
IRISH STUDIES IN SPAIN – 2014

Constanza del Río-Álvaro (ed.)

Copyright (c) 2015 by the authors. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the authors and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged for access.

Introduction

Constanza del Río-Álvaro120

Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España (2011)

María Gaviña Costero

Teresa Caneda-Cabrera122

Catalan Production of Translations (2014)

Brian Friel

Rosa González-Casademont.....125

Other Irelands: Revisited, Reinvented, Rewritten (2014)

Juan Ignacio Oliva (ed.)

Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides129

Canta Irlanda. Un viaje por la isla esmeralda (2014)

Javier Reverte

Inés Praga-Terente.....132

Introduction

Constanza del Río-Álvaro

Ireland has been on the papers worldwide this last week. Accidentally, the Court of Appeal legalised certain drugs and, for a day or so, until the wrongdoing was righted, everybody could get high with the government's approval. Wish something similar happened with mortgages and bank loans. A universal web blackout (doesn't have to last long or the world would collapse, just 30 seconds) deletes bank data and it is impossible to retrieve them. Imagine? Much better than ecstasy or ketamine, and healthier, mind you.

Now, seriously. In 2014 we said farewell to Irish Ambassador Justin Harman, always so caring and helpful, always willing to participate and give a hand. We wish him good luck in his future career and endeavours. Like swallows they come and go, and so we heartily welcome Ambassador David Cooney, as gentle and generous as his predecessor. Before leaving the Embassy, Justin Harman attended, this year as every year, the XIII International AEDEI Conference, under the heading "Éire/Ireland and Dysfunction" and held at the University of Deusto (Bilbao), from 29-31 May. The Conference had a special focus on Kate O'Brien, who lived and worked as au-pair for some time in Portugalete, Bilbao. Eibhar Walshe, a good friend of our association and a specialist in Kate O'Brien, was invited as keynote speaker. The Mayor of Bilbao offered a reception in the "Arab Room", a splendid chamber in the Town Hall, where the Spanish translation of O'Brien's book *Teresa de Ávila* (trad. Antonio Rivero Taravillo) was launched. Other scholars, writers and artists stimulated the audience with their wisdom and performances: sociologist Tom Inglis, writers Emer Martin and Billy O'Callaghan and musician Steafán Hanvey. Some students, directed by Asier Altuna (Senior lecturer in Deusto, organiser of the conference and current President of AEDEI) staged Yeats's and Gregory's *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* in a beautiful room. This

Cathleen Ní Houlihan in a beautiful room. This was a memorable and touching event. The University of Deusto impressed me for its magnificence and also because it is a university "with a view". Just facing the river and the famous Guggenheim Museum, it outwardly conflates tradition and modernity in the best possible way, a combination also reproduced inside the University buildings. We all delighted in the Basque country's food and wine and congratulated Asier on such an unforgettable conference.

In Zaragoza, a cycle on Joyce started in January 2015 and will end in the high note, linguistic fireworks and celebrations of Bloomsday. Once a month in the Teatro de las Esquinas, certain lecturers from the Department of English Studies at Zaragoza University (myself included), together with actors, musicians and a Lacanian psychoanalyst gather together to offer songs, recitations, commentaries, and viewings of filmic and dramatic adaptations of Joyce's work. So far, we have covered Joyce's poetry, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*. The title of the cycle is "Who Knows Joyce?", and the main idea is to bring the Irish writer closer to the people and encourage them to read his work. In the three sessions held up to now, the place has been packed (admission free) and the audience seems to have enjoyed the spectacle while leisurely drinking a bottle of stout (not free).

In terms of translations of Irish literature, I would like to highlight Seumas O'Kelly's (1881 – 1918) *Waysiders: Stories of Connacht* (1917). In Spanish the title is *Al borde del camino* (trad. Celia Filipetto. Barcelona: Sajalín 2014). This is a collection of stories by O'Kelly where he combines a lyrical portrayal of injustice, violence, hunger and poverty with Irish folklore. In Marta Sanz's words, "leer la violencia que O'Kelly paraliza en la cápsula de ámbar de sus bellas palabras es interpretar el hoy. Precariedad,

pobreza, hambre, frío, viejos que mueren alrededor de un brasero. La estremecedora posibilidad de que la ira sea justa” (*El País Babelia*, 31-01-2015: p. 8). Sajalín also published in 2010 the translation of O’Kelly’s most famous novella, *The Weaver’s Grave* (1918), as *La tumba del tejedor*.

The year’s recipient of the Príncipe de Asturias award for Letters was John Banville (1945-). Logically, on his coming to Spain to receive the award, the Irish writer gathered quite a lot of media attention, both as artist Banville and as artisan Black, particularly for Black’s follow-up to Raymond Chandler’s *The Long Goodbye* (1953) in Benjamin Black’s novel *The Black Eyed Blonde* (*La rubia de ojos negros*, trad. Nuria Barros. Madrid: Alfaguara 2014). December 2014 being the twenty-fifth anniversary of Samuel Beckett’s death, Spanish journalists, writers and intellectuals paid tribute to this universally acclaimed Irish author. José Andrés Rojo writes: “Importa más coger sus libros y entrar en su región. Y leer, por ejemplo: ‘Los patos puede que sean lo peor, verse de pronto pateando y tropezando en medio de los patos, o de las gallinas, cualquier clase de volátil, hay pocas cosas peores’. He ahí Samuel Beckett” (*El País*, 22 de diciembre de 2014: p. 36). Beckett’s play *Happy Days* (1961), translated into Catalan as *Els dies felços*, adapted and directed by Sergi Belbel, with Emma Vilarasau and Óscar Molina as protagonists, was staged in June in the Teatre Lliure, Barcelona. The Catalan production was unanimously praised, particularly Emma Vilarasau’s performance as Winnie. Another Irish dramatist present on the Spanish stage in 2014 has been Oscar Wilde, not with any of his plays but with Irish actor and director Denis Rafter’s production *Beloved Sinner*, a monologue based on some of Wilde’s texts [(“The Nightingale and the Rose” (1888), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), *Salome* (1894), *The Ballad of Reading Goal* (1898) and *De*

Profundis (1905; 1962)]. Rafter’s production started on 26 November and ran until 7 December in the Teatro Epañol, thus coinciding with the anniversary of Wilde’s death in Paris, 30 November 1900. In a tragicomic tone, it narrates in English (with Spanish subtitles) the last lonely and miserable years in Wilde’s life. A tremendous success has been the Spanish production of Colm Tóibín’s play *The Testament of Mary* (2013). Translated by Enrique Juncosa, adapted and directed by Agustí Villaronga (better known as film director since, in fact, this is his first dramatic venture) and interpreted by famous actress Blanca Portillo, the triumph of the play has lain as much on Tóibín’s iconoclastic, though humane, view of the Virgin Mary and her son’s life and martyrdom as on Portillo’s excellent performance. Portillo is a long-distance runner, never shying away from increasingly harder challenges. The play’s premiere took place in November 2014 in Madrid, Teatro Valle-Inclán, where it run until Christmas. With the coming of the new year it started touring other Spanish cities.

More attention has been paid in this section to 1) María Gaviño Costero’s *Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España* (Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert, 2011), reviewed by Teresa Caneda-Cabrera; 2) Javier Reverte’s *Canta Irlanda. Un viaje por la isla esmeralda* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2014), reviewed by Inés Praga-Terente; 3) *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* 68, 2014, with Juan Ignacio Oliva as guest editor and devoted to Irish Studies (“Other Irelands: Revisited, Reinvented, Rewritten”), reviewed by Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides and; 4) The Catalan production of Brian Friel’s *Translations* (*Traduccions* 2014), reviewed by Rosa González. The four reviews, all of them excellent, can be read below, and I wish here to thank the colleagues who so generously accepted the task.

14th March 2015

Constanza del Río is Senior Lecturer in British Literature at the University of Zaragoza, Spain. Her research centres on contemporary Irish fiction, narrative and critical theory and popular narrative genres. She has published on these subjects and on writers Flann O’Brien, Seamus Deane, Eoin McNamee, William Trevor, Jennifer Johnston, Kate O’Riordan and Sebastian Barry. She is co-editor of *Memory, Imagination and Desire in Contemporary Anglo-American Literature and Film* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2004).

Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España

María Gaviña Costero

Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2011

ISBN: 978-3-8465-6310-6

507 pages

Reviewer: **Teresa Caneda-Cabrera**

Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España (2011) is the result of the painstaking doctoral research carried out by the author, María Gaviña Costero, who successfully defended her dissertation at the University of Valencia in the spring of 2011. As the introduction makes clear, we stand before a work that owes its existence to the author's long time engagement with the study of a playwright who, despite enjoying the status of celebrity in the English speaking world, is virtually unknown in Spanish theatrical circles. In the opening pages Gaviña explains that, although Brian Friel's plays have been staged in theatres in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, San Sebastián, Pamplona and Alicante, the reviews published in the national newspapers after the premières revealed a regrettable lack of in-depth knowledge of the Northern Irish playwright. The author claims that this neglect is also characteristic of the Spanish academic world, where the very few scholarly articles published so far are, for the most part, limited to discussions of the play *Translations* (1980).

This is indeed an extremely ambitious book, born with the laudable aim of attempting to make up for a most unjustifiable lack in the field of Irish Studies in Spain. Curiously, the ambivalence of the title, *La obra dramática y su repercusión en España*, (emphasis mine) is misleading since, as the table of contents makes clear, there is only one relatively short chapter, "Friel en España" (350-468), which specifically addresses what proves to be a fascinating field of study in itself: Friel's Spanish reception. Thus, rather than a study of Friel and his influence in Spain, prospective readers must be warned that the book is largely a general discussion of Friel's

work with a final section focusing on the translation and adaptation of *Translations* (1980), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), *Faith Healer* (1979), *Afterplay* (2002) and *Molly Sweeney* (1994). Despite this minor flaw, it must be said that the book succeeds in providing an insightful analysis of the playwright and his world, complemented with a final suggestive examination of his reception in our country. Among its most obvious merits is the fact that it provides an exhaustive and systematic discussion of plays written between 1964 and 1999 (from the early *Philadelphia, Here I Come* (1964) to the more recent *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1999) which are introduced and analyzed against the background of Friel's own development as a multifaceted artist in the often controversial context of Northern Ireland.

The book is clearly structured following a chronological approach. After a couple of short introductory sections with information on the historical and cultural context of Friel's Ireland, we find four chapters devoted to individual discussions of each of the eighteen plays selected, followed by the chapter addressing Friel's reception in Spain and the final conclusions. Drawing closely on Seamus Deane's (1984) and Elmer Andrews' (1995) proposals, Gaviña distinguishes an early phase (1964-1970) characterized by the influence of the director Sir Tyrone Guthrie, and a second stage in the 1970s marked by the period of political violence in Northern Ireland. She identifies also two later phases which correspond with the decades of the 1980s, with the emergence of *The Field Day Company*, and the 1990s, a time when Friel presumably found his inspiration

in philosophy, rituals and autobiography. The progression of Friel's development is, thus, presented through an engaging combination of historical and political contextualization, plot discussion and formal analysis, together with a revision of Friel's work's critical reception. Although the author announces in her introduction that, given the complexity of the unstable connections between language, territory and identity in Northern Ireland, her approach will be necessarily informed by her readings of Homi K. Bhaba, Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, she does not establish obvious links with postcolonial (or other) theoretical frameworks as expected in her subsequent reading of the plays. Admittedly, Gaviña's methodology is eclectic and her analysis oscillates between the discussion of political motifs, formal strategies, dramatic techniques and themes that reverberate throughout the plays. Her invocation of the central tenets of postcolonial theory becomes only evident in her discussion of the troubled relationship between language, memory and politics in Northern Ireland and in her analysis of Friel's alertness to such issues in emblematic plays like *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Translations*. Given that *Translations* creatively problematizes the complex relations between language and identity, often crucial elements in the history of the different territories and regions of Spain, it is not surprising to find out that this particular play has been the source of considerable attention among the so-called "small nations" within the Spanish state. Thus, we learn that *Translations* in the original version premiered at the "Teatre Nacional de Catalunya" in 2001, with Catalan subtitles projected on a big screen above the stage.

The author interestingly remarks that spectators received a brochure in Catalan explaining that, although the language spoken by the actors was English, the actual mother tongue of the Irish characters would have been Gaelic. She also observes that the publicity of the play in the Catalan press included a reference to the quotation

quotation "Qui perd els orígens perd la identitat"(416) (If one loses one's origins one loses one's identity", my translation) from the song *Jo vinc d'un silenci* ("I come from a silence", my translation) by Raimon, one of the most popular singers of the protest song movement of the 1960 and 70s and also an emblematic former representative of Catalan cultural and linguistic movements. Ultimately, as the author astutely remarks, both the publicity campaign and the press focused on the linguistic question at stake in the play, thus insisting on a significant parallelism between Ireland and Catalonia.

Certainly, in this particular section Gaviña's painstaking research proves extremely fruitful as she presents readers not only with exceptionally original and pertinent information, including unpublished interviews, but also with rich visual materials, such as the reproduction of the poster through which the play was advertised in the Basque Country (a picture showing a young woman whose mouth has been erased). In this respect, since the strength of this chapter lies precisely in the fact that it incorporates a vast amount of original research with an extraordinary potential for discussion on translation-related issues, it remains a little disappointing to discover that the author avoids reflecting on theoretical aspects which are so obviously and interestingly connected with current perspectives and theories on translation. Recent scholarly trends in Irish Studies have approached translation as a suitable concept which can help explain the construction of Irish cultural identities, mediated both by the processes of colonialism and the pressures of nationalism. In this context, Friel's work and more specifically *Translations* has often been invoked by well known Irish scholars like Michael Cronin who famously argued that "translation is our condition" (1996: 199). Understandably, though, in such a comprehensive book, one is doomed to find questions that necessarily remain unaddressed.

Works Cited

- Andrews, Elmer. 1995. *The Art of Brian Friel: Neither Dreams nor Reality*. London: Macmillan.
 Cronin, Michael. 1996. *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages, Cultures*. Cork: Cork UP.

- Deane, Seamus. 1996 [1984]. "Introduction". *Brian Friel: Plays One*. London: Faber and Faber, 11-22.
- Lefevere, André. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.
- Venuti, Lawrence (ed). 1992. *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge.

M. Teresa Caneda-Cabrera is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Vigo. She has taught in the Departments of English and Translation Studies and currently coordinates the Research Group NeTeC on "Textual and Cultural Negotiations in the Anglophone World". She is the author of *La estética modernista como práctica de resistencia en A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and has published extensively in the field of Joyce Studies with a special focus on the translational poetics of "extraterritorial" Joyce and also on the circulation and reception of Joyce's translations. Her most recent publications concentrate on the interrelation between modernism and translation, translation and the postcolonial and translation and place. Her current research focuses on the convergence between translation and mobility. She is a member of the research project "Ex-sistere" FFI2012-35872, on mobility in Irish and Galician Literatures, funded by the Spanish *Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad* and ERDF.

Catalan Production of *Translations* by Brian Friel
 Directed by Ferran Utzet
 Translated by Joan Sellent
 Produced by La Perla29
 National Theatre of Catalonia, Barcelona, January 29th – March 12th 2014

Reviewer: **Rosa González-Casademont**

As announced in last year's section of *Irish Studies in Spain*, a production of Brian Friel's *Translations*, translated into Catalan, opened in January 2014 at the National Library of Catalonia (Barcelona). Under the direction of Ferran Utzet, who had made his directorial commercial debut in 2011 in the same venue with an acclaimed production in Catalan of Conor McPherson's *The Weir*, Friel's play has been rendered literally as *Traduccions*. Following a six-week-run in Barcelona, the production toured to seven towns (Badalona, Girona, Manacor, Cerdanyola, Vilafranca, Sant Cugat, El Prat de Llobregat) from September 27th–November 30th 2014.

As documented by Maria Gaviña in the chapter devoted to the reception of Friel's work in Spain in her 2011 book *Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España* (reviewed by Teresa Caneda in this issue), *Translations* is (quite understandably) the play by Friel which has awakened more interest in Spain, particularly in the Basque Country and Catalonia, two autonomous communities where Spanish is co-official with their respective native languages.

In March 1988, eight years after its historic première in Derry, *Translations* had a four-day-run in the Basque town of San Sebastian, followed by a one-year tour across the Basque Country. The production, entitled *Agur, Eire ... agur* [*Good Bye, Eire ... Good Bye*] was directed by Catalan director Pere Planella, and had two versions, one in Spanish (translated by Teresa Calo) and the other bilingual, using Basque (translated by Iñaki Alberdi and Julia Marín) for the Irish characters and Spanish for the English sappers.

In Catalonia, despite a fine, though relatively unknown, translation made in 1984 by Josep Maria Balanyà (See Gaviña 2011) there was no staging of the play until the Abbey Theatre's 2001 European tour took Ben Barnes' production (with subtitles in Catalan) to the recently opened TNC (National Theatre of Catalonia) for four days. By then, Catalan audiences were already familiar with the playwright thanks to a notably successful production of *Dancing at Lughnasa* [*Dansa d'agost* (1993, directed by Pere Planella and translated by Guillem-Jordi Graells)], to which were later added the titles *Faith Healer* [*El fantàstic Francis Hardy* (2004, dir. Xicu Massó, transl. Ernest Riera)], *Molly Sweeney* (2011, dir. Miquel Górriz, transl. Jordi Fité) and *Afterplay* (2013, dir. Imma Colomer, transl. Jordi Fité).

Whilst *Translations* was not Friel's visiting card in Catalonia, the 2014 staging reviewed here has certainly been his most acclaimed. This may be partly due to extra-theatrical factors, in particular a socio-political juncture which has intensified the centrality of language in Catalan culture. Indeed, whereas the link between language and identity has always been strong, the notion of Catalan as the main identity marker has been foregrounded in the wake of the central government's recent offensive against Catalonia's educational linguistic model.

The so-called language immersion method, a learning technique that incorporated Spanish and Catalan but used the 'minoritised' language (in this case Catalan) as the main medium of classroom instruction, had been introduced in 1983 with a view to normalizing this language after its prolonged proscription from the public realm during the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975).

Despite occasional and unsubstantiated claims that the systems of normalization and language immersion were a means to turn the newly established Autonomy of Catalonia into a monolingual community, this is far from the case for, being “enrichment-oriented” (Fishman 1976: 36) models, they have fostered bilingualism. This is testified to by several student assessment and literacy surveys which reveal that pupils end their compulsory education with a similar level in Catalan and Spanish (Badia 2010: 21), that almost three million people whose first language was not Catalan are able to speak it now, and that at present 50.7% of the population over 15 use Spanish as their habitual language, 36.3% use Catalan and 6.8 use both Spanish and Catalan (Generalitat de Catalunya 2013: 6). Thus, rather than acting as a divisive force, the educational linguistic model has contributed to social cohesion in a society which features a large number of immigrants with different language backgrounds.¹

Traduccions has undoubtedly invited current audiences to draw comparisons with the linguistic question in Catalonia, but the reception of this production has encompassed other central issues probed by Friel’s play, such as its dramatization of “tradition and progress. Adaptation or resistance” (Ferré 2014) as well as the fact that, as pointed out by director Utzet, *Translations* addresses the irruption of violence, subtly describing how it emerges “almost by accident out of a very tense situation” (Zaballa 2014), a point taken up by another reviewer who perceptively observes that whereas in the play “violence is generated by the less educated ones ... the victims are those who might become links in the act of cultural recovery” (Bordes 2014: 38).

I would even venture to say that the play’s (exaggerated) depiction of the supposedly uncouth Irish characters as fluent in Irish, Latin, Greek

(and English in the case of Hugh and his sons) is another potential asset for Catalan audiences aggrieved by derogatory opinions, voiced through some sections of the Spanish media, which qualify Catalan culture and society as inward-looking and narrowly provincial, a view which contrasts sharply with their self-image as a cultured, dynamic society with a cosmopolitan outlook.

Ultimately, though, one would like to think that the impact of *Traduccions* rests above all on the merits of Friel’s text, ably rendered into Catalan by award-winning translator Joan Sallent, and by a fine production, featuring a generally competent cast of nine actors.

Utzet’s production, set in the Gothic hall of the National Library of Catalonia, a 15th century building formerly occupied by a hospital, where the audience sits a few yards from the stage, places us in the back yard of a rural school bathed in ochre shades, a manger-like setting whose bucolic quality is abruptly broken by tragedy (Bordes 2014). The performance lasts two hours and 45 minutes including the interval, a considerable duration for a play that is driven by the characters’ speeches rather than by action. This length is due to the presence of two different elements added to the original: a narrator who provides the non-Irish audience with information about the Irish context at both ends of the performance, and music that enlivens the increasingly gloomy mood of the play. The narrator delivers most of Friel’s stage directions (about the period, the hedge school and the characters) at the beginning, and then, at the end of Act Three, he intersperses Hugh’s broken recitation from the *Aeneid* with the following summary of the fate of the Irish language:

Some summers later, after laying waste all the crops in the country, the potato blight will finally reach Baile Beag. There will be migrations, whole villages will disappear. In 25 years the Irish population will decrease from eight to four million. People will remember these years as *An Gorta Mór*, the Great Famine. The Irish will still have to fight a war against the English, and a civil war. Eventually, in 1937 they will achieve their independence. English, though, will have replaced Gaelic as the first language of the island. Towards the end of the 20th century little more than 30% of

1. Out of a total population of 7.553.650 people, 63,7 % have been born in Catalonia, 18,8 % in the rest of Spain and 17,5 % abroad – 10,6 % of the latter group do not have Spanish or Catalan as their first language (Generalitat de Catalunya 2013: 4, 9).

Irish people will understand or will be able to read Irish and only 3% will use it as their first language (My translation).

The performance then concludes with “The Wild Rover” sung by American actress Jenny Beacraft (Sarah in the play), accompanied by the rest of the company. Further than this and the reel specified in Friel’s stage directions for the brief interval between the first and second scene of Act Two, (during which the Catalan production keeps Owen, Yolland and Maire on the stage in a lively drunken scene in which Owen mockingly tells Maire to keep an eye on Yolland because “the English can’t hold their alcohol”), there are three more instances of musical insertions: *The Dubliners*’ “Oró Sé do Bheotha obholle” [Welcome Home] at the end of Act One, after Hugh’s words of hospitality “Gentlemen – welcome” to Lancey and Yolland; Eddie Vedder’s soundtrack for the film *Into the Wild* (Sean Penn 2007) “Guaranteed” at end of the love scene between Maire and Yolland, and this is followed by actress Beacraft’s rendition of the ballad of the ’98 Rising “The Wind that Shakes the Barley” at the beginning of Act 3.

On the other hand, there are a few minor omissions, mostly of culturally-specific references that were probably deemed to be unfamiliar to a foreign audience. Thus, part of Captain Lancey’s reading from the white document about the military occupation of British colonisation has been cut down (“All former surveys of Ireland originated in forfeiture ...”), as has the allusion to Daniel O’Connell’s use of Irish just “when he’s travelling around scrounging votes ... and sleeping with married women”. Other references are reworded with a view to making them more accessible: when Maire says to Manus “The passage money came last Friday” in the Catalan version this is rendered as “last Friday I received a letter from Brooklyn; my brother says he’s found a job”; and

when Hugh asks the whereabouts of Sean Beag, instead of Manus’ original answer (“he’s at the salmon”) we get “he had to leave, he had a family affair”. Adding “English soldiers” to a passing reference to “the Red Coats” or substituting “Hibernophile” with “irlandòfil” [Irishphile] are other minor changes that contribute to making culturally-specific details more accessible. The substitution of William Wordsworth with George Gordon Byron as the romantic poet who lived close to Yolland, though, seems less justifiable, since both writers are equally well known in Spain.

Last but not least, Joan Sallent’s version of *Translations* passes with flying colours the linguistic challenge that Friel poses on the credulity of the audience and becomes a solid asset of the production. As the translator himself has said, he faced a double challenge and decided to rule out not only “the temptation to transfer the conflict to the situation in Catalonia so that some characters would speak in Catalan and others in Spanish, [but also] the option of making the Irish characters speak a clearly identifiable dialectal variant of Catalan (as spoken in Mallorca for instance) and the English ones to speak the standard peninsular form, for this would have worked as a distracting element” (my translation) (Sallent 2014: 11, 12). Instead, he chose to use two different registers of Catalan: a popular, atemporal variety, non identifiable with any concrete dialect, to be spoken by the local characters,² and a normative standard by the English soldiers. Both forms flow with great naturalness and make possible the necessary ‘suspension of disbelief’ asked from the audience.

2. For instance, they say ‘llenga’ for ‘llengua’, ‘gesto’ for ‘gest’, ‘tàctica intel·ligenta’ for ‘tàctica intel·ligent’.

Works Cited

- Badia, Joan. 2010. “Gràcies a la immersió lingüística: models d’escola i models d’educació lingüística”, *Òmnium: llengua, cultura, país*, N° 15 Atumn. Barcelona: Òmnium Cultural, pp. 20-23.
- Bordes, Jordi. 2014. “Un drama ben plaent als sentits”, *El Punt Avui*, 2 Feb, p. 38.

- Ferré, Teresa. 2014. "Rural i universal", *Un blog de crítica teatral*, 22 Feb, <http://notesescena.wordpress.com/2014/02/22/rural-i-universal/>
- Fishman, Joshua, A. 1976. *Bilingual Education: An International Sociological Perspective*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.
- Gaviña Costero, María. 2011. *Érase una vez Ballybeg. La obra dramática de Brian Friel y su repercusión en España*. Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Cultura. 2013. *Els usos lingüístics de la població de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Direcció General de Política Lingüística.
- Sellent, Joan. 2014. "Notes del Traductor", *Traduccions. Dossier* [Press Pack]. Barcelona: La Perla29, pp. 10-12.
- Zaballa, Bel. 2014. "Irish play holds lessons for Catalonia", Vilaweb, 5 Feb, <http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/4171372/20140205/irish-play-holds-lessons-for-catalonia.html>

Rosa González-Casademont lectures in Irish Literature and Cinema at the University of Barcelona, Spain. Her research and publications are mostly focused on representations of Ireland on screen. In 2002 she was awarded an honorary doctorate in Literature by the National University of Ireland at Galway.

Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses 68 (2014). Special Issue “Other Irelands: Revisited, Reinvented, Rewritten”

Juan Ignacio Oliva, guest editor.

La Laguna: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de La Laguna.

ISSN: 0211-5913

Reviewer: **Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides**

The many changes that Ireland has experienced in the multilayered forms of its cultural order constantly trigger works and studies that tackle the process by which the island is facing its past, negotiating its present and constructing its future. Among the broad spectrum of disciplines in the humanities, scholarly projects continue to emerge in an attempt to explore how the normative artifacts that constrained definitions of Irishness can be significantly dismantled, also revealing the many prospects of the deconstruction of those traditional tenets. Volume 68 of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* contributes to such mission in a compelling and enriching way, as it gathers together a number of essays on the broad topic of “Other Irelands: Revisited, Reinvented, Rewritten”. Indeed, the guiding principle of the collection seems to be the divergence from accepted views and limiting categories that Irish cultural products have put forward throughout history. As the guest editor, Juan Ignacio Oliva, remarks in the introduction, “(M)other Ireland is viewed here as a country of heterodoxy and a rich mosaic for diaspora, reversion, remodeling, and why not, canonical dissent” (9). The volume contains articles by fourteen specialists on Irish studies from Spanish universities and other European institutions, and it spans a number of centuries, disciplines and literary genres. At first sight, such varied approaches to the core theme may seem overwhelming; yet, as the reading advances, it is quite evident that not only have the pieces been correctly arranged, but also they fit together perfectly, with intersecting contents that make real sense. Besides, one of the most significant marks of the collection rests in the fact that it offers updated views on the key issue

of rearticulating Ireland, a project that is always welcome, mostly in the Spanish context in which it is published. In fact, several articles address the connection between the two countries, and the varied cultural exchanges that are brought with it.

In the article that inaugurates “Other Irelands”, Leif Søndergaard describes details of some travel accounts about St Brendan’s voyages collected in several medieval manuscripts. He claims that, unlike common belief, the saint travelled from Ireland towards the west, not only for the obvious geographical location of the island but also considering his description of his final destination as a “fake Paradise”. Similarly, Enrique Galván provides an interesting insight into the appropriation of the mythical insularity portrayed in St Brendan’s travels for the articulation of Canary Islands nationalism, indicating that the Irish saint’s views helped to project counter images of national identity. The Ireland-Spain interface is also the concern of Ute Mittermaier’s work, which concentrates on the autobiographical novel *Balcony of Europe* by Aidan Higgins. As suggested in the article, submerged in the Irish author’s descriptions of Spanish life in the 1970s are an alienation from his native country and the identification Spain as “anOther Ireland”. Then, Margaret Brehony offers an uncommon vision of Ireland as she explores how the Irish migrant community that worked in Cuba on a railroad construction in the early decades of the nineteenth century made a significant contribution to the labour relations and the workers’ protests against military rule in the Spanish colony at that time. Also focused on nineteenth-century events is Marta Ramon’s article,

where she analyses the tangibility of the new Ireland defended by James Fintan Lalor in the 1840s, that would be quite at odds, she contends, with Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined communities". In the following work, the exploration of nationalist identity continues, with Alfred Markey's analysis of the figure of Sean O'Faolain. Markey provides a non-canonical perspective of the anticolonial positions of the Irish writer, as evidenced in his autobiography *Vive Moi*. In the same vein, Juan F. Elices offers a refreshing vision of Ireland by means of his analysis of Peter Dickinson's *The Green Gene*, a text that employs dystopian tropes to challenge the bases of the racial stereotyping that, in imperialist ideology, identified Ireland as "the Other".

Turning to more contemporary re-visions of Ireland, the next two articles address the heterodoxy of Irish identity from the perspective of the performative and visual arts. In the case of Jochen Achilles, his work examines the modes of liminal subjectivity that can be found in Martin MacDonagh's play *The Cripple of Inishmaan* and, briefly touches upon Marie Jones's *Stones in His Pockets*. For Achilles, both texts contain an existential dimension that reveals the multiple possibilities of the negotiation between Irish realities and their representation. A similar point is made by Rosa González, whose article gives a detailed overview of the traditional Irish clichés that have permeated recent films set on the island, in an attempt to criticise their essentialist basis and denounce the intercultural encounters that they have thwarted.

The last five articles in the volume examine the notion of an alternative Ireland as represented in poetic and narrative texts. Katharina Walter delves into the revisionist projects that contemporary Irish women poets like Eavan Boland, Medbh McGuckian, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Rita Ann Higgins and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill have been engaged in when contesting the maternal allegories of Irish nationalism in their poetry. Then, with Pilar Villar and Burcu Gülüm's article the reading shifts to a more recent picture of Ireland and also to the analysis of short fiction. The authors explore two stories by Roddy Doyle where, they

argue, the multicultural reality of present-day Ireland and the many tensions that it entails are depicted in an unorthodox manner, that is, from the usually conflicting viewpoints of the local Irish and the incoming migrants. In the next article, Marisol Morales approaches the notion of revision in light of Colm Tóibín's articulation of a non-traditional iconography of the Irish female emigrant in his novel *Brooklyn*. In Morales's sharp judgement, the text demystifies the codes of diasporic subjectivity that impinged on Irish women who emigrated to the United States in the 1950s, highlighting instead their possibilities of reinvention and their fulfillment of a hybrid identity. Afterwards, Juan Ignacio Oliva's article, focused on Jamie O'Neill's novels *Disturbance*, *Kilbrack* and *At Swim, Two Boys*, studies the intersections of nationalism, independence and masculinity that O'Neill, in line with writers like Oscar Wilde, renders in his texts. For Oliva, the political emancipation of the country and the sexual liberation of the male protagonists overlap, demonstrating that a non-conforming and heroic reading of Irish history is possible. And finally, Asier Altuna plays with the symbolical phrase "Mother Ireland" to demonstrate that in her two collections of short stories – *Antartica* and *Walking the Blue Fields* – Claire Keegan revisits many of the elements of the canonical Irish female imagery that were assessed by Edna O'Brien in her famous memoir *Mother Ireland*. In Altuna's view, the nostalgic discourse that O'Brien used to claim for a rearticulation of femininity in Ireland is challenged by Keegan as she proposes a more centralized affirmation of female identity that would turn the island into "(M)other Ireland".

Taken together, the articles in the 68th issue of *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* contribute significantly to the multifocal debates about how Ireland and Irishness have been represented in literary productions, historical accounts and cultural manifestations. To a large extent, authors succeed in offering thought-provoking explorations of the nonconforming character of such representations. The volume constitutes a plural perspective of a fascinating subject that is thoroughly assessed in most of the articles, which in turn, are extremely readable, solid and provide

remarkable discussions. Thus, collectively and individually, the critical pieces that are gathered in “Other Irelands” shed new light on the alternative imaginary that surfaced over the course of Irish history, and it is more than likely

that, given their academic quality and critical grip, they will usher in further discussions on this engaging topic within the field of Irish studies, both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Auxiliadora Pérez-Vides lectures in English at the University of Huelva, Spain. Her publications include *Sólo ellas: familia y feminismo en la novela irlandesa contemporánea* (2003) and the co-edition of *Espacios de género* (2005), *Single Motherhood in Twentieth Century Ireland: Cultural, Historical and Social Essays* (2006), *Gendering Citizenship and Globalization* (2011), *Experiencing Gender: International Approaches* (forthcoming) and *Words of Crisis/ Crisis of Words: Ireland and the Representation of Critical Times* (forthcoming). She has published extensively on the representation of gender, motherhood and the body, covering the work of Irish authors like Catherine Dunne, Mary Rose Callaghan, Edna O’Brien and Mary Leland, among others. Her current research interests focus on the repression of the institutionalised body, the cultural manifestations of Ireland’s Magdalene Laundries and the social dimension of John Banville’s crime fiction.

Canta Irlanda. Un viaje por la isla esmeralda

Javier Reverte

Barcelona: Plaza y Janés 2014

376 páginas

Reviewer: **Inés Praga-Terente**

Un relato de viajes es siempre la expresión del alma del viajero, la crónica de unas vivencias personales, fruto de un ejercicio de curiosidad y devoción. La proliferación del género – tan antiguo como la literatura y la historia – muestra que, como en el río de Heráclito, nunca se realiza dos veces el mismo viaje aunque coincidan los personajes, los tiempos y los espacios. Por eso es de gran importancia conocer la brújula que guía a cada viajero ya que de ella va a derivarse la esencia y el desarrollo del periplo, que en el caso de Javier Reverte queda aclarado en las palabras siguientes:

Los viajes precisan de un impulso mítico, aunque estos impulsos sean más caseros y humildes que los de los tiempos heroicos, cuando los hombres iban a conquistar ciudades ... Si el impulso mítico se diluye, por pequeño que sea el mito, el viaje se pierde. No obstante, a veces el viaje va construyendo su propia mitología” (2014: 19).

Leyendo a Reverte es evidente que ese impulso, si bien ya no aspira a conquistar ciudades y territorios como el propio autor comenta, aspira a conquistar el espíritu de un lugar y a descifrar sus señas de identidad más íntimas. En otras palabras, a captar “the sense of place” que, en definición de Seamus Heaney es tanto un lugar geográfico como un lugar de la mente, un lugar vivido y vivenciado por y para el viajero (1980). En el prólogo del libro Reverte se revela que

[m]i pretensión no es otra que comprender un poco y rendir mi particular homenaje a esta isla en la que no hay serpientes, que exporta al mundo miles de curas y monjas y millones de litros de cerveza negra, que presume de tener uno de los índices más bajos de suicidio de la Unión Europea, que nunca ha invadido a nadie y que ha sido tantas veces invadida (por vikingos, normandos y sobre todo ingleses, que se quedaron un buen rato), donde sus habitantes beben hasta el delirio Guinness y

whiskeys, gentes que prefieren la carne al pescado, las patatas a las verduras y que aman los cisnes y los caballos y a los poetas. En su bandera nacional no hay feroces águilas ni leones, tan sólo una delicada arpa gaélica (18).

Todo viaje comienza con un impulso mítico pero también demanda con el lugar cierto grado de amor y empatía que a veces, por excesivo, puede adulterar la óptica del viajero. Reverte evoca las palabras de uno de los grandes cronistas de Irlanda – Heinrich Boll, autor del célebre *Diario Irlandés*– cuando confiesa que “el mayor obstáculo que me impide escribir mi visión de Irlanda es el hecho de que este país me gusta demasiado y no es bueno para un escritor escribir sobre un asunto que le gusta demasiado” (16). Quizá por ello Reverte escribió la versión definitiva del libro en 2012 rememorando un viaje realizado ocho años antes – en 2004 – tras dejar que reposaran sus vívidas impresiones recogidas en diferentes cuadernos. El autor aprovecha a veces esta distancia temporal para medir las diferencias entre la Irlanda de entonces y la de ahora, si bien estas apreciaciones son escasas.

Irlanda ha ejercido a lo largo de los siglos una notable fascinación para el viajero, representando esa Arcadia feliz y bucólica que la vida moderna aún no ha empañado. Tal imagen, abundantemente glosada en la literatura y en el cine, encuentra cierto eco en el subtítulo del libro, “*Un viaje a la isla esmeralda*”, que a primera instancia parece prometer los paisajes de ensueño de las postales de John Hinde. Reverte, sin embargo, dedicará una atención muy parcial a la belleza de la tierra irlandesa que, si bien es convenientemente alabada, en modo alguno representa el núcleo central del relato. El autor ha viajado a lo largo y ancho del planeta y en su obra encontramos siempre el deseo de trascender las experiencias

del propio viaje adentrándose en la historia del lugar que visita. Leer a Reverte es casi siempre visitar con él un país y un territorio y al mismo tiempo recibir documentadas lecciones sobre su pasado y – en menos medida – su presente. En el caso de Irlanda, el autor detecta de forma clara sus rasgos distintivos:

[A] las naciones no las significan tan solo su historia, su geografía y sus gentes, sino también sus mitos, su poesía, su música, sus canciones y, en el caso irlandés, el peso que la leyenda tiene sobre la realidad. Siento que Irlanda es el país europeo donde se aman los mitos con más fuerza que los hechos probados (16).

No cabe duda de que este prisma – la gran importancia de la leyenda frente a la historia, la fértil alianza de “story” y “history” en cualquier acontecimiento – es un fidedigno punto de partida para todo viajero que busque la esencia irlandesa y por ello no debe extrañarnos que ambos elementos se alternen y se fundan en el relato de Reverte. Un relato que comienza en un día mítico para la literatura irlandesa – el 4 de Junio de 2004, centenario del Bloomsday – y que adopta de inmediato el carácter de peregrinaje por los lugares y los episodios Joyceanos. El peregrinaje literario será uno de los grandes estímulos del autor, que visitará y recreará con devoción los lugares de Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde, Brendan Behan, Patrick Kavanagh, Seamus Heaney, W.B. Yeats o J.M. Synge, rastreando siempre al ser humano además del escritor. De este modo efectuará tanto un jocoso “literary pub crawl” como la visita a museos, bibliotecas, viviendas y calles en busca de la huella viva. Y entre esas líneas inserta a menudoversos escogidos de Yeats, Kavanagh o Heaney para ilustrar determinados pasajes o simplemente para hacer gala de la riqueza de un país donde “se reverencia a los escritores más que a los héroes”. Por otra parte, no olvida Reverte esa otra gran veta de la literatura irlandesa que es la tradición oral y a ella le dedica interesantes comentarios en el capítulo “Y esta es mi historia”.

Pero el alma de Irlanda no sería tal sin la música que, en íntima alianza con la palabra, es la verdadera carta de naturaleza del país. El propio título del libro, *Canta Irlanda*, ya nos anuncia la presencia continuada de un extenso

repertorio de baladas que el autor va citando según el acontecimiento o el personaje del momento. Cada balada – siempre en versión original con su traducción al castellano – corona la narración de un suceso o un perfil histórico aportando la versión popular, el punto de vista de la leyenda, del testigo directo que estuvo allí o el halo mítico con el que Irlanda suele involucrarse en hechos y a sus gentes. Efectivamente, en el libro de Reverte Irlanda canta, canta la historia y la vida en miles de pubs y en cualquier situación, ofreciendo un repertorio rico y variado que en sí mismo es una valiosa aportación. En mi opinión, la selección poética y musical del libro revisten mucho mayor atractivo que la documentada – y a veces tediosa – información que ofrece sobre los principales acontecimientos históricos tales como los asentamientos británicos, la Hambruna, la división de la isla, la Insurrección de Pascua, o personajes claves como Oliver Cromwell, Daniel O’Connell o Charles Stewart Parnell, por citar solo algunos ejemplos. Como apuntábamos anteriormente, Reverte siempre ofrece amplia documentación sobre los países que visita y en ocasiones ésta puede resultar desproporcionada, desviando la atención del lector sobre el desarrollo del viaje. A ello debe sumarse el interés casi exclusivo en acontecimientos del pasado – sin duda relevantes para entender el presente – y una escasa atención a la sociedad irlandesa actual. Quizá su análisis más contemporáneo sea el relato de los disturbios y la situación de Irlanda del Norte anterior al acuerdo del *Good Friday* de 1998 porque no en vano Reverte vivió de forma directa el *Bloody Sunday* en su calidad de corresponsal de un periódico. El celo del autor en documentarse pasa por alto una observación más estrecha de las grandes transformaciones de la Irlanda del siglo XXI y de sus múltiples problemas, como la economía, los movimientos migratorios, las minorías o los problemas de la Jerarquía Católica, por citar algunos. No puede achacarse esto a su falta de contacto vivo con los irlandeses: muy por el contrario, es de alabar su cercanía para iniciar una conversación espontánea en cualquier pub – su lugar de encuentro favorito – o en otros lugares, conversaciones que suele transcribir con fidelidad y que constituyen una jugosa antología

de anécdotas.

No faltan las referencias al cine irlandés, y su potencial para la creación de estereotipos nacionales, con todo un capítulo dedicado a *The Quiet Man*, la película que hizo a un adolescente Reverte enamorarse de Irlanda pero sobre todo del esplendor pelirrojo de Maureen O'Hara. Como tanta gente de su generación, él descubrió en la pantalla que había vida – y muy atractiva – más allá de nuestras fronteras y sintió el deseo de escapar hacia allá. No cabe duda que somos legión los españoles que aprendimos a soñar en el cine y que un día pensamos que en Irlanda todas las mujeres eran como Mary Kate Danaher y que todos los caminos conducían a Inisfree. En cualquier caso, lo que nunca declina a lo largo de *Canta Irlanda* es el entusiasmo del autor por vivir y sentir esa Irlanda que canta todo el tiempo, sobre todo historias de mártires y perdedores. Un entusiasmo que no disculpa la a veces descuidada revisión tipográfica y errores notables como atribuir el origen de Seamus Heaney al condado de Kerry (en vez de Derry!) (240) o imprecisiones como referirse a “la República del Sur” (47) o “el Eire”(152). Del mismo modo resulta confusa la autoría de las traducciones, tanto de los poemas como de las baladas. Quizá debemos suponer que las primeras proceden de las traducciones que cita en la bibliografía aunque no se señala nada al respecto; y en cuanto a las baladas, sólo en el apartado de agradecimientos sabemos que unos amigos le “asistieron en las traducciones al español de las canciones irlandesas, en ocasiones muy difíciles de trasladar a otros idiomas” ¿Debemos deducir por tanto que son del propio autor?.

Works Cited

- Boll, Heinrich. 1998. *Diario Irlandés*. Madrid: Galaxia Gutemberg.
 Heaney, Seamus. 1980. *Preoccupations. Selected Prose, 1968-1978*. London: Faber and Faber.
 Hooper, Glenn. 2001. *The Tourist's Gaze: Travellers to Ireland, 1800-2000*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Inés Praga is Professor of English at the University of Burgos (Spain). She is the author of *Una belleza terrible: la poesía irlandesa contemporánea 1945-1995* (1996), *Diccionario Cultural e Histórico de Irlanda* (in collaboration) (1996), *Ireland in Writing. Interviews with Writers and Academics* (1998) and the editor of *Irlanda ante un nuevo milenio* (2002) and *La novela irlandesa del siglo XX* (2005). In 1998 she was conferred with an honorary degree in Literature by the National University of Ireland (Cork). She was founding member of the Spanish Association for Irish Studies (AEDEI) in 2000 and she is currently the honorary chair.

Reverte se revela en Irlanda, no solo como un viajero, sino como un buen parroquiano que ama y conoce la vida irlandesa, el ritual de la bebida y – hasta donde el país se lo permite – de la buena comida. El libro se nutre de un detallado diario de su actividad gastronómica y resulta una guía más que notable de los pubs de Dublín, cuya cerveza, bullicio – y sobre todo música en directo – le producen una fascinación absoluta. De ahí el contraste tan acusado entre sus diferentes registros narrativos: el humor y la campechanía con que nos cuenta sus experiencias personales choca con el aséptico tono enciclopédico de su documentación histórica. Y es que, a medida que avanza el libro, el escritor y el estudioso de Irlanda van dejando paso a un Reverte íntimamente irlandés que se funde en el paisaje y el paisanaje sin el menor esfuerzo. Afirma Glen Hooper, editor de una interesante antología de relatos de viajes a Irlanda, *The Tourist's Gaze*, que el mayor móvil para el viajero es siempre la posibilidad de reinventarse, de imaginar y explorar la pluralidad del ser que habita en nosotros y que se libera en un contexto diferente (2001: xiii-xiv). Tal es el caso de nuestro autor, que poco a poco abandona la óptica del viajero y, ya sea tomándose una pinta, cantando baladas a coro en un pub, gozando del paisaje al volante de un coche o rastreando en vivo la historia, se convierte en un simple enamorado de Irlanda. Tan enamorado, que el libro se cierra con una pregunta al lector cuya respuesta no es difícil adivinar:

Si tuviera una nueva vida, amigo lector, y pudiera elegir una tierra donde nacer, ¿cuál crees que escogería?.