

Does History Consist of the Biographies of Great Men? – Parallel Irish Lives Scrutinised and Contextualised: Collins, Joyce, and Company

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The year 1997 marked the 75th anniversary of the first publication of *Ulysses*, the beginning of the Irish Civil War, the death of Michael Collins, and the inception of the Free State. Commercial and academic publishers seek to profit from such occasions by commissioning biographies, studies, and collections. They do so in the face of theories doubting the effectiveness of biography, prophesying “the end of history” (Fukuyama) or the end of historiography (Ernst Nolte). Hence the dated essay question courtesy of Thomas Carlyle set at Cambridge University where Jacob Flanders, the protagonist in Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room* (1922), went up to study in autumn 1906 has resurfaced with a vengeance.

Following the empowerment of formerly muted female, colonised, and suppressed communities in general, such broad issues seem to have lost academic support, since each scholarly community speaks to its peers. I think the effect of globalisation in communication was to diversify and deregulate what once was a unified if not unitary discourse across linguistic and cultural boundaries. To give an example: *Ulysses* was written when the Irish struggle for independence came to a head, and published on the same day when the Prime Minister for the Provisional Irish Government—Michael Collins—and James Craig—head of the Stormont Government established following the Government of Ireland Act, 1920—met in Dublin only to realise that partition had become an irrefutable historical fact.¹

Separate literary and historical sources had given me the clue to describe a key-moment in Irish (literary) history. When I proposed to write an epilogue for a biography of Michael Collins to be translated into German I thought to make good in the marketplace what academic specialisation had so far precluded. Alas, my ambition to tell the story of Collins’s and Joyce’s parallel lives between July 1921 and August 1922 and discuss the historical implications of *Ulysses* was nipped in the bud. Besides claiming that “the reader,” unfathomable being, would not be interested in such “digressions,” the publisher objected that Collins and Joyce had been juxtaposed at random. There is Alan Bullock’s famous *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (1991), but I did not use it to defend my case, and the two dictators belong to the category of Great (Bad) Men in History, so that a parallel biography, let alone the humble sketch attempted, would have had to conform to the principles of historical and literary biography. And I had written neither.

The notes on the lives of Collins and Joyce in the context of Anglo-Irish cultural history seek to enlarge “the subject-matter,” not of poetry as Aldous Huxley proposed in his essay collection *On the Margin* (1923), but of criticism and history alike. It is high time that modernist studies give more prominence to cross-disciplinary and trans-cultural approaches. Arbitrary

time and space limits need to be transcended if connections and contexts are to be perceived.

Joyce wrote about an Ireland to which largely applied what Nadine Gordimer says about Apartheid South Africa: "Nothing could be asked; nothing could be explained."² In an unsolicited reply the Irish poet Desmond Egan points out the past of his country: "we the Irish know/how deep your memory runs[addressing the Jews]/how little is a hundred years//mingled with the awareness/of a people never privileged to explain."³

It was literature which paved the way for historical explanation: in South Africa, Ireland, and in post-war Germany. The study of Joyce raises questions that only historians can answer, and literary critics may be able to answer questions raised by the study of Collins. Whoever writes the life of a great Irishman or a great Irish author, composes *Ulysses* or directs a popular feature film like *Michael Collins* must be subjected to criticism. Even the fullest biographical account must be *scrutinised*, and each and every work of art needs to be *contextualised*.

I wrote a small part of Collins's biography and an afterword placing him in the context of Irish cultural history. Neither the deadline nor the space allotted allowed me to reflect the approaches used. I tried to imitate the biographer's methods and tone in the epilogue where with the help of allusions and subterfuge I introduced parallels and analogies between Joyce and Collins. The afterword sought to provide some cultural-historical background saying that Collins's success came after the various failures of Theobald Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, Daniel O'Connell, and Charles Stewart Parnell. I referred to the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League supplanting the political efforts to achieve Home Rule and managed to squeeze in a few sentences on politically relevant writers from Jonathan Swift to Tom Paulin and Paul Muldoon. Grateful for feeling free to criticise post-war Irish studies in Germany and historiography in general for turning a blind eye to each other's work and blurring the over-all view in the general reader's eye, I concluded by pairing off Neil Jordan and Thomas Moore, the 19th century bard, because they share a two-fold appeal: on the surface they reach a mainstream global or British audience, and on a second level they play the Irish nationalist card. This could only be stated, not explained. In telling the parallel lives of Joyce and Collins I refer to the problems inherent in any such account before a second look at "History," "Biography," and "Great Men [People]," the big words still so attractive to a mass audience, raises the question of the Anglo-Irish cultural-historical context Collins worked in, Joyce lived, and wrote, in as well as about.

I

Collins and Joyce were contemporaries, and each had a part in the process leading to the establishment of the Irish Free State and the Civil War. Ironically and suitably, this unlikely pair graces the cover of Carol P. Shaw's *Famous Irish Lives* (1996). Beside Oscar Wilde, George Best, and Mary Robinson, they form a group portrait with a lady. With the former President of the Republic perhaps being *the* representative of a new post-de-Valera Ireland, the lives of great Irish people may also enter a new phase. Nevertheless most of the lives Shaw recounts were marred by scandal, early death, or exile.

Collins and Joyce share some characteristics of a "famous Irish life," and

both have acquired a kind of mythical status. They are icons of Irishness and export assets in our current commodity culture. The first edition of *Ulysses* pioneered a development in 1922 the end of which may not be reached with the release of *Michael Collins* in 1996-97.⁴

Born in 1882 and 1890 into a bourgeois Dublin family on the decline and a solid West Cork tenant family, they left Ireland at an early age. Collins was fifteen and a half when he set out for London to join his sister Hannie, then a clerk at the Post Office Savings Bank. While Collins was the youngest in the family and relied on a network of seven brothers and sisters to help him at home and on the mainland, it was Joyce's task as the eldest surviving son to provide opportunities for his younger siblings once he had come into his own abroad.

The traditional emigration pattern worked smoothly enough for Collins whose brains enabled him to join the British civil service. In London he became an ardent nationalist. Like Joyce and, indeed, another contemporary, Adolf Hitler, surrounded by women, after his father's death in 1896, Collins emerged a self-confident, perhaps even an over-confident young man. With Joyce the emigration pattern failed: his father posed as a gentleman when he could no longer afford to, and the family almost fell apart when May Joyce died in August 1903. Joyce, who continued to need female care, was twenty-two when he eloped with Nora Barnacle in October 1904 on the premise that he was offered a job as language teacher in Zürich, failing that, in Trieste. But he did not only leave for economic reasons, and he never envisaged to return to Ireland for good. He did not become a campaigning nationalist in Trieste, though he was sympathetic to Home Rule and the Irredentist cause and mellowed towards Ireland when writing "The Dead," continuing to be deeply interested in Irish affairs until his death in January 1941.

When Joyce asked Stanislaus and two of his sisters to join him in Trieste it was on the pretext to provide for them but, in fact, he needed their help and his brother's financial support until 1915 when he avoided internment by escaping to Zürich. Joyce spent the First World War as an Irish refugee with a British passport, at times upheld by a grant from the British Civil List provided with the help of fellow Irishman W. B. Yeats and the influential English critic Edmund Gosse. Collins, however, left England at the beginning of 1916 when "his personal conscription crisis [came] to a head,"⁵ thus clearly showing where his allegiance lay.

In the ensuing armed struggle for independence their roles could hardly have differed more. As usual, Joyce was a mere onlooker from afar, and in April 1922 at forty apparently as helpless as the nine-year-old who wrote the poem "Et tu Healy" following Parnell's death when his partner, Nora Barnacle, and his two children were in Galway at the start of the Civil War.

Collins had an uncanny knack to be in the midst of things. In 1904 he "learned to type" (Dwyer 9) as a helper at the "*West Cork People* newspaper in Clonakilty," run by his "eldest sister Margaret and her husband P[atrick] J. O'Driscoll," which was a highly political leisure activity for a teenager in turn-of-the-century-rural-Ireland. His assistance consisted in writing "reports of minor football matches and bowling contests"⁶ or he "helped out with the reporting, usually on hurling or football matches" (Dwyer 9).

These minutely divergent statements—the latter nationalist in tone since it mentions hurling, a Celtic game, and the former less politically minded—stem from two biographical studies seeking to cover a limited period or one aspect of Collins's life. Without claiming theoretical

allegiances they adhere to the postmodern view which prefers multiple lives to the magisterial portrait of a life as a work of art exemplified by Richard Ellmann's lives of James Joyce and Oscar Wilde.

T. Ryle Dwyer's *Michael Collins: The Man Who Won The War* (1990) describes the period between the Easter Rising and the Truce on 11 July 1921, whereas the title of Meda Ryan's *Michael Collins and the Women in His Life* (1996) is self-explanatory. Both works cover the beginnings and omit an important part of the Collins story. Dwyer laconically concludes: "At the time [when Collins signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty] he thought he had secured the means of ending partition and achieving the full national goal, but his part in those negotiations is a different story which is told elsewhere" (Dwyer 146). Ryan's final flourish is little better: "(A detailed account of the last three days of Michael Collins's life and an analysis of the way in which he met his death and of subsequent events are contained in *The Day Michael Collins Was Shot by the present author, Meda Ryan*)" (Ryan 189).

But for the arrival of Neil Jordan's film those problems would not have troubled me. As the translator of Dwyer's book I felt that the story of Michael Collins ought to be fully told. Unaware at the time that it was a suggestion boldly to square the circle rather than to "circling timidly round the neighbouring square" (P 2.222-23) as Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus did when he first came to Dublin, I offered to write an epilogue to Dwyer's book, using two chapters of Sinéad McCool's *Hazel: A Life of Hazel Lavery, 1880-1935* (1996) to fill the lacunae left by Dwyer.

In what proved the only contact I asked Dwyer to send me a copy of his earlier book and other material, which he promised to but never did. The German publisher gave me Ryan's recent book, which the Swiss agent wanted to sell as well. Again I looked for the earlier one but found and read it only after completing translation and epilogue of Dwyer's book. Moreover, I had no immediate access to any of the substantial lives by Piaras Béaslaí *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland* (1926) or Frank O'Connor's *The Big Fellow: Michael Collins and the Irish Revolution* (1965 and 1979).

The available sources contradicted each other in terms of ideology and in factual minutiae behind which loomed the ghosts of political points of view: Dwyer and Ryan, for example, disagree about Collins's date of birth and the size of his father's farm. Crucial dates are often controversial, so that it is almost irrelevant whether you follow Ryan, Rex Taylor, and Coogan among others, and choose the 16 or the 18 October 1890, as Dwyer does.⁷ But it is an important social and historical point for a translator and any reader to know whether Collins's father's farm comprised sixty or ninety acres.

Looking for an answer I turned to the German translation of Alexander Somerville's *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847* in the glossary of which Christian Langhorst explains the difference between English and Irish acres. Applying his figures to our case, it is possible to approach Dwyer's sixty acres as 470,400 square yards to Ryan's and Coogan's 435,600,⁸ and with some more research into Irish rural history the two figures might yet be reconciled. Again, Dwyer emerges as the more nationalist biographer, using Irish acres.⁹ Such discrepancies are bound to turn up—whether there is time to check and double-check a biographer's work or not. (In fact, translating a scholarly book means to re-do the research, and as a rule—and Dwyer is no exception—authors dislike such *scrutiny*.) Writing the epilogue meant I was in the biographer's shoes myself and had to solve problems arising from contradictory sources.

Dwyer, for example, stresses that unlike "most of his young

contemporaries, [and, indeed, James Joyce], Collins showed little interest in the opposite sex” in his late teens and early twenties, and then rejects the claim that Collins “may have been homosexual.” He quotes a description by Joe O’Reilly, Collins’s intimate friend and aide, “confidant, messenger, nurse, sometimes body-guard, and the person who bore the brunt of the Big Fellow’s rages” (Dwyer 113), “the portrait of a rather strange fellow” given to “wrest[ling]” a colleague “to the floor, and then begin biting the unfortunate friend’s ear until the other fellow surrendered, often with blood streaming from his ear” before he denies any authority to Hazel Lavery’s claims to an affair with Collins “in London, during the Treaty negotiations”: “The evidence of this affair is totally from her side.”¹⁰ Whatever a biographer of Lady Lavery now says one is reluctant to give her the benefit of the doubt.

To make matters worse, Meda Ryan emphasises that women “played an important part in Collins’s espionage” (Ryan 13), which Dwyer cannot and would not deny, for he says that of Collins’s “safe houses” most “were run by single women, the aunts or widowed mothers of colleagues” (Dwyer 13). Ryan is the first to stress that for “most of his early days Michael’s home life was dominated by women who loved and nurtured him” (Ryan 18), that he lived “amongst women” to turn John McGahern’s eponymous novel to biographical account, an aspect Dwyer does not refer to when he states that Collins as opposed to Eamon de Valera “had been reared as the youngest of a large close-knit family” (Dwyer 124).

Ryan specifies Collins’s behaviour towards women in London and contradicts Dwyer in degree if not in kind without addressing any of the theories rehearsed in other lives: his “cousin Nancy O’Brien . . . observed how he avoided getting involved with any one girl, preferring to win the friendship of several” (Ryan 23). And she points out Collins’s social standing in the years prior to the Great War: “He became a regular theatre-goer and soon rubbed shoulders with the famous and the rich,” including “Crompton Llewelyn Davies and his wife Moya [O’Connor],” who had a nationalist family connection through her father and a business relationship to David Lloyd George, the Liberal politician, later Collins’s counterpart at the negotiating table. “Through his friendship with the Davieses Collins was introduced in 1913 to the Belfast-born painter Sir John Lavery and his attractive wife, Lady Hazel” (Ryan 23).

All this is neither corroborated by a footnote of Ryan’s nor referred to in Coogan’s massive biography or recounted in Sinéad McCoole’s life of Lady Lavery, and as a potential change in Collins’s life-style flatly denied by Dwyer who quotes Michael Collins’s *Own Story as Told to Hayden Talbot* (1923): “For the most part we lived lives apart. We chose to consider ourselves outposts of our nation . . . We were proud of isolation . . . and we maintained it to the end” (Dwyer 10). Set against Ryan’s account, it is hard to believe that he “and his friends never integrated into British society, and never wanted to” (Dwyer 10), unless one accepts Dwyer’s political bias as implicit reason for his failure to explain in other than nationalist terms why Collins was safe at “Furry Park, the home of Moya Llewelyn Davies” “who was the daughter of James O’Connor, a late Parnellite member of parliament, and her husband was a confidant of Lloyd George. With credentials like those, her home was one of the last places the security forces were likely to raid” (Dwyer 114).

Since I could only speculate as to the content of Dwyer’s earlier book on the negotiations of the Anglo-Irish Treaty I wondered at the omission of Collins’s social contacts when in London as an emigrant because he profited

from them once he returned to the British capital in the autumn of 1921. This troubled me also because Sinéad McCool reports according to Sir John's autobiography that after having "received no reply" from Collins himself "Hazel [in October 1921] got in touch with Collins's sister [Hannie], and one morning he walked into my studio," against all odds prepared to be painted by Sir John who undertook a unifying project of political portraits by painting members of both delegations, thus completing an Anglo-Irish picture gallery when the political odds were all for partition.¹¹

Obviously keen on revelations about the purported affair between Collins and Lavery, McCool glosses a quotation from a letter on that first session from Collins to Kitty Kiernan: "Collins did not mention the painter's wife" (McCool 75). Naturally, McCool stresses Hazel's position: "Like other hostesses in London, Hazel wished to entertain Collins; unlike most others, however, she had a genuine interest in Irish politics." "The informality at the Laverys' was crucial for Collins, whose language was 'more suited to the docks than the drawing-room.'" (McCool 75, 75-76) Again, she relies on another biographer's, that is, Margery Forester's, evaluation of Collins's behaviour, which is in line with both Frank O'Connor's view, quoted subsequently that he "had always been shy and rather self-conscious, hating formalities" (McCool 76), and Dwyer's opinion. There is no mention of prior encounters which would explain why there was an informal relationship between Collins and the Laverys.

In two subsequent paragraphs McCool describes how Collins—apparently owing to "Hazel [being] adept at making people from different backgrounds feel comfortable, mixing literary figures with those in politics"—"befriended the [Scottish] writer J. M. Barrie" and became the rather "unlikely" friend of the "Unionist Lord Birkenhead," which, according to Chamberlain, was instrumental in achieving "agreement with the Irish" (McCool 76). This ties in with her view of Hazel Lavery and tells us much about Collins as a controversial character, but I was looking for historical facts about his life and felt lost, particularly when reading in Ryan's account that Collins with "a view to promotion in the civil service . . . successfully pursued evening classes at King's College" before she turns to his political activities (Ryan 21). (It is worth mentioning that King's College London, founded by the Church of England in 1829 in response to the secular University College of London, may have fuelled Collins's nationalism.)

Both Dwyer's and McCool's portraits of Collins stress the image of the raw, uncouth farmer's son, which remains a constant feature in the muscular *The Man Who Won the War*, while McCool tends to attribute Collins's interest in books to Lady Lavery's influence: "Hazel wrote to him: 'I found this portion of a wonderful book in an old shop. I am trying hard to get an intact copy to send you as you would delight in it I know, and be interested in all the facts about the French Revolution'" (McCool 77). Yet I fail to follow McCool's qualifications: "The nature of Hazel's relationship with Collins cannot be established with certainty, as Hazel's own comments on such matters are notoriously unreliable and all other existing 'evidence' is hearsay" (McCool 77). At this stage she should stop speculating or report rumours and party gossip as such. Notwithstanding this caveat McCool goes on to consider doubts on the part of Kitty Kiernan, by now Collins's fiancée, and the "surviving fragments of letters from Collins to Hazel" "preserved" in her "scrapbook" as proofs of their romantic attachment (McCool 89-90, 92, 94).

In her account of their relationship as only one among many between

Collins and women before, during and after the War of Independence, which Coogan hardly touches upon in the 480 pages of his life, Ryan comments on Hazel's alleged romantic interference in the relationship between Collins and Kitty Kiernan: "Kitty knew of the value of Lady Lavery in Mick's intelligence world" (Ryan 162). And further on: "There has recently been some debate about the degree of romantic involvement between Collins and Lady Lavery and how much of it was the invention of Lady Lavery. A 'fantasist' was how Oliver Gogarty called her," according to Ulick O'Connor, Gogarty's biographer (Ryan 162-63). With this we are still left with Dwyer's assertions at the beginning of his book when he uses hints, which do not later materialise, from the correspondence between Collins and Kitty Kiernan to "demolish," it seems, "the homosexual accusation," also denied by "rumours that he had an affair with Hazel Lavery," before stating that the "evidence of this affair is totally from her side" (Dwyer 14). He readily makes use of hearsay to stifle any hints of a homophile strand in Collins's life but declares the same hearsay an untrustworthy piece of evidence when it does not suit his image of Collins as the virtuous muscular man who had no affairs with married women.

After all this quibbling the question recurs: what is the meaning of "Biography," "History," and "Great [People]." "—I fear those big words, Stephen said, which make us so unhappy" (*U* 2.264). This fictional response makes me wary of a context where political interests feed the publication of multiple biographies of Great Irishmen and -women. They supposedly form the basis of historiography from an Irish point of view.

Joyce, the writer, points out an Irish perspective in the history of the United Kingdom, and I thought an outline of the contradiction between his life as an unpolitical individual and the "progressive politics"¹² of his work would complement the political narrative about Collins's life after the Truce and before his death. For their parallel lives and works reveal that neither was prepared for, and able to avoid, the pitfalls that prevent a solution of the Irish predicament even today. Compared to compromise figures such as Eamon de Valera and W. B. Yeats, who emerged unscathed from the bloodshed and received the Nobel Prize in 1923, Collins and Joyce were predestined to avoid the actuality of *current* politics and literature, aiming instead at an unpopular statement of the *contemporary* situation and pay the penalty—early death or permanent exile.¹³

In turning to Joyce it is apt to say that the image of his life as "fix[ed] . . . for a generation"¹⁴ by Ellmann has recently been questioned by various approaches. By contrast to Collins's political achievements, Joyce's works have always had a palpable existence even when subjected to controversies. His writings attract many people forced to read translations. If, in criticism, they could choose between the multiple lives now offered to those literate in English, they would be empowered to judge for themselves.

Yet the Joyce industry of largely American descent does not sell everywhere. In German we still have only Ellmann's account, Jean Paris's earlier faulty short life (in its 18th edition since 1960), and Stan Gébler Davies's whimsical and "gossipy biography,"¹⁵ recently resurrected by a German critic, who, in a daily newspaper, deemed it a "magnificent biography."¹⁶ Besides, there is Brenda Maddox' *Nora*. Introducing a new perspective first published in translation in 1990 and re-issued in paperpack in 1998, this life of Joyce's wife did not create the need to translate the insight "that Joyce grew up in the age of the New Woman and was caught up in a questioning of sexual relations no less vigorous than our own" into the image of Joyce the ultra-modernist whom everybody reveres and

nobody understands.¹⁷ There is no public discussion in German about the life of James Joyce at the moment, nor is it likely to happen. Thus David Pierce's biographical remarks indebted to Ellmann and his chapter on feminist views of Joyce only provoked hostile responses when the translation of *James Joyce's Ireland* was released in 1996.

A society where translations abound, like any other pluralist and capitalist culture, is determined by choices of the marketplace, and the subsequent public reception does not necessarily coincide with the response the original met with. Translators must address this problem by preparing their audience, providing information where the author relies on cultural presupposition. Thus when a new book of Joyce criticism or a biography comes out in German, there are the works as a primary wall to lean to while the secondary scaffoldings are being erected.

With the Great in History whose achievements can only be grasped in the archives if not through secondary accounts we lack such helpful crutches. Hence a biography of Eamon de Valera or Michael Collins as opposed to a well-known icon of British history such as Winston Churchill would neither be supported by any edition of their works nor rely on historical knowledge imbibed in secondary or higher education. Such a special study would appeal to the few initiated among German-speaking students with a particular interest in Irish studies, but they are supposed to read English anyway, so the book would not be made available in German.

Neil Jordan's film, however, crosses cultural and commercial barriers because it is a highly profiled work of art and a commodity—in the big single-language market of the German-speaking countries even dubbing pays off. Hence publishers, translators, and critics share a responsibility as to which sample of a culture they choose to make available beyond the language barrier.

The *contextualisation* of Collins and Joyce in their various settings is perhaps more important than to import works and lives, whether written or to be screened, solely on the grounds of their saleability. Since the literary biographer and the historian in the guise of a biographer seek to please the multitude and earn a living, they adhere to the maxim that "History consists of the Biographies of Great Men [People]." And this is due to the fact that our economies and commodity cultures function according to principles first formulated by Adam Smith in the 18th century. Women have recently been raised to the stature of the Great, and so have small countries and minorities. Despite this change of content the stories told in such biographies continue to be "inflect[ed] in the direction of William Wordsworth."¹⁸ Greatness is a romantic notion which applies to the myth of geniuses and performing artists as exemplified by Beethoven, Paganini, and Liszt in the 19th and the Modernist writers, Strawinski and Picasso, Caruso, Eleonora Duse, Charlie Chaplin, and Horowitz in the 20th century.

Similarly, Michael Collins has become a legend in Irish history, not unlike Andreas Hofer who fought Napoleon in the Tyrol in 1809 and was executed by the French in 1810. Neither Dwyer, nor Ryle or McCooile addresses the theoretical problem of history-turned-mythology in their lives of Collins, and a movie as a work of art is a myth-maker in its own right. So I felt the German readership of Dwyer's brief life should get an impression of Collins's status in Anglo-Irish cultural history before they go and see the film (again). Therefore I proposed an afterword outlining the reception of Irish culture as against which the story of Michael Collins—the first Irish soldier and politician after independence to achieve Hollywood status and thus also to invade the minds of countless people fully unaware of Irish

history—was to be shown in a German-speaking culture. Again, the larger theoretical issues at stake in such a project transcending a specialist audience are best seen when pairing off Joyce and Collins.

II

On the continent things Irish always mobilise flocks of *aficionados*, but in general the country is still largely *terra incognita*. Important events increasingly enter our consciousness but they are highlights without a context such as when Seamus Heaney received the Nobel Prize in 1995, when the EU summit was held in Dublin, and when the Frankfurt Book Fair focussed on Ireland in July and October 1996.

This attitude of pick-and-choose concerns so-called purely Irish events, but while the public awareness of things Irish grows the very possibility of using such a category dwindles away. Sooner or later “Anglo-Irish” becomes a pervasive concept: its ambiguities relate to nation—there is an Irish nation and a supposedly English one (where do the people in Northern Ireland belong?)—the Irish variety of English, known as Hiberno-English; as an adjective the word qualifies the War of Independence as the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921)—another means to blur the clear-cut oppositions outside observers attribute to the Irish cause; and it also refers to the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, the class of Irish who were part of Irish and English society, which included homes in Ireland and on the mainland, a mixed education, mixed religious, cultural, and family traditions and so forth.

All this complicates and shades a romantic view of Ireland prevalent in Germany. Whoever shares it seeks to obliterate the expression “Anglo-Irish War” and use the term “British-Irish War.” (I found it hard to convince a colleague and friend, a student of history, to relinquish that coinage and prevent its leakage into three publications on Ireland in German.)

With the “Anglo-Irish” identity an especially untrodden ground in German and Germany, I should mention that the conflict in Northern Ireland is one of the most persistently covered topics in the media. It rouses mixed feelings, too. And this is due to the fact that the *current* and the *contemporary* are consistently being confused.¹⁹

Currently the good news about Irish culture often correspond to bad news about the unresolved conflict. Appropriately, the average listener and viewer learns little about Irish history and its relationship to British history. Hence Irish life in its variety has reached Germany only in recent years, partly through feature films like *My Left Foot* (1991), *The Field* (1991), and *In the Name of the Father* (1993), directed by Jim Sheridan; *The Crying Game* (1992), and *Michael Collins* (1996), directed by Neil Jordan, but also through movies made by Alan Parker and Stephen Frears based on Roddy Doyle’s Barrytown trilogy, *The Commitments* (1991), *The Snapper* (1994), and *The Van* (1996). Apart from folk and rock music, the traditional transmitters of Irish culture, novels and feature films have turned attention to contemporary issues in Irish history despite their adherence to the current politico-cultural scene in Ireland.

In *The Crying Game* and the novels by Bernard MacLaverty, Danny Morrison, and Eoin MacNamee the conflict in the province disturbs and destroys people’s lives. Roddy Doyle and Joseph O’Connor, however, present conflicts within the predominantly Catholic if no longer clerical Roman Catholic society of the Republic. The proverbial Irish humour makes

for a good laugh even in the most tragic moments of the characters' fictional lives. Seen in the context of North and South, it is only black humour which helps to survive the catastrophes pervading past and present.²⁰

The film *Michael Collins* introduces a chapter of Irish history prior to partition, which sealed the destinies of several generations of Irishmen and -women. It is an attempt at reconciling in cultural and artistic terms what both parties to the conflict have so far failed to do for fear of harming anyone's vital interests. Besides, casting Liam Neeson for the part of Michael Collins has contributed to popularising the historical personality so that it is highly important soberly to re-assess Collins's actual role. For Neil Jordan's work may create the impression that a modern hero gave Ireland, the underdog, a triumphant victory over Great Britain, the favourite.²¹

It is not only since the release of *In the Name of the Father* in 1993 that British mass media have mistaken a work of art featuring historical events with a clear bias for a current political statement or even nationalist propaganda while Jim Sheridan and Neil Jordan simply profit from the ascendancy the Irish have gained in the international arts scene to present a former minority view. Rather, the critical reaction to both films conveys the impression that the media misunderstand the real impact of works of art and tend to pit purportedly current issues against contemporary ones.

Neither film seeks to glorify one political position at the expense of another as intimated in British and German newspapers. I think the release of controversial films provides a perfect opportunity to witness how backward any society becomes which pays homage to the goddess of current events and but scant attention to the niceties of contemporary Political Culture, necessarily also determined by long-term tendencies. In Britain this led to the re-iteration of banner head-lines popular over seventy-five years ago and to the strategy of avoiding any risks in the negotiation process for fear of losing the support of the Ulster Unionists in the Commons or the general election in May 1997 or both. Since such constellations were barely perceptible in the German media where we learned of John Major's reliance on the vote of nine MPs from the province but remained ignorant as to its implications, I now want to explore the concept of parallel lives in an Anglo-Irish and a literary context.

Collins was a soldier and a politician, and unlike other leading Irish contemporaries he neither attended university nor practised a profession or wrote books. Nevertheless he belonged to a mainly Anglo-Irish (political) culture to which he reacted in his London exile and also on his return to Ireland before he played the London cultural card again during the Treaty negotiations in autumn 1921. Other than James Joyce, the most important Catholic Irish writer of the 20th century, Collins thought he had to participate in the armed struggle and was perhaps unable to grasp his own ambivalent position in that strife. In focussing on Joyce's treatment of Irish history in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* I seek to illustrate how his view encompasses parallel lives of the past, real and fictional ones, and might be extended to include Collins.

His life and work was determined by two major events in Anglo-Irish cultural history: the Great Famine, the greatest catastrophe in living memory, survived by his family, and the Easter Rising, which he survived himself. On the other hand the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969 and the unilateral declaration and revocation of the ceasefire by the IRA in August 1994 and February 1996 have been tantamount to turning international attention to the situation in Ireland as a whole and the role of Michael Collins 75 years after his death, so that the stalemate prior to the ceasefire

announced on 20 July 1997 appears to be embedded in a contemporary situation rooted in the 1920s.²²

Like the key moments in Irish history and politics, the actors, their achievements, and failures have hardly been perceived in Germany. Firstly, the media silently supported the British government and considered the nationalist cause an internal problem with the terrorists of the IRA. Although the situation has started to change, especially with the Marching Season 1998, only few initiated people appreciate the connection between the separation of the Republic from the United Kingdom and partition. Secondly, conventional historiography starts with hagiography, and there must be success to begin with. In Ireland, however, before Collins, defeat and failure reigned supreme. Between 1798 and 1891 Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, O'Connell, and Parnell stopped short of reaching their goals. Apart from Parnell, whose rise and fall was basically orchestrated in London, they all faltered in Dublin.

Besides, London was the political and the cultural stage for many Irishmen: for centuries writers, members of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy or even Catholics, could only succeed in the English capital, so that the marketplace and until fifteen, twenty years ago historians of English literature claimed them for the English mainstream, just as Austrian and Swiss writers were confused with Germans simply because they shared a language. Thus Laurence Sterne, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, George Moore, Oscar Wilde, G. B. Shaw, W. B. Yeats succeeded in London merely to be more or less assimilated to the dominant culture. Their (Anglo-)Irishness could only be unearthed in the wake of a devolution of literature in English which may be fairly advanced in the classroom and in scholarly publications but is still halted at the boundaries of cultural spheres where the marketplace controls the influx of knowledge. Hence it seems easier to introduce largely unknown historical personalities like Michael Collins than to divulge the dubious Anglo-Irishness of purportedly English writers or historical characters like the Duke of Wellington or Lord Kitchener.

Owing to the scandal about Katherine O'Shea's divorce, Parnell's life enters the glossy weekend magazines of national dailies in Germany, and his role in Joyce's works has been studied extensively. While Robert Emmet is waiting for his cue in the wings, O'Connell as a distant relative of Joyce's has surfaced as a collateral influence to the lives and stories of John Stanislaus Joyce in a biography by John Wyse Jackson and Peter Costello, subtitled *The Voluminous Life and Genius of James Joyce's Father* (1997), so that I concentrate on Wolfe Tone. I first heard of him and the Rising of the United Irishmen around 14 July 1989 when I watched a BBC documentary about the Irish rebellion broadcast to commemorate the bicentenary of the French Revolution. Taken aback at, and surprised by, my ignorance, I scanned the shelves in near-by Harrogate and Ripon for books to tell me more about this event in Irish history. My anxiety did not abate when I found that few writers referred to it and that British authors and the books I had read seemed to by-pass the event altogether.

Subsequently I noticed, even if I did not pursue and understand, references to Irish history in Joyce's writings, and I recalled an allusion to Wolfe Tone in *A Portrait*. Since this novel continues to puzzle me with its unfathomable textual features, I made a detour via the concordance and Chester G. Anderson's 1964 text before I discovered the passage in Gabler's 1993 critical edition only to note that it concludes a sequence saturated with references to Anglo-Irish (cultural) history and the cultural landscape in the 1900s.

This circuitous approach reflects the way Joyce translates Irish history into fiction. As with personal memories there is no direct, let alone chronological access, which is ironically pointed out in *A Portrait*: "In the roadway at the head of the street a slab was set to the memory of Wolfe Tone and he remembered having been present with his father at its laying." These are Stephen Dedalus's thoughts, and Joyce's refusal to use an intrusive narrator makes the reader work. Probably I never stopped to think about the sentence before I knew how and where to place Wolfe Tone in Irish history.

Stephen's thoughts have a marble-like quality. There is no crevice to poke one's finger in: "He remembered with bitterness that scene of tawdry tribute." With no factual reference his memory remains a riddle which even the last sentence of the paragraph fails to solve: "There were four French delegates in a brake and one, a plump smiling young man, held, wedged on a stick, a card on which were printed the words: *Vive l'Irlande!*" (P 5.355-61)

Notwithstanding the initial frustration, this passage also leaks some information: it re-memembers and re-calls a commemoration scene and involves the French and the Irish, at one in their Celtic antagonism against the English, and it must have been embarrassing. The unenlightened reader will be none the wiser.

I doubt whether Joyce is a good history teacher, but he alerts us to the problems behind any rationalisation of history which passes into living memory, then into legend and the world of books before it becomes an unrecognisable part of people's private pasts, to be reluctantly released on psychiatrist's couches, spelt out by writers, and recounted by biographers and historians.

In *A Portrait* Wolfe Tone is only recognised as an important actor in Anglo-Irish cultural history through supplementing the hints by means of outside knowledge, but Joyce returns to Tone in *Ulysses* where he first mentions him in "Wandering Rocks": "Five tallwhitehatted sandwichmen between Monypeny's corner and the slab where Wolfe Tone's statue was not, eeled themselves turning H. E. L. Y.'S and plodded back as they had come" (U 10.377-79). The absent Wolfe Tone is a part of Dublin street furniture, and the allusion to the scene Stephen Dedalus had witnessed in 1898, which, like the insurrection was an abortive attempt, ironically underscores the general truth that before the advent of Michael Collins Irish history consisted of failures—even properly to remember the disasters of the past. A "slab of granite," the stone presumably a symbol of eternal Irish endurance, "[i]nscribed with the message: '1798. Tribute to Theobald Wolfe Tone, Patriot. Belfast Nationalists '98 Centenary Association. 1898,'" was followed by massive Dublin crowds to its destination. "Everyone had enjoyed their bit of pageantry, but that was all it was: no memorial to Tone would ever be built on that corner. But John Stanislaus [Joyce] could have predicted that; it was all that was to be expected these days."

In "Cyclops" Tone re-curs in a catalogue with "many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity," and here the greatness of Irish history is largely exaggerated and laughed at, and many are the names of those who are not Irish at all or of more recent date or not even human beings (U 12.184).²³ Again, Wolfe Tone's historical role is almost beyond recall in the maze of people and places unknown and well-known, obscure, and blatantly illustre.

It would be worthwhile to study the catalogue at length, sift the diverse characters but Wolfe Tone's re-appearance in "Circe" is singular because it highlights Joyce's binary view of Anglo-Irish history: "*Armed heroes spring up from furrows. They exchange in amity the pass of knights of the red cross and*

fight duels with cavalry sabres." The worthies of Irish history, ironically clad as members of a peace corps, are involved in a kind of medieval tournament, and Joyce's arranger almost creates the illusion of parading Irish history in a chronological order, while simultaneously placing the protagonists on stage. Parallel lives meet in eternity or in literature: "*Wolfe Tone against Henry Grattan*" — the archetypal duel of the 1790s between the United Irishman and the leader of the short-lived Irish parliament, both Protestants, active lawyers, and politicians; "*Smith O'Brien against Daniel O'Connell*" — the Protestant Young Irelander and hard-hearted absentee landlord against the "Liberator," Catholic Old Irelander, abolitionist, and controversial politician in the 1840s.

Fifty years when silence was general all over Ireland and Irish history are passed over before the next match is announced: "*Michael Davitt against Isaac Butt*" — the post-Famine politicians, the Land League, and the Land War come to mind; "*Justin M'Carthy against Parnell*" refers to the big moral split over Parnell's private life and the end of hopes for Home Rule in the 19th century, while "*Arthur Griffith against John Redmond*" epitomises the duel between the founder of Sinn Féin and the man who clinched the Home Rule Debate in 1911-12 but failed to sustain his impact by supporting the British Government during the Great War. The remaining three matches "*John O'Leary against Lear O'Johnny*", "*Lord Edward Fitzgerald against Lord Gerald Fitzedward*," "*The O'Donoghue of The Glens against The Glens of The O'Donoghue*" illustrate Joyce's delight in linguistic horseplay and indicate the relentless infighting that he had been witnessing from afar since 1904 (U 15.4680-87).

Moreover, this lucid tableau of Irish history since the 1790s mirrors the combative duality lurking behind dual categories such as Anglo-Irish, Hiberno-English, or Ulster-Scots which refer to a double identity rather than to two outright opposites as expressed in a term like "Franco-Prussian War." This inner strife is shown in the final chapter of *A Portrait* when Stephen Dedalus walks from his home north of the Liffey to University College Dublin.

Stephen walks the streets of Dublin the "rainladen trees" of which "evoked in him, as always, memories of the girls and women in the plays of Gerhart Hauptmann" (P 5.71-73) set in different parts of 19th century provincial Germany. Close to home and removed from it as well as on stage, Stephen, like Joyce, distinguishes the elements of the life he lives. He even hears a voice from the past: "he saw [MacCann] . . . standing in the wind at Hopkins' corner and heard him say: — Dedalus, you're an antisocial being, wrapped up in yourself. I'm not. I'm a democrat: and I'll work and act for social liberty and equality among all classes and sexes in the United States of the Europe of the future" (P 5.121-28).

Although the political utopia courtesy of Victor Hugo here outlined tends to be ironically undermined, Joyce, the artist, contributed to the Irish struggle for independence because he pointed out the problems inherent in that society. In passim he mentions another landmark of Anglo-Irish cultural history since the 1880s, the fact that the English-poet-turned-Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins had been "sent to Dublin to be Professor of Greek and Latin Literature at University College" in 1883. And "attached to an academically poor institution and . . . inextricably part of a movement actively working to throw the English out of Ireland" he felt terribly isolated, since he also was an "English patriot at heart."²⁴ Where should he place his allegiance? Stephen as an Irishman alienated from his compatriots shares this mood of indecision and loneliness.

Stephen's friend, Mat Davin, "stood towards . . . [the Irish] myth . . . in the same attitude as towards the Roman Catholic religion, the attitude of a dullwitted loyal serf," thus serving two masters he fails to understand: "[w]hatsoever of thought or of feeling came to him from England or by way of English culture his mind stood armed against: and of the world that lay beyond England he knew only the foreign legion of France in which he spoke of serving" (P 5.249, 5.252-58). Stephen "called him one of the tame geese" (P 5.260), pointing out that Davin's very Irishness would keep him from living up to his "wild" ancestors' unvoluntary military feats beyond the coasts of Ireland.

It is an ironical, if unsolicited reaction to that fictional image of a nationalist wrapped up in his Irishness that Michael Collins learned the English ways so well that he turned his knowledge against the British Army and that Eamon de Valera, born in New York, felt he had to be somebody special, and, driven by that incentive rather than his Irishness, played the loyal serf to the Roman Catholic Church to gain its support in the struggle to turn the Irish Free State into the Republic. Joyce sees through these ironies, and his writings, published and unpublished, understood or misunderstood in his lifetime, can be seen as a running commentary on the events in Ireland he read about in the *Irish Times*, traditionally a Unionist paper, which again shows his independence in spirit, for in 1904 he had written: "Man and woman, out of you comes the nation that is to come, the lightning of your masses in travail; the competitive order is employed against itself, the aristocracies are supplanted; and amid the general paralysis of an insane society, the confederate will issues in action."²⁵ This emphatic prophecy did not come true, and but for the mismanagement of the Easter Rising by the British authorities the "confederate will" in Ireland would still be laughed and spat at. The phrase "the competitive order is employed against itself" acquires an ironical undertone once the Home Rule Debate, the Anglo-Irish War, and the subsequent Civil War are seen as against the background of Joyce's evolving work. Irish politics at the time and to the present day are characterised by an internecine conflict primarily harming the state of Irish affairs, just as the "sorrowful legend of Ireland" (P 5.245), the Irish "myth upon which no individual mind had ever drawn out a line of beauty" with "its unwieldy tales that divided against themselves as they moved down the cycles" (P 5.249-52) had been subjected to petty bickering and lacking a cohesive texture before Joyce came to give it a shape of his own.

Joyce must have felt that, after its initial rejection in 1904, he could not publish the essay "A Portrait of the Artist" which, with hindsight, derives from the current politico-cultural atmosphere in Ireland. Instead, he wrote and published, the more cautious *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which, set in the 1890s and leading up to 1903-1904, stages the contemporary atmosphere since Parnell's death in 1891. Set before the University question split the nation in 1909 but written in Trieste and issued after the Easter Rising at the height of the Great War, the fifth chapter of *A Portrait* provides an apt commentary on Irish history as it was palpable in University College, in Newman House, years before the likes of Michael Collins realised it: "The corridor [to the physics theatre] was dark and silent but not unwatchful." Stephen feels encompassed by the walls as Joyce must have felt surrounded by the intellectual and artistic stuffiness in the Dublin he left in 1904. "Why did he feel that it was not unwatchful? Was it because he had heard that in Buck Whaley's time there was a secret staircase there?" The repercussions of history, its footfalls, the memories of the famous rake

whose memoirs only appeared in 1906, one hundred and six years after his death, are indeed nightmarish, and Stephen this side of *Ulysses* also asks questions to dispel the effects. "Or was the jesuit house extraterritorial and was he walking among aliens?" (P 5.372-76) Again, a muted allusion to G. M. Hopkins may be assumed, who "lamented that his efforts were 'like prisoners made to serve the enemies' gunners'" and perhaps "for reasons of nationality . . . withdrew from many of the social opportunities available to him in University College."²⁶

The dialogic openness of chapter five and the duality of Stephen's soul are revealed in his conversation with the self. He is anything but individual in the etymological sense of the word. The inherent oppositions, also reflected by Stephen's graeco-christian names, cannot be resolved, only uttered in and/or-constructions. A possible answer resides in the architectural structure itself, the one constant feature in Joyce's Dublin since the eighteenth century. Like the "grey block of Trinity on his left, set heavily in the city's ignorance like a great dull stone set in a cumbrous ring," "the droll statue of the national poet of Ireland," and the "slab . . . set to the memory of Wolfe Tone" (P 5.212-13, 216, 356), Newman House certifies the passage of time: "The Ireland of Tone and of Parnell seemed to have receded in space" (P 5.376-77) Stephen's walking reflections stop here. Joyce's readers are left with a cryptic statement which his contemporaries may have marveled at.

Did Collins realise that he shared with Tone and Parnell the political vision of a united Ireland? Like them, he was an idealist eventually entangled in the nets of political intrigue. Joyce did not foresee or foretell this inner-Irish struggle, hence the discussion in Stephen's mind which by a feat of perverse logic is actualised in the famous exchange between the dean of studies, an Englishman-turned-Catholic-gone-to-Ireland, and the young artist on art, the artist, and on correct English.

The dean suddenly appears to be Cardinal Newman or Gerard Manley Hopkins resurrected, and Stephen only addresses the inherent contradictions Anglo-Irish converts must face. This impression is deceptive, since "as he passed the sloblands of Fairview" there is neither "the cloistral silverveined prose of Newman" Stephen used to think of (P 5.76-77) nor is there in the life of the dean the emphasis on "feelings of a lack of worldly success, of having wasted his talents" that can be felt in Hopkins's letters and in his "skilfully shaped" verse²⁷: "Like Ignatius he was lame but in his eyes burnt no spark of Ignatius' enthusiasm. Even the legendary craft of the company, a craft subtler and more secret than its fabled books of secret subtle wisdom, had not fired his soul with the energy of apostleship" (P 5.436-40). In the opening chapter of *Ulysses* another Stephen is weary if reluctantly so, but he cannot serve whereas it "seemed as if he [the dean] loved not at all the master and little, if at all, the ends he served" (P 5.445-46).

Armed with such insight, Stephen leads the dean by the nose, to discuss the arts and aesthetics in the subversive language which gives the colonised, who must have acquired it, an advantage over the coloniser who, like "a poor Englishman in Ireland" (P 5.526-27), takes it for granted. He says that he "can work on at present by the light of one or two ideas of Aristotle and Aquinas" (P 5.466-67) which the reader knows already, since the "lore which he was believed to pass his days brooding upon so that it had rapt him from the companionships of youth was only a garner of slender sentences from Aristotle's poetics and psychology and a *Synopsis Philosophiae Scholasticae ad mentem divi Thomae*" (P 5.96-100).

At once an admission that there is little behind the theoretical show put up later in the chapter and a clever stratagem to alert the reader to the ironical undertones in the exchanges with the dean, Joyce's method consists in making sure that whoever tries to understand his aesthetics must first see through the machinations of his novel: "I also am sure that there is no such thing as free thinking inasmuch as all thinking must be bound by its own laws" (P 5.462-64).²⁸ As Stephen moves on he deflects the dean's attention from *what* he says to *how* he says it: "If the lamp smokes or smells I shall try to trim it. If it does not give light enough I shall sell it and buy or borrow another" (P 5.470-72). The priest takes the words at face value and rambles on about Epictetus and his lamp sold after the philosopher's death. Wary, his "mind halted by instinct," as it suits whoever employs an acquired tongue, Stephen, "checked by the strange tone and the imagery and by the priest's face which seemed like an unlit lamp or a reflector hung in a false focus" wonders: "What lay behind it or within it?" (P 5.486-89, 5.489). As before he cannot answer the question raised mentally: "A dull torpor of the soul or the dullness of the thundercloud, charged with intellection and capable of the gloom of God?" (P 5.490-91). And he enlightens the priest as to words "being used according to the literary tradition or according to the tradition of the marketplace" (P 5.495-96). His quotation from Newman who "says of the Blessed Virgin that she was detained in the full company of the saints" (P 5.497-99)—a more deceptive source could not be chosen in Newman House!—misleads the dean who replies to Stephen's example of the "use of the word in the marketplace": "*I hope I am not detaining you.* —Not in the least, said the dean politely." (P 5.499-501) If the Irish ever employed such cunning when talking to the English, I am sure there were many similar misunderstandings, and more serious ones at that.

The dean is not beaten yet, and probably does not even feel that he must take care not to succumb to the deviousness of Stephen's words. And their dialogue almost breaks off over a single term, the "funnel" or "tundish" of a lamp, before it is interrupted by a long narrative paragraph in which Stephen paints a portrait of the dean's possible life—parallel to his actual one, looking at him "with the same eyes as the elder brother in the parable may have turned on the prodigal" (P 5.523-24). An intimation of Stephen's feelings, this narrative aside shows that Joyce read the parable as an instance of parallel and as such incompatible lives.

Whatever the background of "the English convert," an "humble follower in the wake of clamorous conversions," "he seemed to have entered on the stage of jesuit history when that strange play of intrigue and suffering and envy and struggle and indignity had been all but given through" (P 5.524, 5.525-29). He was "a latecomer, a tardy spirit" (P 5.530), and is commiserated by Stephen ("desolating pity," P 5.584). In anticipation of "Eumaeus," where another Stephen says to Bloom: "—We can't change the country. Let us change the subject" (U 16.1171), he coolly brushes off the dean's attempt again to raise the subject of the "tundish" and refers to the question "[w]hat the beautiful is" mentioned but not gone into several exchanges before (P 5.416). With "Telemachus" in mind it is easy to see why: "The little word seemed to have turned a rapier point of his sensitiveness against this courteous and vigilant foe" (P 5.549-50). If compared with the narrator's statement: "Stephen, shielding the gaping wounds which the words [of Buck Mulligan] had left in his heart, said very coldly" (U 1.216-17), it becomes clear that in *Portrait* his vulnerability also resides in the language he shares with the Irish and the English, so that the dean's politeness or the "sharp Ulster voice" (P 5.685) of MacAlister alienate him

from both, no matter what he may think of Ben Jonson. "How different are the words, *home, ale, Christ, master* on his lips and on mine! . . . I have not made or accepted its words" (P 5.554-55, 5.557-58). What we have always guessed is now spelt out, and the subliminal irony in Stephen's behaviour, his deviousness may not be intentional after all. Like the English he speaks they are acquired habits, and once he sees this the conversation takes another turn, and, priestlike, the dean gains the upper hand: "We never can say what is in us. I most certainly should not be despondent. . ." (P 5.577-79). He silences Stephen's speech but not his thoughts, and they are embittered ones: "and he thought how this man and his companions had earned the name of worldlings at the hand not of the unworldly only but of the worldly also for having pleaded, during all their history, at the bar of God's justice for the souls of the lax and the lukewarm and the prudent" (P 5.589-93).

Stephen's own position is at odds with this history, being an Irishman at odds with himself, and unsurprisingly, a few pages on, the "voice, the accent, the mind of the questioner offended him." There is resentment against the people from Ulster: "and he allowed the offence to carry him towards wilful unkindness, bidding his mind think that the student's father would have done better had he sent his son to Belfast to study and have saved something on the trainfare by so doing" (P 5.693-94, 5.694-98). Since this was written and published before partition, even the historically ignorant outsider should notice the bitterness and hostility creeping into Stephen's thoughts. How do people feel and react who do not recognise what happens to them? There are only two references to Ulster and Belfast in *Portrait* but they are as important as the one reference to the Czar in the next sequence (P 5.737).

Joyce's concern with Anglo-Irish history and the European context cannot be overestimated although the reader must put bits and pieces together, and that usually takes a long time to flourish on the arid ground of hints and allusions provided. From Wolfe Tone's story as told by Joyce and a fictional parallel life of Hopkins and the dean, who were both converted Englishmen and Jesuits in Ireland, it is perhaps a long way back to Michael Collins's role in the context of Anglo-Irish cultural history. He grew up in the atmosphere prevalent in post-Parnellite Ireland where a Professor of physics quotes lyrics from "the works of Mr. W. S. Gilbert" to illustrate the "ellipsoid" (P 5.631-32, 5.637).

Immersed in contemporary English popular culture, Joyce and Collins needed to seek outlets for their suffocated national identity. As the Irishman on the continent, Joyce is well-known to have articulated his views. As the Irishman in London, Collins must have tried to sidestep the influences of the culture he lived up to by applying for, and working in, the British civil service. Unlike his famous compatriot Oscar Wilde, Collins managed to extricate himself from that influence in 1916 but failed in Ireland. In an attempt to make intelligible why Joyce's historical tableau in "Circe" is open to include Collins and de Valera and a companion list with duels between contemporary writers or other famous Irishmen I conclude by referring to the actual situation of Irish writers in London since the eighteenth century.

Laurence Sterne, only half-Irish, is an exception because he came to London after the publication of *Tristram Shandy*, but as with Sheridan, Wilde, and Shaw, the London scene made him. I wonder who could be considered his antagonist in terms of Irish history. It is easy with Sheridan who, as a dramatist, managed to disturb politics, and, as a politician, succeeded in dramatising the House of Commons, and continued his career

in the wings well into the Regency period. His antagonist became his fellow Irishman Edmund Burke.²⁹

Wilde, who gave a lecture in New York in 1882 entitled "The English Renaissance of Art," betrayed an almost perfect assimilation to the English way of life and of speaking, and in *The Uncollected Oscar Wilde* (1995), compiled by John Wyse Jackson, the references to Irishness as mentioned in the index are to poetry in Gaelic and the work of the young W. B. Yeats. Obviously, Wilde had not yet fully grasped the impact of the emerging Irish Literary Renaissance, and it is only in recent years that he has been claimed an Irish writer by academic critics. In Germany we have not reached that stage yet. Ironically, Wilde fell at the hands of a fellow Irishman, the Unionist and lawyer Edward Carson.

Finally, George Bernard Shaw and Yeats made it to the top in England and Ireland, the latter a senator of the Irish Free State and among the elect in London clubland, the former a writer for the *Irish Times* during the Civil War, he also met Michael Collins a few days before he died in August 1922, and both were awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 and 1925 respectively. Like them, Collins was honoured but only in afterlife. Joyce, perhaps, knew that the likes of him could not be but observers from afar, and even in his story "The Cat and the Devil" (1936) he turns Dublin local colour to account to illustrate his constant attachment to, and estrangement from, Ireland's little split pea by ridiculing Alfie Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin for "a record nine successive years," who, like the devil, "was very fond of dressing himself . . . He wore a scarlet robe and always had a great golden chain round his neck even when he was fast asleep in bed with his knees in his mouth."³⁰ Even in a story supposed to be for his four-year-old grandson he must allude to the petty goings-on in Irish politics. If only Michael Collins had refused to try and change the country himself and shown more personal interest in getting on or reading James Joyce he might have survived the feud with de Valera!

Notes

1. This essay was first presented at the University College of Ripon and York St. John in March 1997. For pragmatic reasons I gave two papers entitled: "'Does History consist of the Biographies of Great Men?': 'On the Margin' of the Lives of Michael Collins and James Joyce" (4 March 1997) and "Assessing Michael Collins and James Joyce in the Context of Anglo-Irish Cultural History" (7 March 1997). I am indebted to David Pierce (York) for arranging this visit. See Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins: A Biography* (London, 1990) 341-42.

2. Nadine Gordimer, "Hanging on a Sunrise: Testimony and Imagination in Revolutionary Writings," *Writing and Being* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1995) 20-42, here 21.

3. Desmond Egan, *In the Holocaust of Autumn: A Sequence in Eight Parts with an Epilogue* (Newbridge, 1994) 21.

4. Lawrence Rainey, "Consuming Investments: Joyce's *Ulysses*," *JJQ* 33.4 (1996): 531-67, here 559.

5. T. Ryle Dwyer, *Michael Collins: "The Man Who Won The War"* (Cork, 1990) 15. See also T. Ryle Dwyer, *Michael Collins: Biografie*, trans. Jörg W. Rademacher and Cristoforo Schweeger, epil. and afwd. by Jörg W. Rademacher (Münster, 1997); henceforth cited parenthetically in the text. In 1998 Dwyer published *Big Fellow, Long Fellow: A Joint Biography of Collins and de Valera*, which I had not seen when this article went to press.

6. Meda Ryan, *Michael Collins and the Women in his Life* (Cork, 1996) 19; henceforth cited parenthetically in the text. See also Meda Ryan, *The Day Michael Collins Was Shot* (Dublin, 1996).

7. Ryan 15; Rex Taylor, *Michael Collins* (London, 1963) 24; Coogan 5; Dwyer 8.
8. Coogan 7.
9. Dwyer 8; Ryan 18; Christian Langhorst, "Glossar," *Irlands Grosser Hunger: Briefe und Reportagen aus Irland während der Hungersnot 1847*, by Alexander Somerville, ed. Jörg W. Rademacher (Münster, 1996) 310-37, here 310-11. See also Alexander Somerville, *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*, ed. D. K. M. Snell (Dublin, 1994).
10. Dwyer 12, 13, 14.
11. Sinéad McCooile, *Hazel: A Life of Lady Lavery 1880-1935* (Dublin, 1996) 74, 75; henceforth cited parenthetically in the text.
12. David Pierce, "Lektüre des *Ulysses* nach dem Fall der Berliner Mauer" ("Reading *Ulysses* after the Fall of the Berlin Wall"), trans. Jörg W. Rademacher, *Was nun, Herr Bloom? Ulysses zum 75: Geburtstag: Ein Almanach*, ed. Jörg W. Rademacher (Münster, 1996) 199-221, here 208.
13. For the distinction between these categories I am indebted to a talk Aidan C. Mathews gave on "Writing in Ireland after *Ulysses*" at the University of Münster on 3 February 1997.
14. Frank Kermode, "Puzzles and Epiphanies," *Puzzles and Epiphanies: Essays and Reviews, 1958-1961* (London, 1963) 86-90, here 86.
15. Joseph Kelly, rev. of *James Joyce and the Burden of Disease*, *JJQ* 33.4 (1996): 626-34, here 633.
16. Walter Klier, "Chinesisch kochen lernen: Teig in vielerlei Händen: James Joyce und die Interpreten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 1, 2 January 1997: 1, 24.
17. Ron Bush, "James Joyce: The Way He Lives Now," *JJQ* 33.4 (1996): 523-29, here 526.
18. Bush 523.
19. Again, I am indebted to Aidan C. Mathews for pointing out this distinction.
20. Egan says about the Irish and the Jews: "we . . . carry a sadness in the blood/a walk a look an accent/some bitter rhythm a wounded shadow/wear like you/humour as a vest" (29).
21. Again, I owe a special debt to Aidan C. Mathews who said that writers and artists in Ireland pretend, and some also believe, to represent a subversive view while they already form part of the authority. With Eavan Boland, Seamus Heaney, and Paul Muldoon as directors of the three most important creative writing centres in the United States, famous Irish poets somewhat control the perception of their literary output in the occident. A world-wide network of people with Irish ancestors also contributes to spreading the word about Irish culture.
22. This is felt in the novels and stories of Sean O'Faolain and Francis Stuart, who participated in the armed struggle, but also in the writings of Brian Friel and John McGahern, who belong to the first generation reared in an independent Ireland, and is still palpable in the works of Colm Tóibin and Patrick Quigley, who grew up in the Republic after World War Two.
23. For Joyce's use of "the 'what if' approach" in his early work, which description may be extended to his complete writings, see John Wyse Jackson and Peter Costello, *John Stanislaus Joyce: The Voluminous Life and Genius of James Joyce's Father* (London, 1998) 229. They also point out the changed circumstances in 1898 (210-11): John Stanislaus Joyce "knew enough Irish history to be aware that the Wolfe Tone on offer in 1898 was not the anticlerical French Revolutionary of a century before, but a carefully canonised version, acceptable to the churchmen on the platform, who had co-operated in this use of their Holy Day of Obligation (15 August)" (211). I am particularly indebted to the article of Wolfgang Wicht, "Erinnerungen an Irlands Größe in *Ulysses*" ("Remembering Ireland's Greatness in *Ulysses*," *Was nun Herr Bloom?* 223-42).
24. Catherine Phillips, Introduction to *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Selection of his Finest Poems*, ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford and New York, 1995) xi-xvi, here xv and xvi.
25. James Joyce, *Poems and Shorter Writings, Including Epiphanies*, Giacomo Joyce and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. Richard Ellmann, A. Walton Litz, and John Whittier-Ferguson (London, 1991) 201-18, here 218.
26. Phillips xvi.

27. Phillips xvi.

28. The basis for this argument can be found in Jacques Aubert's *The Aesthetics of James Joyce* (Baltimore and London, 1992) chs. 5 and 6. See also my review in the *James Joyce Broadsheet* 41 (June 1995): 2.

29. For the idea to pair off Irish writers I am indebted to Fintan O'Toole's essay "Bringing the House Down: Sheridan's Machinery," *New Writing from Ireland*, ed. Colm Tóibín (Winchester, 1994), 82-89. He did not raise the topic again in his *A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (London 1998).

30. *Modern Irish Lives: Dictionary of 20th-Century Biography*, ed. Louis McRedmond (Dublin, 1996); James Joyce, *The Cat and the Devil*, illustr. Blachon with a letter by Stephen J. Joyce (London, 1990) 12.