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Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,  
Linguística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 35, 2019, Especial N°

# 21

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

ISSN 1012-1587/ ISSNe: 2477-9385

Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



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Facultad Experimental de Ciencias  
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Maracaibo - Venezuela



## **Interpretation of Irish Nationalism in The Shaughraun by Dion Boucicault , John Bull's Other Island by George Bernard Shaw, and Translations by Brian Friel.**

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### Abstract

The study discusses interpretation of Ireland in three Irish dramas : The Shaughraun , John Bull's Other Island , and Translations. The introduction presents Ireland and the political vision which the Irish playwrights have been discussing throughout history. The Irish drama produces new and different versions of Irishness by interpreting the Irish stage. Selected scenes are taken from each play and then analyzed as far as the subject is concerned. Discussion and analysis start with The Shaughraun by Dion Boucicault ,then John Bull's Other Island by George Bernard Shaw , and finally Translations by Brian Friel. Each play is presenting the importance of understanding and interpreting Ireland on stage. Such interpretation and understanding can be attained in showing the difficult circumstances that Ireland suffer from. Political disputes and conflicts for national identity are used by the Irish playwrights as the main themes in their drama. Finally , the study ends with the conclusion which sums up the success of the three dramas in interpreting Ireland in view of politics and nationalism as well.

Key Words: Irish nationalism , interpretation , nationality struggle , national identity , Irish drama.

## **Interpretación del nacionalismo irlandés en *The Shaughraun* por Dion Boucicault, *La otra isla de John Bull* por George Bernard Shaw y Traducciones por Brian Friel.**

El estudio analiza la interpretación de Irlanda en tres dramas irlandeses: *The Shaughraun*, *John Bull's Other Island* y *Translations*. La introducción presenta a Irlanda y la visión política que los dramaturgos irlandeses han estado discutiendo a lo largo de la historia. El drama irlandés produce versiones nuevas y diferentes de lo irlandés al interpretar el escenario irlandés. Las escenas seleccionadas se toman de cada obra y luego se analizan en lo que respecta al tema. La discusión y el análisis comienzan con *The Shaughraun* de Dion Boucicault, luego *la otra isla de John Bull* de George Bernard Shaw, y finalmente *Traducciones* de Brian Friel. Cada obra presenta la importancia de comprender e interpretar a Irlanda en el escenario. Dicha interpretación y comprensión se pueden lograr al mostrar las circunstancias difíciles que sufre Irlanda. Las disputas políticas y los conflictos por la identidad nacional son utilizados por los dramaturgos irlandeses como los temas principales de su drama. Finalmente, el estudio termina con la conclusión que resume el éxito de los tres dramas en la interpretación de Irlanda en vista de la política y el nacionalismo también. Palabras clave: nacionalismo irlandés, interpretación, lucha por la nacionalidad, identidad nacional, drama irlandés.

### **Introduction**

The process of interpretation comes out of the three representative plays which are real examples of the changing Ireland on the Irish stage. Each of these plays has a specific political frame. The interpretations of the dramatists for Ireland offer a political vision of their country in an attempt to challenge contemporary thinking on the matter. The "Irish question" has been answered by these playwrights as they discuss the national politics in addition to the politics of internal interpretation. At least one figure appears as interpreter in each text of the plays, involved in the process of interpreting between audience and stage, between characters, then reading and explaining Ireland on behalf of the playwright's maker. Producing different new versions of Irishness depends on the nature and function of the stage interpretations which change from play to play. Conflicting na-

tionality is also embodied in the works of these three plays because they reveal the potential and limitations that are generated by the intersection of Irish politics. In this concern , the ideology that is illuminated by the Irish Literary Theatre's manifesto states : "We hope to find in Ireland an uncorrupted and imaginative audience trained to listen by its passion for oratory , and believe that our desire to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland will ensure us a tolerant welcome , and that freedom that is not found in theatres of England.... We are confident of the support of all Irish people, who are weary of misrepresentation , in carrying out a work that is outside all the political questions that divide us."1

The three plays are considered to be high successes for not only the Irish audience , but also to non-Irish since they were performed in England and America well as Ireland. The political interpretation analysis of the Irish stage in these plays attracts attention to the various roles of the dramatists as interpreters , to whom they interpret and to what target. Dion Boucicault confirms that the reason behind not achieving historical plays as success is the lack of dealing with political issues: "The rayson why historical plays so seldom succeed is because a normal audience doesn't go into the thayatre with its politics in its breeches pockets."2 In Irish drama , functioning nationalism and politics is a very important element of a play's overall reception in the process of the Irish playwright's interpretation for his dramatic work.

### 1. The Shaughraun

The *Shaughraun* is Dion Boucicault's third melodrama the plot of which follows the abortive rising of Fenian movement in 1867. It follows the Manchester Martyrs trial and the Clerkenwell prison explosion which caused the Green Wearing in the British Empire. It is after the Fenian activity period and its aftermath that Boucicault finished his play. The text of the play suggests the winter of 1867-1868. The villain of the play , Kinchella , has a plot through which he takes the advantage of the current political situation in order to justify the murder of the escaped Fenian convict Robert Ffolliott at the hand of the police : "The late attack on the police van at Manchester September 1867 , will warrant extreme measures."3 The audience is directed towards the sort of political sympathies in this play. The Fenian hero seems plausible by the playwright who is courting Irish-Americans in the country where the Fenian movement began. Boucicault claims the significance of the play is its patriotic exposure of English misrepresentations: "let me disclaim any pretension as an actor

to excel others in the delineation of Irish character. It is the Irish character as misrepresented by the English dramatists that I convict as a libel.”<sup>4</sup> Boucicault has made *The Shaughraun* as the base ground of the public demand for the Fenian prisoners release. He , by the stage , argues the situation of the most chief Fenian leaders who are already found to be free . He even imagines the existence of the dramatic reunion for twenty million Americans’ hearts: “hearts that sincerely respect their mother country, and would love her dearly if she would let them. One crowning act of humanity would be worth a dozen master-strokes of policy; and the great treaty to be established with the United States is neither the Canadian fisheries nor the border-line on the Pacific Ocean-it is the hearty cohesion of the English and the American people.”<sup>5</sup> .

Boucicault’s appeal has been ignored by Disraeli and is treated by the British press with skepticism. However , the appeal represents the play’s theatrical Utopian politics.

A mock passage of arms opens the action of the play as the Irish Claire Ffolliott takes the English officer Captain Molineux , in the style of *She Stoops to Conquer* , for the dairymaid. “Molineux : Is this place called Swillabeg? Claire : No. It is called Shoolabeg. Molineux: Beg pardon; your Irish names are so unpronounceable. You see I am an Englishman. Claire: I remarked your misfortune ; poor creature , you couldn’t help it.” Boucicault ,*The Shaughraun* ,p. 173. In the suggestive intimacy between Molineux and Claire , the latter gets apart before she calls her cousin Arte O’Neal.” Claire: What’s your name again? looking at card Mulligrubs? Molineux: No ! Molineux. Claire: I ax your pardon! You see I’m Irish , and them English names are so unpronounceable!” Boucicault ,*The Shaughraun* ,p.174.

The expected coming trope of a romance is set up by the national difference between the two. The honorable Englishman Molineux falls in love with the Irish woman Claire. Claire , despite her prickly patriotism , is unable to resist the Englishman’s sincerity , decency , and uprightness . The Irish woman and the English man get married by the end of the play. This marriage is not in colonial subordination but considered as the marriage of complementary equals . Class plays a significant role in such national romance. The Irish female representation , Claire , places herself to take revenge for being mistaken by Molineux for the dairymaid . Thus , she becomes deliberate to distort the English aristocratic Molineux into the ludicrous Mulligrubs. But , in the next scene , he proves his class affinity with her. The villain Corry Kinchela appears to provoke social antagonism

which includes Molineux : “This fellow is awfully offensive to me” Boucicault, *The Shaughraun*, p. 176. Yet, Kinchela’s extreme opinion is insultingly refused. While Kinchela is observing this instinctive hostility, Claire decides to ally with Molineux who shows her a formal apology for missing her class before he takes his leave: “Molineux: . . . I ask your pardon for the liberty I took with you when I presented myself. Claire: (offering her hand) The liberty you took with him [Kinchela] when he presented himself clears the account.” Boucicault, *The Shaughraun*, p. 176.

The identification of the English Molineux against the racial Kinchela’s attitude, is decisively established as an inevitable relation beyond difference of nationality.

Arte O’Neal and Claire Ffolliott are cousins of the upper-class; they are related by a kinship which represents a pre-Cromwellian alliance. This kinship joins Old English and Old Irish gentry. The would-be dispossessing Kinchela is reminded of the curse upon the usurpers of Suil-a-more by Father Dolan: “When these lands were torn from Owen Roe O’Neal in the old times, he laid his curse on the spoilers, for Suil-a-more was the dowry of his bride, Grace Ffolliott. Since then many a strange family have tried to hold possession of the place; but every year one of that family would die; the land seemed to swallow them one by one- till the O’Neals and Ffolliotts returned, none other thrived upon it.” Boucicault, *The Shaughraun*, p. 178.

The English role in the confiscation of Ireland’s lands is skillfully excluded in order to show original despoilers and the families who attempted at seizing Suil-a-more as being such disliked Irish middle-men as Corry Kinchela.

The middleman is the suitable one to be blamed in such matters. The agent, who represents the connection between the tenant and landlord, is exploiting both to achieve personal interests. Furthermore, the half-educated “half master”, who also belongs to the professions of the middle-class, is seen as the favoured villains of nineteenth century Irish fiction. Ireland is known for its unsettled state and its chronic land predicaments, however, there is no need to attribute these issues to the colonial connection or the inequities of land tenure where the middleman are put in the position of blame. Hence, the agent and informer of *The Shaughraun* is Harvey Duff.

Harvey Duff is an informer and agent provocateur. Away from the police, Duff has been hired and used by Corry Kinchela for his infinite personal ends. The agent asks Kinchela to gain more money in exchange for

the evidence against the Fenians , but Kinchela tries to fob off the agent's demands ; therefore , he protests against the villain : “Kinchela: Were you not handsomely paid at the time for doing your duty? Duff: My jooty! Was it my jooty to come down here amongst the people disguised as a Fenian delegate , and pass meself aff for a head centre so that I could swear them in and then denounce them? Who gave me the offis how to trap young Ffolliott?” Boucicault ,*The Shaughraun*,p.190.

Duff's evidence leads to Robert Ffolliott's transportation to Australia and it is still doubtful whether Ffolliott has really engaged in any Fenian activity. However , he has been mentioned by Captain Molineux as “a distinguished Fenian hero” Boucicault ,*The Shaughraun*,p. 174 ). Fenianism is a movement which “includes people who supported or sympathized with the Fenians' goal of bringing about an independent Irish republic through revolutionary means,”<sup>6</sup> The Fenian movement is purposed towards the Harvey Duffs and the Corry Kinchelas , who are used as devices to further their own wicked ends. The middlemen , agents , and informers have an influential place in the misinterpret relations; the relationship of Irish and English landlords and tenants. These land wars alongside with Fenianism as a liberation movement are outcomes of such willfully arranged misunderstandings. In this Irish political picture , the clergyman Father Dolan is emphasizing his position with the angels who are represented by the Fenians. Arte O'Neal , on the other hand , explains her position and the position of her cousin , Claire , in the meantime , Molineux refers to the suffering : “You have to suffer bitterly , indeed , for ages of family imprudence , and the Irish extravagance of their love for their country , and the imprudence of their fidelity to their faith” Boucicault *The Shaughraun*, p. 175. It seems that the Ffolliotts and the O'Neals are related not only by political and social classes , but also by religion as they both belong to Catholicism. However , the play presents no further inconvenient signs of their faith and their priest is a most reassuring figure.

Through the play , Father Dolan's influential speech appears as a kind of protest to Kinchela's proposal that he would marry Arte : “I'd rather rade the service over her grave and hear the sods falling on her coffin than spake the holy words to make her your wife” Boucicault , *The Shaughraun*, p. 178 . The priests usually belong to the peasant class , thus they are known for their political loyalty. Father Dolan is a representation and a guarantee of this class .The priest is the peasant heroine Moya's uncle , to whom Conn the Shaughraun eventually gets married. Playing the role of both priest and faithful retainer to the upper-class , especially , O'Neals

and Ffolliotts , the priest presents no threat to the Utopian political harmony towards which the action of Boucicault's drama ends.

Conn's the Shaughraun role is the key to the political happy-ever-after denouement in the play. Throughout the action of the play , Conn is the middleman's exemplary opposite. While Law and order wickedly goes with Harvey Duff and Kinchella as magistrates and police spies , Conn , the lawless vagabond , is the incarnation of true loyalty. Corry Kinchella is responsible for the letters which caused Robert's imprisonment because these letters bear false witness and so they imprison the good and innocent people. Conn here plays the role of a liberator who frees his master from prison by his songs which are coded with messages. He sings them outside Robert's prison walls repeatedly. While Kinchella is the villain of financial and sexual dominator , Conn is the communicator who facilitates the two politically and socially correct marriages of Arte with Robert , and Molineux with Claire , then he is finally rewarded with his own marriage with Moya. Conn the Shaughraun asks the public to recognize him as a friend not an enemy:

"You are the only friend I have . Long life t'ye! Many a time you have looked over my faults. Will you be blind to them now , and hould out your hands once more to a poor Shaughraun?" Boucicault , *The Shaughraun* , p. 219 .

Through the Shaughraun's character , Boucicault is inviting his audience to approve the performance and the reconciliatory happy ending that he has brought to Irish stage.

The Shaughraun proves to be "an entirely New and Original Play... illustrative of Irish life and character"<sup>7</sup> . The Shaughraun as a character who is set , here , as "the soul of every fair , the life of every funeral ,the first fiddle at all weddings and patterns" Boucicault , *The Shaughraun*, p.171. Conn is embedded into the Irish scenery and he exhibits the Irishness essence for it can be found in funerals , sweddings , and also the showman who produces the Irish featured action.

The end of the play shows the presentation that is meant by the playwright to mime and defuse the threatening images of kinchella and Duff. In opposition to Conn's success , all of a sudden the two villains' transformation into a lynch-mob comes with Molineux's revelations of their iniquities , as they pay for the informer's blood: "Biddy seizes axe. Mrs. O'Kelly crosses to fire for poker. Donovan gets scythe and file. Peasants rush for various implements that are about the stage . Molineux comes on Biddy with axe , backs to Mrs. O'Kelly with poker , turns to Donovan

with scythe , whom he eyes with his glass.” Boucicault , *The Shaughraun* , p. 213.

Terror and violence , here , occupy the place for those who are unleashed by the rebellious peasants using axes and other tools as their weapons. The Irish peasants’ rage is supposed to include Molineux the English , but , he rather strongly supports their revolution. Duff now intends a suicidal leap from the cliff because of the mob fury . As for Kinchela , he is saved from being lynched by Father Dolan’s order : “Stand back ! D’ye hear me ? Must I speak twice ?” Boucicault, *The Shaughraun* , p. 218 . Hearing that , “The crowd retire , and lower their weapons” Boucicault , *The Shaughraun*, sp. 218. It is obvious that the priest’s authority controls violence in the play which is directed towards the villainous middlemen , represented by Kinchela and Duff , only . Such national revolting violence is not headed against the colonizing British , Molineux , or the landowning classes of O’Neals and Ffliotts.

As the case is with Boucicault’s Irish plays , *The Shaughraun* addresses the middle class of Irish society. So , The Irish audience receives a melodrama revolves around the struggle of simple peasants , representing the working class , against the bourgeois ambition through which the play offers “an optimistic myth of reconciliation”<sup>8</sup> in colonial Ireland. The Fenian political struggle is set on the national and patriotic level. The success of the Irish Conn along with the success of the English Molineux who supported the peasants’ revolution , is valuable to English , American audiences besides the Irish audience. It embodies Irish-Americans’ inherited sentimental patriotism ; it also allies the English man’s fears and satisfies the Irish man’s national self-esteem. Boucicault interprets and impersonates Ireland in the same way that Conn plays his role in the play. Since *The Shaughraun* is indeed a stage Irish man , this man is prepared to experience a representative form of theatre, and to perform the Irish life and character.

## 2. John Bull’s Other Island

This play extends over a long period of time , therefore , the politics , and performance that have been presented in the play seem to be more complicated than *The Shaughraun* . Shaw’s ideas about Irish and English go back to 1897. A comparison appears on a paper is entitled “Irish Actors of the Nineteenth Century” : “It is a mistake to think an Irishman has not common sense . It is the Englishman who is devoid of common sense ... It is a mistake to think the Irishman has feeling ; he has not ; but the Englishman is full of feeling. What the Irishman has is imagination ; he can imagine himself in the situation of others.”<sup>9</sup>

Reading such a note , one may think that Shaw makes an unfair comparison between the Irishman and the Englishman. He designs his play according to the opposition between the English and Irish characters in the same way that he studies the emotional Celt and the practical Saxon in terms of Arnoldian polarity.

Shaw's reputation as a leading Fabian attracts the attention of the British political establishment .Boucicault fails to achieve this appeal to "Disraeli". However , in *John Bull* there is much more serious targets for political argument to advance than *The Shaughraun* . Moreover , the play can be considered a fruitful political satire. The destination that play is headed for joins both the English audience and the Irish as well. It adopts such a theatrical structure through which the audience becomes able to move from England to Ireland. According to review of *The Colleen Bawn* in 1896 , Shaw has the first move at the Boucicaultian Irishman stage: "I have lived to see *The Colleen Bawn* with real water in it ; and perhaps I shall live to see it someday with real Irishmen."<sup>10</sup> As it is elaborated in *John Bull's Other Island* , the playwright argues that Irishman on stage cannot be evaluated as a misrepresentation of the Irish by the English, on the contrary , an Irish specular invention is used to be suitable for tastes of the English.

So , *John Bull's Other Island* appears to produce the real Irishman Larry Doyle who performs the exposure of the unreal Haffigan and his role as an Irish stage interpreter. Shaw describes Larry and his job in theatre like *Shaughrauns* do for Ireland: "Mr. Lawrence Doyle is a man of 36 , with cold grey eyes ,strained nose , fine fastidious lips , critical brows , clever head ,rather refined and good looking on the whole , but with a suggestion of thin skinnedness and dissatisfaction that contrasts strongly with Broadbent's eupeptic jollity." Shaw , CPP , 11 , pp. 901-902.

Larry is providing another representation for Irishman on stage. According to flabbergasted Broadbent , Tim Haffigan spoke and "behaved just like an Irishman" , and thus Larry angrily bursts: "Like an Irishman!! Man alive , don't you know that all this top-o-the morning and broth-of-a-boy and more-power-to-your-elbow business is got up in England to fool you , like the Albert Hall concerts of Irish music? No Irishman ever talks like that in Ireland , or ever did , or ever will. But when a thoroughly worthless Irishman comes to England , and finds the whole place full of romantic duffers like you , who will let him loaf and drink and sponge and brag as long as he flatters your sense of moral superiority by playing the fool and degrading himself and his country , he soon learns the antics that take you in." Shaw ,

CPP , 11 , pp. 905-906.

Boucicault-like stage Irishman is included within Larry's de-authentication which helps his authority to confirm as a genuine interpreter for the real Irishman. In the first act , Larry shows the function of Shavian spokesman for the theories of his creator as a national character , that formerly has a voice in the speech of 1897 at the Irish Literary Society. It is problematic for Shaw to discuss the notion of national character. He is confirmed about his opposition to any ethnical or racial concept related to Celticism or as it is known as Celtic nationalism. It is a political , social , and cultural movement which advocates solidarity and cooperation between Celtic nations and the modern Celts in North-Western Europe.<sup>11</sup> In this concern , Larry again voices his views: "When people talk of the Celtic race , I feel as if I could burn down London. That sort of rot does more harm than ten Coercion Acts. Do you suppose a man need be a Celt to feel melancholy in Rosscullen? Why , man , Ireland was peopled just as England was ; and its breed was crossed by just the same invaders." Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 908.

Being a cultural materialist is enough for Shaw through his reading of Marx. Yet he assures the idea of a fundamental difference existence between English and Irish characters. He adopts the climatic and environmental theory of nationality which Larry manifests in the magnificent dreaming speech in the play. Broadbent preserves that the tedium of life in the country is much the same in England as in Ireland , but Larry is earnest to contradict Broadbent:

"No , no: the climate is different. Here , if the life is dull , you can be dull too , and no great harm done. Going off into a passionate dream But your wits cant thicken in that soft moist air , on those hillside of granite rocks and magenta heather. You've no such colors in the sky , no such lure in the distances , no such sadness in the evenings. Oh , the dreaming! the torturing , heart-scalding , never satisfying dreaming , dreaming , dreaming!" Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 909.

The climate idea , here , as one of the cultural determinants begins as some kind of challenge that is paradoxical to ethnic and racial essentialism , which makes it soon transmute into the romantic landscape faith that even Irish writers who are known for their allergic sense to national nostalgia find it very difficult to elope. For Larry , Irish imagination becomes indeed another version of Arnoldian Celticism , with a strong fierce self-hated turn rather than a patronizing or self-congratulatory admiration. "An Irishman's imagination never lets him alone , never convinces him , never

satisfies him ; but it makes him that he cant face reality nor deal with it not handle it nor conquer it” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p.909. The image of the Irish imagination is presented as a wretched failure not a spiritual creative asset. The speech of Doyle shows all the things that the imagination of Irishman disqualifies him for: “He cant be religious. The inspired Churchman that teaches him the sanctity of life and the importance of conduct is sent away empty; while the poor village priest that gives him a miracle or a sentimental story of a saint , has cathedrals builtfor him out of the pennies of the poor. He cant be intelligently political: he dreams of what the Shan Van Vocht said in ninety-eight. If you want to interest him in Ireland youve got to call the unfortunate island Kathleen ni Hoolihan and pretend she’s a little old woman.” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 910.

Imagination for the Irishman is a fantasy-fed and this imagination leaves him permanently dissatisfied with a world of impoverished facts. Larry’s aria on Irish imagination prepares an audience to travel to Ireland with whetted appetite and new eyes. Shaw leaves the stage Irishman behind in England , in the meantime , Doyle’s credibility as interpreter is constantly enhanced by the solemn obtuseness of Broadbent. However , the opening scene of Act Two restores the scenic romanticism of Boucicault: “Rosscullen. Westward a hillside of granite rock and heather slopes upward across the prospect from south to north. A huge stone stands on it in a naturally impossible place , as if it had been tossed up there by a giant. Over the brow , in the desolate valley beyond , is a round tower. A lonely white high road trending away westward past the tower loses itself at the foot of the far mountains. It is evening ; and there are great breadths of silken green in the Irish sky. The sun is setting.” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p.922.

For all his denunciation of the stage Irishman , Shaw is working within the theatrical idiom of the Boucicaultian Irish romance. He does not deny the romantic spectacle of Ireland they are used to , he seeks rather for the audience to read and interpret it.

Braodbent plays the role of the cultural tourist to mimic and mock that business of interpretation. He is deeply prepared to be in the antiquities: “ Have you any theory as to what the Round Towers were for?” he asks Father Dempsey eagerly. Father Dempsey is offended: “A theory? Me! ... I have a knowledge of what the Roun Towers were , if thats what you mean. They are the forefingers of the early Church , pointing us all to God” Shaw , CPP , 11 , pp.932-933. The allusion here is headed to the

debate which overwhelmed the nineteenth century between those who argued for a pre-Christian origin of the round towers and the historical scholarship which has the position to them as medieval structures with a defensive function. For Broadbent, national identity is the stuff theorizing, for Father Dempsey, on the other hand, the stuff theorizing is a dangerous nonsense, threatening the authority of the Church. Corny Doyle puts it devastatingly as: "Father Dempsey is the priest of the parish, Mr. Broadbent. What would he be doing with a theory?" Shaw, CPP, 11, p.933. Like Molineux with his "you Irish", Broadbent is the outsider who theorises, generalizes, interprets, and whose interpretations are always rebuked by the reality on the ground, the reality of Father Dempsey and Corny Doyle, of Aunt Judy and Nora Reilly.

Shaw contrasts the reality of Rosscullen with preconceptions of Ireland about the changed political and social situation of 1904 which was the generic threat in any number of nineteenth century melodramas; it is also the threat of dispossession of the about-to-be-foreclosed mortgage. A special Irish cast in *The Shaughraun* by having the already dispossessed Arte O'Neill and Claire Ffolliott. The villain Corny Kinchela's threat completes the process of dispossession by driving them from the tiny remains of their property. As for John Bull, the foreclosure of the mortgage already happens before the action starts. As Larry Doyle explains in the first act, he is upset to hear that the Rosscullen landowner has lost his estate: "Your foreclosing this Rosscullen mortgage and turning poor Nick Lestrangle out of house and home has rather taken me aback; fo I liked the old rascal when I was a boy and had the run of his park to play in. I was brought up on the property." Shaw, CPP, 11, p.962.

In Shaw's 1904 *Rosscullen*, the feared threat of Boucicault's melodrama is an accomplished political fact of life. He rewrites and melodramatizes Boucicault. In place of Corry Kincheala, Shaw presents Corny Doyle who is a small man trapped in a system that he does not begin to understand. Through Larry, Shaw also questions whether the replacement of landlord by peasant farmer will result in a social system of greater equity and less exploitation. Larry, on the other hand, rounds on Matt Haffigan, the newly independent landholder: "Do you think, because youre poor and ignorant and half-crazy with toiling and moiling morning noon and night, that youll be any less greedy and oppressive to them that have no land at all than old Nick Lestrangle, who was an educated travelled gentleman that would not have been tempted as hard by a hundred pounds as youd be by five shillings?"

Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 962.

Shaw lends to Larry his own socialist perspective in which a nation of small farmers is the worst of all worlds ; it is the nation of capitalists. The political scene , on the other hand , is interpreted by Larry Doyle. In Doyle's opposition to separatist nationalism , he says : "I want Ireland to be the brains and imagination of a big Common wealth , not a Robinson Crusoe island" Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 914. He diagnoses the power of the Catholic Church beyond state control and Ireland's exportation of cheap labour to Britain. Larry acts as Shaw's sponsor in his de-mythologising interpretation of Irish politics. Neither English nor Irish can be brought to share his views on stage. In his version of stage interpretations , Shaw states the truth about Ireland is what the Irish , as much as the English , refuse to see.

Larry Doyle loses out to the fatuously uncomprehending Broadbent. He loses the seat in Parliament to him , and he loses Nora Reilly. Nora's and Broadbent's marriage is Shaw's another technical version for the national romance which can be imaged in the love between Molineux and Claire Ffolliott. Boucicault's Claire and Molineux succumbed to the irresistible attraction of difference , whereas Shaw's Nora and Broadbent have a relationship that is the hilarious product of complete miscomprehension. In the introductory stage description of Nora , Shaw undoes the Irish colleen image:

"A

slight weak woman...she is a figure commonplace enough to Irish eyes; but on the inhabitants of fatter-fed, crowded ,hustling and bustling modern countries she makes a very different impression. The absence of any symptoms of coarseness or hardness or appetite in her , her comparative delicacy of manner and sensibility of apprehension , her fine hands and frail figure , her novel accent , with the caressing plaintive Irish melody of her speech , give her a charm which is all the more effective because , being untraveled , she is unconscious of it...For Tom Broadbent therefore , an attractive woman , whom he would even call ethereal." Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 927.

The deeper version of the national romance in John Bull's *Other Island* is not Broabent's and Nora's marriage but the partnership of Broadbent and Doyle. Nora's and Broadbent's engagement is considered to be an act of acquisition by the "conquering Englishman" , as Keegan calls him only half ironically: "Within 24 hours of your arrival you have carried off our only heiress , and practically secured the parliamentary seat" Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 1010 . Larry also considers Broadbent's success in his love

relationship under the influence of national difference: “Nora , dear , dont you understand that I’m an Irishman , and he’s an Englishman. He wants you ; and he grabs you. I want you; and I quarrel with you and have to go on wanting you.” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 1008 .

It is not clear that Larry means what he has said , but one fact is that he says it “nervously relapsing into his most Irish manner” . From his view point , Larry recognizes the deeper attachment in the triangular relationship that he imagines for the future: “Larry. ... we must be friends , you and I. I dont want his marriage to you to be his divorce from me. Nora. You care more for him that you ever did for me.Larry. (with curt sincerity) Yes of course I do : why should I tell you lies about it?” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 1008-9 .

Doyle and Broadbent need one another and depend on each other , thus , both should keep distance from struggle and opposition. Broadbent considers Doyle as assistant for his ideas , his brains , and his imagination. As for Doyle , he considers Broadbent for his certitude , his experience of the world , and his decisive energy. Doyle’s part in that partnership suggests the psychological dependence of the colonized even in the formal tribute he pays to Broadbent: “it is by living with you and working in double harness with you that I have learnt to live in a real world and not in an imaginary one. I owe more to you than to any Irishman.” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 913 .

The dilemma of the expatriate Irishman has been expressed by Doyle regarding the conventionally Arnoldian disparity between Saxon fact and Celtic dream: “Live in contact with dreams and you will get something of their charm: live in contact with facts and you will get something of their brutality. I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal.” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 919.

John Bull’s Other Island ends like so much of the play and its ending is remarkable for its poised balance. The strategy of the action throughout the play involves the equitable distribution of satire. The conclusion of the play affords to an audience a held doubleness of feeling and thought. With Keegan’s exit , Doyle and Broadbent are literally and metaphorically left in possession. A coda of ironic diminuendo is provided by the uncomprehending exchanges of both Broadbent and Doyle: Broadbent’s last line “ Come along and help me to choose the site for the hotel” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 1022. Keegan’s marginal status as mad dreamer and the inevitability of the syndicated Rosscullen that he has forecast seem to be underscored by these final moments. For all Keegan’s significant denunciations of the

Land Development and what it stands for , he tells Broadbent that “I may even vote for you” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p. 1015. He refers to the Shavian socialist meliorism and the belief that social and political progress must come through the development of capitalism. He gives what lies beyond the colonial present of John Bull's Other Island ; beyond the immediate future to be controlled by Broadbent and Doyle , “Every dream is a prophecy : every jest is an earnest in the womb of Time” Shaw , CPP , 11 , p.1021. The play as a whole covers the imagined Ireland of a Boucicault with a sharply etched Shavian reality , it also allows the audience the inspiration of some transcendent future Ireland of the mind.

### 3. Translations

Unlike *The Shaughraun* and *John Bull's Other Island* , *Translations* is set almost 150 years back in time. In 1979 , Friel was highly aware of the unfinished business of the English-Irish colonial connection that is represented in the violence Northern Ireland which had been continued for ten years. Both Friel's play and the Field Day Movement go on searching for providing new trends in thinking of Ireland as a land of national identity , and giving solid expression to the unexpressed thoughts and facts in this country. They , in fact , attempt at confronting the depressingly intractable Irish political situation. *Translations* is a massive national and international success for it has created an almost universally admired Irish drama .

Without any outside interpreter , *Translations* presents itself with no Captain Molineux to misconceive and no Broadbent needing to be educated out of gullible belief in stage Irishry. There is only the community of the hedge-school , pupils and teachers , Sarah and Manus , Maire , Bridget and Doalty , and finally Hugh the master himself. In casual expository conversation , the characters reach out to the local news which is the opening of a National School in the neighborhood.

The character Owen enters the hedge-school as the returning son , hail-fellow-well-met , having the good word for everybody. But his social skills are suspect in contrast with the earnestness of his brother Manus. He announces his position with the army almost as a confession : “I'm on their payroll.” Though he laughs at the idea that he has enlisted as a soldier “I'm employed as a part-time , underpaid , civilian interpreter.” Friel , SP , pp.403-404. There is a strong sense that he has gone over to the other side. The equation ‘translator = traitor’ is given a new political force in Owen's translating Lancy's bureaucratic government to the people of Baile Beag. The characterization of Owen comes as a striking shift in terms of the succession of stage interpreters in the play. His structural position is closer to

that of the hated middleman. As he introduces English to Irish at the end of Act One, Owen says ironically: “Isn’t this a job for the go-between?” Friel, SP, p.408. He seems that he has some of the theatrical attractiveness of Conn the Shaughraun. Owen understands Baile Beag, as Larry Doyle understood Rosscullen, however that understanding is not given the authority it had with Doyle. He is seen as a villain though nationalist viewers see him as having none of the bitter self-hatred which can turn to destructiveness against his home country.

Owen acts as he thinks practically, rationally, and with no ill-will to anyone. There is obvious good sense in his response to Yolland’s guilty feelings about the nature of the Ordnance Survey: “Yolland...It’s an eviction of sorts. Owen: We’re making a six-inch map of the country. Is there something sinister in that?” Friel, SP, p. 420.

The play as a whole supports Yolland’s view that the mapping and re-naming of the Irish landscape is an eviction of sorts and there is nothing anyone can do to stop it. On the other hand, Hugh’s final doubtful and reluctant agreement to teach Maire English shows the real purpose of translation and interpretation as they need concentration to reach the end: “I will provide you with the available words and the available grammar. But will that help you to interpret between privacies?” Friel, SP, p. 446.

Translations depends on a tragic vision of an historically determined colonial process which is to leave the Irish people spiritually and psychologically dispossessed through a language that cannot determine, any longer, who they are and where they are. So, Baile Beag becomes uninterpretable and Owen’s efforts in translating between English and Irish are misguided. The version of national romance which is exemplified by Maire and Yolland leads to the tragic climax and catastrophe of the play. There are no only the special tokens of national difference that can easily be overcome just like Claire and Molineux, nor even the cultural cross-purposes of Nora and Broadbent. They have instead an unbridgeable gap and severing communication. In the only love scene of Yolland and Maire, they show their mutual attraction through reciting Ireland’s place-names which Yolland learns in his map-making. This suggests the attachment to place which can be considered as a marker for national identity which escapes from political and sectarian crisis.

Characters on stage speak English as the English do which reflects what the play dramatizes: Irish was destroyed as Ireland’s mother tongue. By 1980, even within the Republic of Ireland after nearly sixty years of state-sponsored language revival, Irish – speaking characters who speak

Irish language are supposed to be comprehensible, intelligible, and well understood to the audience by making them speak English.

In Act Two, Manus deliberately refuses to speak English for the benefit of the colonist, therefore, Yolland appears to switch languages when he communicates the good news of the job that he has been offered in Meadhon. In another scene, Hugh talks to Yolland using English when he talks about the culture and language of Ireland in order to be understood: "You'll find, sir, that certain cultures expend on their vocabularies and syntax acquisitive energies and ostentations entirely lacking in their material lives. I suppose you could call us a spiritual people." Friel, SP, p. 418.

Owen as translator or traitor receives more sympathy when he learns, too late, the implications of the mapping and his function in it. He also has to translate, for the Irish-speakers, the shock of Yolland's abduction and of Lancey's fiercely punitive response with absolute accuracy. This situation moves him a stage further towards an implied abandonment of the Ordnance Survey which is suggested in the stage direction: "Owen picks up the Name-book and says, 'We must learn these new names ... We must learn where we live. We must learn to make them our own. We must make them our new home' " , Owen replies defiantly : "I know where I live" Friel, SP, pp. 444-445 . Language is a very important part in identity. Owen cannot identify where to live, so his identity is lost as well. Moreover, Yolland is reminded that "words are signals, counters. They are not immortal. And it can happen [...] that a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of...fact" Friel, SP, p. 419 . It is this thinking that suggests the decisive force of political policy to Owen's statement "We must learn these new names."

At the end of *John Bull's Other Island*, Keegan's prophetic position is a Utopian one through which he envisions a future beyond imagining the future of Rosscullen in the neocolonial hands of Broadbent and Doyle. Speaking of the imagined past of 1833, Hugh, in *Translations*, looks sadly for a future which is the known present of Friel's audience. The final position of the play is represented in Hugh's very moving repeated recitation of the lines quoted from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "Urbs antique fuit-there was an ancient city, which 'tis said, Juno loved above all the lands" Friel, SP, p. 446 . The Rome Carthage, England Ireland analogy places an audience is similar to Virgil's Augustan readership looking back to the past in so that a good future can be well achieved. Virgil's melancholy imperialism perfectly suits Friel's purpose. It means the arbitrariness of the configuration of power in which one culture flourishes at the expense of another's ruin ;

Rome by the annihilation of Carthage and Britain by the colonisation of Ireland. In highlighting the issue of language, Friel makes of his tragic drama of destruction and loss a manifestation of triumphant success. The playwright uses English language to commemorate Irish culture of which the English colonists deprived him and his.

### Conclusion

The *Shaughraun*, *John Bull's Other Island*, and *Translations* offer interpretations of Ireland to suit a wide variety of interpreters, making of the potential contentiousness of their subject a multi-dimensional asset. Reading the three plays is intended to illustrate the varying forms of Irish stage interpretations which they represent. There is the fact that Ireland continues to be matter for interpretation. It is a place, a space, and a people need explanation for their country and their nationality. The problematic atmosphere of Ireland as it has ongoing political issues and as a place which is different within the English-speaking world makes the dramatic interpretation for this country marketable. The phenomenon of the Fenians, the issue of land purchase, and the Northern Troubles provide Boucicault, Shaw, and Friel with an appropriate occasion and an audience for drama.

Being in part because of its vexed colonial history, Ireland needs representation, understanding, and interpretation. The Irish history also helps the audience to be eager for Irish drama both abroad and at home. The preoccupation with national identity of a colonized people, the worldwide diaspora of Irish emigrants. The huge populations of people of Irish descent particularly in North America and in Britain also make for a potentially global interest in plays on Irish themes. This is such a market that Boucicault's *Conn the Shaughraun* is already catering. Ireland exists as interpretable matter for Irish playwrights partly for political, social, and demographic reasons. It is also a subject for dramatic interpretation which has created an internal structure for Irish drama. It can be said that all dramatized Irish men and women are stage Irish men and women.

Ireland has to be recognizably Ireland whether the scene is the picturesque landscape of Boucicault, the Round Tower of John Bull or the hedge-school of *Translations*. The attraction of these three plays is their strangeness and their identifiable Irishness. They are made to make the audience feel at home and the playwright speaks to that double position with a doubleness of his own. The characters work as interpreters trying to convey the author's authority which is claimed to be the knowledge of the reality that is represented on stage. The three dramas have reflected Ireland

as the space between dramatist and spectators ; it is an area already known and need the plays to be understood. Understanding and interpretation have come through the three dramas in terms of the political atmosphere that surround Ireland as a country of disputes due to the British invasion. So , Struggle for the Irish nationality is overwhelming Ireland. However , the three dramas prove to be success for Interpreting Ireland in light of nationalism.

#### End Notes

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Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 35, Especial N° 21, (2019)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.  
Maracaibo - Venezuela

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