
IRISH STUDIES IN SPAIN – 2011

Constanza del Río-Álvaro (ed.)

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Introduction

Constanza del Río-Álvaro

In my debut as editor of the section “Irish Studies in Spain”, I first wish to thank Rosa González for her trust and confidence in commissioning me to assume this job. I have taken up the task with enthusiasm, only hoping to achieve the standards of quality of my predecessors, José Francisco Fernández and Inés Praga, just the standards that our journal *Estudios Irlandeses* deserves. The prestige of the journal keeps growing, and that is a fact, not a question of motherly love. Last November I attended an Irish Conference in Falun, Sweden, at the University of Dalarna, where most delegates belonged to the Nordic Irish Network. All of them knew the journal and most of them praised its excellence. I could not but feel proud of my occasional work for the journal and, particularly, of the efforts and savoir-faire of its General Editor and the whole Editorial Board, and of the scholarly rigour of its contributors.

In this my first appearance, the readers will perceive some novelties: first, efficiently advised by José Francisco Fernández, I have decided to include any work, whether critical, literary, historical, etc., written originally in Spanish though always dealing with Irish matter; then, I have discarded the alphabet as a criterion to list the reviews. Rather, I have opted for grouping them according to their nature: a) works in Spanish; b) translations into Spanish; and c) literary criticism, cultural studies, history, etc. written in English though mostly authored by Spanish scholars. I sincerely expect that the new arrangement, together with the selection of reviews for issue 7 of *Estudios Irlandeses*, will be both pleasing and interesting for the reader.

Starting with the Spanish originals, there comes first the review of a novel by one of the most prominent contemporary Spanish novelists: Enrique Vila-Matas. Just in its title, *Dublinesca* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2010), the narrative

announces its indebtedness to Irish culture by echoing Joyce’s *Dubliners* (1914). Its reviewer, José Francisco Fernández, centres on its protagonist, a retired editor who laments the changes in the literary world brought about by a general commodification and debasement of Literature (with a capital L). Simultaneously, he also shifts his literary preferences from France to Ireland, seen as a “new and strange” cultural site where Joyce and his *Ulysses* (1922) are still alive and kicking. The Joyce icon is soon followed by Beckett, whose work Vila-Matas, and his partial surrogate the protagonist of the novel, have always read with enthusiasm. Both Irish writers are paid homage in this most literary of novels. *Dublinesca* is followed by *Dublinés* (Alfonso Zapico, Bilbao: Astiberri, 2011), where more so than in Vila-Matas’ novel, Joyce is the absolute protagonist for this is a biography of the Irish writer, though a peculiar one. It is, as far as I know, the first graphic novel reviewed in the journal, and I would like to use this occasion to call the reader’s attention to the increasing relevance of and scholarly interest in this emergent genre. In his review, Andrés Romero-Jódar links *Dublinés* with other graphic novels by the same author, traces the influence of Richard Ellman’s biography on this work, combines generic knowledge of the graphic novel with knowledge on Joyce, and praises this graphic novel’s fitting association between form and content. He finally recommends this piece as a good first serious approach to the figure of Joyce. Closing this subsection of Spanish originals, we find *El sueño del celta* (Mario Vargas Llosa, Madrid: Alfaguara, 2010), Vargas Llosa’s first novel after being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. As the reviewer Laura Izarra explains, this novel comes out of Vargas Llosa’s admiration for Roger Casement’s versatile life and figure. Rather a work from its author’s

imagination and fantasy than a merely historical account, Izarra sees it as a hybrid novel blending journalism, fiction, biography and history. She comments on Vargas Llosa's appropriation and rewriting of parts of Casement's *The Amazon Journal* (1997) and questions the epilogue's narrative and historical function in the novel.

El sueño del celta perfectly fits in with the first review of works translated from English into Spanish: *Roger Casement: Diario de la Amazonía* (Roger Casement, La Coruña: Ediciones del Viento, 2011. Ed. Angus Mitchell & trans. Sonia Fernández Ordás). This is a translation from *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1997), also edited by Angus Mitchell. The reviewer, Mariana Bolfarine, commends the contributions of the editor, explains the differences between the Spanish and English editions and highlights the import of the Amazonian experience for Casement. Just as decades later George Orwell would take his experience of imperial domination at Burma as a template for any system based on exploitation (e.g.: capitalism), Casement's nationalist conscience awakened when he perceived the similarities between the colonial situation in Brazil and Peru and that of his country, Ireland. *La Habitación* (Emma Donoghue, Madrid: Alfaguara, 2010. Trans. Eugenia Vázquez Nacarino) is the next translation, reviewed by Celestino Deleyto. After a general introduction to Emma Donoghue emphasizing her nature "as a border-crossing and transnational creator", Deleyto gives details of the novel's diegetic world and narrative choices to then centre on the translation problems Vázquez Nacarino has encountered, since in the original the novel is marked by the invention of an idiosyncratic language meant to convey a very peculiar view of the world. In this respect, Deleyto remarks and exemplifies the achievements and occasional failures of the translator, on the whole, nevertheless, praising Vázquez Nacarino's work. Novels and short stories dealing with the Irish diaspora and emigration have already become some kind of subgenre within contemporary Irish narrative. Two recent examples are Sebastian Barry's *On Canaan's Side* (2011) and Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn* (2010). Unfortunately, and to my

knowledge, Barry's novels have not been translated into Spanish yet, and I wish here that some Spanish Publishing House should consider this possibility since, for example, *The Secret Scripture* (2008) is a wonderful novel that, I think, could please even the most demanding of readers. Colm Tóibín's work, maybe because of the author's strong bonds with Spain or his more international profile, is a different case. As the reviewer Marisol Morales states, most of Tóibín's work has been translated into Spanish, including his last novel (*Brooklyn*, Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2011. Trans. Ana Andrés Lleó). Tóibín is another instance of the transnational Irish writer who has lived in different countries and deals with Irish matter only in some of his novels, such as in *Brooklyn*, an example of the Irish diasporic novel. Morales emphasises the novel's questioning of stereotypes in relation to Irish emigration and its debunking and provocative view of the myths associated with the Irish diaspora. The last translation takes us back to the figure of Samuel Beckett, now as a young and confrontational writer whose first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, was written in 1932 though first published in 1992. This novel has recently been translated into Japanese, Dutch, German and Spanish (*Sueño con mujeres que ni fu ni fa*, Barcelona: Tusquets, 2011. Trans. José Francisco Fernández y Miguel Martínez-Lage). María Jesús López takes into consideration the novel's narrative and linguistic playfulness – a result of Joyce's influence on the early Beckett – and considers the great challenges that the novel poses for translation. She comments on the different options the translators have used to make the novel a little less demanding on the reader, yet "without excessively domesticating or simplifying the text". Her final assessment is that the translation is "superb" and will perhaps contribute to "the re-edition of old and unavailable translations" of other works by Beckett.

The last reviews are those of two edited collections of interdisciplinary articles: literature, cinema, cultural studies, history, politics, etc. Undoubtedly, the different outlooks from which Ireland is perceived in the collections are refreshing and illuminating. The first volume, *Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on*

Literature and the Visual Arts (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011. Eds. Marisol Morales & Juan F. Elices), gathers contributions that dwell on the dynamics between globalisation and locality. After summarising in some detail the theoretical introduction written by the editors, the reviewer, David Clark, goes over the separate articles, concluding that the volume “represents an absorbing contribution to scholarship within the field of contemporary Irish Studies”. Finally, Asier Altuna reviews *Dreaming the Future: New Horizons/Old Barriers in 21st-Century Ireland* (*Irish Studies in Europe* 3, Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2011. Eds. María Losada Friend *et al.*). Here it is the interaction between the old and the new that frames the contributions. As Altuna remarks, the articles challenge critical and temporal barriers, presenting “new critical perspectives on Irish topics”. Altuna summarises all the contributions and concludes by saying that the volume is “an illuminating, comprehensive and challenging publication on Irish Studies”.

For reasons of time, a monograph on Brian Friel and a bilingual translation of Seamus Heaney’s poetry have not made it in this issue of

Estudios Irlandeses. They surely will find accommodation in the next issue. William Trevor’s novel *Love and Summer* (2009) was translated into Spanish in 2011 (*Verano y amor*, Barcelona: Salamandra. Trans. Victoria Malet) by the same Publishing House that published Trevor’s previous novel, *La historia de Lucy Gault* (2004. Trans. Patricia Antón de Vez). I can only feel delighted that Trevor’s novels, if not his short stories, are getting known and appreciated by a Spanish readership. *Verano y amor* was generally hailed by Spanish critics and the reason for not reviewing it here is that the novel in the English original was already reviewed in issue 6 of the journal. Doing it again, even in translation, would be somewhat redundant.

Well, now that Ireland and Spain are both peripheral countries, both unwilling members of the exclusive club of PIGS (I am always amazed at the amount of new identities that are heaped on us), there is something to celebrate. The bonds between the two countries have historically been strong but they seem to be increasingly so.

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Dublinesca by Enrique Vila-Matas
 Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2010.
 325 pp. ISBN: 978-84-322-1278-9.

Reviewer: **José Francisco Fernández**

Dublinesca, by Enrique Vila-Matas, is not by any means a novel about emigrants, although the protagonist falls under the spell of all things Irish (or more precisely English in the widest sense of the word, in what effectively constitutes the adoption of a new culture) and decides to go to Dublin and there enact a funeral for the age of print, the Gutenberg era, which he understands is in its death throes. Samuel Riba is a prestigious and recently retired editor, perhaps the last of the cultivated representatives of his trade, who wants to mourn the disappearance of the literary novel, eclipsed as it is by the emergence of Neo-Gothic artifacts and best-sellers. Choosing James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) as the pinnacle of glory of a fading epoch, Riba consequently decides to carry out the funeral rites in the capital of Ireland on 16 June, Bloomsday.

There are personal reasons for running away from Spain. Since he stopped drinking two years before, when he had been taken to hospital suffering from a physical breakdown that almost killed him, he has become a grumpy old man and everything makes him angry. He is almost sixty, has no children, and lives in Barcelona with Celia, his wife, who has threatened to leave him if he returns to the bottle. He spends his days locked in this flat, surfing the internet for hours like a Japanese *hikikomori*, and blaming himself for not having been able during his thirty years as editor to find and publish the unknown young author who would have become the literary genius of the new era. He feels empty and gradually out of touch with reality. At the full height of his profession his inner void was filled by compiling his catalogue, the list of authors he gathered and which made of him a legend in the publishing industry. That was an essential element of his personality then, apart from

having an active social life. At the time when the novel begins, in May 2008 (the two other chapters correspond to the following two months, June and July, of the same year), he occasionally goes out of his flat to visit his elderly parents, who live in the same house where he grew up, and this contributes enormously to his feeling trapped and stuck in time.

But there are also cultural motives that provoke in him the need for a change. As Vila-Matas has acknowledged (in Cruz 2010) there are many autobiographical aspects in his portrait of Samuel Riba, although conveniently disguised. The author himself belongs to the literary generation who came of age and published their first books in the nineteen sixties and seventies, when Barcelona was the Mecca of modernity in a backward and tradition-bound Spain. Because of its closeness to the rest of the continent it had retained the atmosphere of a cosmopolitan city and was an exception in the cultural wasteland of Francoist Spain.

The most daring publishing houses (Lumen, Seix Barral, Tusquets...) were in Barcelona and the most innovative and transgressive intellectuals had begun their career in that city (the Goytisolo brothers, Jaime Gil de Biedma, Juan Marsé, Ana María Moix, Félix de Azúa, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán...). For this generation French culture was the model to follow and French literature their artistic referent. Enrique Vila-Matas is firmly grounded in that tradition, his name permanently associated to the group of Francophile artists from Barcelona (Baños 2010: 57). If in the realm of fiction Vila-Matas makes his main character undergo a personal crisis, the author himself suffered a serious kidney failure in 2006, when he had to undergo life-saving surgery. After this

experience he reconsidered his past career and a new horizon was deemed necessary. In the novel this means going English or “dar el salto inglés” as he defines it. His friends tell him that the new approach will be good for him, will make him more flexible, lighter, a more humorous kind of person. If he abandoned Spain for France to escape from “el eterno verano inculto del Franquismo” (117), where it was a commonplace to be proud of not having read *Ulysses* for its being boring and incomprehensible (116), now perhaps is time for a change of route, and literature written in English seems the most attractive option.

The question now is, why choosing Ireland as the new destination?

Here the connection with the first set of motives (what impels him to abandon French culture) is more uncertain. In the novel, Irishness is diluted in the English-speaking world. New York, and not Dublin, is where the protagonist finds the essence of happiness. What attracts him to this corner of Europe is its quality of being strange to him: “lo inglés [es] el inicio de la diferencia, el comienzo de lo exótico” (77). For his new start in life, Riba has decided to become less latino, and in a country outside the Spanish and French orbit he might recover the strangeness of things (78). Dublin, a city where he has never been, seems to him the ideal place to be a foreigner (79).

Although the attraction of Dublin lacks a firm grounding in reality, it is his admiration for Irish literature which makes up for the fragile acquaintance with Ireland. *Dublinesca* is a very literary novel and the books by other writers occupy a prominent place. “Literatosis”, or obsession for books, a term coined by Juan Carlos Onetti but adopted by Vila-Matas, has always been a common feature in his fiction, although it is also true that a more solid plot is built here than in much of his previous work: “Vila-Matas ha conseguido algo poco corriente: siendo más Vila-Matas que nunca es de repente un Vila-Matas para todos los públicos” (Martínez-Lage 2010: 80). The first text that appears when rubbing off the first layer of Vila-Matas’s narrative is of course *Ulysses*, and it is notable that the author captures what Declan

Kiberd has described as a defining feature of Joyce’s novel: men who seem dead and masculinity in crisis (Kiberd 2009: 100). In his funeral for the age of printing Samuel Riba openly repeats Paddy Dignam’s exequies that take place in Chapter 6 of Joyce’s book. The second day of his stay in Dublin, 16 June 2008, he and his three friends (like Leopold Bloom sharing a funereal carriage with Simon Dedalus, Martin Cunningham and Jack Power) indeed visit Glasnevin Catholic Cemetery where Paddy Dignam was buried. The funeral for the Gutenberg era, which takes place near the end of the second chapter at the cemetery chapel, is confused, fragmented and playfully incoherent, as befits a modern-day rewriting of an iconic masterpiece. Samuel Riba, very much Vila-Matas’s updated version of Leopold Bloom, being half-Jewish and a foreigner among his own people, reads the poem by Philip Larkin “Dublinesque”, from which the novel we are reading takes its very name. Outside the cemetery Riba’s attention is drawn to a man in a mackintosh not related to the group who shortly afterwards disappears in the mist. This is another intertextual game with *Ulysses*, where a mysterious man in the same garment appears briefly several times. Vila-Matas treats *Dublinesca* itself as if it were an image doubly reflected in a hall of mirrors: in the previous chapter Riba has glimpsed in Barcelona his own version of the mackintosh man in the shape of a young individual with a Nehru jacket. In any case, the man in the cemetery serves to introduce the presiding figure in the third and final chapter, who is none other than Samuel Beckett.

In his wandering through Dublin, and even before, when Riba is preparing his journey, comments on Brendan Behan, W.B. Yeats and Flann O’Brien, among others, have contributed to the creation of a highly allusive Irish literary context. Now is the time for Beckett. In fact, it could be said that Riba went to Dublin to meet Joyce and found Beckett. It makes sense, after all, to end with Beckett having previously dealt with Joyce; if the latter represents the power of the word, after its demise the only logical conclusion is the search for silence represented by the former.

By exploring obsessively the nature of loneliness, of defeat and hopelessness Vila-Matas pays in *Dublín* a dignified homage to his most admired author. The happy finding of fragments of *Molloy* and *Murphy*, thinly disguised in the third chapter of the book, enhance the solipsistic quality of Vila-Matas's narrative. What happens to Samuel Riba in the last and nightmarish chapter of the book must be discovered by the readers: whether he is able or

not to survive the burial of literature and the whirlpool of his life in Dublin. Readers of Vila-Matas will in any case imagine that, whatever the outcome, there will be different strata of literary substance to be deciphered and assessed.

Dublín is perhaps the beginning of a new direction in the career of a respected and accomplished author. It is certainly a stimulating and intriguing piece of fiction.

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Dublinés de Alfonso Zapico

Bilbao: Astiberri, 2011

ISBN: 978-84-15163-04-6. 232 páginas.

Reviewer: **Andrés Romero-Jódar**

Pocas figuras literarias pueden representar tan acertadamente la realidad contemporánea del mundo que nos rodea como lo hace James Joyce.¹ *Dublinés* de nacimiento e irlandés por vocación, James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (Dublín, 1882 – Zúrich, 1941) trató de hacer despertar la mentalidad nacional irlandesa desde una perspectiva transnacional. El objetivo de su temprano exilio europeo quedaba claro en las últimas líneas de *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). Su intención era, en palabras de Stephen Dedalus, “forjar en la fragua de mi espíritu la conciencia increada de mi raza” (1980: 260).² Mientras el artista buscaba su voz literaria en ciudades como Dublín, Pola, Trieste, Zúrich, Roma o París, sumergiéndose en lenguas como el inglés, francés, alemán e incluso el italiano de Dante, Europa, entonces grande y vieja, se derrumbaba a su alrededor, embarcada como estaba en dos temibles guerras que habrían de cambiar definitivamente el mundo. Ahora que celebramos tristes aniversarios de estos crueles eventos (setenta y cinco años de la Guerra Civil española, setenta de la Segunda Guerra mundial...), tampoco parece sorprender que, justo en plena crisis de comienzo de milenio, se recupere la figura cosmopolita del autor irlandés

en el momento de incertidumbre que estamos viviendo en una Europa que también se tambalea bajo presiones internacionales y deudas financieras.

Alfonso Zapico, joven historietista y novelista gráfico asturiano nacido en 1981, redescubre la biografía del autor irlandés en la novela gráfica *Dublinés* (2011), y se convierte en su “asesinógrafo” (traducción personal y muy libre del término *biografiend*, acuñado por Joyce en *Finnegans Wake* [1939] para referirse a la más que comprensible habilidad que tienen los biógrafos para asesinar a los protagonistas al final de sus narraciones [1975: 55]). Zapico, además de otras obras en los géneros icónico-narrativos del cómic y de la tira cómica, ha publicado tres novelas gráficas: *La guerra del profesor Bertenev* (2006), *Café Budapest* (2008) y *Dublinés* (2011). El autor asturiano presenta historias donde sus personajes intentan escapar de las circunstancias políticas adversas que les rodean. Así, en *Dublinés*, no sólo se narra la biografía de James Joyce desde sus antepasados más cercanos (claramente influida esta parte por la biografía de Richard Ellmann de 1959), sino que también se presenta la figura de un hombre que se ve envuelto en diatribas políticas europeas, nacionales y transnacionales. Joyce en *Dublinés* no tienen más remedio que enfrentarlas. Así lo explica también Richard Ellmann en la biografía del autor irlandés: “La guerra y la sociedad no eran sus temas, pero ambas le salieron al paso y le obligaron a tomar posición” (1991: 20).³ Sin embargo, el mundo a

1. La investigación llevada a cabo para la redacción de esta reseña forma parte de un proyecto de investigación financiado por el Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN) y el European Regional Development Fund (ERFD) (código HUM 2007-61035). El autor también agradece el apoyo del Gobierno de Aragón y del European Social Fund (ESF) (código H05).

2. “To forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (1992: 276).

3. “War and society were not his theme, but they found him out and forced him into attitudes towards them” (Ellmann, 1965: 2).

través de los pinceles del autor asturiano se presenta como un peligro constante para el artista y el intelectual: este se ve forzado a crecer y adaptarse para sobrevivir en circunstancias que modelarán sus percepciones del mundo para siempre. De esta manera, tanto *Dublinés* como las otras novelas gráficas encajan a la perfección en la definición genérica de novela gráfica.

Como ya se ha afirmado, el género de la novela gráfica se puede definir en términos del uso narrativo del cronótopo, o representación de espacio y tiempo, siguiendo las teorías de Mikhail Bakhtin (y aplicadas a los géneros icónico-narrativos [Romero-Jódar, 2006: 105]). La novela gráfica podría equipararse a las novelas de aventuras de cada día – “adventure novel of everyday life” según Bakhtin (1988) – donde hay una evolución temporal en la identidad de sus personajes, lo cual confiere unidad a la obra completa (frente a la naturaleza estática de los personajes del género del cómic). En congruencia con este requisito genérico, el Joyce que Zapico nos presenta en *Dublinés* evoluciona, cambia y madura durante la narración; el personaje final poco tiene que ver con el original al comienzo de la narrativa.

Aunque existen discrepancias críticas en cuanto a la datación de la primera novela gráfica, sí que se puede afirmar con rotundidad que en España el género ya estaba establecido en 1961. *La tumba de hierro* de Eugenio Sotillos y José María Sánchez Boix, publicado por Ediciones Toray, apareció bajo el título genérico de novela gráfica. Así, en plena (aunque apenas conocida) celebración de los cincuenta años de la existencia de la novela gráfica española, Alfonso Zapico nos ofrece la biografía de uno de los escritores más celebrados por los autores anglosajones de novela gráfica en los últimos años. Joyce ha sido citado abiertamente por autores tan reconocidos como Art Spiegelman, Joe Sacco o Alison Bechdel, y adaptado a novela gráfica en *Ulysses* (2009), por Robert Berry y Josh Levitas.

Dublinés puede englobarse dentro de esta tendencia actual de recuperar autores modernistas y vanguardistas, y en especial, de reconocer la influencia de la figura de James Joyce en la cultura popular contemporánea. La biografía que ofrece Zapico se divide en siete capítulos que presentan la vida y contexto de

Joyce, desde su nacimiento en Dublín hasta su muerte en Zúrich. Así, el primer capítulo, “La familia Joyce”, introduce los antecedentes familiares de los Joyce desde comienzos del siglo XIX, desde James Joyce I hasta su bisnieto y tocayo escritor. En este mismo capítulo se cuentan las primeras andanzas de James Joyce, relatando episodios que aparecen en *A Portrait* (1916), tales como sus encuentros y desencuentros con los educadores jesuitas (el Padre Dolan recibe una especial atención), así como sus primeros contactos con la situación política de Irlanda (con la muerte de Parnell) y con su propia sexualidad.

La obra de Zapico se lee con facilidad, y se plantea como una herramienta muy útil como introducción a la vida y la obra de James Joyce. En el resto de capítulos se hace un recorrido exhaustivo por fechas, lugares y encuentros que marcaron la vida del genio irlandés. Se presenta con minuciosidad su relación con su familia, con los diferentes países donde se exilió, y con los diferentes autores y artistas que conoció (Henrik Ibsen, Italo Svevo, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf y un largo etcétera descrito en el capítulo quinto, “Joyce & Company”). Ahora bien, se podría objetar que la obra carece del experimentalismo de Joyce en la voz narrativa, pues tiende a emplear una *graficación* (o narración verbal y visual de lenguaje icónico, usando el concepto de Philippe Marion [1996]) bastante conservadora, heterodiegética y omnisciente, lo cual contrasta con la subjetividad de las técnicas de *stream of consciousness* empleadas por el autor tema de la novela gráfica. Igualmente, algunos detalles se han pasado por alto, como la existencia de la obra inconclusa *Stephen Hero*, que Joyce transformó en *A Portrait* reorientando el estilo de la narración. Tampoco se hace mención a la importante influencia que tuvieron tanto Tomás de Aquino como su educación con los jesuitas en la creación de la mentalidad artística del autor irlandés. Ellmann sí que explica esta relación ideológica, artística y moral (1965: 197). Y, aunque Zapico ha empleado la obra de Ellmann como fuente primaria, también es comprensible que ciertos detalles, que interesan más a los críticos literarios, se dejen fuera para acomodarse al mercado de jóvenes adultos al que va dirigida

esta novela gráfica.

Por último, me gustaría destacar lo acertado de esta obra en su relación forma y contenido. Las obras de Joyce, así como su vida, están cargadas de un fuerte humor irónico y jocoso, bullicioso con chanzas y carismático en sus cantares y sonoridades. El tipo de dibujo que emplea Zapico podría catalogarse dentro de la caricatura. Sin pretender ser realista, se basa en la representación humorística de la figura humana. Sin embargo, la temática de la obra sigue siendo seria, lo cual produce un interesante efecto de contraste entre forma caricaturesca y contenido

biográfico documentado. Este mismo efecto puede verse en obras como *Persépolis* (2000-2003) de Marjane Satrapi, *Palestina* (1996) de Joe Sacco o *Maus* (1973-1992) de Art Spiegelman. Este rasgo parece definir la novela gráfica actual a nivel mundial. De este modo, Alfonso Zapico ofrece una obra contemporánea a nivel de creación artística que, si bien no pretende convertirse en un texto de referencia en los estudios de James Joyce, sí que resulta adecuada como primer acercamiento serio a la figura del autor irlandés.

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El sueño del celta by Mario Vargas Llosa
 Madrid: Alfaguara, 2010.
 456 pp. ISBN: 978-84-204-0682-4

Reviewer: **Laura Izarra**

To write a novel based on history is like a chess game between truth and fiction. Mario Vargas Llosa has played this game in previous novels and he embarked on the writing of *El sueño del celta* fascinated by the multifaceted life of Roger Casement. The writer said in an interview to Angus Mitchell (2009) that he wanted to write “a book in which fantasy and imagination are more important than the historical raw material” and he added, “what is important when you use history in writing a novel is to reach the level where all experiences are an expression of the human condition” (140). Vargas Llosa tried to be true to his axiom.

The novel is based on Roger Casement’s travel writings, letters and reports which describe the horrors of the Congo (where he spent seven years from 1884) and the abuses against the Brazilian natives in the Amazon in 1910 and 1911. Casement’s narratives do not bear the legacy of imperial modes of vision and thought. Thus, Vargas Llosa uses this material not only to give accuracy to his story and construct a reliable protagonist who denounces the atrocities committed in the name of the three ‘C’s – Christian evangelisation, civilisation, and commerce – but also to unveil Casement’s inner transgressive thoughts against the system he works for and the process of self-critique he has undergone.

The book is constructed upon the hero’s doubts and uncertainties and its structure is divided into three parts – “El Congo”, “Amazonía” and “Irlanda” – ending with a disturbing epilogue. An omniscient narrator retells Casement’s past but the chronological time of the narrative is tangentially cut by flashbacks and foreshadowings related to the psychological time of the protagonist who is in Pentonville Prison in London awaiting the result of his appeal against

the death sentence for his involvement in smuggling German guns for the 1916 revolutionaries.

It starts with the door of Casement’s cell being opened in order to admit his lawyer’s assistant who has brought the news of the discovery of his intimate diaries and his guard’s (the *Sheriff’s*) resultant condemnation of his immorality. Every other chapter throughout the remainder of the novel focuses on him in prison, receiving visits from his cousin Gertrude Bannister, his friend the historian Alice Stopford Green or the Catholic priest Carey. Each of these intermissions reveals his thoughts in flashback and his disturbed state of mind in prison. However the narrative fails to convey the depth of inner emotions in the conflicted self of one who has lost the support of many of his friends and compatriots having previously enjoyed the admiration of the world for his defence of the oppressed. In fact, with the exception of chapter VII where the prisoner, with a trembling body, confessed to father Carey that he was very much afraid of death (128), Vargas Llosa suggests that Casement suffered no emotional turmoil with regard to his imminent execution as a traitor – he is portrayed as a remarkably calm, self-controlled and detached prisoner.

In “El Congo”, the writer explores the traveller’s curiosity during his first visit to Africa under Leopold II’s regime. He reproduces Casement’s discursive style as he surveys this virgin colony, which combines a strategic and aesthetic valuation of the landscape and the situation. He conveys the young man’s efforts to participate in the “chess game” of constructing an independent Congo state, with great idealism and the firm belief that there was a philanthropic design behind the brutal actions of Henry Morton Stanley, a living myth of the civilising mission.

This is perfectly understandable in the context of the prevailing ideological advocacy of the benefits of modernisation. He describes Casement's blind enthusiasm in 1884 when, at just twenty-one years of age, he was a member of Stanley's expedition and later when he worked like a "peón en una partida de ajedrez" ("a pawn in a chess game" 49) under the command of Henry Shelton Stanford between 1886 and 1888. Vargas Llosa contrasts the stereotyped consumerism of the exotic and the idea of progress against the primitivism and exploitation that prevailed in the middle of the African jungle. Repetitions in a liturgical rhythm abound not only to underline the importance of the three 'C's, but also to highlight the atrocities committed in the name of a utopian project of civilisation.

This first part of the novel can be read from the perspective of the failure of the utopias of modernism. Vargas Llosa represents Casement's thoughts through an interrogative narrative: "Does civilization bring progress and modernity through free commerce and evangelization? . . . How many of the colonizers – merchants, soldiers, government workers, adventurers – have some respect for the natives and consider them brothers, or at least humans?" (63). He gives voice to Casement's discontent and justifies the pre-modern attitude of maintaining the "natural equilibrium" of subordination through the voice of Theodore Horte, an old Officer of the British Navy and Baptist missionary: "Europe could do a lot to help the natives to abandon their primitivism" (63). The cause of Casement's remorse was that he was responsible for negotiating with the natives: he gave them worthless souvenirs in exchange for their lands and labour; he "bought" their confidence telling them imperial "truths" about progress, and convinced them with his patience and soft voice. This attitude disturbed him a lot as he knew he was "jugando sucio" ("playing dirty") with these tribes (61); he was helping to enslave them. In this way, with the missionary's acceptance of the cruel situation as a minor evil (64), Vargas Llosa translates Casement's lies into shared secrets.

The Peruvian writer explained in an interview that when the law of the strongest is installed,

barbarism, savagery and cruelty reach vertiginous extremes (*Clarín* 04/11/2010). Thus, the collective utopia is replaced by the individual utopia of the "hunters", an unstructured, privatised and individualised version of the old visions of a perfect society (Bauman 2007). The imperial system was not looking for Thomas More's "perfect world nowhere," but for a "hunting" game, for chasing rather than catching. The effect of this utopian hunt is fictionalised when the protagonist returns to the Upper Congo and realises that only eighty-two inhabitants of Lukolela have survived out of 4,000. "Progress" under Leopold II has decimated the population. However, explanations and "half-lies" justify the facts: "they died due to diseases, typhus, the tsetse fly" (82). The unspoken secret was the limitless desire for "red rubber", powered by human cruelty.

Utopias became the awful caricatures of dreams rather than a dreamed Paradise in the world project of modernisation. This is emphasised in "Amazonía", when Casement reaches the Amazon in 1910 accompanying the Commission of Inquiry charged with investigating the atrocities practised by the Peruvian Amazon Company against the indians of the Putumayo region due to the exploitation of the "red rubber". The celebratory image of *Hy Brasil*, associated with this country and exalted by Casement in a lecture in Belém do Pará (1907), was tainted by his later denunciations. Vargas Llosa's narrative can be placed in the liminal space between literary journalism and fiction. Using the literary strategy of appropriation, he rewrites parts of *The Amazon Journal*, reassessing discourses of displacement, metaphors of movement and representations of cultural differences from a new rhetorical viewpoint. Crude realistic details are explored and even invented to represent Casement's real and imaginary journeys.

Moreover, the writer reconstructs Casement's physical and mental spaces based on contemporary documentary photographs. The description of children mutilated by Congo soldiery (89) corresponds to that still instant caught by the camera and subsequently published by the British press; the protagonist's admiration for the indian body, with its implicit

sexual desire, corresponds to pictures that were found among Casement's documents (159). Another moment of real time is caught, emulsified and "fixed" by the reader's perception when the author refers to "las correrías" (206) and the suffering of the enchained indians of the Putumayo (238). In this way Vargas Llosa builds bridges between the snapshots and passages from Casement's diaries and his fictional narrative to enable the reader to see how the colonial utopias which started with veiled uncertainties and silenced truths while Casement was in the Congo, took the form of a dystopia in Casement's mind when he was in the Amazon experiencing the effects of modernisation in the South American tropics. The novelist translates Casement's internal inquiries and anticolonial reflections, creating what Michael Foucault (1988: 49-50) defines as an "aesthetics of existence," "a deliberate stylisation of daily life."

There is a relationship of proximity in *difference* and *similarity* between Casement's country, the countries he lived in, and the writer's imagination. The relationship of proximity reveals the nationalist dilemma faced by Casement and the way it was fictionalised. Witnessing violence in foreign lands checkmated the coherence of his principles and enabled him to see the similarity between conditions in Ireland and in the Amazon. He approximates the situation of the indians (Boras, Huitotos, Andoques and Muinanes) to that of the Irish people, and he concludes that they were "all colonised, exploited and condemned to be thus forever if they continue relying on English laws, institutions and government to reach freedom" (239); the only way to regain freedom was through violence. His idealism made him turn to the past, to Irish tradition, in order to make his dream of an independent Ireland come true. To achieve his utopia he allied himself to the Germans, England's enemy in the First World War, and he defended armed struggle against the English in order to achieve independence. The dream of the Celt was for justice, equality and happiness even when defeat was inevitable (272).

The awakening of a political consciousness is represented in "Irlanda", where the implications

of nationalism and Casement's involvement with the revolutionary movement are raised. In his Nobel lecture, Vargas Llosa stated that he "despise(s) every form of nationalism, a provincial ideology – or rather, religion – that is short-sighted", and he made a distinction between nationalism and patriotism, "a salutary, generous feeling of love for the land where we were born". The novel is not an apology for an ideal nationalism or patriotism. It is more based on the cultural nationalist movement and national symbols are referred in a very romantic way (359).

Mario Vargas Llosa crosses the frontiers of the genre and invades the fields of biography and history preserving the mystery of the patriot's/traitor's life through a doubly-bound construction/disruption of the protagonist's cultural identities. The issue of sexuality is openly addressed in the epilogue. Vargas Llosa said to Mitchell that Casement "has never been dehumanised, he's always at the level of humanity, even when he accomplished the most extraordinary achievements" (2009: 140). However, the author's strategy of a circular narrative that starts and ends with references to Casement's homosexuality (always half-silenced in his reflections in prison) creates an ambiguous effect that culminates in the epilogue describing the post-mortem medical examination of Casement's anus in order to prove the veracity of the Black Diaries. According to Barnwell "this final touch – historically true – epitomises human degradation, but it is the degradation of the British prison and its agent Mander" (2011: 299-304). But is this the only function that the epilogue exercises in the novel? It is the voice of the author, not the fictional narrator. What kind of "aesthetics of existence" is here created in relation to the fictional narrative itself? What alternative frames of historical reference are being posited? Vargas Llosa argues that, although Roger Casement wrote his diaries, he did not live entirely what he narrated. They were his fantasy and fiction of what he would have liked to experience (449).

El sueño del celta captures the conflicting layers of meaning and myth in the life of Roger Casement, his contradictions as traitor and patriot, and the tensions between his public and

private life. It does not deny the cultural prejudices, neither those of Casement's period and contemporaries nor those of our own time. Concepts of plurality and historical, geographical and psychological displacement are reconfigured in multi-dimensional images of re-presentations

of the past to show that the totality of a human being can never be captured. In this way, the interrogations and shadows of Casement's inner self remain in darkness and in the imaginations of Vargas Llosa and his reader.

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Roger Casement. Diario de la Amazonía ed. by Angus Mitchell
Translated by Sonia Fernández Ordás
La Coruña: Ediciones del Viento, 2011
424p. ISBN: 978-84-96964-82-2.

Reviewer: **Mariana Bolfarine**

The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement, first published in 1997 by Lilliput Press, is the result of years of archival and historical research carried out by its editor, Angus Mitchell. Its translation into Spanish, by Sonia Fernández Ordás, *Roger Casement. Diario de la Amazonía* (2011) is a first step towards bringing to light the controversial figure of “Casement stripped of his sexuality” (Mitchell 2009: 196), which is, not surprisingly, his least known facet up to this day.

Diario de la Amazonía begins with a letter from Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa to Angus Mitchell in which he describes Casement’s *Amazon Journal* as a sociological document that exposes the miserable condition of the Indians in contrast with the wealth in Manaus and Belem do Para due to the rubber economy. To Vargas Llosa, Casement’s journey to the Putumayo – a frontier region claimed by Brazil, Colombia and Peru – incited great changes in his character and individual experience.

Mitchell’s introduction provides a biographical overview drawing a parallel between Casement in the Congo, disclosing the horrors practiced by the expeditions of Henry Stanley, and in the Amazon, revealing the excesses committed during the four centuries of Portuguese and Spanish rule. Mitchell assesses the impact of the white man in the Putumayo and blames the second industrial revolution that was taking place among the developed economies in the late 19th and early 20th century: the invention of the pneumatic tire by John Dunlop and the process of electrification.

Following Hardenburg’s reports claiming atrocities against the native populations in the Putumayo, in 1910 Casement was asked by Sir Edward Grey to verify the living and working

conditions of 200 Barbadians, British subjects transported to Peru to work as overseers on the rubber stations of the Peruvian Amazon Company. Thus, after the introduction the book is divided into 10 chapters named after the places Casement visited during his journey.

In order to describe “the devil’s paradise”¹, Casement employs a descriptive style based on Manichaeistic dichotomies such as good and evil: the Indians and the Barbadians are the victims, while the villains are the members of the Peruvian Amazon Company, ultimately Armando Normand, chief of the station called Matanzas, “[...] con una cara que en mi opinión era sin lugar a dudas la más repulsiva que he visto en mi vida. Era absolutamente diabólica, por la crueldad y malicia que transmitía. Me sentí igual que si me hubieran presentado a una serpiente” (166-7), who was responsible for the worst crimes against the natives.

There are three main issues raised in *Diario de la Amazonía*: the first is Casement’s empathy with the Indians. In the chapter “Regreso a Entre Rios” Casement sleeps amongst Indians and attends their wounds. He wishes to protect and arm them, “nada me gustaría más que poder armarlos, entrenarlos y adiestrarlos para que se defiendan ante estos rufianes” (217), mirroring his further actions in forming the Irish Volunteers, in 1914. Yet, a somewhat polemical Casement is revealed as he acquires “his” Indians, the little Omarino for a shirt and a pair of trousers, and the young married man Arédomi,

1. From the title of Walter Hardenburg’s report: *The Putumayo: the devil's paradise travels in the Peruvian Amazon region and an account of the atrocities committed upon the Indians therein*, London and Leipsic: T. Fischer Unwin, 1912.

over a game of bridge. Although he explains his reasons for doing so, “Mi esperanza es que al llevar a Europa algunos de estos indígenas allí desconocidos logre que haya gente poderosa que se interese por ellos y al mismo tiempo por el destino de toda la raza que queda aquí, en el tajo” (247), his means of raising awareness in Europe were quite questionable even then.

The second issue concerns the subjugation of women who were made into domestic servants and worked as did the men, extracting rubber, and carrying loads of it for more than 60 miles. Casement criticizes the harems of “wives” kept by members of the Company, and records their servitude: “Su ‘esposa’ vestida con su *cushma* larga, le servía, sujetándole de una mano para ayudarle a mantener el equilibrio mientras se enjabonaba, lavándole los pies y desempeñando todas las tareas propias de una auxiliar de baño [...] No es que hubiera nada malo en ello, pero ilustra claramente en qué consideración tienen a estas mujeres indias” (128).

The third is his disillusionment with the civilizing mission preached by European Empires whose aim to shed light into the dark continents was but an excuse to exploit the native peoples and lands. The book starts as a travel journal of a diligent employee: “Esto nos llevó a un debate algo extenso sobre los métodos de la colonización británica y las garantías que nuestro gobierno había establecido y seguía estableciendo para proteger a los nativos en las colonias” (29), and it ends as the investigation of an anti-imperialist dissident after the Commission concluded that both the Hardenburg papers and the crimes committed against the Indians were true, “¡Qué régimen tan adecuado para una Compañía Británica civilizada!” (301).

The Epilogue informs of the outcome of Casement’s journey as he returned to England in 1911. The *Blue Book* (official Putumayo report) was published in 1912, inciting profound changes in the rubber politics and economy. In 1913, Casement retired to engage in the Irish cause, travelling to Germany to gather this country’s support. In April 1916, he returned to Ireland where he was arrested and hanged for high treason in Pentonville prison on the 3rd of August 1916. His fate was decided after British authorities found a set of intimate diaries

describing homosexual practices, known as the *Black Diaries*.

The footnotes in the 1997 version of the *Amazon Journal* contrast the two different personae Casement assumes in order to prove that the *Black Diaries* were forged. In this sense, the Spanish version differs from the English, for the *Black Diaries* are only briefly mentioned in the Epilogue to explain the importance they once had. Up to 1997, the narrative of the *Amazon Journal* had been suppressed by previous biographers who legitimized the sexual narrative. Thus, its publication could be considered a counter response in favor of Casement’s defense. In *Diario de la Amazonía*, although appearing more scarcely, the footnotes are a supplement to Casement’s entries, assisting the reader to set the historical, geographical and sociological context. For instance, Mitchell describes the tributaries of the Amazon basin (26-7) and elucidates the meaning of words and expressions that appear originally in Portuguese or Spanish as *cachaça* (296), or *muchachos de confianza* (53).

Better than the 1997 version are the two picture sections: one of the Putumayo with notes by Casement, and another with captions by Mitchell, as well as the foldable map entitled “Croquis de la zona territorial del Río Putumayo ocupada por las empresas J.C. Arana y Hermanos”, giving an idea of the damage inflicted by the Company.

Diario de la Amazonía reveals a shift in late 19th and early 20th century travel writing about colonial atrocities, which, according to Robert Burroughs, is based on its “open admission of the witness’ angry response to violence” (120). He sustains that Casement’s travel account is unique as it not only draws together “centre” and “periphery”, but also expresses personal outrage in his discovering the “English” complicity with the Putumayo atrocities. Its style differs from Casement’s factual and distanced Congo report, since there he played the role of a representative of the British Empire, whereas *Diario de la Amazonía* is intimate, revealing his private feelings and perceptions about what he was actively witnessing.

To conclude, Casement had the traveller’s eye, but he was also an agent of transformation among the Indians, and *Diario de la Amazonía*

is a powerful weapon for denunciation as it claims for changes to be implemented in the depths of the Amazon Forest and exposing to the world what would otherwise remain invisible. The content of Casement's entries is up to date and relevant for a broad understanding of the exploitation by Brazilian and Peruvian societies of the Amazon forests and its native populations

today, tackling themes that we now recognize as the province of human rights and preservation of natural resources. This excellent Spanish translation will certainly help to spread the narrative of Roger Casement, so that he can be remembered as a revolutionary and, chiefly, as a humanitarian Irishman.

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La Habitación de Emma Donoghue
 Traducción de Eugenia Vázquez Nacarino
 Madrid: Alfaguara, 2010
 ISBN: 978-84-204-0661-9.

Reviewer: **Celestino Deleyto**

Emma Donoghue has always considered herself a lesbian Irish writer (in Moloney and Thompson, 2003: 177, 179). An extremely prolific author and winner of numerous awards, her work includes drama, radio plays and literary history, although she is best known as a novelist and short story writer. Her novels do not exclusively deal with lesbian issues and characters. Nevertheless, they tend to follow Donoghue's life wanderings through different nations. Some of them are set in her native contemporary Dublin, others, particularly her historical narratives, investigate London life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, together with the British class system. Her last novel so far, *Room* (2010), which became an international bestseller, reflects her move to Canada. As she has confessed (179) it was love that led her to Canada, where she has been living for some years with her partner and children. However, the events narrated in this novel are international, and unfortunately too up to date, mirroring Donoghue's nature of a border-crossing and transnational creator.

Room tells the story of a five-year-old boy who has lived his whole life inside a shed in a back garden with his young mother, who is being kept captive by a middle-aged man. The narrative voice is that of the boy, Jack, whose grasp of the world is both severely limited by his lifelong entrapment and extremely rich and exciting, as well as touching and funny. Donoghue creates a personal linguistic idiom for the narrator, which wonderfully facilitates the reader's understanding of the boy's world and, as the narrative progresses, allows increasing identification with his predicament and his unpolluted views of identity, human relationships and even current affairs. One of the

greatest merits of this novel is that it offers the reader two simultaneous perspectives, that of the child, and a more detached one from which we learn to appreciate the vulnerability of his position and, in small doses, the fears, traumas, hopes and courage of his mother. Once the two escape, half-way through the narrative, our familiarity with the child's perspective and sense of self-identity enriches our appreciation of the difficulties, absurd situations and rapid learning process that he undergoes in the outside world. One of the greatest pleasures in the second half of the book is to see the two universes coming gradually together and how Jack's identity evolves as his grasp of the world radically changes.

Eugenia Vázquez Nacarino's Spanish translation manages, for the most part, to get across the novel's singular world. Since Jack's personal universe is conveyed largely through his "special" use of the English language, his often logical but incorrect grammar, his propensity to invent words or join them together, and, especially, his anthropomorphisation of all the significant objects around him, the most crucial and difficult job of the translator is to render these in a different language, in this case Spanish. Vázquez Nacarino does this well, succeeding, for example, in adapting the concision with which the boy expresses himself to a language like Spanish in which such concision is not as easy as in English. Jack's Spanish is generally believable, funny and atypical—just as it should be. There are inevitably problems with the frequent titles and fragments of children's songs, rhymes and books, as well as with television programmes. The translator adopts a flexible approach here, doing her best to translate some, leaving others

in the original and providing the occasional translator's note when some explanation appears to be necessary that cannot be conveyed through the translation. For instance, Old Nick, their captor, is translated as "el Viejo Nick", which in Spanish is just a name and is not one of the names for the Devil, as it is in English, so Vázquez provides a brief and simple note to add the connotation that she, reasonably, thinks is important to understand the characters.

The main problem in the translation comes, predictably, with Jack's naming of the objects around him, which are, for him, characters in the unusual narrative of his life. So, he does not live in a room, where there is a table, a mirror, a bed, a plant, a TV, a pen, and so on. These for him are individuals called Table, Mirror, Bed, Plant, TV, and Pen. The novel's title itself adopts the child's way of naming and is called *Room*. We can already infer from the title of the translation—*La Habitación*—that the approach is going to be different: here Jack's expression of the world around him is conveyed by the name of the objects with a capital letter but preceded by the definite article: la Habitación, la Mesa, el Espejo, etc. It was probably felt that to turn them fully into proper names (Habitación, Mesa, Espejo) would not be idiomatic and would not sound well in Spanish, or maybe it was the marketing necessity to keep the article in the novel's title that directed the decision. In any case, this choice impoverishes the rendition of Jack's idiosyncratic world since, after all, there is no spoken exceptionality in the capital letter if the article is kept. In the Spanish translation, Jack refers to the objects in his world like any other

child. Incidentally, one exception is "Penis" (referring to Jack's sexual organ), which is inexplicably translated as "Pene", rather than "el Pene". Another important event in Jack's routine is the Sunday Treat, the little extras that he and Mum request from Old Nick together along the "shopping list". This is translated here as "el Gusto del Domingo", which does not sound like anything at all in Spanish and suggests that Jack has invented the expression (as he invents many others). Other awkward moments like when Ma finds the "ten-story skyscraper" funny because it is a building made of ten children's books (ten children's stories), which is translated as "Qué edificio tan edificante" (p. 30), can be counted as those occasions when one does not envy the job of the translator.

In general, however, Vázquez Nacarino does a very good job of turning into Spanish a deceptively simple novel and manages to keep the inventiveness, the excitement, and the unspoken or barely spoken drama of the original. When, for example, Jack manages to bring forward plan B and escapes from Old Nick pretending to be dead and is rescued by a man walking his dog and later by the police, the vertiginous rhythm of the original until Mum is safely sitting next to her son in the police car is beautifully conveyed in the translation, as are most of the funny moments in a novel which, like many of the best comedies, approaches traumatic experiences with a very light touch. On the basis of *Room*, Emma Donoghue is certainly a novelist to be discovered by the Spanish public and this translation will contribute powerfully to bringing her art to visibility in our country.

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Celestino Deleyto is Professor of Film and English Literature at the University of Zaragoza. He is the author of *The Secret Life of Romantic Comedy* (Manchester University Press, 2009) and co-author with María del Mar Azcona of *Alejandro González Iñárritu* (University of Illinois Press, 2010). At the moment he is working on cinematic representations of the global with a special interest in the city of Los Angeles.

Brooklyn de Colm Tóibín
 Traducción de Ana Andrés Lleó
 Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2011
 ISBN: 978-84-9989-048-7

Reviewer: **Marisol Morales Ladrón**¹

Acaso haya sido la atracción por España de este irlandés errante, y emigrante en lugares tan distintos como nuestro propio país, Argentina o EEUU, lo que ha contribuido a su enorme popularidad y a que su obra se haya traducido a tantos idiomas, tan rápidamente. Tóibín es el único autor irlandés contemporáneo cuya producción se ha vertido al español casi en su totalidad. Desde sus primeras novelas, *El Sur* – del original *The South* (1990) –, *El brezo en llamas* – traducción de *The Heather Blazing* (1992) – o *Mala sangre: peregrinación a lo largo de la frontera irlandesa* – traducción de *Bad Blood: A Walk Along the Irish Border* (1994) –, las siguientes, ya como encumbrado escritor, correrían la misma suerte. Así, *El faro de Blackwater* – traducción de *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999) –, *Crónicas de la noche* – traducción de *The Story of the Night* (1996) –, *The Master: Retrato de un novelista adulto* – traducción de *The Master* (2004) – y *Brooklyn*, traducida ahora para la editorial Debolsillo por Ana Andrés Lleó, entre otras, han contribuido a la solidificación de la fama de Tóibín allende sus fronteras. Colm Tóibín, que inició su carrera literaria tras experimentar con el periodismo, es un escritor de indudable talla internacional y una de las voces más destacadas de la literatura irlandesa actual. Ha sido galardonado con una gran cantidad y diversidad de premios literarios, y la novela que ahora nos ocupa, *Brooklyn* (2009), no es una excepción. Nominada para el premio Booker el mismo año de su publicación, ganó el prestigioso premio Costa en 2010 – conocido como “Whitbread Book Award” hasta

el año 2006 – y quedó seleccionada un año después para el premio internacional de Dublín, el IMPACT, que se concede a obras de alto calado literario.

Inspirada en una historia real que Tóibín oyó accidentalmente en una conversación que tuvo lugar durante los días que siguieron al velatorio de su padre, cuando sólo contaba con doce años, *Brooklyn* narra una peculiar historia de emigración forzada a los Estados Unidos. La protagonista, Eilis, empujada primero por su familia y, a su regreso, por el rechazo moral de su comunidad, es el medio del que se sirve Tóibín para ofrecer una visión tan renovada como provocadora de los mitos que tradicionalmente se han asociado a la diáspora irlandesa. La discreta vida de la joven Eilis en el pequeño pueblo de Enniscorthy – en el condado de Wexford, donde el mismo Tóibín creció –, a principios de los años 50, en una época de recursos económicos limitados y en una familia que dirige sus actos son los pilares sobre los que se edifica un entramado de circunstancias que inexorablemente llevará a la protagonista a la emigración. En una casa gobernada por mujeres – su madre y hermana mayor – después de que la muerte de su padre obligara a sus tres hermanos a emigrar a Gran Bretaña desde donde poder enviar “dinero para los extras” (19), Eilis se debate entre una realidad que le ofrece posibilidades poco comunes para una joven de vida tan modesta. Mientras sus amigas han aprendido pronto a hacerse valer ante los chicos, especialmente los que tienen medios y un futuro prometedor, ella aspira a terminar sus estudios de contabilidad y a encontrar un trabajo mejor que el que tiene los domingos, en la tienda de la avara señorita Kelly.

1. La elaboración de esta reseña ha sido financiada por el Proyecto de investigación FFI2011-23941, concedido por el Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación.

La escasez de recursos económicos, la falta de trabajo y las pocas salidas que tenían las mujeres son motivaciones suficientes para que tanto su hermana como su madre manden a Eilis a Estados Unidos, con billete sólo de ida, donde le espera un trabajo en unos grandes almacenes y nuevas oportunidades. Como figura mediadora entre ambas culturas emerge el padre Flood, un sacerdote irlandés afincado en EEUU, quien asegura a la familia que no deben temer nada, pues: “Algunas zonas de Brooklyn ... son como Irlanda. Están repletas de irlandeses” (34). Efectivamente, la Gran hambruna que asoló a Irlanda a mediados del siglo XIX y la consecuente diáspora irlandesa a diferentes lugares del mundo, aunque especialmente al continente americano, no puede entenderse sin el papel de la iglesia católica. La edificación de iglesias en torno a comunidades de emigrantes irlandeses se convirtió en práctica común, ya que su función no era sólo de orden religioso, moral y educativo sino especialmente de preservación de una identidad y de unos valores acordes con la moralidad católica y con el sentir irlandés que, especialmente en EEUU, les permitía distanciarse del Puritanismo americano. La construcción “católico-irlandés” cobra en este contexto mayor sentido, ya que se utilizó para asentar las bases del ideario de la nación, “la Madre Irlanda”, portadora de valores como la piedad, la familia o la comunidad. Con el objetivo de re-plantear y re- visar esta visión idealizada de la diáspora irlandesa, la novela de Tóibín destruye, uno a uno, todos y cada uno de los mitos que la han sustentado, empezando con el mismo padre Flood, cuyo acento híbrido “medio irlandés, medio americano” (33) acoge precisamente las posibilidades que encarna esta asimilación de culturas.

Es el padre Flood quien subvenciona parte del viaje de Eilis a EEUU, le busca un trabajo, un lugar seguro donde hospedarse y posteriormente le ayuda a ingresar en el Brooklyn College para que continúe sus estudios, convirtiéndose en la primera mujer irlandesa que asiste a clase. Y lo mismo ocurre con su casera irlandesa, la señora Kehoe, una mujer gruñona que le da la mejor habitación para que tenga más espacio, más libertad y más tranquilidad para estudiar. En claro contraste con el resto de huéspedes, mujeres inmigrantes prototípicas – algunas de

ellas, irlandesas –, Eilis no llega a encajar en este microcosmos, falsa réplica de su país natal. En tales circunstancias, no sorprende que acabe iniciando una relación sentimental con el Italiano Tony, cuyo nivel de honestidad y buenas intenciones contrastan enormemente con las de otros hombres que merodean al resto de las chicas casaderas de la pensión. Cuando finalmente Tony la seduce con el único propósito de asegurar su matrimonio, y ella accede a dar un paso del que no está convencida, pero que la vinculará para siempre a EEUU, su incapacidad para aprovechar las oportunidades que se le han presentado y su inacción se tornan irreversibles.

A nivel formal, el aspecto más relevante de la novela de Tóibín es su magistral uso de una voz narrativa intimista, que continuamente guía al lector por caminos inciertos y equivocados, tornando la narración en un proceso constante de descubrimiento y revelación de matices e interpretaciones alternativas. Así, con la intención de cuestionar estereotipos simplistas sobre los inmigrantes, la novela inicialmente muestra los peligros y riesgos que conlleva que una joven como Eilis emigre a un país tan lejano y desconocido, para posteriormente hacer a la protagonista beneficiaria de oportunidades que, de tan poco comunes, llegan a resultar inverosímiles. Si bien la horrenda y dramática descripción del larguísimo viaje en barco sigue la línea realista de otras novelas sobre la diáspora, como las de Joseph O’Connor, *Star of the Sea* (2002) o *Redemption Falls* (2007), y durante el cual la compañera de camarote alerta a Eilis de que su maleta es “demasiado irlandesa, y [que] ellos paran a los irlandeses” (67), ni esta premonición se ve cumplida, ni tampoco las penurias que continuamente parecen anticiparse. De hecho, es la noticia del repentino fallecimiento de su hermana lo que rompe la calma de su estancia, y la obliga a volver a su tierra para cuidar de su madre, como le corresponde ahora que es hija única. Será la imposibilidad de (re)integración en su comunidad, erigida como juez y guardián de su moralidad, lo que la empuje de vuelta a EEUU para cumplir con sus deberes de esposa, revirtiendo así el mito del ansiado retorno al hogar.

En Estados Unidos, su nuevo hogar, aunque liberada de las obligaciones familiares y de la

la estrechez de miras de sus convecinos, tendrá que reinventarse para encajar en una realidad de identidades híbridas, pues “Brooklyn cambia día a día.... Llega gente nueva y pueden ser judíos, irlandeses, polacos e incluso de color” (79). Finalmente, posicionada entre dos comunidades de valores culturales irreconciliables, Eilis toma conciencia de su propia dislocación y siente: “como si fuera dos personas, una que había luchado contra dos fríos inviernos y muchos días duros en Brooklyn y se había enamorado allí, y

otra que era la hija de su madre, la Eilis que todo el mundo conocía, o creía conocer” (273). En definitiva, en una época en la que las mujeres no eran dueñas de sus vidas, sino que sus destinos venían marcados por las expectativas familiares y por los deberes para con la comunidad, Eilis, víctima pasiva del destino, deberá aprender que el hogar es más un espacio recreado en la mente que un lugar real donde todos los deseos pueden cumplirse.

Marisol Morales Ladrón is Senior Lecturer in contemporary English and Irish literature at the University of Alcalá (Madrid, Spain). Her main area of research is Irish literature and she currently chairs the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI). She is also interested in gender studies and in the interrelationship between literature and psychology. Her publications include the books *Breve introducción a la literatura comparada* (U of Alcalá, 1999) and *Las poéticas de James Joyce y Luis Martín-Santos* (Peter Lang, 2005). She has edited the volume *Postcolonial and Gender Perspectives in Irish Studies* (Netbiblo 2007) and has co-edited the recent monograph *Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge Scholars 2011), as well as two other books on feminist criticism: *Mosaicos y taraceas: Desconstrucción feminista de los discursos del género* (U of Alcalá 2000) and *(Trans)formaciones de las sexualidades y el género* (U of Alcalá 2001). She has published articles on a variety of English and Irish authors, which have appeared in peer-reviewed journals, such as *Papers on Joyce*, *Irish University Review*, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, *Atlantis*, *Exemplaria*, *BABEL Afial*, *EJES*, *Estudios de Filología Moderna*, *Bells*, *Estudios Irlandeses* and *Odisea*.

Sueño con mujeres que ni fu ni fa by Samuel Beckett
 Trans. José Francisco Fernández y Miguel Martínez-Lage.
 Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2011.
 ISBN: 978-84-8383-281-3 302 pp.

Reviewer: **María J. López**

Samuel Beckett wrote *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* in the summer of 1932, in Paris, when he was 26 years old and after having resigned from his teaching post at Dublin's Trinity College. Aware of the fact that Irish censorship would not tolerate its sexual explicitness and linguistic eccentricity, Beckett sent the manuscript to different British publishers, with no luck. He decided, then, to include some of its material in the collection of stories that was to be published in London, in 1934, as *More Pricks than Kicks*. After his initial desire to see *Dream* published, and as he progressed along his literary career, Beckett became more and more critical of his early work, forbidding the publication of this text in his lifetime, so that it did not appear until 1992, three years after his death.¹ This work, hence, has long been unavailable for the general public, and its Spanish translation is indeed to be celebrated, even more so if we bear in mind that it has only been translated into three other languages: Japanese, Dutch and German.

When he wrote *Dream*, Beckett had only published the essay "Dante ... Bruno . Vico .. Joyce" (1929), his prize-winning poem, *Whoroscope* (1930), the monograph, *Proust* (1931), and a few other minor poems and short prose pieces. Therefore, as the Spanish translators point out in their insightful postscript to the text, this work belongs to the very first Beckett, the Beckett before *Waiting for Godot* (1949) and the *Trilogy* (1951, 1953), whose style was very different from the austere and purified one he was going to adopt in his maturity. *Dream*

is an erudite, allusive and macaronic text, characterized by narrative and linguistic playfulness, inventiveness and exuberance. In this sense, it constitutes a quintessential modernist work with an obvious influence of James Joyce, in whose circle Beckett had been accepted when, from 1928 to 1930, he worked as English teacher at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, and whom he had assisted in the French translation of his *Work in Progress* (later to become *Finnegans Wake*). Beckett's first novel poses, then, a huge challenge in terms of translation, and José Francisco Fernández, a scholar specialized in Beckett, and Miguel Martínez-Lage, well-known for his translations of English literary works and other texts by the Irish writer, have indeed accomplished an impressive achievement.

In terms of narrative features, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* subverts and undermines many of the traditional conventions associated with plot, characterization and narration. As put by Pilling, "Beckett's *Dream* makes use of so many negational strategies that they virtually defy classification" (2005: 172). The novel is divided into five sections, entitled "ONE", "TWO", "UND", "THREE" and "AND", and translated as "Uno", "Dos", "Und", "Tres" and "Y". By keeping the original German connective "und", the translators maintain the multilingual dimension of the titles, a right move on their part. The incorporation into the Spanish version of an index with the sections's titles may give, at first, the impression of some kind of structure and order in a text that lacks any coherent and balanced structure whatsoever, as the varying lengths of the sections highlight: "Uno" (1 page), "Dos" (124 pages), "Und" (36 pages), "Tres"

1. See Gontarski (1995) for a discussion of the controversy that accompanied the different English editions.

(108 pages) and “Y” (3 pages). In the first section, the whole of Belacqua’s childhood is told in only two paragraphs, whereas the subsequent ones deal with Belacqua’s abortive attempts to establish a meaningful relationship with three women, Smeraldina-Rima, Syra-Cusa and Alba, and with his journeys from Dublin to Vienna, Paris, Germany and back to Ireland. But those external incidents are just a tiny part of what King (2005) has called a “plotless” plot, given the lack of meaningful relationships between characters and of causal relations between events. For the most part, what we encounter are Belacqua’s confused thoughts and disordered perceptions, constantly interrupted by a collective narrator whose metafictional comments suggest that s/he is almost as lost as the reader: “El hecho es que no sabemos muy bien dónde nos hallamos en esta historia” (21). Hence, as Pilling has stated, the sections’s titles, far from being genuine connectives, are “simply the means whereby additional material can be conveyed”, since we are not provided with actual motives and reasons for continuity (2005: 172).

In terms of language, the text’s multilingual quality is one of its most conspicuous features. Together with English, the reader will come across words in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin. Though in the original text Beckett did not italicize foreign words, the Spanish translators have opted both for italics and for the introduction of the Spanish translation in explanatory notes. This has the advantage of facilitating a too demanding and possibly even frustrating reading, though it goes against what we assume may have been Beckett’s desire to keep all the different languages at the same level in a homogenized amalgamation. There are even passages entirely written in a foreign language, like the letter in French that runs along several pages (20-22) and that Fernández and Martínez-Lage present in Spanish (33-35), probably due to its length. They maintain, however, the French language in the shorter conversation at the beginning of section “Tres” (173-175). In the case of foreign words or phrases easily intelligible to the Spanish reader, no translation accompanies them, as in “*pianissimissima*” (45), “*choquant*” (55), “*per faecula faeculorum*” (63), “*ami unique*” (67), “*Domine, non sum dignus*”

(95), or ‘*merde*’, a word that keeps appearing throughout the text. In other cases, the translators have turned the non-English word into a Spanish one: “Anatomiestunde” (14) becomes “clases de anatomía” (27); “Stefanskirch” (30), “catedral” (45); or “recueillement” (119), “recogimiento” (146). Hence, in the “tension between comprehension and opacity” created by *Dream*’s “multilingual amalgam” (Lalor 2010: 53), Fernández and Martínez-Lage have strengthened the former, but without excessively domesticating or simplifying the text. They also enhance comprehension by indicating in the explanatory notes which phrases belong to other literary works, thus alerting the reader to the high amount of literary allusion that this narrative contains.

Throughout the Spanish text, the reader can feel the great extent to which the translators have become infected with *Dream*’s “turmoil of language” and Beckett’s “delight[s] in language” (O’Brien 1992: xvii) – often going together with a strong sense of humour –, which infect the reader as well. As regards Beckett’s “sheer joy of inventing new words and coining new phrases” (*ibid.*), his playful manipulation of sounds, spelling and morphology, the solution, on some occasions, has been to find an equivalent in standard Spanish words. Thus, “pizzicatoing himself” (18) becomes “sirviéndose del pizzicato” (32); or “whirljiggery-pokery” (137), “vertiginosos tejemanejes” (165). But in most cases, the translators adopt Beckett’s irreverent and inventive stance towards language, which is materialized in words such as “sienpre” (74), “clitoridiano” (137), “trogloditizarse” (151), “uterotumba” (161) or “pedincurabilidades” (162), and in wonderful moments such as this one: “Su mirada era lasciva; giraba y rondaba *lucrosa y golosamente*; sus ojos eran agentes de su celo, ojos de basilisco, cazadores y garras de Amorr” (68). Beckett’s fascination with sounds and their combinations can be felt throughout Fernández and Martínez-Lage’s brilliant translation of English onomatopoeias, alliterations and rhymes, as in “blop-blop, blop-blop a cada paso, todo blandenguería” (27); “polvos de pecho de pichón” (137); or “el intrínquilis, el meollo de toda la maraña, por la mismisimosidad de nuestro galán (139). Last but

not least, Fernández and Martínez-Lage are faithful to Beckett's convoluted syntax and "cluttered style" (King 2005: 135); to his playing with spaces of varying length (55, 79, 161) and asterisks (74, 77, 80, 83) to separate chunks of text, with capital letters (85, 86, 117, 183, 252), and with punctuation (104, 261); and to his introduction of elements such as musical scores (131, 271).

With the translation of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* into Spanish, all major works by Samuel Beckett are available in this language

now, which we hope will contribute to the continuity and growth of Beckettian studies in this country and to the re-edition of old and unavailable translations. In a superb exercise of linguistic and stylistic virtuosity, Fernández and Martínez-Lage have produced a text that will provide readers with an exhilarating and challenging experience that only Belacqua's last word in the novel can encapsulate: "*Himmisacra krüzidirkenjesusmariaundjosefundblütigeskreuz!*" (281)

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Dreaming the Future: New Horizons/Old Barriers in 21st-Century Ireland,
 María Losada-Friend, José María Tejedor-Cabrera, José Manuel Estévez-Saá, Werner Huber (eds.)
Irish Studies in Europe 3,
 Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2011
 ISBN: 978-3-86821-327-0, 122 pp.

Reviewer: **Asier Altuna-García de Salazar**

The latest volume of the series *Irish Studies in Europe*, with the title *Dreaming the Future: New Horizons/Old Barriers in 21st-Century Ireland*, contains a wide range of critical studies on Irish studies that do not only deal with literature but also with other aspects of culture and history in Ireland and Europe. The majority of studies included came out of the Sixth International EFACIS Conference held in December 2007 in Seville. The thematic editorial line of the volume distinctly reflects the interaction between the old and the new in Irish studies. Accordingly, the choice of topics do address this interest in showing how old themes, traditions and images are not only (re)visited and (re)approached but, more importantly, (re)dreamt anew in 21st-century Ireland. The studies challenge the barriers and boundaries anchored in many different approaches to the writers, topics and issues addressed here. The volume successfully presents new critical views on Irish topics which range in time from the nineteenth century up to the twenty-first century. The present volume has, as was expected, a representative tribute to Irish-Spanish perspectives. The volume's scholarly depth and the editorial mastery in the choice and distribution of the studies make this latest volume of *Irish Studies in Europe* a clear exemplar of the "European" dimension of perspectives and approaches to Ireland and Irish interests.

Declan Kiberd's "Old Testaments and New: Joyce and Messianic Time" represents a comprehensive analysis of Joyce's mastery in endorsing *Ulysses* with a backbone of ancient religious and secular texts. For Kiberd, *Ulysses* stands as a modern text that

needs the (re)visioning, (re)cycling, (re)writing and (re)interpretation of such texts as the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. Joyce's use of these texts enabled him to design the fulfillment of earlier tradition in the prophetic *Ulysses*. The use of messianic time in *Ulysses* points to the belief that the constraints of time make us and any work of art be past, present and future at the same time because our being in the present pointing to a near future enables us to design future realities of the past, but, we, and our artistic productions, will also stand as past realities for future generations.

Benigno del Río Molina's "Geography of Desire and Guilt: Joyce's "Circe" in the *Tradition of The Temptation of Saint Anthony*" maps the crossing influences of Flaubert's *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, heavily influenced by Breughel the Younger's *The Temptation*. For Del Río Molina, the echoes between the representations of Bloom's and Saint Anthony's temptations and tribulations are beautifully delineated by Joyce, who minutely introduces into a contemporary Dublin a landscape of sexuality, desire, enticement and attraction which goes side by side with an atmosphere of trauma, sin, hallucination, tediousness and emptiness. For Del Río Molina, in "Circe" a modern pattern of temptation can be traced back to former levels of artistic representation infused anew by Joyce.

In "Denis Florence MacCarthy's translations of Calderón de la Barca" Anne MacCarthy† analyzes how Denis Florence MacCarthy envisaged translation, especially of Calderon's texts, in nineteenth-century Ireland. For Anne MacCarthy, the nineteenth century was a time in

Ireland in which many issues were at stake that heavily influenced a poet's and translator's choices. During the Union with Great Britain Denis Florence MacCarthy approached the early nationalist movement of the Young Irelanders, Catholic Emancipation and an Irish literature that was struggling to find its place in the English language in such a way that it did not look partisan but new and modern. For Anne MacCarthy, Denis Florence MacCarthy's translations clearly "opened up" the target literature and culture to new worlds.

In "Reading Oscar Wilde in Post-war Spain: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* under the Microscope", Alberto Lázaro approaches reception and censorship in Wilde's novel both at the end of 19th-century Britain and especially in Spain at the time of the Spanish civil war and after. In Britain, the novel first met with controversial and praising reviews. When Wilde's novel reached Spain in 1918 it became a popular read. However, as Lázaro rightly states, controversy arose during Franco's regime, once the censorship system was enforced. After a thorough examination of the censorship files in the Archivo General de la Administración, Lázaro correctly assesses that the "fluctuations" in the censors' decisions cannot be solely ascribed to their lack of zeal; but rather to Wilde's novel being constantly open to interpretations.

Juan Ignacio Oliva's "Rewriting Ireland through Fractured Male Selves in the Works of Jamie O'Neill" scrutinizes how O'Neill's fiction serves as a means of subverting narratives about the social discourse in Ireland with regard to masculinity. Dysfunctional families, father-figure characters, disordered youths, contested sexualities are rightly assessed by Oliva in O'Neill's fiction, which can be read under a myriad of prisms due to its multiple male voices. The historical background in O'Neill's fiction also helps in the analysis of the time-span in which masculinity in Ireland is seen as traditionally struggling around environments that abound with hostility, rigidity, fracture and disturbance towards the "male selves". O'Neill's writing offers a profound quest for the envisaging of new identities, revisions and interpretations of masculinity.

José Francisco Fernández delves into Spanish echoes and motifs in Samuel Beckett. In "Spanish Beckett" Fernández minutely analyses connections, allusions and (re)workings of Spanish literary origin in Beckett's early works and his less known translations of Mexican poems compiled by Octavio Paz and commissioned by UNESCO in the 1950s. Either known to him through his readings, his self-study of Spanish or his affair with a student of Spanish during his Trinity College years, Beckett was well acquainted with Spanish literature. Fernández also addresses a less well-known aspect of Beckett's relationship with Spanish and its literature in his translations of Mexican poems. As Fernández shows, Beckett accepted this task with extreme professionalism although he did not seem to have liked the quality of the Mexican poems in its original.

In "Irish Cinema and Europe throughout the Twentieth Century: an Overview" Estelle Epinoux addresses the history of cinema in Ireland and its interaction with Europe from the very end of the nineteenth century up to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Abounding on issues of exclusion and isolationism, with a distinct political nationalist stance, the first five decades of Irish cinema were characterized by a defense of what was truly Irish. The 1960s saw attempts to challenge images of Ireland that somehow did not match with the social, political and economic development of the rest of Europe. The last forty years are characterized by the Irish entry in the ECC and also by a higher exposure to Hollywood and the process of globalization, all of which have added to the appearance of new realities in Irish cinema.

In her "Connolly and his Legacy" Sophie Ollivier has a twofold enterprise as she analyses, firstly, how James Connolly's political thought at large evolved through time; and, secondly how his legacy has in many ways influenced political parties and associations in Ireland until today. Ollivier follows to this end Pierre Nora's distinctions between the concepts of memory and history. Ollivier minutely describes the influences and debts in Connolly's political thought. Her main achievement resides, as well, in the detailed historical overview of James Connolly's legacy in political parties and

movements over time; particularly in the way Connolly's ideas have been adopted, rather (re)written and (re)constructed, by political organizations according to their interests, which can at times differ from James Connolly's initial political thought.

Marie-Claire Considère-Charon examines the significance of cross-border cooperation in her "New Horizons for the Border Areas: from Good Intentions to Good Practice in Cross-border Cooperation". Her analysis maps the history behind such a process in Ireland, which needs to be seen from the very start of partition in 1921, the whole process after the first provisional IRA ceasefire in 1994 and the historical landmark of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Although Considère-Charon is well aware of the short time-span of analysis and the need of time to see the results of cross-border policy implementation at large, dramatic and crucial steps have been

taken on both sides of the border which can serve, as Considère-Charon contends, as models for similar conflicts in the rest of Europe and the world.

Rita Ann Higgins adds the final touches of poetry to this volume. Her poems, "Ask the concierge", "He knows no artichokes" and "The Immortals" encompass what is new and modern about poetry in Ireland. Higgins's clear-cut vocabulary and composition in these poems address the complexities of today's Ireland. Higgins's poetic enterprise makes the reader aware of a combination of approaches to old barriers and new horizons in a future that is being dreamt in 21st-century Ireland.

All in all, *Dreaming the Future: New Horizons/Old Barriers in 21st-Century Ireland*, represents, thus, an illuminating, comprehensive and challenging publication on Irish studies.

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Glocal Ireland: Current Perspectives on Literature and the Visual Arts

Marisol Morales Ladrón and Juan F. Elices Agudo (eds.)

Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011

Reviewer: **David Clark**

In their introduction to this volume, Morales Ladrón and Elices Agudo justify their use of the portmanteau term “glocal” as a means of encompassing “the dynamics of the search for one’s identity and the cross-current need to open up new boundaries” (2). “Glocality”, therefore, is that area of apparent contradiction in which the devastating effects of globalization interact with the local, often used as a synonym for the traditional, the “known”, the comfortable. For the editors, the two concepts are not mutually opposing, but rather, using Bakhtinian terminology, consist in “the site of negotiation for two forces, one centripetal and one centrifugal” (2) from which, given the perceived interchangeability of both concepts “the glocal emerges as the dialogic point where the two can meet” (2). The situation in Ireland, they suggest, is particularly fruitful as a testing ground for such theories, as the literary and artistic production emerging from the island divulges a continued interest for the specificities of local identity, while at the same time revealing a growing concern for a greater heterogeneity and the multiculturalism which stem from the process of globalization. This book, they state, aims at tracing the movement that Ireland is making “from the local to the global and back again to its origins” (3). The proposal is fascinating, especially given the intense upheaval undergone by all aspects of life in Ireland over the last fifteen years or so. The response to such changes as experienced by the country’s writers and artists is a subject of great interest, and the scholars given the responsibility of analyzing the effect of the intersection of the global and the local in the field of literature and the visual arts represent some of the most interesting academics working in the field in Spain, in Ireland and further afield.

Both Margaret Kelleher and Ruth Barton, responsible for the two essays which make up the introductory section, are well-known and well respected in the world of Irish Studies. Kelleher opens the volume with “From the Anthology to the Database: Old and New Irish Studies”, in which she considers the effect of the new technologies on the humanities in general and in Irish Studies in particular. In Kelleher’s study the vast 1904 edition of *Irish Literature* is discussed in some detail as a means of shedding light on how the largely nineteenth-century concept of the anthology is being steadily replaced by its early twenty-first century equivalent, the database. Kelleher praises the multilingual aspects of contemporary database projects such as the Drapier project, Irish Script on Screen, CELT and the Spanish-Irish collaboration in the An Foras Feasa Alcalá Project. Ruth Barton deals with the cinematic production of the Celtic Tiger period in her “The Ghosts of the Celtic Tiger”, criticizing the way by which Irish film audiences are accepting the safe narrativization of the Irish past which is being produced for global publics and as such play an important part in the perseverance of negative and stereotypical images of the country, its people and the events from which its history is written.

In “The Paradoxes of Locality”, María Jesus Lorenzo Modia adeptly examines the way in which certain eighteenth century Irish literary works were used as “effective tools” for the instruction of young women in a form of education based on Enlightenment principles in which “the local and the global are inextricably joined” (47). Begoña Lasa Álvarez remains in the century of lights and discusses the literary output of Regina Maria Roche and the way in which the author’s Irish birth was disregarded

amidst the global popularity of her *Children of the Abbey*. Esther Rey Torrijos examines the qualities of speed and space in the works of Elizabeth Bowen, stressing how the contrast between change and permanence, both of which are qualities rigidly associated with the twentieth century, and which bear an obvious relationship with the qualities of the local and the global, have been overlooked by critics. Munira H. Mutran draws on the figure of the sixteenth century Irish leader Hugh O'Neill and the way in which his figure has been portrayed by dramatists Brian Friel and Thomas Kilroy. Mutran's intelligent analysis centres on the key importance of Seán O'Faolain's biography of the O'Neill for both playwrights, but stresses the different perspective each gleaned from that work. Juan Ignacio Oliva Cruz ends this section with an interesting appraisal of Jamie O'Neill's 2002 *At Swim, Two Boys* which he terms a "kaleidoscopic view" (16) of Irish history in which the author rejects provincialism in an effort to dignify ancestral figures while at the same time renewing the Irish novel.

Pilar Villar Argáiz provides a fascinating chapter on Paula Meehan's poetry in which she stresses Meehan's criticism of the noxious effects of the Tiger period greed and their close relationship with other global features of capitalism such as neo-imperialism. Villar Argáiz insists on Meehan's concern for "the creation of a global poetics" as "the historical trauma of her class spills across national and temporal borders" (114). In her article, María José Claros Morales examines Seamus Heaney's response to the global in his 2006 collection *District and Circle*. Heaney, claims Claros Morales, has "gone openly global" (118) in this volume, which expands both geographically and poetically his artistic territory. The "globalised" nature of the relationship between Aidan Higgins and Samuel Beckett is discussed by José Francisco Fernández Sánchez, who stresses the international and strangely postmodern nature of their trans-border epistolary friendship, which in some way highlighted the grey monotony of nineteen fifties Ireland when compared to the brighter perspectives offered by continental Europe.

Stephanie Schwerter looks at the intercultural

poetics of Medbh McGuckian who she praises for, in common with other Northern Irish poets such as Heaney and Paulin, their ability to "engage with their own cultural environment from an external standpoint" and thus view the Northern conflict "through the lens of otherness" (139). Schwerter highlights McGuckian's juxtaposition of Troubles experience with that of diverse European historical events and her plea that the North might shed its past of sectarianism for what she believes to be a more intensely European ideal of solidarity. The contribution by María Losada Friend analyses Washington Irving's *Oliver Goldsmith. A Biography* in terms of the New York author's portrayal of an Ireland based on "a careful, concentrated selection of biased, picturesque features" (157). Losada Friend skilfully hints at the critical validity encompassed in a reading of Irving's Biography as a means of comprehending certain twentieth and twenty-first visions of the nature of Ireland and the Irish.

"The Turn to the Local", examines the concept of "glocality" and its practical application in post-Tiger Ireland. Asier Altuna-García de Salazar looks at aspects of the multi-cultural character of contemporary Ireland through the prism of Emer Martin's narrative which, he argues, provides a critique of closed mentalities within the global realities of the modern world. He emphasises the liberating and universal character of Martin's fiction found in his "exposition of glocalisation, globalisation, and even glocalmig in literature" (177). Rosa González Casademont contributes a gloriously refreshing account of screen representations of modern Ireland with special emphasis on *The Simpsons*. González Casademont shows how earlier stereotypes have been substituted for the clichés of Celtic Tiger Ireland. The series, however, playfully relies on the awareness of viewers to the existing stereotypes and as such utilises these to help weaken the "commodified notion of Ireland as a consoling escape from modern life" (191), even now prevalent in much American popular culture.

Guillermo Iglesias Díaz studies the dichotomy that exists between film and reality in his study of Paul Greengrass's *Bloody Sunday* and John Carney's *Once*, which offers a subtle exploration

of what he terms “factual faction” in recent Irish film. Abigail Keating continues the cinematographic theme with an examination of the role of the city in the nation’s cinema. Early filmic Ireland was largely represented by the country, but representation of the city has changed as this has come to be seen as a *problematized* location where it is difficult to pinpoint any determined sense of either nationality or internationality. Aída Rosende Pérez ends the section with an attractive piece on the oeuvre of visual artist Amanda Coogan, whose works scrutinize the interrelationship between the female body, patriarchy and Christianity.

This book concludes with two fine interviews with Deirdre Madden and Mary O’Donnell,

conducted by Marisol Morales Ladrón and Luz Mar González Arias respectively. Both give wide-ranging insights into the creative process and the works of their authors while providing an eloquent contribution to the overall theme of this book. It would be fair to say that this volume represents an absorbing contribution to scholarship within the field of contemporary Irish Studies. The juxtaposition of the local and the global within Irish written and visual cultural artifacts opens a significant number of questions regarding the position of national and international forms and means of expression, and the movement away from closed insularity towards advance heterogeneity within the context of the “glocal”.

David Clark was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and is Senior Lecturer in English Studies at the University of A Coruña. He has held executive positions in both national and international Associations for Irish Studies and has published widely on contemporary Irish and Scottish writing. He co-edited the volume of essays *As Nove Ondas* and is co-author, with Antonio de Toro, of the book *British and Irish Writers in the Spanish Periodical Press*. His most recent publications are *In the Wake of the Tiger: Irish Studies in the Twenty-First Century* and *To Banish Ghost and Goblin: New Essays on Irish Culture*.