption of Culture,”
folk culture and, moreover, the Hanrahan stories are the result of a complex series of collaborations between Yeats and Lady Gregory, Hanrahan also served Yeats as a mouthpiece through which he could privilege his personal voice, speak for his country, and establish himself as a national poet. As I’ll show, Yeats’ exposure to Raftery in the late 1890s gave him access to material that came from a collaborative oral tradition and foregrounded the authoritative voice of the poet, so that the spoken and sung poetic tradition could be both communal and individual.

In his work on Irish cultural nationalism, Joep Leerssen describes the appeal of folk cultures to romantic nationalism and also looks forward to the Celtic Twilight-era Yeats:

"Popular tradition" becomes, next to a quest for the authentic past, the main ideal of Irish cultural pursuits and debates. It is defined by its orality and performance, in contrast to literature proper, which is defined by its written character. That basic distinction between low oral culture and high written culture feeds into a whole set of similarly aligned oppositions: between spontaneous effusion and polished reflection, between transience and permanence, between the emotional and the cerebral, between the timelessness of primitive customs and the historicity of developing civility, between the Celt and the Saxon. Popular, native culture is one of remains and relics; it is yet another mode of establishing a filiation between the post-Union, indeed post-Famine present and the ancient roots of Irishness. It is also a reservoir of raw material to be mined and cultivated: to be retrieved from its illiterate repository, the peasantry, who hoard this cultural heritage with spontaneous and unreflective naivety, without the necessary intellectual refinement to appreciate its higher interest.6

This relationship between textual and oral traditions, as Leerssen writes, was most enthusiastically promoted by Protestant, unionist writers, such as the antiquarian Thomas Crofton Croker and the poet William Allingham, who were interested in establishing an Irish identity independent of Catholicism. These writers promoted the idea of a peasantry isolated in time as well as geography, whose traditions are perpetually in a state of decline and in need of salvaging by a new literary movement, and who could provide British audiences with an antidote to modernity.⁷

Even within such an ideal picture of a pre-literate culture, though, Leerssen sees the beginnings of what would emerge as a politically volatile and subversive mode of expression. Of the fairy stories that come from these Protestant writers, he notes that

…there seems to be something peculiarly interesting in the image of that ousted race, banished from the normalcy of daytime civilization, withdrawing into the nether fringes and the upper fringes of existence, underground and into the supernatural. From the wild and uncivilized parts of the landscape they threaten the settled order and rational plausibility of the victors' existence: changing babies in the cradle, luring people away from hearth, home and family.⁸

Through successive collections of Irish folk traditions, and especially Irish song, according to Leerssen, that subversive potential grew to dominate the repertory in the form of protest songs. James Hardiman’s 1831 Irish Minstrelsy, therefore, depicted a peasantry very much involved in the modern political world, who had established a song tradition that functioned as a coded, “underground” language of resistance.⁹

Leith Davis further develops the idea of an underground musical culture, emphasizing the gendered hierarchies in nineteenth century musical discourses. Thomas Davis, the founder of the Young Ireland movement and publisher of the Nation

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⁷ Ibid., 163–64.
⁸ Ibid., 166.
⁹ Ibid., 178.
newspaper, used gendered language frequently in an effort to turn away from what he saw as an overly feminine tradition of fairies and quaint folktales and towards a more masculine, assertive national character. In an essay on “Irish Songs,” as Leith Davis quotes, Thomas Davis describes “antique war-tunes [that] stream and crash upon the ear like the warriors of a hundred glens meeting.” Further, Davis’s collections sought to eliminate the ambiguity of oral tradition in favor of the more politically expedient form of print. For him, the value of his ballad collections were not so much in their origins in an oral tradition as much as their potential in the present political landscape. In this way, Leith Davis shows that the privileging of text over oral cultures is gendered, in the case of Thomas Davis’ overtly masculinized ballads and again in George Petrie’s work in transcribing traditional Irish tunes. In the case of Petrie, the oral tradition is figured as female not only because many of Petrie’s sources were women, but also because the authenticity of his work depended on a masculinized concept of permanence in print culture:

…authenticity can be preserved only through the technology of print, which erases the voice, masculinizing it by fixing it in a correct form. And as the authenticity of the music can be preserved only through a disavowal of the (female) human body that was its original site, that disavowal becomes necessary to ensure its authenticity.

The emphasis that Leith Davis sees in Petrie and in Thomas Davis on Irish musical traditions as essentially masculine echoes Sarah McKibben’s scholarship on the trope of “endangered masculinities” in sixteenth to eighteenth-century bardic poetry.

11 Ibid., 177.
12 Ibid., 185.
McKibben traces the effects of Ireland’s colonial history through changes in bardic tradition and shows that these changes were consistently reflected through the trope of a gendered binary relationship between colonizer and colonized. As she writes, the earliest bardic poetry was traditionally gendered:

…the bardic poets' conceptualisation of noble identity centred on the performance of heroic manhood in relation to a specifically masculine notion of patrimony. That manly ideal was one that could not be permanently achieved but rather required regular reiteration to justify one's continued status.¹³

McKibben’s discussion of a tradition that dates to the sixteenth century and earlier is relevant to my discussion of nineteenth and early twentieth century Irish musical traditions because the positioning of masculinity as something that “required regular reiteration” is constant across musical genres and periods. She goes on to discuss the changes that British colonialism brought to bardic poetry in the seventeenth century:

Again, these changes manifested through gendered discourses that centered on a contrast

…between normative masculinity and emasculation—between the manhood of heroic, unfeminine, autonomous resistance and a failed, subservient manhood that has strayed away from its opposition to the female and into a netherworld of indeterminacy that parallels the cultural confusion and loss of identity it attempts to counter. In later texts that temporarily adopt a more dejected stance or thematise their author's lost status, the poet's rhetorical virtuosity itself becomes a means of individual and collective projection, a way of recuperating in the literary realm manhood that has been lost elsewhere.¹⁴

The element of heroic, masculine independence, requiring constant reassertion through the bardic voice, is related to the Irish masculinity that Leith Davis sees in Thomas Davis’s nationalist ballad collections and in the recuperative, authenticating goals of Petrie’s collections because each instance is framed by its author as the salvation

¹⁴ Ibid., 7.
of an “endangered” Irish male identity. Further, the emphasis in the poet’s own “rhetorical virtuosity” looks ahead to Yeats’ privileging of the individual poetic voice.

In the case of Yeats’ and Lady Gregory’s adaptations of Raftery, and further in the Yeats’ revisions of his Hanrahan stories in light of his interest in Raftery, the emphasis on a redemptive Irish masculinity is then grounded in a centuries-old oral and performed tradition. Further, taking into consideration Leith Davis’s argument that the transmission of musical songs and tunes from the oral tradition into textual form is part of a long process of pursuing an authentic and authoritative Irish culture, then the Revivalist effort to make Raftery a part of a twentieth century literary tradition is similarly rooted in an established process.

In his work on music and Irish cultural history, however, Harry White sees the literary cultures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as set against, and harmful to, the development of native music. White argues that the efforts of Thomas Davis, Yeats, and others successfully framed music as valuable mainly insofar as it is politically useful, and that by the turn of the twentieth century, the idea of music had become more important to Irish culture than music itself. ¹⁵ White’s argument foregrounds the symbolic importance that music took on as cultural nationalism developed through the nineteenth century and charges the Young Ireland movement and other nationalist ballad publishers with relegating music to the role of propaganda for extra-musical political activity. In the context of McKibben’s and Davis’s work, however, I argue that established Irish musical

traditions had already been deeply political for centuries. Further, as David Lloyd shows in his work on the ballad tradition, music is never so completely appropriated by political interests: it is always hybrid and resistant to homogeneous definitions.16

Lloyd explores the inherent contradictions and challenges to any effort to identify and promote a singular Irish musical tradition. In terms of the history of music in Ireland, Lloyd argues that the discontinuous nature of Irish history, and therefore the fragmented nature of the Irish song tradition, makes it necessary for cultural nationalists to invent their own raw materials for a “revived” national culture.17 However, that same discontinuity means that Irish music will always be especially resistant to inclusion in any nationalist project. Lloyd turns to Thomas Davis’s project of collecting and editing Irish ballads in order to present a unified picture of a national culture: Davis’s main challenge, as he saw it, was not to fill the “gaps” of a fragmented tradition, but to remove the “alien” elements whose presence were the result of a colonial past. Lloyd argues that the Irish song tradition, being a hybrid of the various cultures that make up Ireland’s colonial past, appeared to Davis and his peers as “contaminated,” with that contamination having to be removed in order to uncover a pure Irish musical voice. However, as Lloyd argues, those inconsistencies were intrinsic to the tradition itself, and therefore what Davis accomplished was a construction of something modern and new.18

Lloyd focuses most of his essay on urban musical cultures, associating the urban with cultural plurality. Whereas street ballads had historically been dismissed as overly commercial and thus inauthentic, Lloyd sees them as an especially effective “register of

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16 Lloyd, “Adulteration And The Nation.”
17 Ibid., 89.
18 Ibid., 92.
the processes of cultural hybridization.” Because these ballads are more explicitly hybrids of English lyrics and Irish tunes, they provide an especially revealing picture of the ways that the English language can be distorted in order to fit Irish rhythms. Moreover, street ballads often use various levels of diction simultaneously, showing an indifference to the hierarchies of cultural discourses:

   Military language can cohabit with that of the racecourse, or classical references give way to citations of ancient and modern history, folk heroes and contemporary slang. Much of the pleasure of the street ballad, as with so many ‘popular’ forms, derives from precisely this indifference to cultural hierarchies.”

Overall, Lloyd values street ballads because they can provide an immediate running index of the ways that cultures, voices, and languages intermix. It is these urban forms that are, contrary to the unifying efforts of nineteenth century ballad collectors, more resistant to colonization, specifically because of their heterogeneity.

   Whereas Lloyd focuses on the supposed purity of the content of urban ballads, Seamus Deane has raised the issue of materiality in ballad collections. In his analysis, the translation of ballads from oral to textual transmission wholly reinvents the source material. Deane points out the inherent modernity of the question itself: each “side” of the conflict between orality and textuality brings the other into existence:

   The assumption is that national character is independent of material conditions and yet that its full development or final extirpation is dependent on their restructuring. …Part of this issue is embedded within the very act of transmission itself, whether that be in musical notation, in type fonts, in the representation of dialect. The point is that the problem was not really altered by these newly adopted modes of transmission. They actually determined its shape—even though the problem remained as one that was understood to have had an anterior existence that was now, however imperfectly, emerging into newly communicable forms.

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19 Ibid., 94.
20 Ibid., 96.
The questions of authenticity, narrative, and materiality extend beyond the preservation and transmission of Irish music and song. As Leerssen, Lloyd and Deane illustrate, the issue involves a questioning of how national identity is defined and promoted. All three arrive at a definition of authenticity as an ongoing process of self-definition. Lloyd writes that whereas authenticity is often seen as a recoverable ideal, it is more usefully defined as “the projective desire of a nationalism programmatically concerned with the homogenization of the people as a national political entity.”

Writing in a similar vein, Leerssen defines “tradition” as “one long, ongoing, never-resolved and never-abandoned attempt to impose an imaginative unity on the contradictions of the past… not the pious passing on of a discrete heirloom, but the ever-renewed and never-completed attempt to bring order to a vast and chaotic curiosity shop.” Deane, likewise, argues that any understanding of modernity needs to take into account its dependence on a constant refuguration of an ideal past: modernity is “not only a sequence of enlightenments characterized by progress; it is a sequence that depends upon a constant return to and re-reading of the past that depends upon the paradigm of rebirth, renaissance, recovery of which the modern becomes both the beneficiary and the culmination.”

What all of these arguments assert is that both “tradition” and “modernity” as concepts are very much interdependent and changeable, and that the evolution of national identity through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth should be seen as a dynamic exchange between the two.

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The studies I cite in this section concern Irish musical traditions that differ in genre, medium, and time period, but each foregrounds a pursuit of cultural authority within the framework of the relationship of the traditional and the modern. The very variety of musical genres that fall under the rubric of “Irish music” (here, sixteenth century bardic poetry, nineteenth century nationalist ballads, the dance music of Petrie’s collections, and Raftery’s own work as a Gaelic language singer in the early nineteenth century) and that illustrate the trope of “endangered masculinity” serves to reinforce Yeats’ and Gregory’s promotion of a native Irish culture through music and the spoken word, and specifically through Raftery, as a project whose underlying motivation is a part of a long and established history.

Bardic Ireland: Hanrahan’s Origins

Prior to meeting Lady Gregory and becoming interested in Raftery, Yeats had already explored connections between poetry and music through an interest in bardic culture. As previously noted, he developed a poetic persona, Red Hanrahan, who served the double function of an emblematic figure (a man of his people) and an outsider. Although Hanrahan is, as Michael Sidnell writes, “a poet who has glimpsed an

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25 Concerning Yeats and music, Adrian Paterson has persuasively argued against the popular idea that Yeats was tone-deaf (as Yeats himself frequently claimed) and entirely disinterested in music in and of itself. My focus here is on Yeats’ refiguring of the bard as a musical personality. See Adrian Paterson, “‘An Imagined Music’: Yeats, Music and the Irish Tradition,” in The Current Debate about the Irish Literary Canon: Essays Reassessing The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, ed. Helen Thompson (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).
otherworld and remains, firmly, in this one,” and therefore operates at the margins of society, he also communicates, and embodies, a tradition of song and storytelling that had emerged through nineteenth century explorations and adaptations of folk culture. In these functions, Hanrahan, and by extension Yeats, suggests the doubly impossible role of the national poet that David Lloyd describes. Because of Ireland’s colonial past, Lloyd writes, “the poet must either be created by the nation which it is his (always his) function to create, or create it by virtue of representing the nation he lacks.” Yeats could then portray Hanrahan as a representative of the history of bardic culture and as an expression of Yeats’ own role as a poet, thereby creating both the poet and the nation.

Several of Yeats’ early writings outline his views on the importance of the bard to national culture. In 1890, he reviewed Sophie Bryant’s history, *Celtic Ireland*, for *The Scots Observer*, including a discussion of bards as “the most powerful influence in the land.” Here, Yeats characterizes bards as primarily a threatening presence:

> No gift they demanded might be refused them. One king being asked for his eye by a bard in quest of an excuse for rousing the people against him plucked it out and gave it. Their rule was one of fear as much as love. A poem and an incantation were almost the same. A satire could fill a whole country-side with famine. Something of the same feeling still survives, perhaps, in the extreme dread of being 'rhymed up' by some local maker of unkindly verses.

At the same time, Yeats saw the Irish bards as particularly representative of a national essence. In his introduction to the 1895 *Book of Irish Verse*, Yeats depicted the poet’s function as aligned with the natural world. In contrast to his contemporaries, who

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pursue “those arts which build up a gallant personality, rapid writing, ready talking, effective speaking to crowds” and neglect “the arts which consume the personality in solitude,” Yeats writes,

...[t]he poor peasant of the eighteenth century could make fine ballads by abandoning himself to the joy or sorrow of the moment, as the reeds abandon themselves to the wind which sighs through them, because he had about him a world where all was old enough to be steeped in emotion.²⁹

Later, in his 1897 review of George Sigerson’s Bards of the Gael and Gall for The Illustrated London News, he again characterized Irish poetry as more pure, spontaneous, and integrated into daily life than its English equivalent.³⁰

Yeats outlines a poetic culture that lives independently of written literature and provides an organic connection between human society and the natural and spiritual worlds. As Schuchard writes, Yeats prioritized “the bardic poet’s responsibility to the imaginative and aesthetic life of his culture and of his essential role in creating the images, shaping the values, and restoring the dignity of a beleaguered nation...”³¹ The poet, in Yeats’ formulation, is imbued with an authoritative voice that comes from his innate ability to speak as a representative of his nation, and is simultaneously a threat and an outsider to the society he represents.

Within these parameters, Yeats’ depictions of bardic figures varied widely. As the most developed “peasant poet” in Yeats’ early work, Hanrahan underwent a transition

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³¹ Schuchard, The Last Minstrels, xx–xxi.
through the 1890s and into the twentieth century, from his roots in Munster history and folklore to a visionary and esoteric poet, increasingly informed by Yeats’ exposure to living folk traditions in and around Coole. In her work on Yeats and folklore, Mary Helen Thuente outlines the publication history of the Hanrahan stories, from “The Devil’s Book” (1892) to *Stories of Red Hanrahan* (1905). The earliest stories were published individually in various periodicals in the early 1890s and collected in Yeats’ 1897 volume, *The Secret Rose*, along with other works that focused on the occult. The final version, *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, was the result of extensive revision with the collaboration of Lady Gregory. Thuente sees *The Secret Rose* as essential to understanding Yeats’ evolution as a writer through the 1890s.\(^{32}\)

The stories tell the story of the singer and schoolmaster’s introduction to the otherworld, his gradual letting go of the material world in favor of the intangible and the ideal, and his eventual death and return to the people of the Sidhe. In the earlier versions of the stories, Hanrahan strongly connected to the historical singers Owen Roe O’Sullivan (for whom he is named in the earliest stories) and William Dall O’Heffernan. One of Yeats’ sources for the stories, Edward Walsh’s *Irish Popular Songs*, portrayed O’Sullivan as a rake and introduced several of the bardic themes that would carry over into Yeats’ work. In his earlier *Reliques of Irish Jacobite Poetry*, Walsh emphasized the bards’ role in political resistance, writing that they were “ever ready to expose the cruel deeds of the ‘Invader,’ were hunted like wolves, till their race became almost extinct…”\(^{33}\)


\(^{33}\) John Daly and Edward Walsh, *Reliques of Irish Jacobite Poetry, with Biographical Sketches of the Authors, Interlinear Literal Translations, And Historical Illustrative*
Further, in *Irish Popular Songs*, Walsh identifies the Irish song tradition as more closely connected to an Orientalized “rich and exuberant poetry of the East” than to English songs.\(^{34}\) Finally, noting that the nineteenth century song tradition is “fragmented” and in need of study “as the geologist bears away fragments of old world wonders,”\(^ {35}\) Walsh sounds most like Yeats when he writes that the song writers of his own time are the inheritors of a noble tradition:

> These song writers are, doubtless, the lineal descendants of the bards of preceding centuries. Their poems, however, are not works of art; they are, with few exceptions, the efforts of untutored nature—the spontaneous produce of a rich poetic soil. But if these wild lyrics thrill with electric power to the heart, what must be the effect of the finished productions of that happier period when the chiefs of the land protected the craft of the minstrel?\(^ {36}\)

Walsh’s phrase, “spontaneous produce of a rich poetic soil,” anticipates Yeats’ peasant who wrote poetry instinctively, “as the reeds abandon themselves to the wind…”\(^ {37}\)

Altogether, Walsh constructs a portrait of the Irish bards as rebellious, exotic, connected directly to the land itself, and carriers of the oral song tradition—all aspects that carry over into Yeats’ concept of a lost ideal poetic tradition. However, the most specific links between Walsh and the Hanrahan stories are in his descriptions of O’Sullivan and Heffeman.

> According to Walsh, O’Sullivan was an itinerant farm laborer and hedge school master from Kerry who lived in and around Cork, Limerick, and Tipperary, spoke and

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\(^{35}\) Ibid., 23.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 24.

\(^{37}\) Yeats, “‘Modern Irish Poetry’ (1894; Rev. 1899, C. 1903, 1908), Repr. from A Book of Irish Verse Selected from Modern Writers, Ed. W. B. Yeats (1895, Rev. 1900),” 107.
wrote English as well as Irish, and taught Homeric Greek and Latin in the tradition of the “hedge schoolmaters” of Gaelic Ireland.\textsuperscript{38} Walsh emphasizes his “wild and irregular” lifestyle and his reputation as a rake,\textsuperscript{39} describing his loss of a position as teacher in Charleville after his involvement with a local woman, Mary Casey. O’Sullivan’s poetry reflected his reputation: Walsh writes that “his strain was bold, vigorous, passionate, and feeling; his only fault being a redundancy of language to which he was led by the inclination of the Irish tongue, and his own vehemence of temper.”\textsuperscript{40} Echoing Walsh, Yeats opens his early Hanrahan stories by describing Hanrahan’s “vehemence:” “The Devil’s Book” (1892) opens by describing “a man with a great mass of red hair and a pale, vehement face;” and “The Book of the Great Dhoul and Hanrahan the Red” (1897) likewise describes a man with “a pale vehement face.”\textsuperscript{41}

Hanrahan’s other historical model, William Dall O’Heffernan, was a “poor houseless wanderer,”\textsuperscript{42} born blind into a noble family but dependent on his audiences for food and shelter throughout his adult life. As with Hanrahan, those who helped or hindered him were respectively praised or cursed in his songs.\textsuperscript{43} Heffernan’s birthplace, Shronehill, is the setting for the first Hanrahan story, and his Jacobite aisling, “Cliona of the Rock,”\textsuperscript{44} is referenced in both early versions of “Red Hanrahan”: the O’Sullivan of “The Devil’s Book” conjures “Cleona of Ton Cleona, the Queen of the Munster Sheogues” from his book of spells, and Hanrahan of “The Book of the Great Dhoul”

\textsuperscript{38} Walsh, \textit{Irish Popular Songs}, 26.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{42} Walsh, \textit{Irish Popular Songs}, 28.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 92.
likewise summons “Cleena of the Wave... the queen of the Southern fairies.” As Cliona, the subject of Heffernan’s aisling, seduces the speaker with promises of a great nation yet to come, Cleona and, later, Cleena inspires in O’Sullivan/Hanrahan the desire to turn away from the material world—a temptation he rejects in favor of a life of vagrancy until he is finally united with this queen of the otherworld in the final story. Finally, Heffernan’s most well-known work was “Caítílin ni Uallacain,” which Yeats credited to O’Sullivan and adapted as the basis of the third Hanrahan tale, “Kathleen-ny-Houlihan” (1894), later published as “Kathleen-ny-Houlihan and Hanrahan the Red” (1897) and “Hanrahan and Cathleen, the Daughter of Houlihan” (1905). Yeats’ and Lady Gregory’s play, “Kathleen ni Houlihan” (first performed by the Irish National Theatre Company in 1902), grew from these adaptations. The development of the Kathleen ni Houlihan tale, as I will show in the next section, has notable similarities to Cleena/Cliona of the Hanrahan tales and reflects Yeats’ self-expression as a bard and his evolving sense of sexuality.

In her study of the Yeats’ revisions of the early Hanrahan tales, Mary Helen Thuente reveals a movement away from Hanrahan’s roots in Walsh’s Owen O’Sullivan, the rakish hedge schoolmaster, and towards an ideal bardic role, in which Hanrahan is an instrument of fate, an embodiment of an ideal poetic tradition, and a model of the role Yeats saw for himself as a national poet. In the next section, I argue that Elizabeth Butler Cullingford’s and Adrian Frazier’s work on the gender dynamics of Yeats’ early work sheds light on this transition, and, further, that it is Yeats’ exposure to Raftery that encouraged this transition to occur.

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46 Thuente, W.B. Yeats and Irish Folklore, 201–202, 206, 218–219.
A New Type of Poet: The Early Hanrahan

In her 1996 work on Yeats’ early love poetry, Cullingford wrote that this work “is interesting precisely because of those qualities that have led male critics to denigrate it as insufficiently modern: its adoption of a feminine subject position and its “effeminate” style and form… To paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir, one is not born a man, one becomes one; and Yeats had considerable trouble becoming a man.” Cullingford reads the lovelorn bards of Yeats’ early work, including the Hanrahan stories in *The Secret Rose*, in contrast to both the modernist poetry then beginning to emerge from England and the earlier Irish nationalist material, such as Davis’s ballads, that promoted an aggressive masculinity. Concerning the nationalist material, and especially the Young Ireland literature, Cullingford argues that

...as an Irish nationalist poet [Yeats] was expected to produce “manly” verse in order to counteract the colonial stereotype of the Irish as effeminate and childish. Yet he conceived of his poetic vocation as demanding a “feminine” receptivity and passivity, and as inheritor of an organic romantic poetic he saw the production of verse as analogous to the female “labour” of producing a child.

This androgynous poetic role is, in Cullingford’s argument, linked to the Decadent movement with which Yeats was involved in the 1890s.

From this revision of masculinity comes Yeats’ approach to the Mother Ireland trope, a theme Cullingford traces not only through the Kathleen ni Houlihan story, but

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49 Ibid., 12.
also in Hanrahan’s own overarching spiritual journey towards the queen of the Sidhe. In this reading, Hanrahan, who fails to impress the queen when first visiting her world and returns to a restless temporal and material existence, is a “failed Grail knight unable to rise to the challenge offered by the magical woman… the poet intuits that possession would destroy his image: his imaginative projection cannot survive intact with a real woman.” In both “Hanrahan and Cathleen, the Daughter of Houlihan” and in the overall narrative arc of the Hanrahan stories, the traveling poet straddles the material and spiritual worlds, and his challenge is to articulate his experience without being consumed by either the banality of the mortal world or the loss of individuality demanded by the otherworld.

Following Cullingford, Adrian Frazier has examined the perspective brought to Victorian studies by sexuality studies and especially Foucauldian analysis, and applied these new perspectives to the Irish revival. Reading George Moore, Edward Martyn, and Yeats in the light of Walter Pater’s influence on them, Frazier foregrounds the shift that Foucault outlines from “sexé to sexualité, act to identity.” Because sexual identities were in the process of being defined at the time that these three writers were beginning their careers, and because the anti-imperialism of this period in Irish nationalism allowed for a challenge to “an imperialist ethic that championed the principles of duty, sacrifice,

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50 Most extensively treated in “Kathleen-ny-Houlihan” (National Observer, 4 August 1894), “Kathleen the Daughter of Houlihan and Hanrahan the Red” (The Secret Rose, 1897), “Hanrahan and Cathleen, the Daughter of Houlihan” (Stories of Red Hanrahan, 1905), and the play “Kathleen ni Houlihan” (first performed by the Irish National Theatre in 1902).


and self-sufficiency,” Frazier argues, these three writers had available to them more versions of masculinity than did previous or later generations:

…There is consequently a richness in the possibilities of masculinity during this period—when there were multiple forms of sexual practice (and non-practice) and shifting ways of acting out gender—before the emergent model of sexual identities (as hetero-, homo-, or bi-sexual) came into force in the early twentieth century, that makes our categorical identities inadequate: the more one studies the lives of certain particular authors, the more one concludes that the categories underdetermine the life studied; they fail in explanation, and succeed in distortion.

Further, Frazier draws a distinction between the cultural nationalists of the 1890s and the earlier generation, writing that “[n]ineties cultural nationalism was, after all, susceptible to being thought of as an appropriation of the female sphere, “culture”; …and mid-nineteenth century Irish cultural nationalism, was male—a matter of guns behind the hedge, cigars in the lobby at Westminster, and ballads to Mother Ireland.” Concerning Yeats, Frazier argues that he saw a move away from heterosexual masculinity as essential to the artistic life. Following Pater, Yeats believed that “[c]reation was set against procreation, art against nature, and perversity against normality. To be an artist, it was perhaps necessary to explore other ways of being male.” Frazier places Yeats within the context of a literary culture that provided alternatives to the aggressive masculinity of Irish cultural nationalism and the Young Ireland movement in particular. From this perspective, Yeats’ representations of Raftery and his revisions of the Hanrahan stories gain a degree of complexity as a result of his exposure to “other ways of being male.”

53 Ibid., 11.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 9.
56 Ibid., 14.
Cullingford’s and Frazier’s arguments portray Yeats as at least as much a Romantic and Victorian poet as an Irish revivalist. In the next section of this chapter, I reorient a reading of his work back to Revivalism with Cullingford’s and Frazier’s approach in mind. Therefore, the Yeats we see in the final Hanrahan stories is one who comes from an interest in folklore (The Celtic Twilight and the early Hanrahan stories) and the romantic tradition (as we see in Secret Rose), but who has processed that romanticism through the folklore that Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde brought him back to at Coole, largely through their joint interest in Raftery. Because of that reorientation, Yeats’ interest in folklore was able to continue after his turn away from the early fairy stories and through his interest in esotericism. In order to further explore that interest in Raftery, I focus on Yeats’ visits to Coole in the summers of 1899 and 1900.

Coole Park, 1899 and 1900: Lady Gregory’s “Raftery”

During the two years preceding Yeats’ and Lady Gregory’s first meeting in 1894, Yeats published two Hanrahan stories (“The Devil’s Book” and “The Twisting of the Rope and Hanrahan the Red,” both published in 1892) and his volume of Sligo folklore, The Celtic Twilight (1893). Douglas Hyde’s 1893 Love Songs of Connacht, which included the folksong “The Twisting of the Rope,” further deepened Yeats’ involvement in making folk material the basis for a new cultural nationalism. Yeats reviewed Love Songs for The Bookman in October 1893, enthusiastically writing that the volume was “one of those rare books in which art and life are so completely blended that praise or blame become well nigh impossible.” Echoing his comments on

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58 Yeats reviewed Love Songs for The Bookman in October 1893, enthusiastically writing that the volume was “one of those rare books in which art and life are so completely blended that praise or blame become well nigh impossible.” Echoing his comments on
first visited Coole in 1896, and there began an interest in Raftery. During that summer and the next, Yeats joined Lady Gregory in her folklore collecting travels in County Galway. It was during his stay in August, 1899, that both Yeats and Gregory wrote extended pieces on Raftery: Yeats wrote his essay, “Dust Hath Closed Helen’s Eye,” which appeared in his revised *The Celtic Twilight* in 1902 along with folklore collected in and around Coole, and Gregory wrote her long essay, “Raftery, the Poet of the Poor,” for the Gaelic League newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis*, published that October. In 1900, another visit to Coole led Yeats, Gregory, and Hyde to visit the Galway Feis in early August, where they heard recitations of Raftery’s poetry. Later that summer, all three attended the dedication ceremony for the new grave marker on August 26. Immediately following that ceremony, Yeats wrote a scenario for a new play, “Casadh an tSugain,” based on his Hanrahan story, “The Twisting of the Rope and Hanrahan the Red,” which Hyde wrote in Irish two days later, and Lady Gregory translated as “The Twisting of the Rope.” That play featured Hanrahan, but its themes aligned with material on Raftery that all three writers produced over the same period.

For Lady Gregory, the years 1899 and 1900 were pivotal to her career. Through the three preceding years, she had become more active in revivalist activities. In 1896, she began her folklore collecting travels through the Galway countryside with Yeats, and in 1897, she founded the Irish Literary Theatre with Yeats and invited Horace Plunkett to

the art of the Irish bards, Yeats writes that “…the men and women who made these love songs were hardly in any sense conscious artists; but merely people very desperately in love who put their hopes and fears into simple and musical words…” and “every powerful emotion found at once noble types and symbols for its expression.” William Butler Yeats, “Old Gaelic Love Songs: Review of Love Songs of Connacht by Douglas Hyde,” in *Early Articles and Reviews*, vol. 9, The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats (Simon & Schuster, 2004), 218, 221.
Coole to help found an agricultural co-op.\textsuperscript{59} Her 1898 essay, “Ireland, Real and Ideal,” which described these efforts, made her, according to Judith Hill, “the first to define the purpose of the self-help movements, identify them as characteristic of contemporary Ireland, and to observe that they were currently more effective in generating change than constitutional politics.”\textsuperscript{60} Further, James Pethica notes that the 1900 gathering at Coole took place in the midst of an upsurge in nationalist sentiment. The Boer War had inspired anti-imperialist feelings in Ireland, and Lady Gregory’s essays, “Boer Ballads in Ireland” (published in \textit{Poets and Dreamers} in 1903, although Gregory began writing it in September 1900 and dated it 1901\textsuperscript{61}) and “The Felons Of Our Land” (1900) were, according to Pethica, the “most overtly anti-English writings of her career.”\textsuperscript{62} Likewise, Yeats had written letters protesting Queen Victoria’s visit to Ireland and expressing support for the Boers in the spring of 1900.\textsuperscript{63}

In these contexts, Lady Gregory’s discovery in 1899 of a manuscript of Raftery’s poems at the home of a stone cutter in Killeenan\textsuperscript{64} and subsequent discoveries through

\textsuperscript{60} Hill, “Finding a Voice,” 23.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
conversations with County Galway residents offered an ideal opportunity. As Pethica
writes, Raftery’s poetry was, for Gregory, Yeats, and Hyde, “a focal point for the
construction of community identity, and… a continuing repository of folk-history and
folk-memory.”65 Because he lived before the Famine but remained active long enough
for Gregory’s contemporaries to have memories of him, Raftery provided a tangible
connection to a vibrant, pre-Famine, native culture. This connection resulted in a
significant change in Lady Gregory’s writing style: her first play, *Colman and Guaire*
(1899), used Irish folklore as its basis but relied heavily on Tennyson as a model.66 By
writing about Raftery, Gregory developed a more natural style and a local and personal
connection to her work.

Gregory’s most significant and substantial work on Raftery was an essay that
opened her collection, *Poets and Dreamers*, in 1903. In it, Gregory reveals a poet and
musician who represents a counter-narrative to that of the ruling class. Her Raftery is
rebellious, anti-materialist, politically subversive, and sexually aggressive. Most
importantly, Gregory portrays him as uncompromising in the authenticity of his art.

For much of the essay, Gregory characterizes Raftery in contrast to a rival poet
named Callinan. She opens with a description of an argument between two women set at
a Galway workhouse, one from Kilchreest, favoring Raftery, and one from Craughwell,
favoring Callinan. The woman supporting Raftery refers to his poverty, homelessness,
blindness, and musicality, saying that he “hadn’t a stim of sight; and he travelled the
whole nation; and he was the best poet that ever was, and the best fiddler.” The other
woman responds by citing Callinan’s politeness and higher social standing (“a nice

respectable man”). By opening her essay in this way, Gregory not only highlights the importance of class to Raftery’s reputation, but places that reputation in the memories of two poor women, among the most marginalized members of the community. Immediately, Raftery is aligned with the most disempowered members of the community.

Speaking of Raftery’s capacity for cursing, she notes that the curses were always directed against those who abused their power, and “his gentleness was for the poor.” Gregory gives the most attention to a curse he delivers to the prosecutors of Anthony Daly, who was hanged for involvement with the Whiteboys, a secret society known for agrarian violence. Having witnessed the hanging in Seefin, Raftery wrote a song praising Daly for his refusal to inform on others and cursing those responsible for his arrest and execution. Gregory writes that as Daly was taken to the gallows,

...there were people all the way along the road, and they were calling on him to break through the crowd, and they’d save him; and some of the soldiers were Irish, and they called back that if he did they’d only fire their guns in the air; but he made no attempt, but went to the gallows quiet enough.

Gregory takes care to emphasize the crowd’s sense of injustice, and the curse brings about a type of resolution. Quoting her informant, she writes that “…he called down judgment from God on the two Z’s [police], and if not on them, on their children. And they that had land and farms in all parts, lost it after; and all they had vanished; and the most of their children died.’ …And he [Gregory’s informant] had also heard that the grass had never grown again in Seefin.” Raftery’s curse is notable here not only in its

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68 Ibid., 19.
69 Ibid., 17.
70 Ibid.
protection of the lower class but in the fact that retribution takes the form of the loss of land: The curse accomplishes, in part, the original goals of the Whiteboys.

Raftery’s low social class, his ability to curse, and his subversive politics all serve to mark him as an authentic representative of a native tradition in Gregory’s text. Further, she inserts a personal reflection on his lack of education in order to cement his position outside of modern culture:

I hear the people say now and then: 'If he had had education, he would have been the greatest poet in the world.' I cannot but be sorry that this education went so far as it did… As it was, both his love poems and his religious poems were caught in the formulas imported from Greece and from Rome; and any formula must make a veil between the prophet who has been on the mountain top, and the people who are waiting at its foot for his message.\(^\text{71}\)

The “veil” of any poetic formula taken from “imported” traditions echoes Yeats’ language regarding the immediacy and spontaneity of bardic arts.

Unsurprisingly, then, Gregory emphasizes Raftery’s reputation as a musical performer. She connects his use of the fiddle with the history of the bardic tradition:

His life was always the wandering, homeless life of the old bards. After Cromwell’s time, as the houses they went to grew poorer, they had added music to their verse making; and Raftery’s little fiddle helped to make him welcome in the Ireland which was, in spite of many sorrows, as merry and light-hearted up to the time of the great famine as England had been up to the time of the Puritans."\(^\text{72}\)

Music here functions as a catalyst to social cohesion: “…when he’d come to any place, the people would gather and he’d give them a dance…”\(^\text{73}\) Through this emphasis on Raftery as a musician, Gregory shows that he participated in a broad historical tradition while furthering his role as a bringer of social unity.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 26–27.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
Lady Gregory’s Raftery fits with Joep Leerssen’s definition of traditional culture as imagined by nineteenth century nationalists, but also incorporates the cooperative, “grass roots” efforts she played a large part in promoting. Leerssen outlines a systematic idealization of oral traditions as spontaneous and instinctive as opposed to practiced and educated; an appeal to an idea of authenticity that, as previously discussed in this chapter, aims for “a filiation between the post-Union, indeed post-Famine present and the ancient roots of Irishness.”\(^{74}\) Gregory concludes her essay with an evaluation that foregrounds Raftery’s importance as the last carrier of a purely Irish tradition:

But the nineteenth century has been a time of swift change in many countries; and in looking back on that century in Ireland, there seem to have been two great landslips—the breaking of the continuity of the social life of the people by the famine, and the breaking of the continuity of their intellectual life by the shoving out of the language. It seems as if there were no place left now for the wandering versemaker, and that Raftery may have closed the long procession that had moved unbroken during so many centuries, on its journey to 'the meadow of the dead.'\(^{75}\)

Raftery thus provides Gregory with a tangible link to a pre-Famine Ireland and a starting point for her own work as a folklorist, playwright, and essayist. Her essay establishes Raftery’s authenticity through elaborations on his poverty and his commitment to the poor, his political subversiveness, his cultural authenticity (bolstered by his lack of formal education), and his musicality—all elements that support Leerssen’s outline of “the authentic” as pursued by nineteenth century writers, but because the memory of Raftery is still present in the County Galway communities that Lady Gregory knew, Raftery’s stories have an immediate, real-world presence.

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\(^{75}\) Gregory, “Raftery,” 40.
“The Twisting Of The Rope” and “The Wedding”: Raftery and Hanrahan On The Stage

After Gregory published her long essay, Raftery continued to appear in her work, sometimes as a character in her plays and elsewhere through a return to the figure of the wandering singer. Most immediately, she collaborated with Hyde on a play, first titled in Irish as “An Posadh,” and later translated as “The Wedding.” Here, Raftery is depicted as most like Lady Gregory herself—he functions as a peacemaker and bringer of material stability. The play was written quickly as a response to the earlier “Casadh an tSugain,” which featured a similar plot structure and composition process. Both plays focus on an encounter between a traveling singer and the inhabitants of a rural cottage, and both were based on previous work by Yeats (his story, “The Twisting of the Rope and Hanrahan the Red”) and Gregory (“An Posadh” was based on a folktale Gregory narrated in her essay). Yeats and Gregory began work on the plays by writing scenarios in English, from which Hyde wrote the plays in Irish, and Gregory then translated them into English. With this close relationship in mind, the next section will consider the two plays as a pair.

Yeats’ interest in the folktale at the center of “Casadh an tSugain” predated his interest in Raftery, as the earliest version of his short story, “The Twisting of the Rope,” was published in The National Observer in December 1892. Yeats’ story was inspired by the song of the same title in Edward Walsh’s 1847 Irish Popular Songs, which was itself

translated from the Irish version published in James Hardiman’s 1831 *Irish Minstrelsy*.

Douglas Hyde, likewise, knew the song through his own folk music research and included a version of it in his *Love Songs of Connacht* in 1893. The versions that appear in Walsh’s and Hyde’s collections differ significantly, and bear comparison in light of Yeats’ and Hyde’s later works.

Walsh introduces the song with a summary of the folktale to which it refers:

This is said to be the original song composed to that delightful tune, "the Twisting of the Rope." Tradition thus speaks of its origin. A Connaught harper having once put up at the residence of a rich farmer, began to pay such attentions to the young woman of the house, as greatly displeased her mother, who instantly conceived a plan for the summary ejectment of the minstrel. She provided some hay, and requested the harper to twist the rope which she set about making. As the work progressed and the rope lengthened, the harper, of course, retired backward, till he went beyond the door of the dwelling, when the crafty matron suddenly shut the door in his face, and then threw his harp out at the window.  

Walsh’s translation of the song supports his emphasis on a mischievous harper outwitted by a “crafty matron.” In the voice of the harper, the first stanza expresses his regret: “What mortal conflict drove me here to roam.../ Forth from the house where dwelt my heart’s dear hope,/ I was turned by the hag at the twisting of the rope!” The second stanza presumably addresses the girl he lost, emphasizing a sense of possession:

If thou be mine, be mine both day and night,
If thou be mine, be mine in all men’s sight,
If thou be mine, be mine o’er all beside—
And oh, that thou wert now my wedded bride!”

In Hyde’s version, a version of this stanza opens the song, and the tone is slightly gentler:

If thou art mine, be mine, white love of my heart:

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78 Ibid., 39.
79 Ibid., 41.
If thou art mine, be mine by day and by night;
If thou art mine, be mine every inch in thy heart,
And my misfortune and misery that thou art not with me in the evening for wife.80

Both versions mention the speaker’s ill luck, the “hag” who throws him out of the house, and the lovers in his past, but Hyde’s placement of this stanza at the beginning of the song and the slight difference in translation hints at a speaker motivated more by passion than by pride.

The composition history of the play makes Yeats’ and Hyde’s mutual involvement clear as well as the three writers’ common interest in Raftery. As previously mentioned, Yeats wrote the scenario for the play on the day after the memorial dedication ceremony for Raftery.81 Thirty-five years later, Yeats wrote an account of his motivation for the play in Dramatis Personae: “Lady Gregory and I wanted a Gaelic drama, and I made a scenario for a one-act play founded upon an episode in my Stories of Red Hanrahan; I had some hope that my invention, if Hyde would but accept it, might pass into legend as though he were a historical character.”82 This account echoes the 1928 poem “The Tower,” which includes the line “I myself created Hanrahan.”83 Read in conjunction with its source in Yeats’ short story, though, the play takes Hanrahan in a new direction.

Recent criticism on Yeats’ story, in its final form as published in 1905, has focused on Hanrahan as an outsider and a threat to the patriarchal order of the domestic family; a point of tension that this story shares with another Yeats and Gregory

collaboration, the play “Cathleen ni Houlihan.” Joseph Valente makes this connection explicitly, comparing the two stories as accounts of a threat to the domestic sphere. In the play, Cathleen ni Houlihan (Mother Ireland) draws Michael Gillane away from his fiancé and his family and towards his death, thus ending not only his own hopes for a comfortable domestic life but the family’s hopes for upward social mobility. In Yeats’ story, Hanrahan attempts to woo Oona away from her fiancé by describing a life of freedom from domesticity. In the case of Cathleen ni Houlihan, the conflict is resolved when Michael sacrifices himself for a national ideal, and in the case of Hanrahan, when the patriarchal family structure closes in around Oona and draws him out of the house.84 In either case, an intruder, associated with masculine ideals of nation and art, threatens an entrenched familial order based in the material world.

James Pethica also sees in the Hanrahan story, as published in 1897, an incompatibility between the artistic life and family structures. Put in the context of Yeats’ other work in the 1890s, Pethica reads a pattern in which “the poet or seer […] is either rejected by or himself rejects his culture because his imaginative power disrupts the possibility of being satisfied by an ordinary life.”85 By emphasizing Hanrahan’s role as an artist rather than his parallels with Cathleen ni Houlihan, this approach views the story as more of a meditation on the isolation of the artist than an overall repudiation of a material life. The rope Hanrahan twists, then, becomes a metaphor for “the wandering bard’s associative power of making poems out of the straw of ordinary experience.”86 The more rope he produces, the greater the impossibility of his participation in his own

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86 Ibid., 14.
society. Here, the story becomes the tragedy of an artist bound to a life of isolation, and it closes on a lonely Hanrahan composing the song “The Twisting of the Rope” as he conjures a “Rope of Human Sorrows.” Yeats closes the story with an image of Hanrahan’s burden made visible: “Then it seemed as though the Rope of Human Sorrows changed in his dreams into a great serpent, coiling about him and taking him always more closely in its folds till it filled the whole earth and the heavens, and the stars were the glistening of its scales.” In the end, Hanrahan has more in common with Michael Gillane of the play “Cathleen ni Houlihan” than with Cathleen: through his rejection of the domestic life, he is relegated to a lifelong pursuit of an intangible ideal. Unlike Michael, however, whose willing self-sacrifice allows him access to a higher state of being, Hanrahan is also, through the course of the stories, confined to the material world, and in this way mirrors Yeats’ concept of the national artist.

In contrast, Hyde’s play “Casadh an tSugain” and Gregory’s translation, “The Twisting of the Rope,” lack this final focus on Hanrahan as an isolated and frustrated artist. Instead, Hyde and Gregory make the group of individuals in the cottage central to the action. Oona’s mother, here named Maurya, is as important to the story as Hanrahan himself, and her victory over him is framed as the triumph of a united and empowered community. A new character, Sheamus O’Heran, Oona’s fiancé, provides the audience with a model of masculinity that protects the community, and Hanrahan himself is less of a lonely poet and more of a menace. At the play’s opening, he captures Oona’s attention backstage as Maurya introduces him to the audience as “the greatest vagabond ever came

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88 Ibid.
into Ireland.” A later confrontation between Hanrahan and Sheamus establishes Hanrahan’s antisocial and possessive tendencies:

(SHEAMUS gets up and goes over to her.)
SHEAMUS. Will you dance this reel with me, Oona, as soon as the piper is ready?
HANRAHAN (rising up). I am Tumaus Hanrahan, and I am speaking now to Oona ni Regaun; and as she is willing to be talking to me, I will allow no living person to come between us.
SHEAMUS (without heeding HANRAHAN). Will you not dance with me, Oona?
HANRAHAN (savagely). Didn’t I tell you now that it was to me Oona ni Regaun was talking? Leave that on the spot, you clown, and do not raise a disturbance here.
SHEAMUS. Oona—
HANRAHAN (shouting). Leave that! (SHEAMUS goes away, and comes over to the two old women.)

The plot to trick Hanrahan into leaving the house is now a project that requires mass participation, rather than the action of a single woman. Maurya and a neighbor invent an elaborate story that establishes the need for a rope as Sheamus organizes the community around their common purpose. Finally, as the banished Hanrahan shouts futile curses from offstage, Sheamus closes the play with a victory speech: “I am thankful to ye, neighbours; and Oona will be thankful to ye tomorrow.” The conclusion is that of a comedy, with the family structure reasserted and, as Pethica writes, with Hanrahan “mocked by the community from the security of the settled, quotidian world they have defended against him.”

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90 Ibid., 142.
91 Ibid., 148.
“Casadh an tSugain” opened with success in October 1901 when it was presented along with Yeats and George Moore’s *Diarmuid and Grainne*. John Millington Synge wrote of the evening as a musical event, the highlight of which was the communal singing of Irish songs during the intervals:

Despite the importance of [the Gaelic League] (and as it happens so often in movements which are of their nature, popular) there is an element of the ridiculous apparent in its public events, side by side with which are feelings of infinite depth. Thus, at the beginning of the first night it was hard to keep a straight face at the sight of the beautiful Irish ladies of the Gaelic League all around the theatre talking non-stop in the most woeful Irish with their young clerks and workingmen who were quite pale with enthusiasm. But, it happened that during an interval in *Diarmuid and Grainne*, according to local custom, the people in the galleries started to sing. They sang old, well-known songs. Until that moment those melodies had never been heard sung in unison by so many voices with the ancient Irish words. A shiver went through the auditorium. In the lingering notes there was an incomparable melancholy, like the death rattle of a nation. One after another, faces could be seen leaning into their programmes. We wept.93

The unison singing in this description closely mirrors the spirit of Hyde’s play and, by extension, Hyde’s and Gregory’s motivation for their grass-roots cooperative efforts: a community draws on their native culture and innate sense of invention and collaboration to create and promote their own sense of identity. In Synge’s description as well as in the play, music is the medium of cultural expression, and the truly redemptive music comes from the community: in the play, Hanrahan’s songs become a series of “spells”94 meant to separate Oona from her family, in contrast to the dance music of the unnamed onstage piper, who serves to reinforce the community structure by producing a musical environment in which everyone participates.


Gregory’s scenario for “An Posadh” followed the success of “Casadh an tSugain.” In keeping with Gregory’s “Raftery” essay overall, her telling of the folktale depicts the singer as a figure of charity and protection:

There is a story I often hear told about the marriage near Cappaghtagle of a poor servant boy and girl, 'that was only a marriage and not a wedding, till Raftery chanced to come in; and he made it one. There wasn't a bit but bread and herrings in the house; but he made a great song about the grand feast they had, and he put every sort of thing into the song—all the beef that was in Ireland; and went to the Claddagh, and didn't leave a fish in the sea. And there was no one at all at it; but he brought all the bacach and poor men in Ireland, and gave them a pound each. He went to bed after, without them giving him a drop to drink; but he didn't mind that when they hadn't got it to give.'

Whereas the folktale portrays Raftery only singing about the couple’s imagined wealth, the play makes this loaves-and-fishes tale far more literal. In it, Raftery arrives at a poor couple’s cottage on their wedding day. Unaware of the occasion, he accepts and eats the meager meal they had prepared for themselves. When the husband mentions that they were just married but couldn’t afford a feast, Raftery takes out his fiddle, begins to sing, and charges passers by to give to the couple when entering. By the end of the short play, the couple has enough to start a profitable farm. The ending of the play, in Gregory’s English translation, carries strong echoes of “Cathleen ni Houlihan,” which she and Yeats had drafted one month prior to Gregory’s initial scenario for “An Posadh.” Here, Raftery slips out unnoticed after all the neighbors have donated to the new couple. A young man enters and denies having seen Raftery on his way out, but says that he had been present at Raftery’s funeral three days earlier.96

In both plays, a community finds unity through its relationship to a wandering singer. While Hyde’s and Gregory’s play, “The Twisting of the Rope,” emphasizes a

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95 Gregory, “Raftery,” 36.
96 Hyde, “The Marriage.”
communal effort to oust the singer from the cottage, Yeats’ story focuses on the artist’s life as a type of exile. In “The Marriage,” a singer unites a splintered and impoverished community and gives them the tools for self-advancement. Pethica sees “The Marriage” as Gregory’s attempt to reconcile the conflict between the short story “The Twisting of the Rope and Hanrahan the Red” and the play; specifically, between Hyde’s favoring of the community over the anti-social poet and Yeats’ “celebrations of the poet as a symbolic, quasi-mystical figure who raises ordinary existence to more complex and heightened forms yet remains marginalized or alienated from his audience.”

In Pethica’s reading, the Rafery of “The Marriage” fills both material and ideal roles, bringing material wealth to a poor couple while serving as a spiritual anchor for a community. Moreover, he is as much of a self-portrait for Gregory as Hanrahan is for Yeats: in a parallel to the tension between Yeats’ aesthetic romanticism and Hyde’s social realism, “The Marriage” bridges the “stubbornly real gap between the idealized notions of community [Gregory] sought to promote and the actualities of class distinction, poverty and ideological difference she daily observed around her.”

The first performance of “An Posadh” in Galway on August 20, 1902 was far less formally produced than that of “Casadh an tSugain.” Gregory recorded in her journal that Hyde’s appearance as Rafery was a last minute decision, 99 and the Freeman’s

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98 Ibid., 19.
Journal reported that “the parts were read from manuscript.” However, Hyde’s performance as Raftery was especially striking to both Yeats and Gregory. Yeats wrote in Samhain later that year that although the play was “badly rehearsed,” the connection between Hyde and Raftery made the play especially relevant to the time and place. Writing that “…one could hardly have had a play that grew more out of the life of the people who saw it,” he drew an explicit parallel between Hyde as a cultural figure and Raftery as a carrier of authentic tradition: “…the chief Gaelic poet of our time celebrates his forerunner in simplicity.” Gregory, likewise, saw in Hyde’s performance something akin to the return of Raftery from the dead, especially in light of the character’s own ghostly presence within the action of the play:

It will be hard to forget the blind poet, as he was represented on the stage by the living poet, so full of kindly humour, of humourous malice, of dignity under his poor clothing, or the wistful, ghostly sigh with which he went out of the door at the end, "is fear marbh do bhi ann"—"It is a dead man was in it."

This sentiment echoes her essay, “On the Edge of the World,” which appears in Poets and Dreamers as an introduction to Hyde’s plays. In it, Gregory describes a different feis at which participants are “proud to show that the language that has been called dead has never died; and glad at the new life that is coming into it.”

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concludes: “The rising again of Ireland, of her old speech, of her last leader, dreams all, as we are told. But here, on the edge of the world, dreams are real things, and every heart is watching for the opening of one or another grave.” The staging of “An Posadh” at the Galway feis, then, reinforces the idea of a breakdown of the division between living and dead. As with the revival of the Irish language and national consciousness, Hyde provides a medium for the bodily revival of Raftery.

Yeats’ Raftery

Yeats’ own artistic depictions of Raftery originated in the same folk material that interested Lady Gregory and Hyde, but also function as an extension of the Hanrahan stories and fit into his overall concept of the poet and artist. In 1902 he published a revised and expanded edition of *The Celtic Twilight*, more than half of which was comprised of new chapters based on material he came across at and around Coole Park. One of these, “Dust Hath Closed Helen’s Eye,” deals explicitly with Raftery’s song for Mary Hynes. Yeats’ essay was based on material that Gregory also depicted in her essay on Raftery. As Gregory writes:

A girl in whose praise he had made a song, Mary Hynes, of Ballylee, died young, and had a troubled life; and one of her neighbours says of her: ‘No one that has a song made about them will ever live long’; and another says: “She got a great tossing up and down; and at last she died in the middle of a bog.”

In keeping with her emphasis on Raftery’s power to curse, Gregory portrays Hynes as one among many of his targets. In Yeats’ writing, however, Hynes possesses

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104 Ibid., 135.
105 Gregory, “Raftery,” 16.
an otherworldly beauty that is deadly for her suitors and results in her being kidnapped by the Sidhe.

Yeats first wrote about Raftery and Hynes in an 1899 essay titled “The Literary Movement in Ireland,” which includes an account of Hynes among other material meant to illustrate a link between Irish folk traditions and Homer, a connection he would develop further in later work. He mentions the fragmented nature of the Irish song tradition (the same quality Lloyd addresses in *Anomalous States*):

> The songs are not very good, for Gaelic poetry has fallen from its old greatness, but they come out of the same dreams as the songs and legends—as vague, it may be, as the clouds of evening and of dawn, that became in Homer’s mind the memory and the prophecy of all the sorrows that have beset and shall beset the journey of beauty in the world.\(^\text{107}\)

Having established the authority and universality of Raftery’s art through Homer, Yeats then draws a parallel between Mary Hynes and Helen of Troy. He mentions the likelihood that Hynes was taken by the Sidhe and quotes Raftery’s praise of her, which relates that he “travelled the hills and mountains of Ireland, but could never see one that was like her” and that “it would take a thousand clerks to write down all her ways!”\(^\text{108}\)

Finally, with Hynes’ beauty in mind, Yeats writes that “[t]he spirit of Helen moves indeed among the legends that are told about turf-fires, and among the legends of the poor and simple everywhere.”\(^\text{109}\)

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\(^{107}\) Ibid., 463.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 464.

\(^{109}\) Ibid.
The 1899 essay looks ahead to “Dust Hath Closed Helen’s Eye” not only in the Homeric connections, but in Yeats’ effort to establish Raftery as foundational to his own future work. The title comes from Thomas Nashe’s “A Litany In Time of Plague” (1593), a poem Yeats chanted to an audience in London on February 24, 1902, the same year that the revised *Celtic Twilight* was published.110 The poem concerns the poet’s mortality and the impermanence of beauty and material pleasure:

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air,
Queens have died young and fair,
Dust hath closed Helen’s eye.
I am sick, I must die.
    Lord, have mercy on us!111

The reference places Mary Hynes immediately in the category of an irretrievable ideal. Yeats’ quoted sources all support this depiction: an “old weaver” says that “Mary Hynes was the most beautiful thing ever made,” that “as many as eleven men asked her in marriage in one day,” and that one man fell into a bog and drowned in his pursuit of her.112 Another source, also quoted by Lady Gregory in her essay, adds that “…if she went to any kind of a meeting, they would all be killing one another for a sight of her, and there was a great many in love with her, but she died young. It is said that no one that has a song made about them will ever live long.”113 Although he features the same source as Lady Gregory, who attributes Hynes’ untimely death to Raftery’s writings on

110 Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels*, 57.
113 Ibid., 27.
her, Yeats frames the relationship between Raftery and Hynes through the inevitability of her death because of her otherworldly beauty. Yeats goes on to write this explicitly: “She died young because the gods loved her.”\textsuperscript{114} The Hynes of Yeats’ essay, as opposed to Gregory’s, possesses a threatening, Siren-like beauty that is deadly to men and therefore belongs in the otherworld. Raftery’s importance to the story, then, resides in his ability to observe the otherworld while remaining in the material world.

This ability to straddle two worlds, which Yeats’ Raftery has in common with Hanrahan, is the focus of the remainder of Yeats’ essay. He quotes a man whom he asks about the blind Raftery’s ability to praise Hynes’ beauty: “I think Raftery was altogether blind, but those that are blind have a way of seeing things, and have the power to know more, and to feel more, and to do more, and to guess more than those that have their sight, and a certain wit and a certain wisdom is given to them.”\textsuperscript{115} This acceptance of Raftery’s blindness as a counterpart to his poetic vision echoes Yeats’ thought on the relationship of the poet to the material world. In 1906, he wrote on blindness specifically: “In primitive times the blind man became a poet, as he became a fiddler in our villages, because he had to be driven out of activities all his nature cried for, before he could be contented with the praise of life.”\textsuperscript{116} In Raftery’s case, his blindness was a physical marker of his positioning between worlds.

In her study, Cullingford views Yeats’ essay on Raftery and Hynes, together with the Hanrahan stories, as emblematic of the poet’s androgynous persona in his love poetry.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 28–29.
In both narratives, an imposing woman fills the role that Maud Gonne did for Yeats. As Hanrahan is a “failed Grail knight unable to rise to the challenge offered by the magical woman,” the men who pursue Mary Hynes fail due to their own humanity and mortality. Cullingford observes that Hynes is “deadly to herself as well as to men: like Gonne she represents “the sorrow of beauty,” and like many lovely women she dies young.” Like Yeats’ other narratives of poets and their muses (including Hanrahan and the queen of the Sidhe as well as Michael Gillane and Cathleen ni Houlihan), his essay on Raftery locates an unreachable ideal in the person of a woman who draws the poet away from the material world.

What is unique about this narrative, though, is that it comes directly from the local history of the Coole area. In keeping with the majority of the *Celtic Twilight* essays, as Edward Hirsch has explored, this piece combines the scientific voice of the folklorist with the poet’s concern for metaphoric meaning. I add that there is a parallel between Yeats’ efforts to find the poetry within the folkloric writing tradition, Hanrahan’s effort to articulate his experiences in the otherworld while living in the material world, and Raftery’s successes in providing his nation with a native art as a blind singer. In all three cases, a solitary and by necessity isolated man carries the responsibility of depicting the unrepresentable for the benefit of a worldly audience. Whereas Gregory’s depictions of Raftery emphasized his place among his community, rooted in the social and the material, Yeats’ Raftery becomes the most successful of his many poetic personas.

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117 Cullingford, “Thinking of Her as Ireland,” 63.
118 Ibid., 65.
“Closer To The Life Of The People”: *Stories of Red Hanrahan* (1905)

In his study of the Hanrahan stories, Edward Hirsch sees Yeats’ embrace of folk material as a method of escaping Romantic solipsism, as folk traditions provide a way to engage a communal voice.\(^{120}\) By assuming Hanrahan as a mask, Yeats could keep his identity as a writer without being subsumed by the anonymity of folk traditions, and still take on the responsibility of claiming that the nation speaks through him. I add that Yeats’ knowledge of Raftery informs his concept of Hanrahan as a mask and that Raftery is a more powerful cultural touchstone for Yeats than Hanrahan’s earliest models, O’Sullivan and Heffernan, because the local memory of Raftery was, at that point, still very immediate and because his songs were circulating in the living musical tradition.

Raftery’s connection to a living musical tradition is also central to Gregory Castle’s reading of the Hanrahan stories as they developed from the 1897 *Secret Rose* versions to the 1905 volume. Castle notes that the progression from the esoteric earlier versions to the later stories that are rooted more solidly in folk culture is mentioned in Yeats’ 1905 preface to Synge’s *The Well of the Saints*. Here, Yeats cites his *Secret Rose* stories as an example of the “conventional language of modern poetry” he wanted to leave behind. The symbolic writing of the 1897 Hanrahan stories, Yeats writes, had “separated [his] imagination from life, sending my Red Hanrahan, who should have trodden the same roads with myself, into some undiscoverable country.”\(^{121}\)

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\(^{120}\) Edward Hirsch, “‘And I Myself Created Hanrahan’: Yeats, Folklore, and Fiction,” *ELH* 48, no. 4 (December 1, 1981): 880–93.

that this indicates Yeats’ recognition that “the spiritual need not be ‘indefinite’ or ‘measureless,’ that it might adhere precisely in the materiality of an embodied personality.”

Yeats also mentions this transition in his 1925 note to his volume *Mythologies*, which included *The Celtic Twilight, Stories of Red Hanrahan*, and other stories. There, he writes that Lady Gregory’s role in revising the narrative style to be closer to her “Kiltartanese” allowed the pieces to “come closer to the life of the people. If their style has merit now, that merit is mainly hers.”

It is Gregory’s contributions, then—not only in the process of rooting the language of narration in the language of the people, but in the elements taken from living folklore, including the Raftery material—that brings Hanrahan to those “same roads.”

In these later revisions of the Hanrahan stories, the issue of authorship therefore becomes more prominent. Their writing process is similar to the evolution of a folktale, not only in the growing numbers of individuals who contribute to the stories, but in the history of textual and oral traditions present in the final product. Castle writes that the Hanrahan of these stories is, by this time, a folkloric figure: “less a specific historical individual or even a type of the Irish bard than an effect of a collaborative ethnographic imagination.”

However, when Hanrahan appears in Yeats’ later writing and especially in “The Tower,” Yeats insists on the exclusivity of his invention: “I myself created Hanrahan.” The collaborative nature of the final versions of the Hanrahan stories seems to challenge Yeats’ claims of lone authorship directly. However, the meaning that Yeats found in Raftery’s poetry reveals a way that the Hanrahan stories can be both an

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122 Castle, “‘Fair Equivalents’: Yeats, Revivalism, and the Redemption of Culture,” 81.
124 Castle, “‘Fair Equivalents’: Yeats, Revivalism, and the Redemption of Culture,” 82.
authentic product of a collaborative, authentic “folk” process and still Yeats’ own invention.

Yeats’ early desire to participate in a communal culture, demonstrated through his collaboration with Gregory and included within the narrative through references to folk traditions, seems to be, as Castle writes, “overwhelmed by the prerogatives of the modern artist for whom culture is indistinguishable from personality.” However, this contradiction is inherent to the bardic tradition as Yeats viewed it. First, as noted earlier, Hanrahan’s status within the stories as both insider and outsider in relation to his own culture allows him to speak for his culture as he maintains some narrative distance. Secondly, the 1905 Hanrahan volume, as the result of a long series of collaborations, is the product of a communal effort and therefore has a “folk” authenticity and authority, but also serves the purpose of providing Yeats with a mouthpiece through which he can articulate his own vision for Irish literature and culture. In Hanrahan, Yeats combines a persona that originated in his imagination, an historical personality (Raftery) still vibrant in local memory, and a conduit for a renascent national culture situated in an ideal future.

125 Ibid., 83.
126 In his study of Yeats and ballad poetry, Colin Meir discusses the “dramatically abrupt shift in Yeats’s attitude to his folk material which came from the need to find a language that would be closely knit to the actual and the real, the language of a man speaking under the pressure of feelings that have their roots in the common circumstances of life” and points to the 1905 edition of Stories of Red Hanrahan as a primary example of this transition. See Colin Meir, The Ballads and Songs of W.B. Yeats (University of Essex, 1972), 46.
Conclusion: Finding the Poet’s Voice

In these ways, Raftery is positioned within the Revival period as a necessary bridge that authenticates the works of Gregory, Yeats, and their contemporaries. His presence in their writing illustrates Yeats’ point in “Literature and the Living Voice” on the uniqueness of Ireland at the turn of the century: “In Ireland to-day the old world that sang and listened is, it may be for the last time in Europe, face to face with the world that reads and writes, and their antagonism is always present under some name or other in Irish imagination and intellect.”

Further, in Yeats’ discussion of Raftery in the same essay, he pinpoints a quality of individuality that carries through into “The Tower:”

The minstrel never dramatized anybody but himself. It was impossible, from the nature of the words the poet had put into his mouth, or that he had made for himself, that he should speak as another person. He will go no nearer to drama than we do in daily speech, and he will not allow you for any long time to forget himself. Our own Raftery will stop the tale to cry, ‘This is what I, Raftery, wrote down in the book of the people’; or, ‘I, myself, Raftery, went to bed without supper that night.’

Here, what is central to the poet and singer’s art is the poet himself—as Castle writes, there is an implied coincidence between personality and culture. Raftery’s most frequently quoted poem then takes on additional resonance. Douglas Hyde’s recording of the original reads:

Mise Raifteri an file,
Lán dóchaí agus grádh,
Le súilidh gan solus
Le ciúnas gan crádh.

Dul siar ar m’áistear
Le solus mo chroidhe,

Ibid., 103.
Fann agus tuirseach
Go deireadh mo shlighe.

Féach anois mé
Agus m’aghaidh ar bhalla
Ag seinm ceóil
Do phócai falamh.

Hyde’s translation:

I AM RAFTERY.

I am Raftery the poet,
Full of hope and love,
With eyes that have no light,
With gentleness that has no misery.

Going west upon my pilgrimage
(Guided) by the light of my heart,
Feeble and tired,
To the end of my road.

Behold me now,
And my face to a wall,
A-playing music,
Unto empty pockets.¹²⁹

Yeats gives a slightly different translation at the opening of “Literature and the Living Voice,” the same as the version Gregory gives in “Raftery” save the last stanza.¹³⁰

Whereas she gives the second line of that stanza as “and my back to a wall,” (a variation Hyde mentions in a footnote), Yeats keeps Hyde’s “and my face to a wall.” Yeats’ quoted poem, which he writes was “in the mind of many” at the dedication of Raftery’s grave at Killeenan, is a generally closer translation of Hyde’s Irish version than the English translation that Hyde provides:

I am Raftery the poet,
Full of hope and love;

¹²⁹ Hyde, Songs Ascribed to Raftery, 40–41.
¹³⁰ Gregory, “Raftery,” 37.
With eyes without light;
With gentleness without misery.

Going west on my journey
With the light of my heart;
Weak and tired
To the end of my road.

I am now,
And my face to a wall,
Playing music
To empty pockets.\textsuperscript{131}

Yeats does not attribute the translation, but its similarity to Gregory’s suggests that it is hers. The repeated phrase “I am” is one notable change from the Irish command “Féach anois mé” (“Behold me now,” as Hyde translates). Here, Yeats and Gregory maintain the focus of the poem on Raftery’s insistence on his own agency. The opening line, “Mise Raifteri,” with its emphatic “Mise” (“I myself”) rather than the simpler “is mé,” and the repeated “I am now,” foreshadows Yeats’ “I myself created Hanrahan” in “The Tower.”

The placement of this poem, together with Yeats’ narration of the dedication ceremony, at the beginning of “Literature and the Living Voice,” in which he lays out his hopes for a national poetry that is a performed art, establishes Raftery at the center of a Revivalist construction of “the authentic.” Moreover, it gives Yeats the authority to identify his own poetic voice as a cultural bedrock for a new Irish literature. To return to the question of the pursuit of authenticity, which has been usefully characterized as a “projective desire”\textsuperscript{132} or an “ever-renewed and never-completed attempt to bring order to

\textsuperscript{131} Yeats, “Sa mhain: 1906--Literature and the Living Voice,” 94–95.
\textsuperscript{132} Lloyd, “Adulteration And The Nation,” 100.
a vast and chaotic curiosity shop,”¹³³ Raftery provided both Gregory and Yeats with a way to establish their own visions for a new nation that carries the weight and authority of a continuous and still-living native art.

Chapter 2

“… till she began to lilt”: The Female Voice in Performance in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*

As Leopold Bloom listens to Father Cowley play the minuet from *Don Giovanni* on piano at the Ormond Hotel, the music lifts his spirits and reminds him of his wife’s singing. Startled by the music’s effect on his mood, he thinks, “Yes, joy it must be. Mere fact of music shows you are. Often thought she was in the dumps till she began to lilt. Then know” (*U* 11.971). The line suggests a common belief about music: that it provides direct access to a person’s deepest emotions and intentions. Molly’s lilting, for Bloom, tells a story that is inarguable because it comes to him through song: although she may seem “in the dumps,” her singing reveals her true emotions.

When Molly appears in *Ulysses*, though, music is not such a simple and direct conduit of emotion. Molly is a skillful performer, able to shape every note and gesture to produce a desired effect, and her mastery suggests that the significance of music is not to be found in an inherent revelatory capability as much as the artistry of the musician. Bloom’s observation of music as an irrefutable pathway to a truth beyond artifice falls short, and the meaning carried in Molly’s singing is what she consciously intends to convey (and is no less profound for being so). For example, the printed score to “Love’s Old Sweet Song” (1884) appears first in “Ithaca,” from Bloom’s point of view, and again in “Penelope,” from Molly’s. In “Ithaca,” the musical work is treated as a physical text
and a clear expression of the composer’s intention. Bloom notices the piano when he returns home,

…its musicrest supporting the music in the key of G natural for voice and piano of Love’s Old Sweet Song (words by G. Clifton Bingham, composed by J. L. Molloy, sung by Madam Antoinette Sterling) open at the last page with the final indications ad libitum, forte, pedal, animato, sustained pedal, ritirando, close. (U 17.1302-1310)

The directions provide relatively straightforward instructions to the singer and pianist:

*forte* means loud; *animato*, lively; *ritirando*, slow—with the exception of *ad libitum*, or “to the pleasure.” Here, the singer is encouraged to provide his or her own interpretation, either in tempo or in the melodic line. Overall, the detached and detailed description of the musical text fits with the style of the “Ithaca” chapter. Additionally, the style shows a bias towards a composer-centered view of the musical text, which assumes that a musical work is contained in the printed text and the performer’s first responsibility is a faithful rendering of text into sound. In contrast, Joyce shows us Molly’s interaction with the same musical text in “Penelope”:

…weeping tone once in the dear deead days beyoondre call close my eyes breath my lips forward kiss sad look eyes open piano ere oer the world the mists began I hate that istsbeg comes loves sweet sooooooooooong Ill let that out full when I get in front of the footlights again. (U 18.874-878)

For Bloom, the music sitting on the piano is a concrete text with seemingly clear directions. In “Penelope,” though, the printed music on the page, as the *ad libitum* instruction suggests, is only a catalyst to the performance. In this passage, Molly rehearses not only dynamics (“piano,” “Ill let that out full”), pronunciation (“deaead,” “beyondre call,” “sooooooooooong”) and delivery (“weeping tone”), but every movement she makes on the stage (“my lips forward kiss sad look eyes open”). The musical performance is centered on Molly herself, and it encompasses the sound she
produces and the visual spectacle she presents on the stage, which involves her whole body. There is no “musical work” that exists separately from Molly’s presentation of it. Further, whereas Bloom’s observation in “Sirens” suggests that music mysteriously acts upon both performer and listener, revealing hidden intentions and emotions, Molly’s conscious shaping and engineering of her performance locates the authorial agency of a musical work on the singer, rather than the composer, the listener, or the music itself.

The contrast between these two interactions with a piece of sheet music points to the question of music and subjectivity, and raises important questions inherent in the singer’s agency. Contrary to the historic valorization of the composer (a stereotypically male occupation) as a creative genius and regard of the singer as a passive vehicle of the composer’s ideas, Joyce’s text suggests that the singer’s role is that of a creative artist. In this, I argue, Joyce’s portrayal of Molly, and of Julia Morkan of “The Dead,” fits within the purview of studies of the female singer and specifically "the diva" as a marker of gender identity. Starting with an overview of feminist approaches to opera that decenter ideas of authority and artistic agency, I apply these questions to Julia’s performance in “The Dead” and Molly's career and repertoire in Ulysses. Through her rendition of “Arrayed for the Bridal” from Vincenzo Bellini’s I Puritani, which depicts a young bride’s innocence and hope for the future, Julia enacts a temporary physical transformation that removes her from her status as an “old maid” subject to the condescending attitudes of her guests. In her portrayal of Zerlina, the peasant bride of Mozart’s Don Giovanni, and in her repeated comparisons to the seducer Don Giovanni himself, Molly gains access to a degree of sexual agency that is otherwise unavailable to
Women, Opera, and Artistic Agency

Because the art of operatic singing is tightly disciplined and yet ultimately dependent on active performance, the singer’s role as an artist bears a dynamic relationship to the musical text, the conductor, and the expectations of the audience. Simultaneously seen as a vehicle for the composer's art and as the star of the show, her part contains great potential for subversive artistic acts within a patriarchal institution.

Irish writer Kate O'Brien's novel, As Music and Splendour (1958), explores the unique place of the female opera singer as an exemplar of a social ideal of femininity and the wielder of a powerful, influential voice. The novel follows two girls, Clare and Rose, from their rural Irish homes to Paris and Rome as they are trained in operatic singing and launch their careers in late nineteenth century Italy. Rose becomes known to her public as "Rosa d'Irlanda" and eventually finds success at La Scala. Figured as a prototypical prima donna in contrast to Clare, who finds a different path in her musical career, Rose is repeatedly said to have "disappeared" into her new public persona. At the launch of her career, a friend comments, "she is given to Italian opera. She will bear it, because she is it, and it is she. She flows with it, and it flows through her."¹ O’Brien emphasizes the submissive nature of Rose’s chosen role, writing that Clare "marvelled … at the ease of

¹ As Music and Splendour (Penguin Ireland, 2005), 84.
Rose within the yoke that had been laid upon her.\(^2\) The language of self-sacrifice to one’s art reappears when Rose begins her career at La Scala: "At the end of the first hard, extraordinary day, with her breast full of song, she gave herself to La Scala, bent her neck delightedly to the yoke—and entered that world of dream which was to hold her prisoner... perhaps for life."\(^3\) As she develops her singing voice, Rose also grows into the emotional maturity of the tragic heroines she depicts on stage, fusing her musical education to her development into adulthood.

In this novel as in \textit{Ulysses}, the female singer is deeply aware of her prescribed role. Within a very limited scope, because of that necessary self-awareness, she maintains control over her public persona. O'Brien subverts Rose's position as a prima donna through contrast with Clare, who embraces the flexibility of gender identity inherent in operatic "travesties" and "pants roles" (male characters, such as Orfeo in Glück’s \textit{Orfeo ed Eurydice} or Romeo in Bellini’s \textit{I Capuleti e I Montecchi}, that are traditionally portrayed by a female mezzo-soprano) in order to make possible and build a lesbian identity within a society that demands heterosexuality. Together, Clare and Rose demonstrate what Judith Butler has shown in her work: that what is called gender identity is the product of a series of performative acts.\(^4\) The culture of the operatic diva demonstrates in an especially forceful way that gender is something that one does, not something that one is.

\(^2\) Ibid., 86.
\(^3\) Ibid., 221.
I begin this chapter with O'Brien in order to foreground the subversive potential of the musical performances of women in Joyce’s work. In "The Dead," song allows Julia Morkan to relive her youth and to further invoke a past era through its music. In *Ulysses*, as Cheryl Herr and Kimberly Devlin have shown, Molly is not depicted straightforwardly to Joyce's reader as much as she is performed: like “Rosa d'Irlanda,” she is always on stage. For her, music is not a way to reanimate the past, as it is in “The Dead,” but it colors every aspect of her present. With this point in mind, I turn to the ways that women's performances have been framed within the field of feminist musicology.

“The Disappearing Self”: Feminist Musicology

The musicologist Suzanne Cusick was among the first to explore the gendered dimension of music, especially of “pure” musical forms thought to lack any specific reference to gender. Cusick introduces and outlines what she terms the "spectacle of the disappearing Self" in classical performance. Beginning with a description of the "culturally prescribed script" involved in a classical performance, Cusick interrogates assumptions about the audience, performer, and composer as gendered roles. The classical audience expects to hear the composer's “voice” coming through the body of the performer, who should "disappear into the work." Therefore, the performer's core task is to act out "the correct relationship of a subaltern to hegemonic power." The skill displayed by the performer, then, is specifically tied to his or her ability to erase him-

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6 Ibid., 92.
herself from the performance and allow the will of the composer to dominate. For this reason, as Wayne Bowman elaborates in his discussion of Cusick, "...the myth of musical autonomy cloaks stereotype and misogyny in a seductive, appealing package claiming to be something else."\(^7\)

To counteract this power dynamic in classical music, Cusick calls for a musicology that not only foregrounds the performer as an active producer of music, but approaches music as an embodied art form. She proposes a feminist musicology that "would theorize about the practices of performing bodies, the bodies most likely to enact metaphors of gender or to enact the constitution of gender itself."\(^8\) Such a model would require an approach to the musical work as something that includes, but is not defined by, the intent of the composer, since, from the performer’s perspective, the musical work is

...something you do which is, while you’re doing it, entirely coterminous with who you are... The score is not the work to a performer, nor is the score-made-sound the work: the work includes the performer’s mobilizing of previously studied skills so as to embody, to make real, to make sounding, a set of relationships that are only partly relationships among sounds.

In the next section, I will argue that Joyce’s musical interests and involvement indicate that he likewise thought of the musical work as an action rather than a text, and that his

\(^7\) “Chapter 8: Contemporary Pluralist Perspectives,” in Philosophical Perspectives on Music (New York: Oxford UP, 1998), 379. To use another example from Kate O'Brien's novel, the voice teacher Iago Duarte at one point describes the value of an operatic career to Clare: "To become a great operatic singer, to be the living instrument through which difficult music comes, to be able to produce through your small, vulnerable but perfectly constructed vocal organs the tenuous work of immortal men—to be able to make that incredibly delicate and complicated work sound almost simple, even to the dullest ears in dullest, dustiest opera houses!" (As Music and Splendour, 336.) Here, the contrast between the creative, "immortal" genius of the male composer and the physical presence of the female singer is made clear.


\(^9\) Ibid., 48.
texts emphasize music as performed experience. First, I outline the body of scholarship that deals specifically with women and opera.

Preceding Cusick’s work by more than a decade, Catherine Clément’s *Opera: The Undoing of Women* (first published in French in 1979, translated into English by Betsy Wing in 1988) takes a similar performer-centered approach to opera. While Cusick aims to expose the gendered dimensions of what is typically approached as “pure music” with no referents other than itself, Clément gives a feminist analysis of a genre that is already, and often explicitly, “about” gender.

Clément addresses the paradox that situates women at the center of an art that frequently assigns them tragic ends.10 Noting that opera is often structured around the enactment of a woman’s “undoing,” and that “the emotion is never more poignant than at the moment when the voice is lifted to die,”11 Clément’s argues that music in opera functions as a diversion, offering audiences “risk free identification” with the misogyny at the heart of its narratives. Seducing the audience into an experience of physical intimacy, music invites a close identification with the performer. Audiences may claim to be less interested in the plot than in the music, but Clément shows that the plot drives the listener’s experience in ways that may not be immediately appreciable:

> The music makes one forget the plot, but the plot sets traps for the imaginary. The plot works quietly, plainly visible to all, but outside the code of the pleasures of opera. … lines are being woven, tying up the characters and leading them to death for transgression—for transgressions of familial rules, political rules, the things at stake in sexual and authoritarian power. …What is played out for us is a killing—for our pleasure, with no risk.12

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10 *Opera*, 5.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid., 9–10.
While Clément emphasizes women’s real and fictional sublimation within operatic plots, others emphasize the very centrality of the female voice as an avenue towards resistance. Michel Poizat draws from psychoanalysis, especially feminist readings of Lacan, in order to examine how the voice in performance works in opposition to narrative structure. In his response to Clément, Poizat argues that it is not women but the unlimited pleasure that they represent which is forbidden and destroyed in the course of an opera. 

The term “jouissance,” as Poizat uses it, indicates joy in disruption or upheaval, as opposed to “pleasure” in order and stasis. In the context of opera, the aria, figured as an outburst of emotion that erupts from the narrative, aligns with this type of upheaval. Poizat isolates the aria as the locus for moments in which singing

...deliberately presents itself as singing, as pure music free of all ties to speech; singing that literally destroys speech in favor of a purely musical melody that develops little by little until it verges on the cry. In such instants, when language disappears and is gradually superseded by the cry, an emotion arises which can be expressed only by the eruption of the sob that signals absolute loss; finally a point is reached where the listener himself is stripped of all possibility of speech.

Poizat’s concept of “the cry,” the central topic of his book, marks an encounter with the Lacanian Real: it is a placeholder for an experience that resists incorporation into language. He connects the cry to a mythical pre-verbal “first cry” given by an infant, which is only given symbolic meaning when it gets a response. As that symbolic meaning is constructed, the “original purity” of the first cry becomes irretrievable and a search for that “lost phonic materiality” is set in motion—thus the contrast Poizat outlines

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13 *The Angel’s Cry*, 151.
14 Ibid., 6.
15 Ibid., 37.
16 Ibid., 78.
17 Ibid., 101.
between symbolic meaning and “the vocal object,” or the pure voice.\(^\text{18}\) For the opera audience, a performance is a reminder of that search: while attainment of the “pure voice” as object is impossible, opera allows the subject to pursue it without becoming lost in that pursuit (the opera will end, the lights will come up).\(^\text{19}\) In this way, the cry in opera becomes “singing that destroys speech,” signaling the collapse of the same narrative system that Clément criticizes because of the immediate physicality of the human voice.

The musicologist Carolyn Abbaté offers a second alternative to Clément’s argument. Following Roland Barthes’ work on the authorial voice, Abbaté brings into question the idea of authorship in opera and suggests that opera “so displaces the authorial musical voice onto female characters and female singers that it largely reverses the conventional opposition of male (speaking) subject and female (observed) object.”\(^\text{20}\) For Abbaté, the female voice’s dominance allows “a musical écriture féminine as a female authorial voice that speaks through a musical work written by a male composer.”\(^\text{21}\) Barthes’ work is especially helpful to opera studies because he approaches a text as a process of signification rather than a static object. Abbaté adds that in any performance genre, “the work does not exist except as it is given phenomenal reality—by performers. We might even say… that the performer in some sense usurps the authorial voice.”\(^\text{22}\) This usurpation echoes Cusick’s point about musical performance: the musical

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 103.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 104.  
\(^{20}\) “Opera; Or, the Envoicing of Women,” 228–229.  
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 229.  
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 234.
work is not a composition that exists before and after a performance, but “something you do which is, while you’re doing it, entirely coterminous with who you are.”

For the purposes of my study of female singers in Joyce, I emphasize Cusick’s idea of an embodied music criticism and Abbaté’s privileging of the performer, along with Clément’s outline of an overlying symbolic structure in opera that traps and “undoes” female characters and Poizat’s suggestion of “the cry” as something that escapes that structure. What emerges from all of these texts is a framework that pits the plot of an opera against the disruptive potential of the female voice. These studies of opera, I argue, encourage a reading of *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* that give disempowered characters like Julia Morkan a freedom of expression and authority that they lack otherwise, and enables Molly Bloom to “author” her own multiple personas.

The Writer as Opera Buff: Joyce’s Musical Career

For James Joyce, opera was almost as important a focus of his professional life as was writing. Although he missed several opportunities to pursue a professional career as an operatic tenor, he continuously performed in private and public arenas for most of his life and remained an active supporter and promoter of opera. As Timothy Martin and others have noted, his tastes, while diverse, tended towards the subgenre of *bel canto*, in which the singing voice is the focus of the performance. In this section, I give an overview of Joyce’s career as a singer and, in a broader context, the range of his musical

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interests. Secondly, I explore how Joyce’s musical life oriented him in terms of women’s operatic roles.

Joyce was born into a musical family. His parents met as choir members at the Church of the Three Patrons in Rathgar. His father, John Stanislaus Joyce, was an amateur tenor, and his mother, Mary Jane (“May”) Murray Joyce, had taken lessons in piano, voice, dancing, and politeness at the Misses Flynn School for girls on Ushers Island, a place Joyce would later commemorate in “The Dead.” The Joyce family often sang together at home: Richard Ellmann writes that the range of music at the household was wide, “sung indiscriminately as to quality but with surprising skill.” James Joyce joined his parents on stage as early as age six, when he participated in an amateur concert at the Bray Boat Club, singing “Houlihan’s Cake” as a solo.

Joyce’s formal music training began when John McCormack, who won the national Feis Ceoil singing competition in 1903, encouraged Joyce to set the same goal for himself the next year. He took lessons with Vincent O’Brien, the director of the Palestrina Choir at the St. Mary Pro-Cathedral, who had trained McCormack and his future wife, Lily Foley. At the competition on May 16, 1904, he won third place. One of the judges, Luigi Denza, reported that Joyce would have earned the gold medal had he not failed to complete the sight-reading requirement. According to Ellmann, “when the piece was put in front of him, he waved it aside and strode from the platform.”

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27 Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 151.
29 One of the judges, Luigi Denza, reported that Joyce would have earned the gold medal had he not failed to complete the sight-reading requirement. According to Ellmann, “when the piece was put in front of him, he waved it aside and strode from the platform.” (Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 152.) Joyce’s friend, Oliver St. John Gogarty, later wrote that the
month later, on June 15, 1904, Joyce sang for Michele Esposito, a well-known music teacher, who visited the Joyce household that evening. Esposito suggested that Joyce visit him to start voice lessons, but this visit never happened, partly because, as Ellmann notes, Joyce had his first date with Nora Barnacle the next evening, an event he later memorialized by setting *Ulysses* on the same date. Later that year, Joyce appeared with McCormack and the baritone, J. C. Doyle, in a concert at the Antient Concert Rooms. The event was well attended but poorly organized: Joyce’s accompanist, Eileen Reidy, left early, and her unprepared replacement forced Joyce to drop “The Croppy Boy” from his program and instead accompany himself on “In Her Simplicity.” His performances of “Down by the Sally Gardens,” a song based on Yeats’ poem, and “My Love was Born in the North Countree” were well received in the press. The event appears in “A Mother,” in which a young pianist leaves a mismanaged concert halfway through, and in *Ulysses*, in which Bloom boasts that Molly is to tour with “all topnobbers. J. C. Doyle and John MacCormack I hope and. The best in fact.” One of Molly’s numbers is a duet, “*Lá ci darem*” from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, sung with Doyle.

After leaving Dublin, Joyce continued to be involved in music as a singer and as a supporter and promoter of opera. After moving to Trieste in 1905, he took voice lessons with the composer Giuseppe Sinico. Sinico’s niece, Lidia Sinico-Hermet, was an accomplished soprano; Ruth Bauerle reads Lydia Douce, one of the two barmaids in

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reason for this might have been that Joyce’s sight was already in decline. More recently, Ruth Bauerle noted that Joyce’s brother, Stanislaus, remembered Joyce spending hours studying music scores and therefore must have been able to read music – but the challenge of singing expertly on first sight of the score may have been one for which Joyce was unprepared. (Bauerle, “Opera Geography,” 47.)

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31 Ibid., 168–169.
“Sirens,” as a tribute to her, as well as Emily Sinico of “A Painful Case.” After moving to Paris in 1920, Joyce had little direct involvement with musical productions, but he remained a committed supporter of opera. In 1929, he met the Irish tenor John Sullivan, who sang regularly at the Palais Garnier. Joyce attended as many of Sullivan’s performances as he could and routinely bought tickets in batches, gave them away, and asked his guests to cheer loudly for Sullivan. Joyce also put notices of Sullivan’s advancing career in the newspapers and sent the clippings to potential patrons. Ellmann posits that the motivation behind this “Sullivanizing” was that Joyce saw Sullivan as the tenor that he might have been.

Joyce’s enthusiasm for McCormack and Sullivan indicates an interest in singer-centered performances. It was specifically the performer’s art to which Joyce paid the most attention: Herbert Gorman wrote that when Sullivan sang in Meyerbeer’s *William Tell*, Joyce studied the score in order to count Sullivan’s high notes: “456 G’s, 93 A-flats, 92 A’s, 54 B-flats, 15 B’s, 19 C’s and 2 C-sharps.” Joyce’s friend Louis Gillet similarly remembered that Joyce “knew how many high-Cs there were in all the

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34 Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 621. The practice of paying audience members to cheer for a singer (and sometimes boo the singer’s rivals) was well established throughout the nineteenth century: opera singers often hired these groups or “cliques” for the service (Ruth Bauerle, “A Rich Inheritance from a Bankrupt,” in *Joyce’s Grand Operoar: Opera In Finnegans Wake*, by Matthew Hodgart and Ruth Bauerle (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997), 9. In his study of the culture of opera, Ethan Mordden shows how claquees were important to the operations of an opera house: as a primary provider of public relations, they were well-structured organizations that allowed opera stars better access to their fans. They also supported opera as an interactive performance art: nineteenth century audiences were notably more vocal than their later counterparts (Ethan Mordden, *Demented: The World of the Opera Diva* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 255–256.
scores." His taste in opera leaned towards star vehicles: the mid-nineteenth century bel canto operas of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini all feature elaborate coloratura flourishes. In his history of Dublin opera during Joyce’s lifetime, Seamus Reilly connects this concentration of attention on performance rather than text to the way Joyce approached opera in his works. Although operatic plots and themes are threaded throughout Joyce’s fiction, Reilly writes, Joyce was “more interested in the local and symbolic connections he could make with his characters in the context of their own situations.” For example, when the dinner conversation in “The Dead” turns to opera, the subject is specific singers and performances, and both Leopold and Molly Bloom reminisce about musical performances they attended.

Joyce’s enthusiasm for opera as a performance-based art, and especially for the singer-focused bel canto era in opera, places him at the theatrical end of the spectrum that music historian Herbert Lindenberger lays out in his study of opera. Lindenberger outlines a history of opera that vacillates between the poles of “operatic,” or that which resists literary narrative, and “verbal,” or art that aims for the referential and mimetic. This spectrum is especially applicable to Michel Poizat’s description of the operatic aria as something that “destroys language”: as Lindenberger illustrates in his work, the energy released in “the cry” is often the center of controversy.

What Lindenberger identifies as “the operatic” in opera—its excess and resistance to realism—is only one of its controversies. As Ruth Bauerle illustrates, during Joyce’s lifetime, opera came to fill a social role that uniquely mixed high and low culture as opera stars began to appear in music halls.⁴⁰ Ethan Mordden adds that it is the singers of the soprano leggiero voice type—those who are most well suited for the elaborate coloratura singing of bel canto operas, also called “soubrette” or “leggiero coloratura”—who most often branch out into popular song.⁴¹

In addition to its tendency to cross boundaries of class and its resistance to narrative authority, opera also might have attracted Joyce’s interest for its contingency on a number of factors that could disrupt the authority of the musical text. At the stage of composition, operas are largely collaborative efforts between composers and librettists. At the stage of production and performance, in the singer-centered bel canto era, singers enjoyed considerable authority over the end result, to the point that, as Lindenberger writes, “one can scarcely speak of a text’s integrity.”⁴² Mordden adds that from the eighteenth into the mid-nineteenth century, singers often altered their parts to suit their artistic strengths, often inserting a favorite aria into a new opera.⁴³

Because of its often uneasy combination of poetry, music, and spectacle, its frequent reliance on emotional excess, its mixture of high and low culture, and its dependence on the many individuals who contribute to its performance, opera, and especially the types of opera that Joyce preferred, is an especially good fit for Cusick’s

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⁴¹ Mordden, Demented, 32. The term “soubrette” appears in Ulysses to describe a music hall singer whose poster is passed by various characters in “Wandering Rocks,” and with whom Bloom identifies in his trans-gender fantasies in “Circe.”
⁴² Lindenberger, Opera, 249.
⁴³ Mordden, Demented, 20.
proposed “embodied musicology,” which privileges the musical performance as a physical experience. Timothy Martin argues that it is exactly these aspects of opera that Joyce admired and mirrored in his own work through his experiments with narrative, departures from realism, and use of diverse narrative voices. Further, what Martin identifies as “the operatic” in Joyce corresponds with “constructions of a ‘postmodern stylistics’ in literature: the abandonment of an ethic of seriousness for one of play, an emphasis on signification rather than on the thing signified, a condition of ontological doubt, a disruptive plurality of styles and voices.” Martin draws a connection between the hybridity of opera, which contradicts the primacy of the composer’s voice that Suzanne Cusick critiques, and a postmodern destabilizing of the author’s voice.

In the next section, I look at “The Dead” in light of this approach to opera. The story’s juxtaposition of a vibrant past against a present marked by loss is played out through two passages in which an older character relives a past glory: Aunt Julia’s performance of “Arrayed for the Bridal,” an adaptation of the aria “Son Vergin Vezzosa” from Bellini’s I Puritani, and Mr. Browne’s reminiscences about the golden age of Dublin opera (set against Freddy Malins’ admiration of a “Negro chieftain” in a minstrel show). As Margot Norris has argued, Julia’s skillful performance of this difficult piece makes the injustice of her ejection from her church choir especially significant to the story. Further, the song she sings places her within the bel canto tradition, marking her as a singer whose specific abilities in coloratura vocal acrobatics belong to a disappearing generation. Also, the song’s context within the opera connects Julia, an elderly woman, with the character Elvira, a young bride, at the moment of the song hopeful about her

future, but about to succumb to madness. As with Julia, Elvira is betrayed by the social structures that contribute to her “undoing.”

“Swift and Secure Flight”: Julia /Elvira

From the beginning of the story, the narrator of “The Dead” describes Julia Morkan patronizingly as a charming but fussy old maid. As the lead soprano in her church choir, she is an accomplished and respected singer, but as Joyce reveals through her sister’s complaint, her position in the choir is soon to come to an end. Her impending isolation from public life plays out in the story through Gabriel’s attitude towards her and Kate (“his aunts were only two ignorant old women”\(^{45}\), her sister’s condescending tone in instructing her to take care of the arriving guests (“—Julia, said Aunt Kate summarily, and here’s Mr Browne and Miss Furlong. Take them in, Julia, with Miss Daly and Miss Power”\(^{46}\)), and the narrator’s tendency to describe her as childish (she is described as “toddling” twice in the course of the story\(^{47}\)). However, Julia’s singing voice is still strong, and the quality of her performance, as opposed to the less successful efforts of Mary Jane and, later, Bartell D’Arcy, indicates that she is, in Margot Norris’s words, “the truest and greatest artist in ‘The Dead.’”\(^{48}\) Julia’s silencing and infantilization by the other characters and by the narrator is, then, a reminder of the stifling social atmosphere that pervades all the stories in *Dubliners*. Moreover, the specific type of performance

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 182.
\(^{47}\) Ibid., 177, 198.
that she gives places her in a musical tradition of a past generation, further relegating her to an irretrievable past era.

Norris argues that the narrator of “The Dead” works to limit and contain the female voice, along with any articulation or realization of any female character’s desires. Also, the musicality of Joyce’s prose serves to mask the violence that the narrative does to the female characters, especially to Julia. Joyce’s prose functions as a seductive distraction for the reader\textsuperscript{49}, “an exquisite form with a hypocritical soul.”\textsuperscript{50} Citing Adorno, Norris argues for a reading that seeks out the repressed reality beneath Joyce’s language. If, as Adorno writes, beauty depends on the repression of ugliness, and “the ugly is more precisely conceptualized as the particular, the material, the social real,”\textsuperscript{51} then “The Dead” is the story of the sacrifice of Julia’s narrative as an undervalued artist in the service of Gabriel’s narrative of transcendence. Because Gabriel is unable to reconcile Julia’s appearance with her singing voice, he refuses to accept her as an artist and narcissistically incorporates her harsh reality into a poignant and aesthetic reminder of his own interconnections. In her criticism of Joyce’s prose for masking the oppression of its female characters, Norris’s argument bears a striking similarity to Clément’s approach to the music of opera as something that offers the listener “risk-free identification” with the social forces that suppress and often murder the operatic heroine.

Julia’s performance begins not with her singing, but with her entrance. Gabriel observes:

\begin{quote}
Mr Browne was advancing from the door, gallantly escorting Aunt Julia, who leaned upon his arm, smiling and hanging her head. An irregular musketry of
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[49] Ibid., 481.
\item[50] Ibid., 485.
\item[51] Ibid., 491.
\end{footnotes}
applause escorted her also as far as the piano and then, as Mary Jane seated herself on the stool, and Aunt Julia, no longer smiling, half turned so as to pitch her voice fairly into the room, gradually ceased. 52

Here, the singer’s arrival to the stage is framed as the opening of a ritual. This “gallantry” has as much to do with Browne’s posturing as her audience’s expectations, but Joyce’s description puts Julia at the center of attention and prepares the reader for the (shockingly, to Gabriel) virtuoso rendition of the aria. Julia’s singing, likewise, is treated as that of a singer at the top of her ability, not a frail old woman:

Her voice, strong and clear in tone, attacked with great spirit the runs which embellish the air and though she sang very rapidly she did not miss even the smallest of the grace notes. To follow the voice, without looking at the singer’s face, was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight. 53

Joyce’s language—“strong and clear in tone,” “great spirit,” “swift and secure flight”—suggests a physical transformation in Julia. Usually “toddling,” failing, and insecure, she is now confident and controls the attention of the room. In his study of “The Dead,” Alan Hepburn suggests that the act of singing allows Julia to return to her youth physically: it “returns her, by bodily memory, to a younger version of herself that defies death.” 54 Hepburn attributes Julia’s transformation to an ability of the singing voice to communicate the body’s desires in a way that speech cannot. 55

Being a mode of expression that operates outside or beyond language, music is most usefully approached, for Hepburn as well as Cusick, as aligned with the body. 56

Hepburn bases his characterization of music as that which expresses the desires of the

52 Joyce, “The Dead,” 193.
53 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 189.
56 Ibid., 206.
body, outside of what is expressed in language, on reading Julia’s performance as expressing her desire to be, like Elvira, a young woman. By singing Elvira’s song, Julia can “adopt a role that she otherwise can never execute” and for the duration of her performance become that young woman. However, the broader context of “Arrayed for the Bridal” within I Puritani complicates Hepburn’s reading of it as Julia’s suppressed desire for her youth and allows for a relationship between Julia and Elvira that is based on commonalities as well as contradictions.

I Puritani is set in England during the Interregnum, and Elvira’s Puritan family is opposed to her engagement to Arturo, a Cavalier who is determined to smuggle the deposed Queen Henrietta to safety. After her father relents, she sings “Son vergin vezzosa.” Thinking the queen to be a servant, Elvira playfully dresses her in the veil, and after she leaves, Arturo escorts the veiled queen out of the city. Believing he has left her for another woman, Elvira loses her sanity. Norris notes Elvira’s madness and draws a direct parallel to Joyce’s narrative, writing that both Elvira and Julia have been betrayed by the patriarchal institutions to which they have dedicated their lives (church, state, and/or family), and both, at the moment of singing “Son Vergin Vezzosa” or “Arrayed for the Bridal,” enjoy a last moment of happiness before an inevitable decline.

Catherine Clément privileges the madwomen of bel canto opera such as Elvira in their most hysteric moments. Reading against the plot that aims to contain them,

\[^{57}\] Ibid., 208.
Clément sees them as most free to express their desires when they are unmoored from reality:

Will they remember all this later? Will they remember those gratuitous moments when, more than any other time, they were beyond constraints, outside of the system, dreaming their mystical marriage at the top of their sweet voices? … Time no longer exists, the time of plots. This is the endless duration of the unconscious drive—the body that does not tremble, the sure footsteps on decaying boards, voices confidently fixed on scales of inhuman scale. They will win. Risking all for all this way, when they awake they will find an emotional audience of the men who had abandoned them.60

Speaking specifically of I Puritani, Clément reads Elvira’s madness as ecstasy:

Bellini’s music “breaks the slow pace of delirium to launch the woman into the outrageous joy of wild, uncalled for, vertiginous notes. […] Elvira […] passes rashly into the magical order of her desires.”61 Taking her point further, Clément proposes a resistance to the plot machinations that work to contain and suppress these heroines by identifying with them at these hysterical moments, just before their “undoing”: “I prefer to get lost in this beneficial going to pieces where my body is no longer mine but is inhabited; as for myself, I choose hysteria, the blessed quality of being other.”62

Clément’s strategy, pinpointing the moment of hysteria as empowering to opera heroines who otherwise have no agency, risks collusion with a plot that advances the woman’s abandonment within a patriarchal system in that it values her specifically for “dropping out” of her social narrative. In “The Dead,” Joyce brings Julia not to the point in I Puritani at which Elvira, in her desperation, imagines she is with her lover even though he is a condemned political fugitive, but to the last possible moment of hope and optimism. Like Clément, Julia is able to insert herself into a specific point in the opera

60 Clément, Opera, 92.
61 Ibid., 91.
62 Ibid., 176.
before Elvira’s undoing, but unlike Clément, Julia avoids having to confront Elvira’s madness, and thus she can postpone her own decline.

After Julia’s performance, Joyce moves on to a dinner conversation on the history of opera in Dublin. Mr. Browne, who speaks knowledgeably and nostalgically about a past generation of opera singers, dominates the discussion. His reminiscences are connected to Julia’s performance not only in their common preference for bel canto singing, but in his ability to select an historical point of ideal artistic expression with which to identify himself. The singers he mentions were internationally known celebrities who routinely performed in Dublin, and the operas he mentions follow the tradition of I Puritani: they are singer-centered rather than reliant on plot or spectacle and they feature heroines who go mad from unrequited or lost love. His anecdotes of the

63 “Mr Browne could go back farther still, to the old Italian companies that used to come to Dublin – Tietjens, Ilma de Murzka, Campanini, the great Trebelli, Giuglini, Ravelli, Aramburo. Those were the days, he said, when there was something like singing to be heard in Dublin” (Joyce, “The Dead,” 199–200.). Therese Tietjens (1831-1877) was a highly renowned German dramatic soprano who was based in London and toured the British Isles (Don Gifford, Joyce Annotated: Notes for Dubliners and A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 120.). Joyce’s friend, C. P. Curran, noted that Tietjens enjoyed a special popularity among Dublin audiences that “lasted fifteen years and more” (qtd. in Bauerle, “Opera Geography,” 26.). Ilma de Murska (born Ema Puksec, 1834-1889), known in Vienna as “the Croatian Nightingale,” was a coloratura soprano – the same voice type as Julia (Nada Bezić, “Murska, Ilma de,” Grove Music Online, n.d., accessed May 10, 2011.). Italo Campanini (1845-1896), an Italian tenor, was from Parma but built his career in London and New York. He performed in Dublin at least twice: in Les Huguenots in 1872 and in Norma in 1874 (Jim McPherson, “Italo Campanini: One of a Kind,” The Opera Quarterly 19, no. 2 (2003): 251–71.) Zelia Trebelli (1838-1892), a French mezzo-soprano, was especially popular in London (Gifford, Joyce Annotated, 120.). Antonio Giuglini (1827-1865), an Italian tenor, was based in London after 1857 (Ibid.). Luigi Ravelli, Italian tenor, was at the height of his career in the 1880s (Ibid.). Antonio Aramburo, a Spanish tenor, made his debut in 1871 (Ibid.).

64 “Why did they never play the grand old operas now, he asked, Dinorah, Lucrezia Borgia? Because they could not get the voices to sing them: that was why” (Joyce, “The Dead,” 200.). Dinorah, a comic opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer, debuted in Paris in 1859.
“gallery boys” who “would sometimes in their enthusiasm unyoke the horses from the carriage of some great prima donna and pull her themselves through the streets to her hotel,” and the tenor who sang five encores, hitting a high C every time, highlight the ubiquity of opera singers to Dublin social life. Finally, his reference to the “Old Theatre Royal” brings an air of finality to his reminiscences: the only dedicated opera house in Dublin’s history, it burned down in 1880 (the rebuilt theatre hosted a wider variety of performances). The older Theatre Royal, according to Ruth Bauerle, was notable for the diversity of its audience along class lines—a feature Browne suggests in his mention of the “gallery boys,” who would have occupied the cheapest seats. As Bauerle notes, the Theatre Royal attracted an audience that was “informed and critical, although not rich.”

By the time of the party, the category of singer that Browne remembers (and that Julia evokes through her singing) was largely made redundant, as singers in 1904 were required to adapt to changing musical tastes. Following Wagner, singers’ individual performances became secondary to the demands of the libretto and score, and the days of multiple encores were ending. As Lindenberger observes, the major operas of the turn of the century, such as Verdi’s and Wagner’s later works and the verismo operas of Puccini

Like I Puritani, Dinorah’s plot revolves around a heroine who goes mad after the loss of her lover (Steven Huebner, “Dinorah,” Grove Music Online, n.d., accessed May 11, 2011.). Lucrezia Borgia, a melodrama by Gaetano Donizetti, premiered in Milan in 1833. The title character is one of the great female villains in opera: driven by vengeance, she poisons five men (including, unbeknownst to her, her son) and the climax of the opera occurs when she appears after her victims drink the poison, bringing with her their prepared coffins (William Ashbrook, “Lucrezia Borgia,” Grove Music Online, n.d., accessed May 11, 2011.). Both operas are showcases for skilled coloratura sopranos.

and others did not require the ornamental styles of Browne’s favorite singers, or of Julia herself.\(^{67}\) At the other end of the cultural spectrum, as Freddy Malins’ praise of “the negro chieftain singing in the second part of the Gaiety pantomime”\(^{68}\) makes clear, opera was more often mixed with forms of entertainment such as pantomimes, music hall numbers, and minstrel shows, and singers needed to adapt to more diverse, and likely less knowledgeable, audiences.

After the dinner conversation, Joyce consolidates the memories summoned by Julia and then Browne through Gabriel’s speech. In his study of \textit{Dubliners}, Alan Warren Friedman reads Gabriel’s speech as “a metaphoric musical occasion,”\(^{69}\) which is

\(^{67}\) Lindenberger, \textit{Opera}, 254.

\(^{68}\) Joyce, “The Dead,” 199. In 1973, John Scarry identified this singer as G. H. Elliott, a featured performer in the 1903 Gaiety pantomime, \textit{Babes in the Wood}. The \textit{Freeman’s Journal} mentioned him as “Mr. G.H. Elliott, the popular ‘Chocolate Coloured Coon’” and noted that the second part of the pantomime was “built on the lines of grand opera” (qtd. in John Scarry, “The ‘Negro Chieftain’ and Disharmony in Joyce’s The Dead,” \textit{Revue Des Langues Vivantes} 39, no. 2 (1973): 182–183.). Norris adds that a later review in the \textit{Irish Times} noted that Elliott was a well-known (white) blackface performer from Rochdale, Lancashire, in northern England, but he was a baritone, not a tenor. She suggests two other possibilities: Billy Farrell, another blackface singer, performed at the Empire Palace Theatre around the time of “The Dead,” and Jim Hegarty performed at the Tivoli Theatre with a group called “The Black Troubadours” (Norris, “Stifled Back Answers,” 501.). In his annotations to \textit{Dubliners}, Don Gifford suggests “the American Negro impersonator, Eugene Stratton,” who gave a song and dance recital as the second part of a comedy show at the Theatre Royal in June, 1904 (Gifford, \textit{Joyce Annotated}, 119.). Norris concludes that Joyce may not have had a specific singer in mind, but generally meant to support Freddy’s point about racism and musical taste. As the person least invested in an elite opera culture, Freddy is possibly the most capable of judging the voice quality of either “the Negro chieftain” or Julia. Freddy’s anxious question of whether the singer’s lack of recognition is “because he’s only a black” is ignored as Mary Jane “led the table back to the legitimate opera” (Joyce, “The Dead,” 199.). The tension on this question points to a broader apprehension regarding opera’s straddling of high and low culture – the dinner guests may have been as uncomfortable with the idea of a quality singer in the pantomime as they were with the question of race.

introduced and described in the same language of ritual as Julia’s performance. Gabriel criticizes the younger generation for lacking “those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day.” The younger generation, to Gabriel, is “serious and enthusiastic” but “hypereducated” and too often negligent of the social rituals of the past generation. Friedman reads Gabriel’s criticism of the younger generation as having “elevated antisocial rudeness to a virtue in the dubious cause of nationalism.” Most pertinent to my study, Gabriel’s description of his aunts’ generation could also apply to the changes in opera: the humor and humanity of the popular bel canto era has given way to the seriousness and heavy symbolism of modernism. Julia’s song, then gains in respect and status within the story because it acts as shorthand for the cultural values of that older generation.

Based on Julia’s performance and Mr. Brown’s recollections of opera in Dublin, then, I read “The Dead” as a complex obituary for a time when gender roles in opera were well established. As such, it speaks to Clément’s argument: Julia’s association with Elvira highlights not only her present triumph in performance but her imminent decline (compared to Elvira’s madness), and her entrapment within a hostile narrative (as Elvira’s suffering is masked by Bellini’s romantic and elaborate score). However, as Julia identifies with Elvira at her best moment, we, as Joyce’s audience, can identify with Julia at her performance and strategically resist her “undoing.” This resistant reading is possible in part because Joyce places her within the bel canto tradition, in which the dominance of the female voice counters the female character’s misfortunes.

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70 Joyce, “The Dead,” 204.
In contrast, *Ulysses* contains numerous allusions to Mozart’s 1787 opera *Don Giovanni*, in which gender roles do not adhere so readily to the pattern that Clément lays out. In it, the title hero is feminized and one heroine, Zerlina, takes on a masculine role in her relationships. Because of the increased variability in terms of sexual roles, the characters in *Ulysses* adopt and reject identification with the operatic characters in order to make sense of their personal situations. Therefore, whereas opera in “The Dead” serves Julia and Browne as a way to summon the past, in *Ulysses* it is more present and real in characters’ day-to-day interactions.

The Diva Role in *Ulysses*

Julia Morkan’s performance suggests resistance to her socio-cultural context because she portrays an operatic character that is radically different from Julia herself, and because she identifies with that character at a willfully optimistic point in the narrative. Whereas Julia provides an interpretation of *I Puritani* that goes against the grain in suggesting that the role of Elvira is accessible to her, Molly, the romantic heroine of *Ulysses*, seems a better candidate for a coloratura role such as Elvira. However, none of the pieces in Molly’s repertoire come from the *bel canto* heroines that one would expect her to portray. Instead, she sings “Love’s Old Sweet Song,” a sentimental favorite, and, in a duet with the baritone J. C. Doyle, “Lá ci darem la mano” from *Don Giovanni*. 
As has been documented by Vernon Hall, Jr., Roy D. Carlson, and Mohit K. Ray, Mozart’s opera is referenced throughout *Ulysses*, especially by Leopold Bloom as he emotionally processes Molly’s infidelity through the opera’s narrative of sexual betrayal and forgiveness. Bloom and Molly identify with the peasant bride Zerlina and her husband, Masetto, but they also freely associate themselves with other characters in the opera as their own self-perceptions and presentations evolve. *Don Giovanni* is an especially appropriate opera for Joyce to include in *Ulysses* because it chronicles a limited period of time during which identities are in flux. In the opera as well as the novel, the aim of such assumed identities is to reveal the artificial aspect of any identity. As in *Ulysses*, the characters of *Don Giovanni* inhabit roles that are fluid in terms of gender and sexuality. Likewise, as I will show, critics of *Ulysses*, and Molly’s place in it in particular, emphasize gender and sexuality as an issue of performance.

Opera is an ideal arena for issues of performance and identity because the potential for gender play is always present. Like Kate O’Brien’s Clare Halvey, who specializes in “pants roles,” many opera singers have made careers out of gender-bending performances, and gender play is one major element that crossed over between opera and the music hall quite frequently. Joyce would most likely have been aware of the

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72 Vernon Hall Jr., “Joyce’s Use of Da Ponte and Mozart’s Don Giovanni,” *PMLA* 66, no. 2 (March 1, 1951): 78–84.
75 More recently, Joyce DiDonato has released a compilation of performances in well-known mezzo-soprano parts, including both male and female characters (Joyce DiDonato, *Diva, Divo* (Virgin Classics, 2011).)
music hall shows that presented playful “sequels” to *Don Giovanni*—Carlson notes that “the first two decades of the twentieth century saw at least sixty-six new versions of the Don Juan story.”76 One earlier example, *Giovanni in London* (written by William Thomas Moncrieff, premiered in 1817 at the Olympic Theatre in London) launched the career of the music hall actress Lucy Vestris in the title role at Drury Lane in 1820.77 The popularity of the Don Giovanni story and its many variations makes the characters especially available to Joyce for incorporation into his work. As Reed Way Dasenbrook writes, Mozart’s opera provides a narrative parallel to *Ulysses* in much the same way as *The Odyssey* or *Hamlet*, with the important distinction that “Hamlet is a play about someone who does not know what role to take on; Don Giovanni is an opera about someone who can take on any role the occasion demands… The world of Don Giovanni is a mask the world of Ulysses can take on when it is convenient; it is not a system of ideological identifications that rigorously controls action in the present.”78 As the characters of Don Giovanni use masks and disguises as the situation suits them, so can the characters of *Ulysses* consciously take on the personas of Don Giovanni characters: Bloom alternately identifies with Masetto, the murdered and vengeful ghost of Donna

Anna’s father, Don Giovanni himself, and occasionally Zerlina. Molly, likewise, identifies most readily with Zerlina but also with the seducer Don Giovanni, in her mind and in Bloom’s.

My discussion of Molly’s relationship to Don Giovanni takes two parts. First, I show how her association with Zerlina allows her some agency in her associations with men and an ability to manipulate Bloom and Blazes Boylan in the interest of her own sexual desires. Secondly, I look at the role of the Don Giovanni character in the lives of both Molly and Bloom.

Recent studies on Molly Bloom have focused on her relationship to performance on and off the stage. As Cheryl Herr notes, Joyce characterized “Penelope” as the “clou of the book,” a term normally used in a theatrical sense as “star turn’ or topper on a music hall bill.” Molly’s function, then, is that of “a singer doing her most famous aria.” In this reading, she has no presence in the narrative other than as “an actor reading a script, a star singing in an aria.” Kimberly J. Devlin adds that “Penelope” encompasses not one but several roles, “an elaborate series of ‘star turns’ that undermines the notion of womanliness as it displays it.” In much the same way that Kate O’Brien’s juxtaposition of Clare and Rose and their different approaches to the stage and, by extension, womanhood, exposes the theatricality of identity, the diversity of Molly’s staged identities highlights the performed aspect of them all. Noting Molly’s ability to embody different and often contradictory versions of femininity, Devlin concludes that

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80 Herr, “‘Penelope’ as Period Piece,” 64.
81 Ibid., 65.
82 Ibid., 69.
83 Devlin, “Pretending in ‘Penelope’: Masquerade, Mimicry, and Molly Bloom,” 82.
Molly is a “female female impersonator” who skillfully mimics femininity, and that performance is “a critical act.”

Because she is before all else a performer, then, Molly’s stage persona takes on added importance.

The structure of Don Giovanni, and the emphasis within the opera itself on the fluidity of identity, supports the idea of the individual as a collection of multiple possible “roles.” The opera features three female leads, each with an individual approach to the “prima donna” role. Molly’s character, Zerlina, is a descendant of earlier opera buffa comic characters and as such has more freedom to express sexual desire, manipulate the men in her life, and showcase a bawdy sense of humor that would be too unfeminine for Donna Anna, a noblewoman whose honor is lost to Don Giovanni, or the revenge-seeking Donna Elvira. The three types of heroines highlight the prescriptive nature of stock operatic characters, and by extension expose the artifice of the drama unfolding on stage.

Herr’s and Devlin’s work supports a characterization of Molly as a “diva” on and off the stage in very specific and significant ways. For example, Molly’s childhood in Gibraltar, and Bloom’s attraction to her because of her Spanish background, aligns with an Orientalist aspect to the diva personality. Clément comments on the tendency of famous operatic sopranos to be, paradoxically, outsiders in the operatic world.

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84 Ibid., 96.
85 Bloom boasts to Stephen of her Spanish heritage: “My wife is, so to speak, Spanish, half that is…. She has the Spanish type. Quite dark, regular brunette, black. I for one certainly believe climate accounts for character” (U 16.876-877, 889-890), and Molly guesses that Bloom’s initial attraction to her was “on account of [her] being jewess looking after [her] mother” (U 18.1184-1185).
86 Clément, Opera, 30. Clément elaborates: “The prima donna comes from somewhere else, as if exile were necessary for her to become famous… The Spanish Malibran, Austrian Sontag, Greek Callas, left their roots, finding in displacement and the loss of a
importance of the diva’s exoticness, for her, has to do with the necessity of her re-inventing herself in the image of what the public desires: the audience becomes the diva’s new family, replacing the one she left behind.

However, in Clément’s study, the exoticness of many popular operatic roles carries the most importance. Here, foreignness relies on stereotype and is not meant to be realistic. Clément writes: “Carmen is no more a Gypsy than Butterfly is a Japanese woman. All we have are images comparable to those tourist dolls we bring back from our trips, limited stereotypes of women whom we have not met although we searched in vain in the places where our cultivated hearts dreamed they would be: in the alleys, in the temples, in the palaces, on the garden steps.”

Considering Cheryl Herr’s point that “Molly's life is recalled on what appear to be stage sets—Molly by the Moorish wall, Molly on promenade with an officer in Gibraltar, Molly on Howth,” it would be appropriate to view Molly’s Spanish girlhood as an ideal story for a singer to tell of her origins. As Herr and Devlin show, Molly is very much a “diva role” enacted through the novel and featured in “Penelope.” As Zerlina, she is savvy to the part she needs to play in order to navigate the sexual politics of her situation, take some enjoyment from the process, and protect her reputation.

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birthplace the source of their mythic power. The successors to the parents terribles are the adoptive country and the vague paternity of a dangerous and adulating public—a symbolic and demanding father for whom they will go so far as to die of their singing.”

87 Ibid., 49.

88 Herr, “‘Penelope’ as Period Piece,” 69. Also see James Van Dyck Card’s argument that “there is no mention anywhere in the novel of Molly’s musical training… Molly seems to have sprung full grown from Gibraltar to the Dublin concert stage like Minerva from the head of Zeus.” (James Van Dyck Card, “Molly Bloom, Soprano,” James Joyce Quarterly 27, no. 3 (Spring 1990): 596.)
Of the three lead female roles in *Don Giovanni*, Zerlina, being of a lower social class, enjoys the highest degree of ability to enjoy Giovanni’s charms outwardly, and “La c’è darem” marks the point in the opera at which Zerlina most clearly encourages his attention. The scene is framed as Giovanni’s seduction: Zerlina doubts his sincerity, singing “Vorrei, e non vorrei…/ Mi trema un poco il cor…/ Felice, é ver, sarei:/ ma puó burlarmi ancor” (“I would like to, and not like to…/ My heart trembles a little…/ I would be happy, it’s true:/ but he could still make light of me”). With more urging, Zerlina worries about her new husband: “Ma fa pietá Masetto” (“I feel sorry for Masetto,”) but soon admits “Presto non son piú forte” (Suddenly I am no longer strong). Zerlina is stopped from leaving with Giovanni only by Elvira, who arrives to warn her of Giovanni’s reputation.

Zerlina plays the role of the coquette knowingly and cleverly: she hedges her initial resistance in her knowledge of Giovanni’s type: “Io so che raro colle donne voi altri cavalieri siete onesti e sinceri” (“I know how rarely you cavaliers are honest and sincere with women”). This awareness of character type colors her later actions, especially in her reconciliation with Masetto. There, Zerlia encourages Masetto to beat her as punishment:

Batti, batti, o bel Masetto,  
la tua povera Zerlina:  
staró qui come agnellina  
le tue botte ad aspettar.  
Lasceró straziarmi il crine,  
lascéró cavarmi gli occhi;  
e le care tue manine  

Beat, beat your poor Zerlina,  
oh handsome Masetto;  
I shall stand here like a little lamb  
waiting for your blows.  
I shall let you pull out my hair,  
I shall let you tear out my eyes;  
and then, happy, I shall be able

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90 Ibid.
lieta poi saprò baciare.
Ah! Io vedo, non hai core:
pace, pace, o vita mia!
In contenti ed allegria
notte e dì vogliam passar.
to kiss your dear little hands.
Ah! I see it, you have no heart for it:
peace, peace, oh my life!
In delights and gladness
let us pass the night and day.  

On the page, Zerlina’s “Batti, batti” is alternately repentant and subservient, or bitter and mocking. The gentle and intimate music, however, betrays a tacit understanding between the two that the violent lyrics of the song are only meant in jest. Zerlina’s ironic tone complicates the element of, in Mary Hunter’s words, the “erotics of chattelhood” that this scene portrays. As Wye Jamison Allanbrook argues, Zerlina gains a degree of power over her situation through “articulate wit and irony of text and gesture.”

The juxtaposition of Zerlina’s scene with Giovanni and her reunion with Masetto colors Molly’s thoughts as she plans to bring Bloom his breakfast in the morning. With aggressive and sexually explicit language, Molly plans to use the lyrics of “Lá ci darem” to confirm Bloom’s suspicions of her betrayal:

I know what I’ll do I’ll go about rather gay not too much singing a bit now and then mi fa pieta Masetto then I’ll start dressing myself to go out presto non son piu forte Ill put on my best shift and drawers let him have a good eyeful out of that to make his micky stand for him Ill let him know if thats what he wanted that his wife is fucked …serve him right its all his own fault if I am an adulteress (U 18.1506-1516)

Zack Bowen reads this passage as indicative of malice: “…for her Bloom is no Don Giovanni but only a cuckolded Masetto and she will let him know it in no uncertain terms.”

Put in the context of Zerlina’s role in the opera and of Molly’s role as

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91 Ibid., 328.
93 Ibid., 65.
94 Bowen, Musical Allusions in the Works of James Joyce, 345–346.
performer, though, this isn’t necessarily the case. As Christine Froula has shown, Molly’s play-acting is almost always for the pleasure of her husband and done with the knowledge of what he wants to see or hear. As Zerlina provides Giovanni with a tantalizing challenge when she sings “Ma fa pietá Masetto” and assuages Masetto’s hurt pride when she sings “Batti, batti,” so does Molly appeal to Bloom’s desire to be betrayed, and her use of sexually explicit language confirms that her purpose here is to seduce Bloom, not to punish him in any real and lasting way. Considering her mental rehearsal of “Love’s Old Sweet Song” quoted at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that Molly thinks of this “performance” for Bloom in much the same way as any other. Further, it echoes her sexual fantasies involving encounters with strange men in that it is enacted mainly for Bloom’s voyeuristic enjoyment.95

In its staged aspect and in its aggressive and explicit depiction, Molly’s breakfast scenario, together with her sexual fantasies and her experience as a performer, shows that her desire does not lie in betraying Bloom but in impressing herself with her own command of a stage. Froula shows that Molly’s fantasies of other men are all, at heart, variations on her effort to rekindle her relationship with Bloom, and I add that Molly does elicit a great deal of pleasure from the idea of her own skillful performance. In his study

95 Christine Froula, *Modernism’s Body: Sex, Culture, and Joyce* (Columbia University Press, 1996), 176. Froula elaborates on Molly’s fantasy of seducing a sailor, writing that she “…only appears to be the "top"; in fact she submits her desire entirely to Bloom's. Her elaborate fantasy bespeaks her long familiarity with her husband's perversity …even as it shows her willingly taking on the role of the perfect whore/wife in which he casts her in hope of making him want her. If "Penelope" is Ulysses' clou, this fantasy is Molly's: her Stanislavskian star turn for an audience of one, the husband whose eccentric passion she undertakes to arouse and satisfy in this manner not because her desire runs this way but in hope of securing his love.”
of “Penelope,” for example, Garry Leonard looks at Molly’s proud recollection of her “performance” with Boylan and her dissatisfaction with him as an unworthy audience.96

Molly’s excitement by her own “star turn” is, in the end, the single source of independent pleasure and agency that she can turn to. As Wayne Koestenbaum writes in his study of “diva” culture, “The diva exposes her capacity for independent pleasure: her joy comes from the body… She presents the uncomfortable and antipatriarchal spectacle of a woman taking her body seriously—channeling, enjoying, and nourishing it.”97

Molly’s connection to Zerlina further highlights her ability to control her situation through performance: both characters use irony and wit to manipulate “the erotics of chattelhood” in order to gain a degree of agency in their relationships with men, and both, as is especially clear in Molly’s case, show pride in their performance.

Molly’s association with Zerlina is a productive way to approach gender identity in Ulysses, but her relationship with Don Giovanni extends further. At various points in Ulysses, Molly is also aligned with Giovanni himself. In “Circe,” when Molly appears in Bloom’s hallucination under her stage name, Mrs. Marion Bloom, she sings one of her lines from “Lá Ci Darem” with one notable change: Instead of “Mi trema un poco il cor” (“My heart trembles a little”), she sings “Ti trema un poco il cuore?” (“Does your heart tremble a little?”) (U 15.351). This change puts Bloom in the place of the object of

96 Garry Leonard, “Molly Bloom’s ‘Lifestyle’: The Performative as Normative,” in Molly Blooms: A Polylogue on “Penelope” and Cultural Studies, ed. Richard Pearce (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 213. Leonard writes that “Molly wishes… to display herself in such a way that she can see from her lover’s expression that her performance has that necessary erotic component of genuine fraudulence.” When Molly calls Boylan a “savage brute,” it is “not so much what Boylan is; it is the role she has assigned him as her ‘leading man’ to facilitate his acting as a foil to heighten the brilliance of her own performance.

desire, with the more confident Molly as the suitor. After delivering her line, “Marion” “saunters away, plump as a pampered pouter pigeon, humming the duet from Don Giovanni” (*U* 15.352-353), with the self-satisfaction of Giovanni, not the coyness of Zerlina.

Later, in “Ithaca,” when Bloom returns home and sees “the imprint of a human form, male, not his” in his and Molly’s bed, he smiles as he reflects that

...each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity (*U* 17.2127-2131).

Bloom’s thoughts closely follow the language that Leporello, Giovanni’s servant, uses to discourage the spurned Donna Elvira from regaining Giovanni’s attention: "Eh! consolotevi; non siete voi, non foste, e non sarete né la prima, né l'ultima ("Eh! console yourself; you are not, were not and will not be either the first or the last)." 98 Again, Bloom experiences a type of awe in what he perceives as Molly’s sexual conquest.

Finally, although Molly does not align herself explicitly with Don Giovanni, she does entertain the thought of taking on a masculine identity. Admiring herself through Boylan’s eyes, she thinks, “I bet he never saw a better pair of thighs than that look how white they are the smoothest place is right there between this bit here how soft like a peach easy God I wouldnt mind being a man and get up on a lovely woman” (*U* 18.1145-1147). She repeats her wish soon after: “its well for men all the amount of pleasure they

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get off a woman’s body were so round and white for them always I wished I was one myself for a change just to try with that thing they have” (U 18.1379-1382). Joseph A. Boone argues that Molly’s transsexual fantasies are the consequence of her lack of available language to admire her own body in any way other than through the objectifying male gaze. However, it also seems likely that Molly is not only impressed by her own appearance, but by the idea of playing the seducer. Later, she muses enviously on men’s greater mobility and thus greater opportunity for sexual misconduct: “they can pick and choose what they please a married woman or a fast widow or a girl for their different tastes like those houses round behind Irish street no but were to be always chained up they’re not going to be chaining me up” (U 18.1388-1391). As in all of Molly’s fantasies, the pleasure is in the performance.

Likewise, critics of Don Giovanni have productively approached the title character himself, as Herr argues of Molly, not as a “real” character but as a role or a costume. Clément writes that Don Giovanni is, in fact, the “perfect prima donna.” Pointing out that Giovanni does not actually find success in any of his pursuits during the opera’s course of action, Clément suggests that his ineffectiveness is the truth that he obscures through his use of disguise and deception. In the second act, he trades identities with Leporello in order to avoid Elvira and pursue another woman. Leporello’s success in convincing Elvira that he is Giovanni, to Clément, reveals the truth of Giovanni’s identity: that he is, in essence, a costume. To Clément, it is this emptiness that most aligns him with the prima donna role:


100 Clément, Opera, 34.
...Don Giovanni’s hysteria is the emptiness of soul behind the cape and cloak… A phantom of a man, a masquerade as perfect as that of the prima donna; and, like the prima donna, Don Giovanni escapes from his original sex to place all the ancient fantasies firmly within himself. The prima donna, costumed as a woman, is not a woman; Don Giovanni, decked out in masculine effects, is not a man.\footnote{Ibid., 36.}

Clément’s comment on costume is echoed in Koestenbaum’s comment on the diva’s clothing: “A woman is a woman and a man is a man but not entirely so; clothes give gender its social meanings.”\footnote{Koestenbaum, \textit{The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire}, 120.} Like Don Giovanni, Molly often relies on costume to enhance her performance: While silently rehearsing “Love’s Old Sweet Song,” she interrupts the song to remind herself, “I’ll change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs and I’ll yes by God I’ll get that big fan mended make them burst with envy” \textit{(U 18.900-902)}. For the same reason, she wants to buy new clothes to impress Boylan: “if it’s going to go on I want at least two other good chemises” \textit{(U 18.438)}. Because she is a “prima donna” in the same way that Clément describes Don Giovanni, Molly’s costume is integral to her self-presentation.

The disposability of clothing makes identity a matter of play. Don Giovanni’s presence in \textit{Ulysses} introduces an element of flexibility to identity and sexuality, and most importantly, of disruption to the social order that depends on a strict gender hierarchy. In this, his narrative arc parallels what Jules Law identifies as the purpose of music in \textit{Ulysses} and especially “Sirens”: Law cites Adorno’s identification of the Homeric sirens with “undomesticated female sexuality,” which itself represents an all-encompassing knowledge of human life, specifically not “the seductions of art or sexuality abstracted from knowledge or labor.” The risk inherent in the Sirens’ song is
that the individual, upon hearing it, will be tempted to deny the separation of work and pleasure that patriarchal capitalism demands.\textsuperscript{103} Because he demonstrates the masquerade at the heart of gender performance, Don Giovanni has a similar effect on his audience and likewise challenges a patriarchal social order. Both Molly’s and Bloom’s associations with him introduce an element of instability to their respective self-images.

Molly’s connection to Giovanni, then, is not only in her fascination with the role of the seducer and in Bloom’s fondness for thinking of her as such, but in her willingness to adopt and perform various gender identities, and the potential for that performance to disrupt social narratives about gender. The concept of gender as costume is reinforced in “Circe,” when Bloom appears as a “charming soubrette with dauby cheeks” (\textit{U} 15.2985). This assumed identity is taken from a music hall promotional poster of “Marie Kendall, charming soubrette… Mustard hair and dauby cheeks,” (\textit{U} 10.380-383) which appears repeatedly in “Wandering Rocks” (\textit{U} 10.380-383, 10.495-496, 10.1141-1144, and 10.1220-1223). By taking on the identity of the singer in the poster, Bloom adopts a well-known performed version of femininity—specifically the voice type shared by his wife as Zerlina and Julia as Elvira. “Soubrette,” as used in “Circe,” denotes not only voice type but character as well: soubrette roles are light, lyrical, and flirtatious, and as Marie Kendall demonstrates and as discussed above, often cross over into popular song.\textsuperscript{104} As Cheryl Herr has noted, Bloom “seems always to have gravitated toward only


\textsuperscript{104}As a music hall enthusiast, Joyce would likely have been aware that Marie Kendall began her career as a male impersonator (Eve Golden, \textit{The Brief, Madcap Life of Kay Kendall} (University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 7.)
a stereotyped femaleness composed of clothing, makeup, hairstyle, and mannerism. I would add that the version of femaleness Bloom adopts is a stereotype that originates from the musical stage.

Together with Molly’s curiosity about men’s experiences and approach to femininity as masquerade, Bloom’s transsexualism signifies a willingness to experiment with gender roles. In juxtaposition with each other, Molly and Bloom demonstrate that, like the hollow Don Giovanni persona, sexual identity itself is inherently a masquerade. The implications of the centrality of performance to Joyce’s constructions of Molly and Bloom, and of the importance of Don Giovanni to Ulysses, touch upon the relationship of nature, or what is considered innate and essential, to culture, or what is considered artificial and constructed. In her discussion of mechanical reproduction and the female body in Ulysses, Ewa Ziarek quotes Stephen’s statement in “Scylla and Charybdis” that “paternity may be ‘a legal fiction’ but the maternal body remains the only true thing in life, immune to the impact of technology.” Taking Stephen’s opinion as Joyce’s, Ziarek reads “Penelope” as a nostalgic tribute to a lost corporeal authenticity. In it, “femininity, defined in opposition to mechanical reproduction, seems to provide an imaginary means of escape from the increasing technologization of the public life.” As an example, Ziarek cites Molly’s concentration on “Love’s Old Sweet Song” as it is

105 Herr, “Transvestism and Transformation,” 152.
106 See Joseph Boone’s work on sexuality and performance in Ulysses: “Bloom’s masquerade illuminates the crucial fact—already implicit in the (psycho)dramatic format of “Circe”—that all sexual identification is a kind of masquerade, a donning and divestiture of roles and masks and words.” (Boone, “Staging Sexuality: Repression, Representation, and ‘Interior’ States in Ulysses,” 150.) Also, Cheryl Herr sees “Circe” as “Joyce’s frontal attack on that concept—on the notion that any essence, any “pure” selfhood exists beyond and above the scriptings of culture.” (Herr, “Transvestism and Transformation,” 150.)
introduced by a train whistle. The connection occurs twice in Penelope, first reminding her of the drivers who are separated from their families:

frseeeedfronnnng train somewhere whistling the strength those engines have in them like big giants and the water rolling all over and out of them all sides like the end of Loves old sweeeetsonnnng the poor men that have to be out all the night from their wives and families in those roasting engines stifling it was today (U 18.596-600).

The second appearance of the train leads Molly into her silent rehearsal of the song quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

Frseeedfrong that train again weeping tone once in the dear deaed days beyondre call close my eyes breath my lips forward kiss sad look eyes open piano ere oer the world the mists began I hate that istsbeg comes loves sweet sooooooooooong III let that out full when I get in front of the footlights again (18.874-878).

Ziarek sets the song, a nostalgic celebration of a “unity of voice, memory, and love” against “the noise of the machine.” 107 The sound of the train, then, is an unpleasant intrusion on what is otherwise an idealist embrace of femininity as a last refuge against modernity:

…It is as if Joyce could imagine the female sexual body as the last remnant of authenticity in the increasingly technologized social space. On the other hand, however, the trope of female infidelity not only divulges a complicity between female masquerade and mechanical reproduction but also indicates that this unity of language, memory and natural sexual identity has been irreparably broken.” 108

In considering Molly as an operatic “diva” or “prima donna” type, though, I place her within an artistic context that idolizes femininity as a construct. Because she is associated with this culture, Molly can embody a nostalgic femininity without being deployed as an antidote to the artifice of the world depicted in *Ulysses*, but, conversely,

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108 Ibid., 280–281.
she utilizes masquerade and technology to further her place as an object and subject of sexual desire. Like “Rosa d’Irlanda” of *As Music and Splendor* and like Clément’s divas who reinvent themselves in the image of what their audiences want to see, Molly engineers her own place in her cultural surroundings so that, like Zerlina, she can play the role expected of her and still satisfy her own desires.

My reading of the train whistle’s insertion into Molly’s song, then, resists the idea that the whistle symbolizes the break that modernity imposes on an ideal unity of voice and nature. Rather, it enhances a performance that is already consciously constructed and “artificial:” Molly’s detailing of every aspect of her performance (“weeping tone once in the dear dead days beyond the call close my eyes breath my lips forward kiss sad look eyes open piano ere oer the world the mists began”) demonstrates that music, for her, does not come naturally and innately, but through work and concentration. In the end, her work is not so different from the men who work on the train, and her body is the instrument that produces a song of nostalgia and sentimentality. At the same time, the inclusion of the train whistle suggests an aspect to the singing voice that goes beyond or exists outside of the body: the soprano Christa Ludwig once remarked on the erotic aspect of “…pouring out the full voice and unleashing that torrent of sound over a full orchestra.”

Joyce places the priority on Molly’s performance: outside of that, there is no “musical work” to speak of, nor is there a “real identity” for Molly beneath what she presents on stage, figuratively and literally. As Timothy Martin shows of Joyce’s musical taste, the female singing voice in performance, here and elsewhere in Joyce’s

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work, values artifice and spectacle, and especially the ability of the performer to bring a
musical piece to life.

The prioritizing of performance also serves an important purpose for Julia
Morkan. As Peter Brooks writes of the relationship between the body and the voice,
opera forces the audience to accept what is often a jarring disconnection between what
they hear and what they see, and it is that leap of faith that is often a source of pleasure:

Lovers of opera … do not close their eyes as the overage and overweight
Radames launches into his adoration of Aida. On the contrary, they revel in the
weird excess of the situation. They revel in a form that combines illusionism with
clear impossibility, the height of artifice with the most natural of instruments, the
human voice.\textsuperscript{110}

Julia is a clear beneficiary of this aspect of opera. By singing one of opera’s most typical
bel canto heroines, she places herself in a situation that demands of her audience a
suspension of disbelief and a respect for Julia as a consummate artist. Molly, too, draws
from opera an agility with masquerade that spills over into every aspect of her lived
existence. Also, both Julia and Molly perform characters that give them access to what
they most need: for Julia, the hopefulness of a young bride, and for Molly, a degree of
sexual license and freedom of expression. Both also insert themselves into their operas at
the point where options are the most open for their characters—before Elvira loses Arturo
and goes mad, and before Zerlina needs to confront the jealous Masetto. Together, they
bring Joyce’s enthusiasm for opera as an art of excess and sensual experience into his

\textsuperscript{110} Peter Brooks, “Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera,” in \textit{Siren Songs:}
\textit{Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera}, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton
University Press, 2000), 121.
Chapter 3:

“Voices of the World”:

National Identity and Musical Space at the 1932 Eucharistic Congress

The thirty-first Eucharistic Congress marked the formal debut of the newly independent Irish Free State on the world stage and set the precedent for the image that Ireland would present to the world over the following decades: that of a new nation unified under the banner of Catholicism. The event ran from Monday, June 20, 1932 to the final Pontifical Mass at Phoenix Park on Sunday, June 26, and hosted an estimated one million pilgrims\(^1\) from at least thirty-two different countries.\(^2\) The Eucharistic Congress functioned as a political event as well as a religious gathering and thus can be viewed as a nation-building exercise that utilized mass public ritual and display in order to make real the emergence of a unified Catholic nation. Music was incorporated throughout the week, making the Eucharistic Congress exemplary of the ways that music functions as a vehicle for communal identity formation.

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2 *The Book Of The Congress* reports on national group meetings and attendance at the final Mass, including those of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, the United States, and Yugoslavia. V. Rev. P. Canon Boylan, ed., *The Book Of The Congress* (Wexford: John English & Co., 1934), 29–40, 174.
In this chapter, I explore how the Eucharistic Congress codified a modern Irish identity strongly co-identified with Catholicism while allowing for a more fluid and changeable collective identity that arose organically from the ethnic and philosophical diversity of the crowd. To that end, I divide the chapter into three sections. First, I lay out a theoretical grounding in music and nationalism, first through Richard Kearney’s and Cormac McCarthy’s theories of nationalism as it developed in Ireland, and secondly through an overview of the work of theorists who work on the relationship between music and social identity. Overall, I argue that, especially in a situation such as the Eucharistic Congress, music can enable the emergence of nationalism as a specifically modern phenomenon.

Secondly, I contextualize the Eucharistic Congress historically: occurring soon after the transition in power from William T. Cosgrave’s Cumann na nGaedheal to Éamon de Valera’s Fianna Fáil party, the Eucharistic Congress functioned as de Valera’s opportunity to ensure a smooth transition of power. Also, the Eucharistic Congress presented an opportunity to reassure the Catholic hierarchy, which nurtured a close association with Cumann na nGaedheal and, at its highest levels, an opposition to de Valera, that Fianna Fáil would continue that close relationship between the Irish government and the Catholic Church.

Thirdly, I address the Eucharistic Congress itself as an international event that promoted both a global, cosmopolitan Catholicism and a diasporic Irishness. At the final Mass in Phoenix Park, the musical performances reflected contradictory versions of Irish nationalism. The choir of men and boys, singing *Missa Brevis* by the sixteenth century Italian composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, signaled a connection to the church
music reform movement in Ireland and throughout Europe. In Ireland, church music reform was closely associated with a conservative nationalism that held pre-colonial cultural forms to be desirable to the exclusion of what was seen as modern and foreign. Conversely, the performance of César Franck’s “Panis Angelicus,” which was then, as now, as much a popular piece as sacred, by Ireland’s first modern, international celebrity, John McCormack, signals a more inclusive and modern nationalism. These two musical moments, together with the procession of the Eucharistic Congress participants through the city, accompanied by the singing of hymns broadcast from Phoenix Park, illustrate how music might open a unique social space in which contradictory identities might find authentic unification, if only briefly.

The scope of the Eucharistic Congress planning process required the coordination of the Irish hierarchy, the Vatican, the Irish government, and lay organizations. Dublin was chosen as the site of the Eucharistic Congress in 1929, soon after the Catholic Emancipation centenary that same year. The centenary, like the Eucharistic Congress, featured an international focus as well as a message of nationalism and unification under Catholicism. The director of organization for the Eucharistic Congress, Frank O’Reilly, had also organized the centenary celebrations and served as secretary of the Catholic Truth Society, a group that led efforts towards the modernization of Catholicism in Ireland through broadcasting while aiming to censor what would be available through the

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new communication technologies. The Chief Marshal of the Eucharistic Congress Committee, General Eoin O’Duffy, was Assistant Chief of Staff of the Free State army and later Commissioner of the Garda Síochána (the Irish police force) since its inception in 1923. Under the leadership of O’Reilly and O’Duffy, then, it would seem that the Eucharistic Congress was an assertion of Catholic triumphalism and a promotion of an exclusivist and conservative Irish Catholic identity. However, although the leaders of the Eucharistic Congress and, often, the official Congress publications and the contemporary press did present an essentialist nationalism, the Eucharistic Congress also offered expressions and celebrations of the diversity of those who claimed Irishness for themselves. The event opened a space for a more inclusive type of national identity.

The tensions regarding nationalism and religious identity, collective and individual, and their relationship to music are especially relevant to the work of music historian Harry White. In his work, White addresses music in modern Ireland as conscripted and limited by its close associations with nationalism. He begins with the place of music within nineteenth century Irish cultural nationalism as “among the

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5 O’Duffy felt that the Garda needed to set an example of Catholic living—the police force was over 98% Catholic—and brought a group of 250 guards to visit the Pope in 1928. See Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation Of Ireland 1900-2000* (London: Profile Books, 2005), 263. After the Eucharistic Congress, he went on to lead the Army Comrades’ Association, which later became the National Guard, a fascist organization known for its grand military displays and the blue uniforms of its members (leading to its being known as the Blueshirt movement) (Ibid., 417; Terence Brown, “Ireland, Modernism and the 1930s,” in *Modernism And Ireland: The Poetry of the 1930s*, ed. Patricia Coughlan and Alex Davis (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 150–151.)
foremost symbols of cultural, and thereby political, integrity” and “an idealized mode of sectarian culture.” The result in the twentieth century, White writes, was “that the emergent Free State was incapable of responding to music other than as a potent signifier (or agent) of nationalist culture.” White’s model is one in which a nationalist ideology commands the entire corpus of music in Irish culture. However, it is this “top-down” model of nationalism that, I argue, can be complicated through a study of the Eucharistic Congress. At this event, the various conflicts within the Church hierarchy, the diversity of culture, class, and ethnicity among the congregants, and the various purposes to which music was put in the final Mass point to something other than complete cultural homogenization. The Eucharistic Congress did not impose a monolithic Irish, Gaelic, and Catholic identity on all persons involved so much as it opened a musical space in which otherwise incompatible identities could unite for a limited time.

White’s model of a hegemonic and conservative cultural nationalism can be challenged through studies that privilege the experience of Irish audiences, most notably that of Paige Reynolds in *Modernism, Drama and the Audience for Irish Spectacle*. Reynolds’ study of modernism, the Irish revival period, and Irish audiences opposes the tendency to criticize large audiences as being subject to social and political powers that seek to “create, disseminate, and consolidate an identity for their individual subjects.” She criticizes recent works in modernist studies that, following the Frankfurt School approaches to mass culture, “intimate or brashly assert that Irish modernism should be defined by its strict opposition to repressive state and nationalist cultures. They assume

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7 Ibid.
that state or nationalist culture is necessarily pernicious, seeking largely, if not exclusively, to delude or oppress its subjects.”

Rather, Irish studies presents an opportunity to investigate audience studies in a way that is more sympathetic to the relationship between audiences and artists because “Irish modernism is intensely concerned with creating a specifically national audience for its work, [and therefore] it demands that we produce a more refined and sympathetic account of national communities and of the popular art that brings masses of people together in shared space and time to celebrate the nation.”

With this assertion, Reynolds seeks to analyze public events as negotiations of identity between artists and audiences, rather than as instances of the physical enforcement of social and political ideologies onto a “passive and malleable audience.”

The Eucharistic Congress fits into Reynolds’ framework because it is exemplary of the public event as a showcase of national identity, as well as a window into the ways that identity is negotiated between civic authorities and the Irish population. Following Reynolds, it is possible to see multiple forms of identity circulating throughout the Eucharistic Congress: while the government, the Irish hierarchy, and the press participated in the promotion of a repressive and limiting form of Gaelic, Catholic Irishness, the ability of the crowd to participate in the construction of identity through the process of ritual, spectacle and musical performance opens a space for a more diverse and inclusive definition of Irishness. Music, I suggest, lies at the center of this more inclusive paradigm.

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9 Ibid., 15.
10 Ibid., 36–37.
11 Ibid., 16.
The Eucharistic Congress as “Audiotopia”: Nationalism and Music

As a display of national as well as religious identity, the Eucharistic Congress is relevant to current debates on the place and nature of nationalism in Irish culture. In his introduction to *Postnationalist Ireland*, Richard Kearney outlines several categories of nationalism and uses a terminology useful to my study in seeking to characterize the version of the Irish nation that was on display at the Congress. Kearney distinguishes the nation as a state from the nation as an ethnicity. Whereas the nation-state “endorses what might be called ‘civic’ nationalism: the claim that the nation is composed of all those—regardless of colour, language, creed or race—who subscribe to the nation’s political principles or constitution,”12 the nation as ethnicity depends on “blood rather than law” and is therefore “a racially homogenous ‘people’ which seeks out a state appropriate to its unique identity.”13 The applicability of this ethnic model to the Eucharistic Congress is clear: throughout the event, from multiple viewpoints, what is stressed repeatedly is a sense of spiritual and cultural unity and belonging. However, the ethnic model does not account for the international scope of the Eucharistic Congress.

Kearney also describes the “migrant nation” as a broad category of nationalism, modeled on the Jewish diaspora and applied to any emigrant nationalities.14 The migrant nation allows for the apparent contradiction between the internationalism of the Eucharistic Congress and its focus on the celebration of Irish nationality, based on the ethnic model while maintaining a focus outward on the nation’s relationship with the

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13 Ibid., 13.
14 Ibid., 5.
world. The Eucharistic Congress, then, could deploy the language of ethnic nationalism but in fact strike a stronger resemblance to the more inclusive migrant nation.

Moreover, a focus on the varieties of nationalism at the Eucharistic Congress produces a way to frame the event in terms of a traditionalism/modernism dichotomy in Irish studies. In his work on modernization in Ireland, Conor McCarthy traces the revisionist debate in Irish studies in terms of a reductive opposition between the valorization of a forward-looking, progressive modernization as opposed to a regressive, nostalgic, and conservative traditionalism of cultural nationalism. Following Benedict Anderson, McCarthy argues that nationalism is a more complex phenomenon that looks to the future as well as the past and is, as McCarthy writes, “itself an element of modernity.”15 The conflicts in ideas of nationalism present at the Eucharistic Congress, then, do not denote a disagreement between (i) nationalism (triumphalist, exclusivist, nativist) and (ii) anti-nationalism (modern, cosmopolitan) but rather reflect the diversity of identities and viewpoints that are possible within a common sense of belonging to an emergent Catholic nation. In terms of Harry White’s thesis, McCarthy’s argument introduces a different perspective on music and nationalism. White’s history of music in Ireland is based on the distinction of modernism from nationalism, with music, when deployed for nationalist purposes, supporting exactly this type of nostalgia. However, both in the specific type of music presented—continental, modern and popular, and reformist and conservative simultaneously—and in the communal nature of music, the music of the Eucharistic Congress points towards a view of the event as something that prioritized the diverse experiences of the participants.

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By approaching music as a social, community-building process, I argue that the musical elements of the concluding Mass of the Eucharistic Congress made the co-existence of different configurations of the Irish nation possible for the limited time of the ceremony itself. This possibility is borne out through the work of Jill Dolan, who writes on the “utopian performative,”\(^\text{16}\) in which the positioning of a performance in a limited set of time and space allows for social configurations that would be impossible in everyday reality. Also central to my argument are what Josh Kun has called “audiotopias,” or spaces “within and produced by a musical element that offers the listener and/or the musician new maps for re-imagining the present social world.”\(^\text{17}\) Together, Dolan’s and Kun’s work shows how music can open a space that incorporates diverse and conflicting identities within an event that promotes an exclusivist agenda.

Dolan argues that the physical realization of a utopia, assuming it to be possible, would not be desirable because (1) there would always be a coercive element, and (2) if such an attempt were successful, the achievement of a utopia would mean the end of conflict, and such a place would not be an interesting one in which to live. However, because performance is marked by its existence in its own designated space and time and is set off from “real life,” it can provide, in Dolan’s words, “an encounter with the utopic, while avoiding the coercive, oppositional nature of the utopia that attempts to exert itself over the real.”\(^\text{18}\) Similarly, Josh Kun bases his cultural study of music on the concept of an “audiotopia” within the space and time of the musical experience, or “sonic spaces of effective utopian longings where several sites normally deemed incompatible are brought


\(^{17}\) Kun, *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America*, 23.

together, not only in the space of a particular piece of music itself, but in the production of social space and the mapping of geographical space that music makes possible as well.” Kun brings Dolan’s concept of the utopian performative into the field of music, writing that “audiotopias can also be understood as identificatory ‘contact zones,’ in that they are both sonic and social spaces where disparate identity-formations, cultures, and geographies historically kept and mapped separately are allowed to interact with each other as well as enter into relationships whose consequences for cultural identification are never predetermined.”

Given the multinational makeup of the Eucharistic Congress and the varying approaches to nationalism and religion present at the event, the musical performances at the final Mass helped to bring the unity of the congregation into physical reality.

Kun bases his argument about the utopian possibilities of musical performance on the physical qualities of sound: “…music makes you immediately conscious of your identity precisely because something outside of you is entering your body—alien sounds emitted from strangers you sometimes cannot see that enter, via vibration and frequency, the very bones and tissues of your being.” Because of this physical, intimate, and invasive nature of sound, music challenges the listener to identify him- or herself in relation to it in a personal way. John Shepherd and Peter Wicke argue a similar point about the physicality of sound, writing that “[s]ound brings the world into people from all directions, simultaneously and dynamically.” Enveloping the listener, resonating with the human body and requiring a response from the listener, sound “serves to remind

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., 13.
people of their tangible relationship to the material world.” 23 The physical qualities of sound, then, serve to support Kun’s model of the audiotopia—through the medium of sound, which demands the interaction of the listener, social relationships can be formed, dissolved and reformed.

However, as Dolan and Shepherd and Wicke make clear, the time and space of a musical performance is by necessity limited. For Dolan, the utopian performative is only possible because the performative space is temporary: she values “glancing moments of possibly better ways to be together as human beings.” 24 Shepherd and Wicke add that the fleeting nature of sound contributes to the way that music challenges the listener to situate himself or herself within the world that the sound constructs: “…since sound is evanescent, going out of existence at the very moment that it comes into existence, people are encompassed and touched by a world that is constantly in process and dynamic, a world that only exists while it is being articulated through sound.” 25 If social meaning in music is thus limited, then the pertinent question regarding the Eucharistic Congress is whether any connections forged through the musical event have meaning outside of the privileged space and time of performance.

The question of the lasting social impact of the musical event is a compelling one in ethnomusicology. Martin Stokes challenges the idea that musical structures mirror existing social structures, writing that “music and dance… do not simply “reflect.” Rather, they provide the means by which the hierarchies of place are negotiated and

23 Ibid., 127.
25 Shepherd and Wicke, Music and Cultural Theory, 126.
transformed.”

For Stokes, music is an important contributor to the study of a culture not because it provides another viewpoint of the way a society is constructed, but because music is often the method through which social structures are built or challenged.

Commenting on Stokes’ work, Georgina Born notes that the social significance of music is twofold: while many scholars, such as Kun, view music idealistically, as “a means for the imagining of emergent and labile identities,” it is also true that music is often the means of social oppression and control. Born writes that music has “often played a leading role in the disciplinary socialization and ideological conditioning fostered by extremely repressive regimes.” In the case of the Eucharistic Congress, both roles of music are present. While music was deployed throughout the Congress Week as a tool of conservative nationalism, it also served to energize a nationally, ethnically, and philosophically diverse Catholic audience and create a common identity that was at home in a cosmopolitan, twentieth century context.

Whether empowering or repressive to its audience, the musical event often bears a close connection to the development of national identity. Noting the role of song in the development of nationalism in the modern era, Benedict Anderson argues that nationalism is an inherently modern phenomenon because it requires the concept of simultaneity—continuous, objectively measurable time. This concept of time, Anderson argues, was made possible by modern inventions such as newspapers and novels, which

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28 Ibid.
promote the feeling of a shared experience across space through co-existence in time and thus made the modern concept of the nation possible. Such a “contemporaneous community” is especially suggested through song. During moments when “people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody,” they experience what Anderson calls “unisonality,” or “the echoed physical realization of the imagined community.”

Anderson’s argument echoes that of Dolan and Kun on the utopian possibilities of musical performance, and also brings the question of music and identity into the field of nationalism studies: according to Anderson, the social nature of music and its situatedness in time and space make it an important medium through which nations, as imagined communities, come into existence.

The Eucharistic Congress as a Political Event: Irish Church and State in the 1920s

Having gained its independence from England in 1922, Ireland had just undergone its first transition in government when the Eucharistic Congress took place. Éamon de Valera’s party, Fianna Fáil, unseated the Cumann na nGaedheal party, led by William T. Cosgrave, which had governed Ireland through its first decade of political independence and identified itself as representative of the Catholic upper class. As President of the nationalist party Sinn Fein, de Valera opposed the partition of Ireland into northern and southern parliaments and, until 1926, abstained from participation in the Irish Dáil (parliament). In 1926, he broke from Sinn Fein and formed Fianna Fáil, which entered the Dáil in 1927 and won a general election in February 1932, only four

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months prior to the Eucharistic Congress. The smoothness of the transition in power stood as a testament to the stability of the still-new Irish Free State.

The Eucharistic Congress, occurring at the very beginning of Fianna Fáil’s control of the Irish government, provided de Valera an opportunity to prove himself as an Irish leader who would continue the close relationship that the Cumann na nGaedhael government maintained with the Catholic hierarchy. As the majority of bishops sided with the pro-treaty Free State government through the civil war and thereafter, de Valera faced a challenge in normalizing his relationship with the church. Furthermore, the Eucharistic Congress faced an additional challenge in that the hierarchy itself was far from a unified entity. The political and social upheavals of the early twentieth century had divided church officials in Ireland and in Rome as well as the Irish population.

The mid-nineteenth century in Catholic Ireland had seen, to use Emmet Larkin’s term, a “devotional revolution.” Under the leadership of Cardinal Paul Cullen from 1852 to 1878, this shift in the Catholic Church’s role in Irish culture and politics “made practicing Catholics of Irish men, women and children” and made Catholicism “almost at one with the nation’s identity.” And, this transformation was achieved within a generation of the Famine. Larkin attributes this rapid consolidation of power partly to demographics: After the famine decimated the poor, rural population, the class of larger tenant farmers “who not only provided the Church with its main financial support and staffed it with their sons and daughters, but who were always its practicing and devotional nucleus” gained more representation and political influence. Furthermore,

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30 Emmet Larkin, “Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland,” *The American Historical Review* 80, no. 5 (December 1, 1975): 1254.
31 Ibid., 1253.
according to Larkin, the Catholic Church offered a sense of identity during a time when Irish language and culture were at risk of disappearing. The devotional revolution “provided the Irish with a substitute symbolic language and offered them a new cultural heritage with which they could identify and be identified and through which they could identify with one another.”\(^{32}\) In this way, as Larkin argues, Catholicism came to be co-identified with Irishness.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Terence Brown, the Catholic Church was especially well equipped to play a central role in the Irish nationalist movement. Brown writes that Catholicism in Ireland was closely bound with a “traditional Gaelic way of life”\(^{33}\) that enjoyed a renewed “vigour” and “a distinct tincture of Victorian respectability by the new discipline imposed on popular expressions of piety.”\(^{34}\) By the time of the 1926 census, 92.6% of the Irish population identified themselves as Catholic,\(^{35}\) and the 1932 Eucharistic Congress thus signaled an affirmation of the link between faith and identity for the great majority of the country.

In his work on Catholicism and Irish identity, Richard Kearney identifies a cohesive narrative of nationality within Irish Catholicism that evolved concurrently with Irish cultural nationalism, and venerated the idea of a “Holy Ireland,” or the promise of the return of a lost ideal nation after independence. Kearney writes that “Holy Ireland” …referred back to an idealized past of saints and scholars before the arrival of the Protestant planters; or else forward to an idealized future after Ireland became an independent Catholic nation once again. In short, as long as colonial oppression reigned, the Name of Holy Catholic Ireland could remain inviolate for the simple

\(^{34}\) Ibid.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 20.
This utopian ideal of a Holy Ireland, lost to history and yet to be regained through independence, was challenged through the Irish Civil War, when members of the Catholic hierarchy condemned many of the same fighters whom they supported through the War for Independence. As historian Dermot Keogh demonstrates, the Church accepted political violence as a last resort through the Irish war for independence. However, after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December of 1921 and the outbreak of civil war thereafter, the Church’s stance on violence shifted and the Irish bishops issued a statement declaring that those who resisted the treaty had “wrecked Ireland from end to end.” Those who rejected the treaty that partitioned Ireland and gave the Irish Free State dominion status within the UK, including Éamon de Valera and Sinn Fein, lost the broad support of the Irish hierarchy.

During these post-Civil War years, the Vatican and the Irish hierarchy built a mutually beneficial relationship with the new Irish government. In Rome, the Irish Free State became a strategic ally to the Vatican within the British Commonwealth, speaking for Catholic interests within the Commonwealth and in the world through its international policy and its missionary work. From the point of view of the Irish Free State, the support of the Vatican gave stability and authority to the new government.

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38 Ibid., 95.
39 Ibid., 83.
40 Dermot Keogh, Ireland And The Vatican, Irish History Series (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), xxi.
While a close alliance between the Irish bishops and Cumann na nGaedheal cemented the government’s authority, it also allowed the Church considerable power in dictating the social lives of the Irish people. As Terence Brown writes, the Irish bishops were "disturbed by what they thought were signs of an unraveling moral fabric in a society which had experienced revolution and warfare and which was riskily open to the influence of rapidly developing mass media" after the violence of the Civil War.\(^4\)\(^2\) Kearney adds that the Church was motivated in its promotion of "a certain idealised, some would add clichéd, version of Gaelic nationalism" by "a desire to preserve its traditional role as the ideological protector of the Irish people, by purging [Ireland] of extraneous immoral influences: that is, by keeping it pure.\(^4\)\(^3\) Kearney traces the isolationist and traditionalist type of nationalism promoted by the Catholic Church as inseparable from the idea of sexual purity: the protection and enforcement of sexual morality was not only for the good of Irish social life, but it was also important to the continued existence of the Irish state. Further, the attribution of moral laxity to foreign influence provided a sense of continuity with the pre-independence era, in which resistance to foreign influence was more explicitly political.

Despite its role as protector of sexual and national innocence, though, the Church in Ireland was far from united in its social and political views. Diarmaid Ferriter writes that the Irish church of the 1920s saw growing internal divisions along the lines of class and generation. While the older, more established members of the hierarchy, who had been involved in the War for Independence and the Civil War, favored Cumann na nGaedheal, many younger and newer priests from poorer backgrounds, and those who

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\(^{43}\) Kearney, “Faith and Fatherland,” 64.
came from the Irish Colleges in Rome, Paris, and Salamanca, were sympathetic towards the populist Republicanism of Éamon de Valera.\textsuperscript{44} Most importantly to de Valera, the Rector of the Irish College in Rome, Mgr. John Hagan, maintained Republican sympathies despite the close association between the upper hierarchy and Cumann na nGaedheal and was instrumental to de Valera's return to politics in 1926.\textsuperscript{45}

After de Valera's newly formed Fianna Fáil party entered the Dáil in 1926, historians note a steady increase in popularity until their election in 1932. First, Cumann na nGaedheal's efforts to establish formal diplomatic ties with the Vatican ultimately worked in favor of Fianna Fáil. Hoping to create a more established system of diplomacy that did not rely on Hagan as Ireland's de facto spokesperson in Rome, the Cosgrave government pushed for the appointments of a Papal Nuncio in Dublin and an Irish ambassador to the Vatican.\textsuperscript{46} Fianna Fáil capitalized on these proceedings politically: Sean T. O'Kelly, a prominent member of Fianna Fáil, leading anti-treaty Republican and close associate of de Valera and Hagan, criticized the government for going over the heads of the Irish hierarchy on the question of diplomacy.\textsuperscript{47} Ultimately, although Cumann na nGaedheal was successful—the Vatican sent Paschal Robinson to Dublin as Papal Nuncio and Charles Bewley was appointed as envoy to the Vatican in 1929—the

\textsuperscript{44} Ferriter, \textit{The Transformation Of Ireland 1900-2000}, 333; Keogh, \textit{The Vatican, The Bishops And Irish Politics, 1919-1939}, 134.

\textsuperscript{45} Keogh, \textit{The Vatican, The Bishops And Irish Politics, 1919-1939}, 134. As Keogh writes, early that year, de Valera secretly traveled to Rome to meet with Hagan, who pushed him to risk a split in the Sinn Fein party to end his policy of abstentionism from the Free State government and enter the Dáil. In March, de Valera put that policy to a vote, and when that vote was narrowly defeated, de Valera resigned as President of Sinn Fein and established Fianna Fáil in May, which entered the Dáil in August. This development would not have been possible without the support of several Irish clergy and especially the friendship and advisement of Hagan.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 137–138.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 144.
debates surrounding the issue in the Dáil and throughout the Irish hierarchy resulted in some damage to Cumann na nGaedheal's relationship with the Irish hierarchy.\textsuperscript{48}

By the time of the 1932 election, and the Eucharistic Congress soon thereafter, de Valera had established himself and Fianna Fáil as a viable Catholic and populist alternative to Cosgrave's more upper class and conservative Cumann na nGaedheal. After the election in March 1932, de Valera’s most pressing challenge was to quell fears that his party had Communist and anti-clerical sympathies. As a response to such fears, the new government voted to erect a crucifix in the Dáil chamber within two months of taking power.\textsuperscript{49} The most important vehicle through which Fianna Fáil established good relations with the Catholic hierarchy was the success of the Eucharistic Congress.

Throughout the preparations for the event, the new government encountered diplomatic conflict: in May, the Vatican requested that the Irish government present a formal decoration to the Pope's representative, Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri. Joseph Walshe, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, responded through Charles Bewley that a presentation would not be possible since no such formal decorations existed in Ireland, and were not likely to be approved under the populist Fianna Fáil government. Bewley's report back to the Irish government was one of disapproval and offense: "I think it my duty to point out that offence has been taken at what is considered to be a discourtesy towards the Holy See."\textsuperscript{50} Given that this exchange occurred so close to the arrival of Cardinal Lauri in Dublin, Keogh writes, it is understandable that Lauri would have doubts regarding the enthusiasm of his reception.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 160, 226.
\textsuperscript{49} Keogh, \textit{Ireland And The Vatican}, 94.
\textsuperscript{50} Keogh, \textit{The Vatican, The Bishops And Irish Politics, 1919-1939}, 95.
On receiving Cardinal Lauri at Dun Laoghaire harbor, de Valera and his Cabinet arrived not in full formal wear as anticipated, but in more casual morning suits. Lauri wrote to the Vatican that he had initially taken them for "detectives" and wondered if the government had decided not to send any representatives at all. As Keogh notes, the fact that Lauri even thought it possible that Fianna Fáil would send no representatives reveals significant apprehension about the relationship the Church would have with the new government.  

Regardless, Lauri received a spectacular welcome. The Cardinal’s steamer was escorted into Dun Laoghaire harbor by a squadron of aircraft flying in the shape of a cross. After being greeted by de Valera and the government representatives, Lauri was escorted into Dublin by sixty Blue Hussars, a mounted ceremonial army troop created for the occasion. The horse-drawn coach used for his travel was the same one that Daniel O'Connell used in processions. At the city boundary, the lord mayor of Dublin, Alderman Alfred Byrne, bent on one knee to kiss the Cardinal's ring. For the length of the procession, the streets were crowded with pilgrims and school children. As Keogh notes, the festivity and ceremony was in many ways similar to that formerly shown to visiting British royalty. Overall, the Eucharistic Congress was a diplomatic triumph for de Valera. Although Fianna Fáil only stepped in during the finishing stages of the planning process and the bulk of the preparation was done by the Cumann na nGaedheal administration, de Valera and his government enjoyed credit for the event’s success.

51 Keogh, *Ireland And The Vatican*, 95.  
With its elaborate and formal ceremony and with the centrality of the Irish government in its planning and execution, the Eucharistic Congress promoted an image of an Ireland that rendered the non-Catholic minorities virtually invisible and identified itself fully with the Catholic Church. From the point of view of the Eucharistic Congress attendees, however, the event was hardly a demonstration of a monolithic, homogeneous Irish Catholic identity. In terms of Paige Reynolds’ study of mass politics in Ireland, the message of the Eucharistic Congress was not the public’s acceptance of a monolithic identity but, rather, the physical manifestation of a diverse community with a common sense of belonging. In the following section, I explore how the Eucharistic Congress fits with what Terence Brown describes as a tendency towards internationalism and cosmopolitanism within Irish Catholicism in the early twentieth century.

Re-United For The Eucharist: The Congress as International Event

As an international institution, the Catholic Church provided a sense of cosmopolitanism to its followers where it was otherwise unavailable: in Terence Brown's words, a "sense of belonging to a worldwide religious community" that was "curiously linked to the internationalism of Irish nationalist feeling in the early twentieth century." Membership in the Catholic Church allowed a sense of identity that encompassed not only the physical state, but, as with Kearney’s model of a “migrant nation,” the diasporic "Greater Ireland," or "that vast number of Irish Catholic men and women scattered
abroad."\textsuperscript{54} Presented in part as a "homecoming" of the Irish diaspora, the Eucharistic Congress served as a celebration of this type of outward-focused Catholic nationalism.

Of course, the Eucharistic Congress was also a major diplomatic and international event. As such, it benefitted from having greater visibility in the international Catholic world as it promoted the event as a celebration of the Irish people around the globe. In the \textit{Irish Independent}, the paper most closely identified with the upper levels of the Irish hierarchy and with Cumann na nGaedheal, a writer credited simply as “Jacques” announced that the Eucharistic Congress had transformed Dublin into a multivoiced city "of sacred harmony." The article goes on to describe the crowd:

The people of the world are represented here: from the Southern Cross to the snows of Canada; from the pioneer shacks of Australia’s bush; from the prairies of the Middle States; from the lands of Africa; from the reclaimed manhood of Mexico; from almost every State in Europe—a League of Nations marching to the glory of God singing the hymns of their childhood with the Faith of their fathers—This is Dublin; this is Ireland.\textsuperscript{55}

The closing statement, "This is Dublin; this is Ireland," sweeps the dramatically noted diversity of the crowd under the banner of an Irish-led Catholicism. In this way, Irishness becomes an identity available to all who claim a connection or kindredness with Ireland. Later in the same year, the British writer and Catholic convert G. K. Chesterton published a memoir of his experiences at the Congress, and compared the Eucharistic Congress to “a kind of capital of the world,” in which the many exotically costumed congregants reminded him of “a dream of the Day of Judgment;” he especially admired a “Red Indian chief” with “his tremendous tiara of plumes towering up like a grove of palm trees” and

\textsuperscript{54} Brown, \textit{Ireland: A Social And Cultural History}, 25.
his “dark decorous vesture of an ecclesiastic.”  

Many reports emphasized the racial and ethnic exoticness of the foreign visitors in order to romanticize the global extent of the Irish Catholic diaspora.  

Moreover, the internationalist rhetoric that characterized the publications and press coverage of the Congress tended towards the language of empire. The popularity of the idea of an Irish Catholic spiritual empire, according to Brown, indicated "an effort to provide a counterweight to the international vision of British imperialism. If Britain had its material empire, the Irish could assert their dignity in terms of a patriotism and a Catholic spirituality which both transcended the island itself."  

In his study of the visual spectacle of the Eucharistic Congress, Gary Boyd argues that the central motivation behind the design of the Congress week celebrations was "to recast, under the eyes of the world's media, the monuments and urban spaces of a Protestant and imperial past as the icons of a new, Catholic Irish State."  

Similarly, John Turpin argues that the event filled a void left behind by the departing British empire, writing that Ireland had been "starved of spectacle" since British troops departed in 1922: in place of the "regimental marching bands, displays with flags, cavalry formations, carriages of notables, festivities for the monarch's birthday and for royal visits" were Church-based public displays such as "annual public Corpus Christi street processions, May processions and other church-related events with the flags, bunting, banners, clergy in vestments, choirs, bands and processions of girls in white and blue."  

Such public displays served the same function

that the physical demonstrations of the British empire had before independence: they
made real a broad sense of belonging.

In addition to the formal welcome extended to Cardinal Lauri, the Congress
exhibited many forms of public spectacle: a replica of a medieval Irish round tower was
erected in College Green where William of Orange’s statue once stood, the city was
illuminated with floodlights at night, and buildings throughout the city were covered with
decorations. The publications of the Congress committee similarly reinforced the idea of
a spiritual empire replacing and exceeding the recently departed British empire. The
souvenir programme for the week's events included an elaborate narrative of the history
of Catholic Ireland, beginning with the fall of the Roman empire and the destruction of
continental centers of learning:

The whole continent was in turmoil. Only Ireland, unconquered by Rome and free
from the effects of the fall of the Empire, remained as the last outpost of Christian
civilization. To Ireland came students from every part of the civilized world; from
Lombardy and Gaul; from Germany and Britain; for the fame of the Irish schools
had gone out over the whole world.  

From this privileging of medieval Ireland as the repository of Christian learning, the
programme builds a teleological narrative history in which Ireland extends its influence
throughout the world not through military conquest but through forced emigration:

Betrayed by the perjury of alien Kings and smitten with the scourge of famine and
disease they were scattered all over the earth. They went from a land made
desolate, a land unable to support its people, out to the four corners of the earth.
And wherever they made a resting-place there also was a resting-place for their
Eucharistic Lord... Many a hard-fought field witnessed the courage of the Irish
exiles... In every far mission field they work to spread the Kingdom of the Hidden
Christ.  

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60 The Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress - Advance Programme (Dublin:
The Eucharistic Congress Committee, 1932), 7.
61 Ibid., 11.
With its intentional echoes of the narrative of Jewish dispersal, the programme outlines a specific history that shows the privileged place of the Irish in the Catholic world. In the establishment of “resting places” for the Eucharist, and through its description of battlefields and a spreading Kingdom, the programme displays the rhetoric of empire building. The programme continues to describe the geography of this empire:

In the great cities of Britain and the new lands of America and Australia, in every place where the work of God's Kingdom had to be done, there are found the children of the Gael. The face of the earth is bejeweled with the great temples of the Eucharistic God that the poor exiles of Ireland have raised wherever their wandering feet have been stayed by hopes of liberty and sustenance... In every land where the Kingdom of the Eucharistic King is founded or extended, there is the Irish race amongst the pioneers and bearing more than its share of the work.  

The Eucharistic Congress, then, could be framed as the apotheosis of centuries of dispersal and devotion to their faith and their country—no less than “Ireland’s reward for all that her children have endured for the Eucharist during the darkness of centuries.” The Congress was framed as a victorious return of Ireland’s lost generations: “Scattered and broken for the Eucharist—they will be re-united for the Eucharist.” From this perspective, the Eucharistic Congress marks the true beginning point of an independent Ireland as members of the Irish diaspora reclaim their heritage.

As this nationalist narrative valued the tenacity of the Irish people in honoring their Catholicism despite English Protestant colonial rule, a parallel narrative ran through the musical discourse of the early twentieth century. In keeping with Turpin's and Brown’s arguments about a new form of Irish nationalism that appropriated the iconography and symbolism of English imperialism, musicians and composers promoted an Irish musical revival based on the idea of a native Irish art form.

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 13.
The British-born composer and musicologist Carl Hardebeck contributed an article to the *Irish Press Congress Supplement* that outlined a nationalist perspective on the practice and promotion of Irish language folk music. To fully understand native Irish music, as opposed to English language folk songs also popular in Ireland, Hardebeck writes, "is to lose all faith that Anglo-Irish music expresses our national thought or feeling."\(^64\) Gaelic music, for Hardebeck, is valuable specifically because it expresses Irishness in a way that no other type of music could. Because of its innate national value, Hardebeck values Irish music most in what he describes as its native, natural form: he opposed the idea of training "peasant" singers in formal European methods.\(^65\) In its pure, natural state, Hardebeck argues, the unique rhythms of Gaelic music are based on the sounds of the Gaelic lyrics, and therefore he considers it absurd to try to learn and perform Gaelic music in translation—thus "the importance of learning the language thoroughly before attempting to sing a note."\(^66\) In this way, Hardebeck places Gaelic music within the purview of the Gaelic language revival.

In the same article, Hardebeck also traces the origins of Gaelic music to medieval plainchant, a connection that was gaining traction among music revivalists in Ireland in the early twentieth century. According to this argument, plainchant was the form of music most successful in Ireland before the arrival of English settlers and more modern

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\(^{64}\) Carl Hardebeck, “Irish Folk Music,” *Irish Press Congress Supplement*, June 20, 1932, 16.

\(^{65}\) In an article written for the *Journal of the Ivernian Society*, Hardebeck wrote: "[I]et us say to the school teacher, ‘You can do no greater injustice than to attempt to thrash the traditional singing out of your pupil, because, if you are not a traditional singer yourself, don’t be angry and jealous because your pupil has a far nobler, higher and keener appreciation, unconsciously, of the aesthetic value of rhythm than you will ever have, even though you studied Tonic Sol-fa forever.’" Carl Hardebeck, “Traditional Singing: Its Value And Meaning,” *Journal of the Ivernian Society* 3, no. 10 (March 1911): 93.

\(^{66}\) Hardebeck, “Irish Folk Music,” 16.
forms of European music. Because of its connection to a time before British settlement, then, Irish traditional music that contains remnants of plainchant could be held up as being more authentically native and pure than other folk songs. Therefore, Hardebeck provides Gaelic music with a known marker of authenticity when he notes that Gaelic music is not generally composed in major scales but "in old modes of plain-chant," and when he bases his argument about the rhythmic connection of Gaelic music to Gaelic text on the fact that "the rhythm of plain-chant is based on the accentuation of Latin prose."

Likewise, an article in the same Congress Supplement credited to Grace O’Brien addresses Irish sacred music. O’Brien begins by praising the strength of sacred music in medieval Ireland, noting that St. Patrick taught psalmody and that Gregorian chant came to Ireland in the sixth century. However, by the time of Catholic emancipation in the nineteenth century, this musical tradition was lost, as church congregations favored the more modern and Romantic styles of music popular in England and other European countries, which had more in common with secular music than any tradition of sacred music. O’Brien lauds the modern Irish church for reviving pre-colonial liturgical music and ends her piece with the hope that “in the near future, we shall have heard the last of quasi-operatic singing in our churches, and that we shall again hear throughout the land

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67 The Revivalist interest in plainchant in Ireland was one aspect of a broader chant revival throughout the Catholic world. In her work on the chant revival, Katherine Bergeron outlines an international movement partially intended to combat the influence of modern popular music in the liturgy. See Katherine Bergeron, Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
68 Hardebeck, “Irish Folk Music,” 16.
69 In this, O’Brien’s history has more in common with the popular opinion of plainchant of her day than with musical history. “Gregorian” chant, as it was conceived in the twentieth century, dates from the ninth century and its earlier forms extend well beyond then. Pope Gregory’s name was associated with this particular musical form much later in order to give it precedence over various regional traditions.
the beautiful Plain Chant, for which our fore-fathers were once famous in the Christian world.70 More explicitly than Hardebeck, O’Brien treats early religious music as a cultural artifact that enables a return to a Celtic “golden age” before British control.71

The Mass at Phoenix Park:

“Voices of the world among them, and all our own inflection”

The Book of the Congress, published by the Eucharistic Congress Committee as the official record of the event, details the organization of the final Mass. The writer notes that the Fifteen Acres section of Phoenix Park was sectioned off with spaces assigned to groups according to country of origin, diocese, parish, confraternity, etc., and observing that "the ‘Fifteen Acres’ was like a great city in outline, with streets and squares and (in a fashion) residences, and business centres, and all of these were as well defined, and as easy to identify, as the districts of a modern city."72 If the mapping of Phoenix Park took on the rhetoric of modern and efficient city planning, the planning of the Mass in light of the entire Congress Week, as narrated in the Book of the Congress, took on the language of a military effort: "The problem, in its essentials, was like that which a Commander-in-Chief would have to solve, if he had to concentrate in a single city within a few weeks at most, an army more than a million strong, of which the divisions, brigades, and companies, and smaller units were scattered over the face of the

71 Ibid., 3.
whole world.” Here, as elsewhere, the Eucharistic Congress took on the rhetoric of imperial, military display.

The planning and execution of Congress Week, and especially the final Mass, were thus described as an organizational triumph. However, the eyewitness accounts of the scene at the final Mass described something that defied human logic. One reporter for the *Nenagh Guardian*, the local newspaper of Tipperary, opened with a confession that his job was ultimately futile, writing that “…the scene has admittedly baffled description, and the greatest artists in words have confessed themselves at a loss to convey an adequate impression of the whole magnificent episode.” Many accounts included such dumbfounded responses to the vastness of the crowd. A writer for Eamon de Valera’s Republican *Irish Press* emphasized the global reach of this Irish empire come to physical realization:

As the light strengthened the individual footsteps sounding through the morning became first the heavier beat of many groups, and then by eight o’clock the steady tramp of an army. On, on, on, never broken, never stopping, it came; from the south, from the north, from the east, from the west—men and women, boys and girls, without ceasing, without pause. There were voices of the world among them, and all our own inflection—the sharp music of the north, the soft accents of the south, the lilt of the western speech.

Already, this is a musical crowd, simultaneously heterophonic (“voices of the world”) and uniformly Irish (“our own inflection”).

In this culmination of the Congress Week events at the final Mass, music made it possible for the society created within it to contain such contradictions. First, the

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73 Ibid., 5.
74 *Thirty First International Eucharistic Congress Pictorial Record* (Dublin: Veritas Company, Ltd., 1932), 156.
75 Ibid., 157.
Palestrina boys’ choir projected a nationalism that aimed for a pre-colonial purity in its performances. Second, John McCormack, an international celebrity and modern recording artist, expressed a cosmopolitan nationalism that aimed to establish Ireland on the world stage. Both performances culminated in the final procession from Phoenix Park into the centre of Dublin and singing of hymns, in which the focus turned to the congregation itself. Together, these three musical events point to different ideological aims and uses of musical experience.

The Music of the Eucharistic Congress

The week of the Eucharistic Congress was threaded throughout with music. The *Book of the Congress* lists the musical selections for various events and services:

- On June 23, the Thursday before the final Mass, the Mass Meeting of Men at Phoenix Park, which counted between 250,000 and 400,000 men in attendance, included hymns in Irish and English.

- On the next day, the High Pontifical Mass at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral featured a choir of thirty priests.

- On the night of June 24, over 250,000 women attended the Women's Mass at Phoenix Park, where hymns in English and Irish were incorporated into the ceremony.

- On Saturday, June 25, over 100,000 children attended the Children's Mass at Phoenix Park, where, according to the *Book of the Congress*, a choir of
2,500 children under the direction of Vincent O'Brien sang works by Marcello Capra, Max Filke and Griesbacher.

- At the final Mass on Sunday, June 26, Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* was performed by a choir of men and boys, and John McCormack sang César Franck's "Panis Angelicus."\(^7^6\)

The musical preparations, headed by Mgr. Cronin, began in 1931, when choir members were selected from musical groups and secondary schools in Dublin. Three separate choirs were needed: one composed of men and boys to perform Palestrina’s *Missa Brevis* at the final Mass,\(^7^7\) a children's choir of 2,500 for the Children's Mass on Saturday, and a choir of priests to sing at the Pontifical High Mass at the Pro-Cathedral on Friday and to chant while escorting the Blessed Sacrament from Phoenix Park to O'Connell Bridge after the final Mass.\(^7^8\)

The choir director for the final Mass, Vincent O'Brien, was an influential figure in the culture of liturgical music in Dublin at the time. As director of the boys' Palestrina Choir at the Pro-Cathedral, he was instrumental to an increased popular support for

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\(^7^6\) Boylan, *The Book Of The Congress*, 177.

\(^7^7\) Various sources disagreed widely on the size of the choir at the final Mass. An article in the *Irish Independent* praised “the exquisite singing of the Mass by the special choir of 500 voices.” Another article in the same issue stated that “the Music of the Mass was beautifully rendered by the Choir of 2,000.” The *Book of the Congress* stated that, one year prior to the Eucharistic Congress, a choir of five hundred men and boys was assembled to perform the Palestrina Mass (6) and that the Palestrina “was rendered magnificently by a Special Choir of more than 2,000…” (186), and in her memoirs, Lily McCormack gave her recollection of “the special choir of five hundred men and boys.” “City of Song and Prayer: Perfect Broadcasting,” *Irish Independent*, June 27, 1932, 11; “Pope’s Broadcast Message,” *Irish Independent*, June 27, 1932, 9; Boylan, *The Book Of The Congress*, 6, 186; Lily Foley McCormack, *I Hear You Calling Me* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1949), 158.

\(^7^8\) Boylan, *The Book Of The Congress*, 6.
church music reform in the early twentieth century. In her article for the *Irish Press Congress Supplement*, Grace O'Brien made special mention of the Palestrina choir as a foremost example of the liturgical music reform movement in Ireland. She praises Vincent O'Brien, the choir, and especially its benefactor, Edward Martyn, for leading the push for plainchant and Renaissance music such as that of Palestrina.

Martyn, better known as a playwright, a founder of the Abbey Theatre (with Yeats, Gregory, and George Moore), and a member of a prominent Anglo-Irish family, was an important proponent of Irish religious music reform. According to the historian J. C. M. Nolan, by the turn of the century, Martyn was concerned that Catholic musicians in Ireland had grown "lazy" and that most clergy were musically illiterate. In a series of letters to D. P. Moran's nativist paper, the *Leader*, in 1900, Martyn complained of "the unpardonable laxity which, among a large Catholic population, permits such an unecclesiastic and unaesthetic custom to prevail as the singing of women in choir." In these efforts, Martyn was influenced by the Cecilian movement that began in Germany in

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80 J. C. M. Nolan, “Edward Martyn and the Founding of Dublin’s Palestrina Choir,” *New Hibernia Review* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 90. It was this last point that garnered the most opposition, and the effects of this are seen in "The Dead.” The opposition to women's singing in a church setting, here, seems to be based on a view of women as lacking the purity and innocence of boys' voices - in Martyn's words, "voices purified from the earthliness of sex" (Ibid., 91.)
the mid-nineteenth century and melded its conservative ideals with a cultural nationalist approach to Irish politics, making church music an issue of Irish national importance.\textsuperscript{81}

Martyn first heard the Palestrina Choir under the direction of Vincent O'Brien at the St. Mary's Place Christian Brothers School in Dublin in 1898. With O'Brien as director, Martyn established the choir at the Pro-Cathedral in January of 1903. Significantly, this predated Pope Pius X's \textit{Motu Proprio} by little under a year. The \textit{Motu Proprio} marked an important step for church music reform because it laid out the same restrictions Martyn promoted: more medieval chant and Renaissance polyphony; less "operatic" music; more musical training for priests and boys; and the elimination of women from church choirs.\textsuperscript{82}

The music selection for the choir at the final Mass, Palestrina’s \textit{Missa Brevis}, held an especially privileged status within the musical reform movement. When Palestrina wrote it in 1570, he was an influential composer of Catholic music, and the \textit{missa brevis} form was an especially telling example of the direction in which Palestrina took liturgical music. At the time, the Catholic Church was concerned with its response to the

\textsuperscript{81} Martyn’s goals for liturgical music reform in Ireland were not completely in agreement with those of reformers in other countries or some in Ireland: he was concerned about an overly reductive blanket rejection of any music other than chant. See Kieran Anthony Daly, \textit{Catholic Church Music In Ireland} (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), 157–158. Further, the link between liturgical music reform and nationalism had a parallel in France, where Prosper Guéranger, abbot of Solesmes Abbey, believed that, according to Katherine Bergeron, a “return to the Roman liturgy” was “the only way to reclaim the greatness of France’s ancient history…. If the medieval cathedral was the origin of a national architecture, the medieval liturgy became, by a similar logic, the very foundation of French culture.” Bergeron, \textit{Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes}, 11. Bergeron’s work further elaborates on the connections between religious music, architecture, and modern nationalism.

Protestant Reformation of the early part of the century. Throughout the Council of Trent, held intermittently from 1545 to 1563, the popular consensus was to create a more conservative religious culture in order to counteract the growing popularity of the Reformation. In response, a canon issued by the Council in 1562 reasserted the Church’s support for the Latin mass as opposed to the vernacular and rejected the use of secular musical forms. However, the Council also allowed for polyphonic music, a relatively new development in sacred music that involved the interweaving of different and equally emphasized melodic lines (i.e., no distinction between "melody" and "harmony," as in more modern choral music). Plainchant, a type of monophony, featured a single line sung in unison. The acceptance of polyphony, in this context, is often attributed to the popularity of Palestrina’s polyphonic compositions. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the idea of liturgical music reform again dominated musical discourses, Palestrina was held up as the "savior of church music," and gained the status of a definitive composer for the reform movement.

Palestrina was likewise important to the Irish musical reform movement: because his music had, at this point, gained a reputation as a definitive marker of Catholicism, the performance of his piece at the Eucharistic congress helped to cement the message that Ireland was situated at the center of the modern Catholic world. The writer H. R. W., in

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83 Ibid.
his report on the musical preparations for the Eucharistic Congress, commented on the significance of Palestrina’s work:

The Missa Brevis is really the best introduction to the study of Palestrina’s music one could wish, and a perfect example of his pure choral style. In his work the development of many centuries is summed up, and he may be said to stand alone in scope and uniform perfection of artistic resourcefulness. By this time the world of music was beginning to be influenced by new ideas, but Palestrina remained indifferent to them, concentrating all his faculties upon the achievement of pure choral effect. With him all is beauty of motion and tone; expression of a passionate kind, such as seems inevitable in Italian music, is never attempted. It is mysterious, subjective, and almost aloof—the very ideal of the purely devotional art.

The performance of his Missa Brevis at the Eucharistic Congress, then, acquires direct relevance to the nationalist aims of the congress—through the music itself, through the involvement of Vincent O’Brien, and through its connections to Irish Catholic music reform.

John McCormack and Franck’s “Panis Angelicus”

After the choir’s performance, John McCormack performed “Panis Angelicus,” an 1872 work by the French composer César Franck. The selection marked a shift away from the conservatism that the Palestrina piece implied, as Franck’s work was an example of the “operatic,” romantic type of religious music that the Catholic music reform movement had singled out as undesirable. McCormack himself represented a very modern and cosmopolitan type of celebrity, taking the masculine persona of the

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operatic tenor and translating it into the Hollywood age, crafting a new kind of media presence and reflecting Irish identity in Ireland and abroad as an important component of a new, international society.

Having sung in the Palestrina Choir at St. Mary’s Pro-Cathedral under Vincent O’Brien, McCormack was very much a product of the Irish musical system and achieved his fame through Irish institutions. In 1903, he won the Feis Ceoil national contest, an accomplishment that won him a scholarship to study voice in Italy for one year. While abroad, he took care to represent Ireland positively and resist “stage Irish” stereotypes, to the point of refusing to participate in any event that promoted a negative image of Irish people, as he did at the 1903 St. Louis Fair. Moreover, as his career as an operatic tenor unfolded, he emphasized his Irishness: while training in Italy, he used the stage name “Giovanni Foley.” He brought his Irish identity into his singing style as well: Albert Bradshaw of the Royal Irish Academy notes that he used his Irish accent as a technique to get the meaning of his songs across; for example, singing “alarum” instead of “alarm” and “arum” instead of “arm.”

McCormack's status as an international celebrity was cemented with his first visit to America in 1909, at the invitation of Oscar Hammerstein. As Mick Moloney's work on Irish-American music shows, there was already a strong tradition of Irish tenors in America by the time of McCormack's arrival in America: prominent among them were

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90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ledbetter, *John McCormack 1884-1945: The People’s Tenor*.
93 Brock, “Impressions of the Great Irish Tenor.”
the songwriting team Ed Hartigan and Tony Hart, as well as Charles Harrison, Lambert Murphy, Eddie Morton, Billy Murray, and Henry Burr. All of these performers brought their Irish identities to the stage in some form, with styles ranging from high culture (operatic singing) to low (minstrelsy). McCormack's arrival marked the advent of the Irish tenor as a strictly high culture phenomenon.  

McCormack's career as a concert singer of international fame was at its peak through the second decade of the twentieth century. He gave over four hundred concerts in the United States between the years of 1914 and 1918, including twelve concerts in New York during the 1915-1916 concert season, and a performance for an audience of 18,000 in San Francisco. He was also successful in the emergent record industry, selling over two million records from 1910 to the end of his career, with more than eight hundred separate recordings overall. In 1929, not long before the Eucharistic Congress, McCormack finished his first Hollywood film, *Song O'My Heart*, which was produced with a continuous soundtrack—the first “talkie,” *The Jazz Singer*, was released in 1927. McCormack received the sum of half a million dollars for the film, in which he played a character based on himself: a “small town boy, Sean O’Carolan, [who] becomes famous because of his golden voice.” Throughout his career, McCormack found success by taking advantage of the new types of media that were becoming ubiquitous on both sides

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95 Brock, “Impressions of the Great Irish Tenor.”
96 Ibid.
97 Gordon Ledbetter, *John McCormack: The Great Irish Tenor* (Dublin: Town House, 2003), 206. The name O’Carolan would have been widely recognizable as significant to Irish music: the eighteenth century blind harpist, Turlough O’Carolan, had, especially through the Irish folk music revival of the early twentieth century, emerged as a popular composer and had achieved important cultural status as the “last of the Irish bards.”
of the Atlantic, and by presenting a modern and upper class version of Irish masculinity in direct opposition to the derogatory “stage Irish” stereotype.

If McCormack's particular type of celebrity was a specifically twentieth-century phenomenon, his singing style was similarly of its time. In an era before technologies such as microphones and sophisticated recording equipment came into widespread use, McCormack's singing style bore a strong resemblance to other singers whose careers took place when early recording methods required that they have muscular, open voices. McCormack was consistently required to sing without amplification, even to the largest audiences. In the recording industry, the emphasis was on brass bands, piccolos, accordions, and high-pitched voices, or what music historian Mick Moloney has called "the leather lungs brigade." With the arrival of the microphone in 1925, the music industry could turn to softer voices, and as a result the powerful voices of operatic singers gave way to the "crooners" of the next generation such as Bing Crosby. McCormack's career arc forms a bridge between these two eras. According to Seamus Kearns of the John McCormack Society, McCormack is the main link between Enrico Caruso and Bing Crosby because of the way that he took operatic singing into the realm of popular radio music. His voice type, a gentle lyric tenor, was especially well suited for popular music rather than heavier dramatic roles; but the volume and power behind it was a product of the earlier era.

98 Moloney, “John McCormack Weekend at Boston College.”
99 Ledbetter, John McCormack 1884-1945: The People’s Tenor.
As a piece of sacred music that had crossed over into the popular imagination as a favorite performance piece,\textsuperscript{100} Franck’s “Panis Angelicus” ("Bread of Angels") was an ideal selection for McCormack to sing at the Eucharistic Congress. Franck originally wrote the piece as an insert for his Mass in A in 1872. The work was one of Franck’s few strictly liturgical works, but his organ music and oratorios often carried religious themes. In this way, he followed the trend in nineteenth century France for religious works meant for the concert hall, not the church. The music was then exactly the kind of performer-centered material that was suited for someone of McCormack's public stature, and which was also, at the time, the target of various liturgical music reform efforts. In his column for the \textit{Sunday Independent}, Matthew C. Byrne responded to an English reader who criticized the decision to feature McCormack due to “the violation of the Papal Decree forbidding the singing of solos at liturgical functions, except when they form an integral

\textsuperscript{100} The song continues to be popular, having been recorded often by artists who fall within the category of music alternately called “pop-classical” or “classical crossover.” Examples include recordings by Josh Groban (\textit{Noël}, WEA/Reprise 2007), the Christian pop band BarlowGirl (\textit{Home for Christmas}, Word Entertainment 2008), Jackie Evancho, a singer known for her performance for the reality television show, \textit{America’s Got Talent}, in 2010 at age ten (\textit{O Holy Night}, Columbia 2010), the opera/pop act Il Divo (\textit{The Christmas Collection}, Sony 2005), the Celtic pop group Celtic Woman (\textit{A Christmas Celebration}, Manhattan Records 2006), The Priests, a trio of priests from Northern Ireland (\textit{The Priests}, RCA 2008), Luciano Pavarotti with Sting (\textit{The Duets}, Decca 2003), Andrea Bocelli (\textit{Sacred Arias}, Philips 1999), and the young singing phenom Charlotte Church (\textit{Charlotte Church: Voice of an Angel}, Sony 1998). McCormack himself deserves some credit for inspiring this type of classical/pop crossover project, as his albums were among the first to follow this format. The piece was also central to the plot of the 2000 Irish film \textit{When Brendan Met Trudy} (screenplay by Roddy Doyle), in which an uptight schoolteacher and avid fan of McCormack wins the heart of a free spirited woman with his rendering of the song (Kieron J. Walsh, dir. Dublin: Collins Avenue/Deadly Films. DVD distributed by Alliance Atlantis, 2000).
part of an otherwise choral work.” Byrne writes that the anonymous writer “has the mind of the mathematician rather than of the artist.”

McCormack also crafted his public persona to emphasize his faith and commitment to the Catholic Church. In 1928, he was raised to Papal Peerage by Pope Pius XI in recognition of his charity work, the highest honor a layman could achieve within the Church. His performance of César Franck’s “Panis Angelicus” at the Eucharistic Congress marked the largest audience of his career, and was widely received as the highlight of the Eucharistic Congress. Warren Kenny of the Connacht Sentinel, a regional newspaper based in Galway, wrote:

The song of the Bread of Angels rang out across that vast cathedral whose floor was the green sward of the park, whose windows were the heavens themselves, whose spired domes were the cirrus clouds that brushed as with the wings of angels the skies that carried that voice over all the hills and waters of the world. It seemed as if Count John McCormack had for ever lived for that moment when he should send César Franck’s “Panis Angelicus” from that altar of classical purity, walled within whispering trees, out to that wonderful congregation and out across this reeling planet to millions of Catholics to tell them that the great moment was at hand.

To the idea of the city transformed into a “vast cathedral,” Kenny adds the image of McCormack's voice reaching across the globe. Notably, most of the people there only heard McCormack's voice through the loudspeakers, either at the park or throughout the streets of Dublin. One reporter for The Universe of London, a Catholic weekly, was standing with the crowd four miles away on O'Connell Street and wrote that "a thrill ran through the city whilst the famous voice filled every corner of every street for miles

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around." The effect is that of a voice cut free of its physicality and allowed to roam over the entire city. Another reporter for the *Nenagh Guardian* refigured McCormack’s performance as a collective action, writing that McCormack’s singing “is a treat indeed, nay more, it is an offering of the best that our land has produced.” The solo, here depicted as a communal offering rather than a performance, becomes an act that, like the procession following it, involves every individual.

As in John Shepherd and Peter Wicke’s description of a musical performance, music is described as omnipresent, enveloping its listeners, intimately connecting them to the source of the singing voice and reminding them of their physical relationship to the world and to each other. The idea of the musical performance as a deeply personal event is shared by McCormack himself, who thought of his singing as a simultaneously intimate and communal occasion involving him and his audience of thousands. The gramophone, for McCormack, was not an impersonal piece of technology so much as a way for him to reach his unseen audience. McCormack's performance at the Eucharistic Congress is described with the same idea in mind: with the aid of the loudspeakers placed throughout the city and the radio broadcast, McCormack could extend his presence far beyond his natural range. As Paige Reynolds writes of the modern crowd, the relationships enabled in this environment could be both social and individual: the crowd becomes a collective, not a “mass.”

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103 *Thirty First International Eucharistic Congress Pictorial Record*, 159.
104 “The Great Final Scene,” 1.
106 Ledbetter, *John McCormack 1884-1945: The People’s Tenor*. 
The idea of music “filling every corner” is carried through into the reports of the procession that followed the Mass, from Phoenix Park to the altar on O’Connell Bridge about four miles away. The *Book of the Congress* stresses the difficulty and complexity of the procession, both in the organization of the crowd into many different streams threading their way through the city, and in the PA system put in place to broadcast the choir’s singing throughout the city. The *Book Of The Congress* records that “it was necessary to bring nearly a million men and women of every age and condition, in orderly march, in two or three hours from one altar to the other... It was a problem to tax all the resources of Congress Organisation, and its eventual solution was one of the greatest triumphs of [the] brilliant Congress Celebration.” ¹⁰⁷ While the congregation was directed in many columns through the streets of Dublin on both sides of the river, the Sacrament was carried slowly along the quays. The scene was one of mass discipline as well as unity of all the national institutions: “Here too—almost more strikingly than anywhere else in the Congress—one saw the perfect co-operation of State and City, and University, and Schools with the clergy and ecclesiastical authorities in eager and enthusiastic work for the success of the Congress.” ¹⁰⁸ As with the Mass at Phoenix Park, the procession is portrayed as a triumph of human precision and organization, which in turn reflects on the process of identity construction in terms of both state and nation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
The procession, like the Mass, was a musical event. A choir stationed at Phoenix Park led the singing of hymns via an elaborate system of over four hundred loudspeakers set up along about thirteen miles of streets throughout the city. One preview in the Anglo-Celt emphasized the sense of simultaneity that would encompass the entire city: “…the processionists, separate though they may be, will be at the same time singing the same hymns and reciting the same prayers.”

To add to the challenge, any loudspeakers within two hundred yards of the Blessed Sacrament were kept silent, so the only sound audible in this moving space was the chanting of the priests’ choir marching with it. The hymns chosen for the procession were in Irish, Latin, and English, and interwoven with them were recitations of the Rosary, led by a priest in Phoenix Park and broadcast over the loudspeakers.

The Book of the Congress closes with this description of the procession:

There were no mere onlookers. Everyone—the people on the house-tops and in the windows, as well as those that lined the foot-paths, and marched in the various columns—joined in praise and acclamation of Our Eucharistic King. This

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109 According to a report in the Kildare Observer, the procession began with the hymn “O Salutaris.” The music acted as a cue to the congregants: “The opening bars of that hymn, sung by the choir and broadcast on loud speakers, will be the signal to start.” The choir then sang “Pange Lingua,” “Adoro Te,” “Landa Jerusalem,” “Lauda Sion,” “Holy God,” “Iora a Thigheasna” (“Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All”), “A Chroidhe Dhil Iosa” (“Sweet Heart of Jesus”), “To Jesus Heart All Burning,” and “De Bheatha Corp mo Rigo” (“Sweet Sacrament Divine”). These hymns were repeated for the duration of the procession, alternating between English and Irish languages. The Kildare Observer describes the broadcasting of the choir throughout the city not as an accompaniment or performance for the congregants but rather as an extension of a ritual that is performed by each individual: “In the intervals between each hymn, a priest will recite litanies or a decade of the Rosary. The processionists and those along the processional route should join in the prayers and responses, which will be broadcast on the loudspeakers. The responses should be made in the language being broadcast, or in each person’s native language.” “Eucharistic Congress,” Kildare Observer, June 18, 1932, 2.


marvelous unanimous outburst of love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was the spontaneous outpouring of the heart of a genuinely Catholic people, but its fervour was certainly intensified by the manifest magnificent results of the organisation work which had made the Dublin Congress Procession one of the most perfect processional movements ever executed. \(^{113}\)

Here, the audience at a spectacle becomes the spectacle itself—the procession of many threads of worshippers marching in formation through the streets of Dublin, singing and praying all the way, led by a choir still standing back at the park, all points to a musical performance in which any separation between performer and audience is completely dissolved.

Further technological innovation enabled the participation of those outside of Dublin. According to Brian Lynch’s history of broadcasting and the Catholic Church in Ireland, “a new high-powered radio transmitter at Athlone was opened (for the Congress). This ensured that all over Ireland, even those listeners with the cheapest wireless sets… were able to tune in to hear the Pontifical Mass.” \(^{114}\) The broadcast allowed for other towns to hold their own processions synchronized with Dublin’s: The *Irish Independent* reported congregations of 5,000 each in Muinebeag, Co. Carlow and Belmullet, Co. Mayo; as well as similar observances in Arklow, Co. Wicklow; Birr, Co. Offaly; and Rossinver, Co. Leitrim. \(^{115}\) In this way, the Congress is linked to the earliest country-wide radio broadcasts in Ireland—organized in order to allow Catholics across the country not only the ability to listen but to participate in this massive assertion of an all-encompassing Irish and Catholic identity, and to project that unity to the outside world.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 195.


\(^{115}\) “Listeners Join In Hymns,” *Irish Independent*, June 29, 1932, 7.
Music, Nationalism, and the Eucharistic Congress

The Eucharistic Congress provides a telling example of the ways that music and nationalism are intertwined in Irish culture. This final procession of the Congress, unified by the citywide broadcast of hymns and prayers and marked by its military precision, suggests a version of nationalism in which the nation is homogenized into a single organism. As one reporter for the *Southern Star* described the event, “Humdrum Dublin, in its rush and bustle and noises, has merged its individuality into one supreme, colourful, decorative whole.”\(^{116}\) However, it is not necessarily the case that such a unified display translates into an enforced, exclusivist national identity. The Eucharistic Congress served its purpose of delivering a diplomatic triumph for the new Fianna Fáil government and consolidating the co-identification of Irish social identity with Catholicism. In the end, though, it also demonstrated the possibility of the unification of many different viewpoints and identities by virtue of it requiring the participation of congregants from around the globe.

In the case of the Eucharistic Congress, the various conflicts within the Church hierarchy, the diversity of culture, class, and ethnicity among the congregants, the diversity of musical genres presented, and the various purposes to which music was put in the final Mass point to something other than complete cultural homogenization being imposed. The Eucharistic Congress did not impose a monolithic Irish, Gaelic, and

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Catholic identity on all persons involved so much as it opened a musical space in which otherwise incompatible identities could unite for a limited time.

In highlighting specifically Irish contributions to Catholicism such as Irish language hymns, McCormack’s artistry, and the legacy of Irish missionaries, the Eucharistic Congress situated Ireland as a nation with its own separate and cohesive identity and cemented the link between church and state. The sense at the event that Ireland had become a unified and individual entity would lead to the silencing of dissenting voices and the enforcement of a family-centered Catholicism. For this short time, though, the music presented was able to open a space for this vision of a unified Ireland to materialize organically—a space in which the two different types of music presented by the Palestrina choir and by John McCormack (the collective and the individual performers, the early church music and the romantic performer-centered piece) could coexist. Finally, the mass participation in the procession allowed for the ritual enactment of such a unified group identity to come to fruition, all the more possible because of its being transitory.

The Eucharistic Congress presents a telling picture of the importance of music and ritual to the construction of social identity—here, as deployed by social institutions and supported by a broad audience. That association of music with social identity would again arise through the efforts of church and state to curtail and control the social lives of the Irish people through the Dance Hall Act of 1935. In this case, religious and political authorities colluded to suppress musical events in order to push back against the same social energies that were directed through institutionally ordained channels at the
Eucharistic Congress. In both instances, music becomes the arena for a debate about national identity.
Chapter 4:

Music and Memory in Roddy Doyle’s *The Commitments* and *The Guts*

Through the course of the three preceding chapters, this dissertation has centered on questions of “authenticity” in music as it pertains to gendered and national identity. Chapter 1 looks at the bard as a signifier of Irish authenticity in musical traditions; Chapter 2 considers the ways that music plays a role in an individual’s gendered sense of self; and Chapter 3 concerns the ways that a single musical event can shape the Irish self-image. In this chapter, I move to the past thirty years and specifically to the work of Roddy Doyle, whose career has traced the effects of the economic boom of the 1990s and the subsequent economic collapse of more recent years in Ireland and especially in Dublin. Through readings of *The Commitments* (1987) and *The Guts* (2013), I revisit the themes of communal musical experience, the relationship between musical and national identity, and constructions of authenticity in musical expression.

In doing so, I argue that both texts are centered on an attempt to find an authentic artistic expression of a marginalized identity through musical performance. In *The Commitments*, although that attempt is successful for a limited time, the band ultimately fails because their emphasis on soul music as a carrier of transcultural awareness falls short of their aspirations. In *The Guts*, a fraudulent “found recording,” titled “I’m Goin’ to Hell,” succeeds where the band in *The Commitments* does not in connecting a musical artist (Jimmy Rabbitte) with an Irish audience. That success, I argue, is due to Jimmy’s
ability to manipulate the past and “invent” an ancestor who presciently articulates the concerns and anxieties of an economically troubled Dublin of 2012. *The Guts*, then, demonstrates Arjun Appadurai’s concept of the availability of the past as a “warehouse”\(^1\) of concepts to be shaped into narratives that describe our present.

*The Guts* serves as an epilogue to the Barrytown trilogy and particularly a return to *The Commitments*, centering on Jimmy Rabbitte’s continued involvement in the Irish music industry, itself underscoring the ongoing and continual interest in these questions. However, the dominant themes of race and locality in the earlier book are eclipsed in the latter by an emphasis on an increasingly globalized sense of citizenship through Ireland’s membership in the EU and through a collective sense of economic uncertainty that extends beyond the Northside community depicted in *The Commitments*. Whereas critical responses to the earlier novel focused on the contested validity of trans-racial solidarity through music as promoted by Rabbitte and trumpeter Joey “The Lips” Fagan,\(^2\) *The Guts* looks to music as an avenue to national, economic, and personal renewal through an appeal to nostalgia. Economic crisis mirrors Rabbitte’s mid-life crisis and cancer diagnosis in the novel, and his journey to physical recovery parallels his successful production of a compilation album. Titled *More Songs About Sex and Emigration*, the album is a collection of found recordings from 1932, timed to release

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alongside the return of the Eucharistic Congress to Dublin in July 2012. The most successful track on the album is a forgery, a song titled “I’m Goin’ to Hell,” written by Jimmy, recorded by his son’s band, and attributed to a fictional blues singer named Kevin Tankard. This recording is the first instance in all of Doyle’s work of Jimmy writing an original song, and expresses a contemporary personal and collective need for a counter-narrative to a multileveled sense of institutional, national and personal decline. Jimmy’s inclusion of the song on the compilation “plants” Kevin Tankard into a pivotal point in Irish history, the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, effectively creating an ancestor and accomplishing what he earlier intended in _The Commitments_: a musical outlet for marginalized Irish voices and identities. In this chapter, I will consider debates on race and musical expression in _The Commitments_ and then trace the development of these themes in the much-changed Dublin of _The Guts_.

_The Commitments_: Dublin Soul

_The Commitments_ is a short novel that follows a group of teenagers in a working class neighborhood of Dublin who form a band and play cover versions of classic American soul hits from the 1960s and ‘70s. In political terms, their project seems to dovetail neatly with the “cultural imperialism” model of a modern globalized economy: What the band produces, according to this line of thought, is not original art that expresses their uniqueness but rather an inadequate mimicry of a foreign culture they perceive to be superior to theirs, the inadequacy of which is proven by the eventual failure and disintegration of the band. In the end, the romantic conceptions of individual
identity, transcultural solidarity, and empowerment of the disenfranchised, embraced by the bands’ leaders, are meaningless because the music was not theirs to begin with.

Critics of *The Commitments* have tended to focus on the issue of racial politics, either pointing out the futility of the characters’ cooptation of African American culture and their inability to produce an authentic art form of their own, or claiming a kind of transcultural authenticity for the band, vouching for the often-quoted moment in which Jimmy Rabbitte exuberantly announces, “Say it once, say it loud, I’m black and I’m proud”\(^3\) as a moment of cultural understanding and working-class solidarity.\(^4\) Through reference to Arjun Appadurai’s theory of ethnoscapes and deterritorialized cultures, I suggest that the Commitments’ music, for a short time, is both rooted in their own lives as consumers in a globalized cultural economy and an authentic expression of their local situation. However, that expression is ultimately limited in its ability to speak to and for the intended audiences.

Lauren Onkey’s 1993 essay, “Celtic Soul Brothers,” provides a critique of the Commitments’ claim to African-American music. She writes that Doyle’s comfort in charging a group of white Irish teenagers in the 1980s with the production of soul music is “a problematic move in an American context,” and in the course of telling the story, Doyle “evokes an American past marked by a white controlled recording industry and disempowered black artists.”\(^5\) Her work posits the question: Can the music produced by an industry that contains deep-seated racial inequality be divorced from its American context and acquire real meaning somewhere else? Onkey places Doyle’s novel in the

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\(^4\) See note #2, above, and further discussion in this chapter.
\(^5\) Onkey, “Celtic Soul Brothers,” 154.

> We were up there scruffy, soaked in sweat, unpoised—not concealing but revealing ourselves, what was on our minds and in our hearts. I began to realize how alien this was to the white, stiff upper lip syndrome which I still find in UK music criticism... They seemed to find any kind of passion hard to take, they prefer a mask of cool... unless you're black. Which is interesting, because though this passion is to me an Irish characteristic, in American blacks it's called soul. I was called a 'White Nigger' once by a black musician, and I took it as he meant it, as a compliment. The Irish, like the blacks, feel like outsiders. There's a feeling of being homeless, migrant, but I supposed that's what all art is—a search for identity.”

Onkey’s comparison of the Commitments’ interest in African-American popular music with the concurrent work of U2 highlights the problems with cultural appropriation in both instances. In both cases, a white Irish band, interested in benefiting from a problematically simplistic and primitivist sense of authenticity in African American music, elides the complex racial history of that music in pursuit of their own self-promotion. However, as Lisa McGonigle has argued, Jimmy’s grandiose statements of

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7 Ibid., 189–190.
solidarity with African-Americans are consistently bracketed in an ironic tone, which creates some distance between the cross-cultural aims of the novel and U2’s album.⁸

In her 1998 essay, Lorraine Piroux offers one possibility for redeeming the Commitments’ notion of personal expression, if not the music they choose to play. Noting that the novel suggests that Irish identity “does not exist in and of itself but springs from variegated possibilities of transnational solidarity with the disenfranchised,”⁹ Piroux argues that Doyle challenges the very notion of a stable national identity, based on constants such as national myths, shared culture and common history. In the novel, identity is not asserted so much as it is performed through Doyle’s depiction of dialogue and slang. Through this approach, Piroux connects the “under-determination” of Doyle’s narration with a refusal to assert narrative authority over his characters, allowing them an open, undefined identity, especially in those moments when language breaks down into a representation of pure sound on the page. Doyle’s refusal to provide narrative exposition or judgment, Piroux argues, amounts to a conscious resistance to “the epistemological investment brought upon ‘Irish blackness’ by both colonialism and nativism.”¹¹ The many uses of onomatopoeia in The Commitments’ performances, then, constitute the most effective modes of resistance to a power structure that categorizes both “Irish” and “African-American” as marginal. In these moments,

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⁸ McGonigle, “Rednecks and Southsiders Need Not Apply.”
⁹ Piroux, “I’m Black an’ I’m Proud,” 46.
¹⁰ Ibid., 50. Piroux’s reference to Doyle’s narrative minimalism builds on Gerry Smyth’s argument that the heavy reliance on dialogue requires the reader to “become an active part of the meaning-making process, filling in the gaps and making choices deliberately left by the narrator” (Smyth, The Novel And The Nation, 67.) Piroux’s argument is based on Smyth’s assertion that the narrative style is “in sympathy with the general anti-intellectual content of the story” (Ibid., 69–70).
¹¹ Piroux, “I’m Black an’ I’m Proud,” 50.
Piroux writes, “[t]he “everything” of colonialist discourse and Irish writing is turned into nothing, i.e., noise.”12 Piroux’s reading is centered on an opposition between plot and narrative style. However, whatever degree of artistic success the Commitments gain through performance is subsumed at the close of the novel by internal discord and external market forces, and the “Dublin Soul” project is ultimately untenable.

Following Piroux, Mary McGlynn elaborates on the question of narrative language and power relations within the novel. Because the narrative voice in the novel is a “minor player,”13 Doyle places responsibility for finding meaning in the text on the reader. In this way, McGlynn, like Smyth and Piroux, draws a parallel between Jimmy’s enthusiasm for empowering the working class and Doyle’s refusal of narrative authority. Doyle himself addressed the question of narrative in 2001:

I’ve always wanted to bring the books down closer and closer to the characters--to get myself, the narrator, out of it as much as I can. And one of the ways to do this is to use the language that the characters actually speak, to use the vernacular, [...] so you get a sense that you are hearing it, not reading it.14

However, McGlynn questions the efficacy of a reading that asserts the validity and success of Jimmy’s “politics of the people” by demonstrating an affinity with Doyle’s own technique. Aside from the ironic tone that accompanies any explicit political statements made by the characters, the resolution of the novel shows the weaknesses in Jimmy’s argument. The band relies on capitalist strategies to promote their collectivist message and reach their audience,15 and in the end they are the victims of market forces. As McGlynn writes, “Soul cannot answer the questions that Dublin

12 Ibid., 52.
youth put to it, cannot live up to the expectations they place on it. …soul cannot hold the band together, and its concepts seem irrelevant.”

Speaking of Jimmy’s decision to reconvene the group under a new identity as “The Brassers,” a country-punk band, McGlynn sees a confession on Doyle’s part that musical discourses are in themselves empty: “for the Commitments, a doctrine or philosophy is basically a vacant vessel to be filled with whatever you want… Doyle’s interest here seems to be in exposing the motives of his characters and in critiquing the substitutability of discourses.”

Moreover, McGlynn points out the likelihood that the story of The Commitments will be repeated in any further incarnation: “…this band, or another, will always try to access the market via a new angle; the high hopes the novel sets forth early on turn out to be yet another means of production that capitalism can incorporate.”

Doyle’s return to Jimmy Rabbitte in the 2008 short story “The Deportees” supports McGlynn’s conclusion: Doyle reveals that The Brassers, like The Commitments, fell apart soon after their formation. The later short story narrates the formation of The Deportees, a folk-rock band made up of immigrant musicians whose presence in Dublin are a marker of the Celtic Tiger economy. The story of that group is left unfinished, but by the beginning of The Guts, they too have disbanded and are not mentioned in the course of the novel.

In The Guts, I argue, Doyle finds a new way to challenge the cycle that McGlynn outlines. Whereas Jimmy’s previous bands adopt and discard various musical genres as “vacant vessels,” this project is marked by his desire to find a connection, via national memory, to a particular variety of music that can expose a collective history only

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16 Ibid., 245.
17 Ibid., 246.
18 Ibid., 247.
19 Roddy Doyle, The Deportees and Other Stories, 1st American ed. (Viking, 2008).
accessible through that music. Although Jimmy’s invention of Kevin Tankard is fraudulent, it does fulfill a collective need for a particular type of ancestor. *The Guts* leaves behind the question of the Barrytown band’s appropriation of soul music, but it does continue a focus on what Åke Persson terms “a post-nationalist situation, that is the harsh social and economic realities which are the consequences of Irish nationalist ideals and failed domestic policies.”

Persson argues that the social critique of *The Commitments* is not focused on the marginalization of the Irish as a parallel to the African-American experience, but on the abandonment of the urban poor within nationalist narratives. Likewise, in his recent work on the novel, Gerry Smyth begins by citing the tendency of past critics to focus on Jimmy’s claim that “[t]he Irish are the niggers of Europe,” and proposes a shift in emphasis to Jimmy’s preceding statement: “‘Your music should be abou’ where you’re from an’ the sort o’ people yeh come from.’” Through an analysis of locality rather than race, Smyth argues that *The Commitments* becomes a narrative of “the dynamics of local music-making,” and benefits from an approach based in ethnomusicology:

> …before it 'represents' anything else at a greater or lesser symbolic level, both the literary and the filmic narratives focus quite clearly on the formation, recruitment, interrelations, early success and precipitant demise of a group of local musicians playing a form of popular music to local audiences.

In the next section, I argue that Persson’s focus on internal economic and cultural exile and Smyth’s focus on locality both evoke Arjun Appadurai’s study of nationalism in his 1996 work, *Modernity At Large*.

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20 Persson, “‘The Culchies Have Fuckin’ Everythin’: Internal Exile in Roddy Doyle’s The Barrytown Trilogy,” 200.
The Deterritorialization of Cultures: Appadurai and Doyle

In this work, Appadurai provides a challenge to a center/periphery model of global culture, in which a powerful central culture (the American popular music industry, in the case of the Commitments) overwhelms and suffocates small, local cultural enclaves or musical scenes. Appadurai suggests that instead of the local being subsumed by the global, what often happens is the opposite: the global becomes localized. Appadurai introduces the concept of the ethnoscape in order to theorize a way to talk about culture without taking recourse to a center/periphery model. Rather than the terms “community” or “culture,” which connote geographically centered, permanent social groups, the ethnoscape is a measure of the always-moving, always changing populations with various alliances and identities. Within this view, “deterritorialization,” a term Appadurai takes from Deleuze and Guattari to refer to the disjuncture of cultures and social institutions from geographic locations, is the major factor in the way cultures are exchanged.23

In terms of ethnomusicology, it is possible to think of musical forms having a type of mobility similar to Appadurai’s ethnoscapes. As Martin Stokes24 and Dave Laing25 have both pointed out, the cultural imperialism thesis suffers from an oversimplification of the function of African-American music in the global market.

23 Appadurai, Modernity At Large, 49.
Stokes writes that there is no simple and direct connection between the global popularity of African-American music and the major international record companies. Often, live music scenes thrive in places where recordings are hard to find, and corporations are regularly involved in the promotion of “local” musical artists. Likewise, Laing approaches the popularity of early rock’n’roll in Europe as “an instance of the use of foreign music by a generation as a means to distance themselves from a parental ‘national’ culture.”

Taking this into consideration, “Dublin Soul” is not only the cultural appropriation of a preexisting musical genre, but a new and original form of expression. The fact that most of the Commitments don’t know who James Brown is until Jimmy reminds them that he had appeared in “Rocky IV” does not reflect poorly on their ability to play “Night Train;” rather, it gives them the freedom to use the song (however ignorant they may be of its history in the United States) as raw material for a new discourse that is meaningful to their community and participates in a global musical exchange.

As Appadurai’s concept of ethnoscapes applies to The Commitments in a way that allows for the “emptiness” of musical genres to be reconsidered, so does his approach to memory apply to The Guts. Appadurai approaches “the past” as a readily available resource; “a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central casting.” In discussing Eric Hobsbawm’s work on “invented traditions,” Appadurai notes that although Hobsbawm has been criticized for artificially separating “authentic” from “invented” traditions, his work is valuable in that it shows that primordialism (the idea of an innate and essential culture) is not opposed to modernity. Rather, supposedly

26 Ibid.
27 Modernity At Large, 30.
historic traditions are often authored and promoted by modern nation states to suppress dissent.\textsuperscript{28} The musical plot of \textit{The Guts}, involving the fabrication and promotion of a “lost” musical recording which becomes a type of revivalist project, reinforces what Appadurai takes from Hobsbawm: what is considered to be “tradition” is wholly modern. Jimmy’s actions, therefore, are in line with the way that Appadurai considers the past and cultural memory to function in that Jimmy consciously manipulates the past, making use of a “temporal central casting,” in order to shape his present. In this novel, history fills a similar function to that of genre in \textit{The Commitments}: Jimmy uses the availability of the past in the way that he and The Commitments made use of soul music to give form to a collective desire.

“We own our blues”: \textit{The Guts}

Close to the beginning of \textit{The Guts}, Doyle reveals that by 2011, Jimmy Rabbitte is in the business of catering to aging music enthusiasts like himself: “Finding old bands, and finding the people who’d loved them. Loved them enough to pay money for their resurrected singles and albums.”\textsuperscript{29} As the founder of the music website kelticpunk.com, Jimmy contacts long-defunct Irish bands (mainly punk groups), re-releases their recordings, and promotes these recordings through twenty-first century channels, as Jimmy emphasizes: “Links. Wiki to the website. Website to wiki. Wiki to us.”\textsuperscript{30} Doyle draws an explicit parallel between the viability of Jimmy’s business and his health, with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 146.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Roddy Doyle, \textit{The Guts} (London: Cape, 2013), 49.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 55.
\end{itemize}
the economic downturn leading to the sale of the business and “the thought it had kicked off the cancer.”

The compilation album and the possibility of saving kelticpunk.com, then, aligns with the narrative of resistance to decline: physical, emotional, economic, and national. That decline, Doyle suggests, requires that Jimmy and, by extension, Ireland, turn to nostalgia as a way to move forward.

Doyle quotes The Commitments early in the novel to indicate the ways that the cultural geography of Dublin has changed since the 1980s: Considering his first client, Dessie Savage of the punk group The Irregulars, Jimmy thinks, “Des was Southside. Rednecks and southsiders need not apply. But that kind of shite didn’t seem to matter much anymore.”

If The Commitments, as Smyth and Persson argue, is the story of the Northside as a particular location that has been erased from official images of Ireland and particularly of Dublin, then The Guts takes place in a Dublin where the recession has affected the entire city. In this novel as in The Commitments, Jimmy is motivated by the desire to find an artistic outlet for an economically depressed city.

In the same way that Jimmy saw soul music as a necessary artistic outlet for the Northside in the 1980s, he now views the 2012 Eucharistic Congress for its potential for national revival. With a project intended to “trace the roots of punk to some whistlin’ bogger in 1932,” he hopes to find “somethin’ hidden… Music that never made it onto the radio. Our own blues, say. Suppressed—deliberately forgotten. Cos it didn’t tally with De Valera’s vision for Ireland.”

Jimmy’s search for a counter-narrative to the story told of and by the 1932 Eucharistic Congress presents an overt resistance to the idea

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31 Ibid., 63.
32 Ibid., 54.
33 Ibid., 128.
34 Ibid., 129.
of that gathering as a transcendent, universally empowering moment in Irish history.

However, Doyle allows for a narrative of the 1932 event that is not based purely on an oppressive “vision for Ireland.” Jimmy’s father, Jimmy Sr., praises the initial Eucharistic Congress by comparing it to the 1990 World Cup:

The country was only ten years old, remember. An' dirt poor. Then, like the man in the flat next door to my mother's gets a radio—a big fuckin' deal. An' everyone bails in to hear it. She always spoke about hearin' your man, John McCormack, singin' live on the wireless. At the mass. Like he was Sinatra or—I don't know—some huge star today. The Bublé fucker or someone. My father said it was like the whole world was listenin' to somethin' tha' was happenin' here in Dublin. An' it probably was as well.35

Jimmy Sr.’s more positive depiction of the first Irish Eucharistic Congress is notable because John McCormack, rather than Eamon de Valera, is at its center.36 His version of it as a musical and global event matches the positive recollections cited in the previous chapter. Jimmy Sr. presents a collective experience that is political in the sense that Jimmy Jr. saw soul music as political in The Commitments: rather than aligned with a particular political party, it is radically inclusive of individuals previously left out of an overarching narrative. As McCormack brought Dublin to the attention of the world, so did the Commitments aim to put the Northside at the center of Dublin cultural life. In his push to find music that was “suppressed—deliberately forgotten,” Jimmy challenges what he sees as de Valera’s Eucharistic Congress, the triumph of an oppressively conservative notion of Ireland, but not the event described by his father—an ephemeral moment of inclusiveness. In other words, the juxtaposition of Jimmy Sr.’s praise of the

35 Ibid., 144.
36 Jimmy’s opinion of de Valera is based on the powerful figure he later became. As I show in Chapter 3, however, de Valera was at a particularly vulnerable point in his career in 1932, and it was the success of the Eucharistic Congress that largely enabled Fianna Fáil’s powerful alliance with the Catholic Church in later years.
1932 Eucharistic Congress as a moment of national unity and renewal and Jimmy Jr.’s desire to present a counternarrative to the “official story” suggests that it is possible to embrace the musical moment while resisting the nationalist and triumphalist message communicated and promoted by the new Irish government and the Catholic Church.

The possibility that Jimmy’s project is compatible with Jimmy Sr.’s nostalgia for the 1932 Eucharistic Congress is supported by his later justification for the compilation album:

…Ireland in 1932 was a miserable place. That's my guess, and I bet I'm right. Kids with no shoes, hunger, bad housin', the Church supervisin' everythin'. But the official picture was different. Happy peasants, glad to be rid of the Brits. He was loving this.
—So anyway. One of the few escapes, beside real escape—emigration, like—was music. It's always been like tha'. Music is the great escape. In the words an' the rhythm. You could do things an' say things that weren't allowed. And not just sex now. Although everythin' is sex.
[…]
—But anyway. The music. Happy when times were bad. Or laments when they were bein' told that things were lookin' up. They could tell the priests an' the politicians tha' they'd do whatever seemed natural an' they wouldn't be askin' for permission. Inside in the song. In Ireland, in 1932.  

The potential for political resistance that Jimmy sees in music here is compatible with Jimmy Sr.’s version of the Eucharistic Congress specifically because that resistance is hidden “inside in the song.”

At the same time, Jimmy identifies the music he searches for as authentically Irish, mainly by contrasting it against the “Celtic rock” that is the main source of profit for kelticpunk.com, which Jimmy derides as “a portal to electrified diddley-eye” at its worst. These bands, according to Jimmy, are “a stable of bitter old men who, forty years ago, had tried to fuse traditional music and rock. They’d failed, fuckin’ miserably. But

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none of them knew it... Their struggle had been pointless. Pointless and just shite.”

Whereas these bands attempt to find a sound that is Irish and contemporary through a superficial combination of traditional melodies with rock instruments, the songs on the compilation album, ideally, would expose an anti-establishment punk ethos already present in the music of Jimmy’s grandparents and great-grandparents—that is, in a musical repertoire already considered to be sacred.

Jimmy’s method for finding these recordings bypasses the known archives at RTÉ for a more democratic and “authentic” approach, going directly to people who have a personal connection to the music: “—We’ll go after tapes. Parish stuff, family stuff. Lost records. Someone who sang—some teenager back then is ninety-four or ninety-five now.” When he finds the first recording to go into the collection, a song of emigration sung by a young girl, the narrator notes appreciatively that “It had none of the Paddy, none of the dishonesty at the core of every Irish song Jimmy had ever heard, except ‘Teenage Kicks’ and maybe ‘The Boys Are Back in Town.’” Here, Jimmy aligns his found recording not with traditional music but with the Northern Irish punk band The Undertones and Dublin rock band Thin Lizzy, thus creating a category expressive of a more inclusive Irish identity.

As his compilation project takes shape while he undergoes chemotherapy, Jimmy also makes a personal transition from music connoisseur and band manager to musician as he takes up playing the trumpet. The experience prepares him for the musical

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38 Ibid., 99.
39 Ibid., 129.
40 Ibid., 160.
invention that will dominate the second half of the novel and provides him with a sense of empowerment that is otherwise in jeopardy:

Now and again, once or twice each time he played, he got a note that sounded right, a lovely thing that filled the room and the house. There was something great, a bit brilliant about sending the sound out, anticipating it, then blowing and getting it exactly as he'd wanted, and expected.\(^{41}\)

The trumpet is a significant development for Jimmy as a character, marking a shift in his self-image from impresario to artist. As the trumpet gives Jimmy a way to think of himself as a musician, the compilation project leads him to move gradually from the role of collector to that of composer. Each addition to the album contains more inventive input from Jimmy, creating a natural progression towards the forgery that dominates the second half of the novel. The previously mentioned song of emigration, sung by “a wild woman named Dolores McKenna,” contains a sexual suggestiveness that inspires his thoughts about music as “the great escape” and leads him to rename her “Weepin’ Dolores” and continue a search for “a singer who hides nothin’.”\(^{42}\) His next discovery is a recording of a céili band performing Duke Ellington’s “Black and Tan Fantasy,” retitled “Liscannor Bay Fantasy”:

> They listened to an accordion doing what should have been done by a trumpet… —I love that, he said. —Ceili lads listenin' to nigger jazz, down a boreen somewhere.—With the sound down low.—Very low. Huddled around the gramophone, like. And hidin' the record. Passin' it around. In a different cover. It might even've been illegal. Banned.—Different times.—The good ol' days, he said.—They must've been lookin' for new music.—And they found it.\(^{43}\)

Jimmy’s imagined scene is not far-fetched, since Duke Ellington established an international reputation with “Black and Tan Fantasy” in 1927 and toured Europe for the

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 178.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 163.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 183.
first time in 1933. However, Jimmy’s labeling of the record with the racial slur is possibly incompatible with the way the recording was received at the time. The composition, co-written by Ellington and cornetist Bubber Miley, whose solo is featured in the famous recording, opens with Miley’s solo in which he quotes a spiritual he learned from his mother, titled “Hosanna.” That spiritual, in turn, is based on a popular hymn, “The Holy City,” written by the white British composer, Michael Maybrick, under the pseudonym Stephen Adams. In his study of musical quotations, David Metzer considers this composition as an especially complex hybrid of musical styles, “a variegated piece that blends the spiritual together with blues, contemporary urban jazz idioms, call-and-response patterns, and Chopin quotation.” In the cornet solo, which Jimmy recognizes in the accordion in the Irish recording, Bubber Miley “strikingly transforms “The Holy City”: darkening the melody by shifting to the minor mode, adding syncopations, and, most conspicuously, changing its character from an ebullient sacred

45 Patrick Waddington, “Maybrick, Michael (Stephen Adams) (1841-1913),” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46651. Maybrick was most successful as a baritone and a composer of popular and religious songs in the late 19th century, and “The Holy City” was his most popular work. The song features prominently in the “Circe” episode of Ulysses, leading into the “New Bloomusalem” section (U 15.2115). Maybrick himself has a presence elsewhere in the novel, as Molly briefly considers the famous 1904 murder trial of Florence Elizabeth Chandler Maybrick for the poisoning of her husband and the composer’s brother, James Maybrick (U 18.234-45)—a trial now discussed mainly in light of the 1992 emergence of James Maybrick’s supposed diary, in which he confessed to the Whitechapel “Jack the Ripper” murders (Shirley Harrison, The Diary of Jack the Ripper: The Chilling Confessions of James Maybrick (New York: Pocket Star Books, 1993.).
song to a somber blues.” Metzer’s description of Miley’s transformation of Maybrick’s song supports Jimmy’s assumption that the céili band’s recording is an adaptation of “Black and Tan Fantasy” and not “The Holy City,” both of which a traveling performer would be likely to have known in 1932.

“Black and Tan Fantasy,” being a Harlem jazz transformation of a Southern African-American spiritual based on an English hymn, already carries within its composition history a complex interplay of cultures, nations, and racial identities. Duke Ellington’s title for the song adds an explicit political message: In a 1933 interview, Ellington said that “[t]here are in Harlem certain places after the style of night clubs patronized by both white and coloured amusement seekers, and these are colloquially known as “black and tans.” His definition marks the composition as a “fantasy” of cross-cultural unity not unlike the connection Jimmy pursues in The Commitments, one that is mocked at the end by a satirical quote of Chopin’s Funeral March. Doyle further ironizes this “fantasy” by placing it in an Irish context, where “black and tan” refers not to a space of cross-racial unity but to a particularly violent and ugly chapter in Irish history.

The element of cultural exchange in the Irish recording then, is only the first layer of many inherent in this particular tune. However Jimmy may perceive the origins of the tune, its presence in the narrative as a document of musical hybridity anticipates the introduction of Jimmy’s own piece, which appeals to its audience partially because of its migrant aspect: a blues song recorded by Dublin teenagers, presented to Irish audiences

47 Ibid., 141.
as a recovered 1932 recording, and “revived” in Bulgaria and brought “back” to Ireland via Youtube.

“We’ll decide what sort of music there was in 1932”: The Revival of Kevin Tankard

Jimmy’s transition from manager and orchestrator to musician, along with his reinvention of Dolores McKenna as “Weepin’ Dolores” and the cultural exchange inherent in the céilí recording, sets the precedent for the production of “I’m Goin’ to Hell.” The motivation for the project ultimately comes from Jimmy’s sons:

—What sort of music was there in 1932? said Marvin.
—We’ll decide that, said young Jimmy.
—Wha’?
—We’ll decide what sort of music there was in 1932.
Jimmy stared at him, just for a bit.
—Good man.49

Soon after this conversation, young Jimmy gives Kevin Tankard his name.50 The song, however, is wholly Jimmy’s invention. The idea comes to him from a headline in a free weekly Catholic newspaper: “DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN AND HELL.”51 Two months from the opening of the 2012 Eucharistic Congress, the paper disappoints Jimmy, who is hoping for a large-scale event to boost his album sales. He learns that the Pope will not attend, and the planned event seems more like a muted conference than the festival he had imagined:

Events, workshops, keynote addresses; ecumenism, marriage and the family; priesthood and the ministry; reconciliation. It wasn't what Jimmy'd expected. Where was the big stuff—the crowds? Only seven thousand had

49 *The Guts*, 204.
51 Ibid., 205.
registered. They were coming from Kazakhstan, El Salvador and Uganda. These would be hardcore fuckers; they'd be walking all the way, over the water and all. And they wouldn't be buying Jimmy's album.\(^{52}\)

The dramatic headline, although a mismatch for the event as described, resonates with Jimmy’s belief in his own impending death: “He looked at the front page again. DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN AND HELL. He had the four walls of his song.”\(^{53}\)

Regardless of whether the Eucharistic Congress itself would attain the momentousness of 1932, Jimmy decides to transfer the hoped-for scale of passion and spectacle from the anticipated event to his song.

The recording itself receives little narration in the novel. With Jimmy Sr. present as an observer, three generations of Rabbettes gather at a studio. The moment gives Jimmy a sense of finality to his life:

> It was the magic Jimmy had wanted all his life. A small gang of men, there because he’d brought him there, strumming, tapping and groaning—
> —I WANT HER LEGS—
> I'M GOIN’ TO HELL—
> They were making something new. It was perfect—maybe perfect just this once. Was Lochlainn even recording it?
> He was—or he seemed to be. The lads kept rolling. It was 1932.\(^{54}\)

Doyle positions this “perfect” moment as the culmination of a long process involving Jimmy’s manipulation of the other entries to the album, his increasing sense of recklessness, his need to build a relationship with his children, and his new efforts to produce original musical works. In a way reminiscent of Julia Morkan’s performance in “The Dead,” the musical performance creates an alternate reality (“It was 1932”) that allows Jimmy the sense of accomplishment he needs. From this point through the end of

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 204–205.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 205.
\(^{54}\) Ibid., 218.
the novel, Appadurai’s notion of the availability of the past dominates Jimmy’s musical experiences.

The final section of the novel details the Electric Picnic music festival, where Marvin’s blues-rock band, Moanin’ at Midnight, performs “I’m Goin’ to Hell” for a young audience who believes them to be Bulgarian. The performance, like everything in the novel, is described from Jimmy’s point of view. Doyle presents it as his moment of catharsis, listening to his composition emerging from an Irish history he invented. This climax brings a fantastical element to the novel: Jimmy’s most recent medical checkup showed no cancer cells, the song he wrote will save the album’s lackluster sales, he suffers no discernable consequences for his hoax, and his son’s musical career is launched. As the band begins the song, Jimmy thinks, “It couldn’t get louder—the crowd was the band.” Jimmy’s song, planted fictitiously in Irish history, emerges as the work of the Irish audience in 2013. In this moment, Jimmy does achieve “what he wanted all his life”: the organic unity of audience and musical work that he worked for in The Commitments.

After this climactic scene, Doyle narrates one last musical performance as Jimmy and his friends, including Outspan Foster, who was a member of the Commitments and is now dying of cancer, go to see The Cure, who did in fact headline the 2012 Electric Picnic festival. Doyle’s depiction of the festival is detailed and largely accurate: Jimmy and his friends see performances by Patti Smith, The xx, Mark Lanegan, Sigur Rós, Christy Moore, Grizzly Bear, and Dexy’s Midnight Runners, all of whom performed that...

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55 The band is named for the 1962 recording of the same title by the American blues singer, Howlin’ Wolf.
In his review for the *Irish Times*, Fintan O’Toole commented on the presence of older artists, writing that large outdoor festivals were originally meant to unite audiences as a generation, and the music, by definition, belonged to the young. The presence of artists such as Patti Smith, The Cure, and Christy Moore indicated that “the generational identity contained in the music is blurred.” As O’Toole points out, “less time passed between the end of the second World War and the formation of The Cure than has passed between the formation of The Cure and now.” The intergenerational nature of the festival and, of course, the name of the headlining band reinforce Doyle’s themes of aging and personal, physical, communal and national revival.

“Something From the Past Tense”: *The Guts* and Memory

In this chapter, I focus on the musical plot over other important narrative threads in *The Guts* because Jimmy’s hoax brings to the forefront many of the issues on which this dissertation is centered, e.g., musical performance, musical authenticity as a process of constructing social narratives, and music as an avenue for community formation and

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59 In keeping with the importance of Youtube videos to the novel, it is worth mentioning that The Cure’s performance of “Lovecats,” which closes *The Guts*, is available to view online: *The Cure at Electric Picnic 2012 Encore Two (7 Songs)*, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCgMzq4HuO8&feature=youtube_gdata_player. “Lovecats” begins at 3:15 and runs for almost seven minutes. The Cure played for over three hours in total to a large and enthusiastic audience, including two encores, and the performance of that song in particular is, like the last scene of *The Guts*, especially celebratory and energetic.
definition. However, many reviewers of *The Guts* have considered the Kevin Tankard plot to be the unrealistic and therefore the weakest aspect of the novel. Theo Tait, writing for *The Guardian*, calls the novel “overplotted and underdeveloped”\(^{60}\); J. P. O’Malley, also writing for *The Guardian*, writes that the novel’s ending “is unconvincing, and leaves the reader disappointed”\(^{61}\); Matthew Spektor writes in *The New York Times* that the ending was “faintly implausible”\(^{62}\); and Priscilla Gilman, writing for *The Boston Globe*, adds that “the denouement… comes at the expense of believability and takes *The Guts* into a realm of wish-fulfillment that leaves behind the deeper and more interesting novel it often elsewhere is.”\(^{63}\) The critique is valid, but I add that the same element of fantasy that marks the close of the novel, and moreover the entire forgery plot, is not out of place within Doyle’s work (the Last Roundup trilogy required a similar suspension of belief, and *The Guts* approaches this element with a greater degree of irony and humor). Rather, the element of “wish fulfillment” is woven into the entire novel and makes the idealistic nature of the conclusion appropriate.

Doyle commented on Jimmy’s forgery in an interview with Danny Arter of *The Bookseller*, drawing a parallel between the song and the history of Irish writing: In his work for the compilation album, Jimmy "was looking around for the alternative Irish

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history, and then like a lot of writers, he thought: ‘If I can't find it, I'll just make it up.’”

In a later interview with Jake Kerridge of The Telegraph, Doyle commented on the connection between the era of economic austerity and collective nostalgia as an inspiration for the novel, noting that “people were easily and almost happily slipping back into the soundtrack of the previous recession” in the 1980s.”

The decision to return to Jimmy Rabbitte, Doyle says, was a result of his primary goal to depict the Dublin of 2012. The theme of nostalgia within the novel, then, is a reflection of Doyle’s own nostalgia for the Barrytown novels.

In the same interview, Doyle states that the “real story” of The Guts is that of Jimmy’s journey “to shake off this notion that he’s something from the past tense.”

What the novel also shows, though, is what Appadurai discusses in Modernity At Large: The past itself is not something from the past tense, but is a part of the process of creating stories in the present. In the novel, Jimmy’s forgery is a success because it fills the need for an ancestor who articulates sexual desire, religious doubt, and a counter-narrative to the Eucharistic Congress “official story,” and who is especially needed in an economically uncertain time.

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66 Ibid.
Conclusion: Found Connections and Further Study

The chapters of this dissertation vary widely in scope, chronology, and theme, but throughout my writing process I was struck by the large- and small-scale coincidences and connections among them. These correspondences, I feel, are not coincidental but point to the centrality of questions of musical audiences, the production of gendered identities through music, the construction of relationships between the individual and community through music, musical constructions of memory and the past, and the ways that music constructs national identity to the current state of Irish studies. In this conclusion, I outline a few of the themes that emerged through the course of my research and point to possibilities for further study.

Many of the theoretical and historical sources that were foundational to my approaches to music and/in literature focused on music as a performed art. Unlike printed texts, musical performances exist “in the moment” and are by definition transitory. They are also inherently interactive: a musical audience is never “only” an audience, but is always a part of the process of finding and constructing meaning. Through my exploration of these concepts, I found Josh Kun’s concept of the “audiotopia” and Gerry Smyth’s work on musical spaces to be in dialogue with Paige Reynolds’ work on Irish audiences. Specifically, many of the topics covered in this dissertation present unique instances of a musical audience becoming the focus of a performance. For example, at the first performance of Douglas Hyde’s “Casadh an
“tSugain,” the first Irish language play to be produced in Dublin, John Millington Synge was struck by the impromptu singing of Irish songs during the intervals. The significance of the event (the arrival of the Irish language to the intellectual life of Dublin) is given its meaning by the audience. Similarly, one reporter at the Eucharistic Congress described John McCormack’s singing as “Ireland’s offering”: here, one individual’s performance becomes a national product, involving the contribution of the whole nation. In each of these instances, the value of the musical experience comes from both the communality expressed by all present and the ephemerality of the moment.

In addition to the sense of community present at and in a musical performance, this dissertation has looked at music as a site of interaction between individual and communal identities, especially those cases in which the individual is constructed through gender. In the case of Molly Bloom and Julia Morkan, music allows an increased agility with gendered identity: These characters claim prescriptive operatic roles in order to widen their own possibilities for expression. Also, as noted in my introduction, the isolated male musician is a constant throughout the dissertation. Yeats and Gregory each invested the wandering musical figure with the ability to renew a national identity. The presence of Don Giovanni in *Ulysses* furthers Molly’s access to a variety of gendered identities, and specifically the wandering singer. Like Owen O’Sullivan, one of Yeats’ sources for Hanrahan, Giovanni is a seducer and a threat to the patriarchal family structure, and his play with disguise parallels Molly’s own attraction to performance. Further, John McCormack, being a modern type of celebrity and model of Irish masculinity for the twentieth century, personified a cosmopolitan and sophisticated ideal for the new Irish state. Finally, the significance that Jimmy Rabbitte sees in his creation,
Kevin Tankard, is similar to what Yeats saw in Raftery: an historical figure who could fill the role of a needed ancestor for a changing Ireland.

The chapters of this dissertation also all engage with the topic of music and memory in some way. When speaking of historical tradition, or in the case of this study, when speaking of musical tradition, the past is not an artifact to be preserved so much as it is a foundation for the process of modernization. The case of music is especially appropriate for this theoretical approach because its performance is by nature transitory and interactive. In Chapter 1, I cite Joep Leerssen, who defines “tradition” as “one long, ongoing, never-resolved and never-abandoned attempt to impose an imaginative unity on the contradictions of the past…not the pious passing on of a discrete heirloom, but the ever-renewed and never-completed attempt to bring order to a vast and chaotic curiosity shop.” In Chapter 3, I cite Conor McCarthy as his challenge to the “traditional vs. modern” dichotomy applies to the Eucharistic Congress: McCarthy writes that nationalism, far from being a regressive focus on an ideal past, is “itself an element of modernity.” In Chapter 4, I base my reading of The Guts on Appadurai’s figuring of the past as “a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios,” a concept that allows for a forgery of an historical recording to have real cultural value.

Finally, through the course of my research, there were many paths I didn’t take but look forward to pursuing in the future. First, my work on feminist approaches to opera for Chapter 2 introduced me to the larger field of study that focuses on gender and music. I’d like to do more work on “operatic novels” and specifically, within Irish

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3 Appadurai, Modernity At Large, 30.
studies, *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa* by George Moore and *As Music And Splendor* by Kate O’Brien. Outside of Irish studies, Willa Cather’s *Song of the Lark* provides an especially good window into the gender dynamics of opera. My interest in writers’ depictions of opera is connected to the fact that opera is such a closed world; the same factor is present in Colum McCann’s *Dancer* and the perspective it offers of ballet, another highly gendered and structured art world. These types of works invite a study that brings together performance studies, gender theory, and queer theory.

My work on the Eucharistic Congress pointed me in the direction of the 1935 Dance Hall act, which I mention at the close of the chapter in the context of efforts to control the energy present at the Eucharistic Congress. In reading scholarship by J. H. Whyte, Jim Smyth, and Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, among others, I became interested in the intentional and unintentional ways that this Act influenced the development of music in Ireland and opened the way for the showband era. Further, the Eucharistic Congress and the subsequent Dance Hall Act both gained a significant presence in later imaginative literature, and I would especially like to do a close reading of Brien Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) and *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993) in this context.

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Finally, Jimmy Rabbitte’s successful hoax in *The Guts* inspired me to look for real-life instances in which musical figures have been wholly invented, or at least partially fabricated, for the sake of establishing a sense of historical authenticity. For example, the guitarist John Fahey credited a fictional Depression-era blues singer, Blind Joe Death, for one side of his 1959 debut album, titled *Blind Joe Death*, and “planted” several copies of the record at Goodwill stores to be discovered by folk enthusiasts.⁹

In a broader context, these questions of fabrication and authenticity in a musical context can be connected with my study of music and authenticity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Chapter 1. I first thought of the McPherson controversy of the eighteenth century; a case that also refers to the need for a bardic figure as a national symbol, much like Lady Gregory’s and Yeats’ positioning of Raftery as central to the literary revival. The controversy centered on James McPherson’s fabrication of an ancient Scottish bard, “Ossian,” and the 1760 publication of a text supposedly authored by him. Like Jimmy Rabbitte, McPherson lived during a time when swift cultural changes such as the spread of literacy meant that audiences were concerned about the loss of traditional culture. As Nick Groom writes of McPherson, *Ossian* was based on a real oral tradition, songs that MacPherson had heard personally, and traditions he observed in his extensive travels in Scotland. However, the emerging emphasis on the authority of the text in London literary culture compelled MacPherson to “invent” a manuscript in order to convey his discoveries.¹⁰ Like Rabbitte, McPherson responded to a need for

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authentic memories. Finally, in an Irish context, David Lloyd and Seamus Deane have both written on James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849) as a mythological as well as historical figure who was often depicted as a symbol for Ireland.¹¹

Through all of these paths of research, music remains an important lens through which to look at issues of identity and authenticity because it is transitory, dynamic, and communal. As Kun writes of “audiotopias,” music provides a “window” of time during which new configurations of identity and social relationships can emerge.

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